

Proverbs on Friends

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[0 : 00] Proverbs on friendship. A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man's friend deserts him.

Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find. Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work.

[1 : 09] If one falls down, a friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up. Amen. Turn with me to Ruth chapter 1.

Ruth chapter 1. Naomi's life wasn't easy. If you say your life is hard, Naomi would say mine too. If you would say it feels like it's one thing after another, Naomi would say I know exactly what you mean. We just got done singing about our days.

Ruth's, or Naomi's days, were not easy either. Ruth chapter 1, we find out the days that she lived in. Ruth chapter 1, it says, Those weren't easy days.

The people of God, this country, the nation of Israel, were in a, was in a cycle of punishment and sin and punishment and sin.

[2 : 24] And a lot of the judges, not all of them, but a lot of the judges were not shining stars of righteousness. Not always people that, as we read about them, we're completely comfortable of what they're doing.

The days were evil. You can just read how the book of Judges ends. The last five chapters is just brutal, brutal evil.

And if you have the last verse of Judges in front of you, it says, In those days, Israel had no king. Everyone did as he saw fit.

That's when Naomi lived. That's the context of the book of Ruth. So it says, In those days, Ruth, 1-1, there was a famine in the land.

I just told you it seemed like it was one thing after another. Here it is. There's famine in the land. It's more trouble. You know the story. We're not going to read all of it, but Naomi and her husband and family, they flee to Moab.

[3 : 30] There, Naomi's husband dies. And then after that, Naomi's two sons die. And so nothing is left for Naomi. All hope is gone.

And so she says, I'm going home. And then look at verse 12. This is where I want to dive in. And she said to Orpah and Ruth, go home.

Return home. Verse 12. Even if I thought there was still hope for me, even if I had a husband tonight and gave birth to sons, would you wait until they grew up? So you hear Naomi, there's no hope.

I'm leaving. Go home. Go back to your people. And it says, Orpah kissed her, verse 14, and said goodbye. But Ruth clung to her.

Ruth clung to her. She stuck with her. Tonight, the very first proverb you see on your sheet is Proverbs 18, 24. There's a friend that sticks closer closer than a brother.

[4 : 43] That's the same word. That's the idea. Ruth was sticking with Naomi. There's a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

The whole book of Ruth is a beautiful, is a glorious picture of how the Lord rescued and redeemed and restored hope for Naomi.

But how did the Lord do it? what did he use? He used a friend.

A friend. Ruth was a daughter-in-law, but more than that, she was a friend. A friend to Naomi. Ruth is this exquisite example of the power and the glory of friendship and how the Lord can use a friend to help, to bring hope again.

So look, Ruth or Naomi says, look, Orpah's going home, go with her and you see what she says.

Don't urge me to leave you or turn back from you.

[5 : 54] Where you go, I will go and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die and there I will be buried.

May the Lord deal with me ever so severely if anything but death separates you and me. That's what the book of Proverbs calls a friend.

friend. It's the verse that I want to camp on tonight. There's a friend that sticks closer than a brother that says, no matter what you are going through, no matter where you go, I am going to be there with you.

So what's a friend? A friend is someone who says, where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. I'm with you. I've got you no matter what, no matter what.

But Ruth, there's no hope for me. There's no hope for me. There's no hope for you. My life is nothing but bitter.

[7 : 02] Naomi means sweet. She says, don't call me that later. She says, call me Mara, call me bitter. My life is bitter. And it's as if Ruth says, fine, you have a bitter cup to drink.

I am going to drink that cup with you, no matter what. May God curse me and kill me if I leave you. I'm not leaving you.

So a friend is someone who chooses you, who commits to you, not just once, but again and again. So your hearts are intertwined. Your lives are intertwined.

You can't choose your family. No one has that sort of choice. But your friend chooses you, and you choose your family or your friend, and you say, it's not because we're family.

It's not because we have some sort of obligation because of that. But whatever happens, whatever happens, I'm not going to let you fall. I'm not going to be there to watch you fall and not pick you up.

[8 : 02] So thank God for friends. Thank God for people like Ruth. Do you have a Ruth in your life? Someone who's there for you, who's with you?

Do you have a Jonathan in your life? Well, thank God for them. So turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 18, verse 24. We're going to look at this passage primarily tonight, and we're going to dig into it, and then we're going to use it as a jumping off point to talk about some other Proverbs that have to do with friendship.

So Proverbs 18, 24, and the thing I want you to notice is, first of all, it's a contrasting proverb.

A lot of the proverbs are contrasting. This one is contrasting as well. You have two situations put back to back. One's preferable, one is not.

