

Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30

¹⁶“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ¹⁷‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

²⁵At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

This sermon series is rooted in the challenge to “love the people Jesus loved.” The season of Lent follows the ministry of Jesus. Through his journey we are invited to honestly self-reflect and clear away the forces that destroy and diminish our love. The way Jesus loved, as a friend, opens us to love more fully, extravagantly, and truly.

Quotes

“Everything that we take for granted, the divisions that we suffer, the artificial separations that we maintain--friendship can change all this.”

- Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendell

Big Ideas

Friendship with Jesus is:

- **personal** not because it is private but because it changes us
- **purposeful** not because he is our purpose but because he gives us his purpose
- **peaceful** not because it is easy, but because it frees our soul to rest in the freedom of Christ’s kindness

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. Share about the meaning or importance of a significant friendship in your life.
3. Jesus wasn’t just a teacher, a prophet, or a healer... he was also a

friend. What do you think it means that Jesus was (and still is) a friend?

4. Being called a “child of God” is a dominant way we speak of our relationship to God. How might “friend of God” shed new light on our relationship?
5. Jesus wasn’t “friendly” in a cute or polite way, he was friends with people in a way that challenged social convention and religious standards. Who were the people Jesus was friends with and why?
6. Notice where Jesus was “found” being a friend: a dinner table. Why do you think that is?

scripture: read at home, join a Sunday School class, or contact Michael for Men’s Bible Study (Tuesdays beginning 2/20, 7:30 AM, michael@southelkhorncc.org)

Engage

1. **Express your gratitude** for a good friend in your life: send a note, email, or gift.
2. **Ash Wednesday** Discover friendship with God in a profound way by attending the Ash Wednesday service (2/14, 6:30 PM) in the historic sanctuary at South Elkhorn.
3. **A Fast that Can Last** What do you need to give up or take on to cultivate a deeper friendship with God? Consider:
 - a. fasting from your daily or weekly purchase of some item (say, coffee) and donate the proceeds to a ministry, charity or cause.
 - b. Sacrificing time in your day or week to starting a spiritual discipline like reading

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