One is good, one is bad. Situation number one, a man with many companions may come to ruin. So that's situation number one.

[9 : 15] You have a man, you have a person with many companions, with many friends. And these are fair weather friends. These are fair weather friends.

Proverbs 19, 4, it's on your sheet, wealth brings many friends, but a poor man's friend deserts him. So these kind of friends want what you have to give them. So they come to this friendship, they come to this relationship asking what you can do for them.

Maybe not consciously, maybe not verbally or anything like that, but this is why they're there.

Proverbs 19, 4, wealth brings many friends. They're there for the goodies. They're there for what you can do for them.

Proverbs 19, 6, many curry friends.

If you're wealthy and you have lots to give to people, then well, sure, you're going to have lots of friends. It's all about what you can do for them. The party is rolling and they're there.

[10 : 16] Times are good and they're there. They're there for good times. That's situation number one. Many friends, and I sort of put that into air quotes, but these aren't friends that are good when times are difficult.

They're not there for you when times are tough. They're not there for you when your husband and your sons die and all your hope is dead.

And then they're gone. And that's why the second half of that line of this first situation is a man of many companions may come to ruin. Now, the idea in the Hebrew here might be that this person is always about on the edge of falling.

It might be that idea. Here's this person with many friends, but what you need to know about this person in particular is he walks on a fine line.

He walks on an edge. He's always ready to fall into ruin. That might be what it means, or as the NIV says, they might come to ruin. Either way that it's meant to be taken, you see the danger is the same.

[11 : 30] When life gets rough, when life gets difficult, they don't have a friend to help them. They don't have a friend to save them, to catch them.

No, they're ruined, is the word. They're ruined. It's sort of like the bad times happen, and then what's underneath, and when everything falls away, and when everything is destroyed, then you're ruined.

That's what happens to them. The same word is used in Psalm 2. Remember, when the Messiah, he will rule the nations with an iron scepter and dash them like pottery.

So you know, he just bam, hits them and they shatter to pieces. There's no putting back the pottery after the Messiah has hit them with his rod of iron. That's the word here.

The word is used in Isaiah for the earth just splitting open under the wrath of God. So the wrath of God comes down and the earth as it were cannot bear the weight and the anger and it just tears open.

[12 : 31] That's the word here. That's the danger. Life comes down hard on you and instead of having any sort of resilience and instead of being able to hold up, just like the earth splitting, there you are, you're barely holding on and you go to look for your friend.

You need someone to talk to. You need someone to put their arms around you. You need someone to put a strap around you and hold up your life and they're nowhere to be found and you go to pieces.

You're ripped open. You're ripped at the seams. And so stress happens and problems happen and you don't have anyone to come alongside you and throw their shoulder, put their shoulder under the load with you and you collapse.

You fall and you can't get up. Well, that's the first situation. So you have lots of friends. It's looking good at the beginning, but then when something bad happens, it's not just you fall.

You fall and you fall to pieces. That's the first situation. The second situation is better. We want, you want the second situation.

[13 : 43] That is clear from the book of Proverbs. Now, it has to tell us that that's really what we want or we should want because that first situation looks so wonderful and so nice when we see it in real life, but Proverbs is showing us, no, this is how this is actually going to work.

And you want a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Life is hard. The Christian life is hard.

God does not spare his children heartbreak. he doesn't rescue us from hardship. He uses it. He has good intentions for it.

We sang about it this morning. I'm allowing this so your dross to consume and your gold to refine. He's going to use it in your life.

He uses it for one to teach us to not be so independent. We need you, Lord. And sometimes that prayer, that heartfelt attitude is only wrung out of heart after it's been under difficulty.

[14 : 55] And so he uses it to teach us to not be so independent. We learn to rely on him. But like so many things in the Christian life, it doesn't just have a vertical use.

It has this horizontal. We learn to rely on each other. We learn to rely on that other person. It's not just me and God in this Christian relationship.

It's me and God and my brothers and sisters, and I need to learn to live with them as well and rely upon them. So that's the second situation. It's Ruth and Naomi.

Where there they are. My husband's dead. My husband's dead. My sons are dead. Oh, I don't have anyone. I don't have anyone. We don't have any hope. Well, Ruth and Naomi have each other.

It's David and Jonathan. Saul, Jonathan's father, turned against David. He turned against David and he wanted to kill him and he attempted to kill him several times.

[15 : 57] And who did Jonathan choose? His father or his friend? Let's turn back there.

Let's turn to 1 Samuel chapter 20 and here you have this wonderful passage of David and Jonathan. David is now, let me just give you some context in this chapter.

David is running for his life from Saul and where does he go to? This is beautiful. Where do you go when you're in danger? Where do you go when you're in trouble?

You go on someone that you know you can rely upon. You go to someone who you know cares and David is running for his life from Saul and where does he go? He runs right to Jonathan.

Now that might seem like a very strange choice because Jonathan is the son of his enemy and he says, Jonathan, your father is trying to kill me.

[17 : 01] And Jonathan says, no, how can that be? You see that? Jonathan says, look, my father doesn't do anything great or small without confiding in me.

Why would he hide this from me? He couldn't be hiding this from me. David, I think you're just imagining things. It's not so. Saul isn't really after you. And David, look in verse 3 says, and David wants to really convince Jonathan that, no, my life is in danger.

Your father has turned him against me. And so David took an oath and said, your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes. And he has said to himself, Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.

Yes, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live. Now look at this point. This is where David is at in his life. There is only a step between me and death.

There's only a step between me and death. Remember I was talking about you're on that edge.

Well, David is walking this line of now things are very bad and he needs a friend.

[18 : 15] Here's friendship's test. There's only a step between me and death. Jonathan said, verse four, whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you.

Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you. So between Saul and David, he chose David. I just want you to think about what Jonathan was giving up for David.

Jonathan's next in line. Jonathan has a kingdom. He has the safety of his father. Jonathan, you can be king.

And Jonathan chose David. David meant more to him than himself, to his kingdom, to his family, to his dynasty, to Jonathan's future.

And that is a friend. David never had a friend like Jonathan. You can read the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel, and you'll find that David has lots of followers, he has advisors, and I'm sure he did have people that would say he's a friend.

[19 : 43] Lots of followers, lots of advisors, but there was only one friend like that who put his family, his kingdom, his personal glory, his privilege on one side, and David on the other side, and chose David.

Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you. Chose David, who said he's my friend. Now, isn't that something right out of Philippians chapter 2, which we heard this morning, of my interest, your interest.

Jonathan says, I'm all about your interests. Ruth, Jonathan, Timothy, Epaphroditus, they're all cut out of the same cloth, the same Christ-like cloth of I will be your friend.

Epaphroditus says, I'm going to go to that jail. Roman prisons, I'm sure, were not very lovely places.

Paul is not the most popular person around and Epaphroditus gives himself for the sake of Paul.

We need friends like that. We want friends like that. Life is hard. Christian life is difficult. And so, there you have situation number one and situation number two, which one should you choose?

[21 : 06] Now, we want friends like that. Now, what is the overall point in Proverbs chapter 18 24? So, you have it. What is the overall point?

We've seen situation number one, situation number two. Here's the main lesson. When it comes to friendship, quality is far more important than quantity. Quality is far more important than quantity. Quality is of supreme importance. It's not about how many you have, it's the kind you have. Give me one diamond grade friend over a hundred hanger-ons any day.

Give me one over a hundred any day. Life is hard, life is tiring for the Christian. It is a battle. We are 50% soldiers no matter if you're a man, a woman, a boy, or a girl.

When you're called into the kingdom of God, you're called to, now you're against the world, against the flesh, against the devil. You're in the battle. You're in the trenches. We get tired. We get shot up.

[22 : 14] Life is difficult for Christians. That's not the Christian life going wrong. That's the Christian life. Well, then Lord, give me a friend like that.

Give me a Jonathan. Give me a Ruth. Ecclesiastes 4.9, two are better than one because you have a good return for, they have a good return for their work.

If one falls down, and we're going to fall down. If one falls down, a friend can help him up, but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.

Again, it's not the quantity. Young people, it's not the quantity. It's the quality. And true friendship is rare.

True friendship. to have someone like that, that doesn't come around every day. Proverbs 20, verse 6, many a man claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful man, who can find?

[23 : 22] I don't think we should draw from that that there's just no faithful men. It's just to say it's really easy to find someone who says I'm a good man, I'm a faithful friend, I have unfailing love, but when the rub comes, when the difficulty comes, when the water gets hot, then everyone was saying I have unfailing love.

You can't find them. And so maybe you say to yourself, you know, I don't have that many friends, and that bothers you. Proverbs says to have one really good one is a treasure.

To have one really good one is a treasure. Do you have one? Then thank God. That friend has been handcrafted for you, given to you.

And what a lifesaver a good friend can be. If God has given you a good friend, then cherish that friend. That's one of the most brilliant and wonderful gifts that he can give to someone.

Friends aren't like gravel stones that you can just drive by any driveway and pick up one. They're not. They're handcrafted diamonds from God to his people.

[24 : 52] He doesn't heap them into your lap. He gives you one or two or three. So we should treasure our friends. We should thank God for them. We should protect them.

They prove their worth. They prove their worth when the going gets tough. So we've looked at Proverbs 18.24. We've seen situation number one, a situation number two, a friend sticks with you. Now what I want to do is I want to fill in that proverb with some other things from the book of Proverbs. How, and then ask, okay, if I am a friend, what should I do?

What does it look like to stick with your friends? You know, for Ruth, it meant leaving her people and going with Naomi. Naomi. And you can see where that led throughout the book of Ruth.

Well, what does it look like? And I have three things I want to point out to you. And this is where we're going to start looking at some other Proverbs. One, friends stick together in financial difficulties.

[26 : 02] Friends stick together in financial difficulties. We've already just talked about generally, and I just want to make that more specific and talk about financial difficulties.

Proverbs 17, 17, a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Now, we need to put these kind of verses in opposition to those verses where it talks about, you know, wealth brings many friends.

But now, here you are, you don't have money. You're in adversity. In ancient Israel, many times, adversity looked financial because you got to think, in ancient Israel, there is no health insurance.

There's no life insurance. There's no workman's comp. There's no sick days. There's no crop insurance. There's no social safety net in ancient Israel.

There's no social security. family. There's no family. There's no family. There's no family. There's no safety net. That's what it was in ancient Israel.

[27 : 14] Now, things have changed today. Things are different in our culture. It's not true in every country in the world, but it's definitely true in our culture. In many respects, it's better, I would say.

I don't really have to worry about any of you falling to such a degree that you can't eat. There's food banks everywhere. There's all that sort of thing.

I don't have to worry about you becoming homeless generally. Even bankruptcy laws are there to protect your home and a vehicle and things like that.

But you know what? Friends are still there for each other in financially difficult times. Bruce Waltke, who probably has the best commentary on the book of Proverbs, says about Proverbs 17, 17, this Proverbs supports eyeball-to-eyeball charity.

In-the-trenches charity. Yes, it's good that there is all these other things. Those are good. We should be thankful and glad about those.

[28 : 17] But we cannot get around this idea that in the Bible, in the body of Christ, among friends, you don't say, oh, they'll take care of it. You get eyeball-to-eyeball, person-to-person, person, and you, it's in-the-trenches charity.

A friend in need is a friend indeed. We have that own proverb ourselves. And so you say to your friend, whatever happens, I'm not going to let you fall.

I'm not going to let you get behind in your bills. I'm not going to let you go hungry. I am not going to let you come to ruin. You fall down, I'll pick you up.

It gets cold, we'll lie back-to-back, Ecclesiastes says, and we'll keep each other warm. And so that's first. A friend is for days of financial adversity. I'm not going to let you come to ruin.

That's what me being a friend, me being a friend, looks like. So that's first. A friend is for financial adversity. And then two, you know, friendships are not idyllic.

[29 : 27] They are apart. They exist in this world that has fallen. And I am not friends with anyone except for Jesus who is perfect. Friends sin.

Friends make mistakes. Friends do foolish things. Friends get themselves in trouble. Now, fake friends, that's when they bail.

That's when they're silent. That's when they don't have anything to say. But that's not what real friends do. So here's number two. How do you stick with each other? How do you cling to each other, really, through thick and thin in life?

How are you faithful in your friendship? Proverbs 27, 5 through 6. Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Sometimes sticking by your friends means saying, hey, what are you doing? What are you thinking there? Sometimes that's sin.

[30 : 27] Sometimes that's folly. Sometimes they're doing the wrong thing. They're barking up the wrong tree. They've got a bad idea and they're holding on to it. And so it means that we just gently, kindly, but openly and honestly say, I don't think what you're doing is a good idea.

or, I don't think you should have done that. That wasn't right. When your friends do that, they're not doing it to hurt you.

Proverbs says, wounds from a friend can be trusted. They have your best interest at heart. Behind that pain is a heart that's full of love and concern. And they're talking to you because they do.

And so just because they're your friend doesn't mean that you never have to correct them or never have to say, what are you doing? Or pull them up short somehow. Now hopefully, and I don't think this is a problem with widespread here at Grace Fellowship, but hopefully not very much.

I hope we're not always constantly correcting each other. That would become tedious. That would wear our friendships down and that would get bad real quick.

[31 : 46] But in its place, rightly done, and I would say sparingly done, it's part of being a friend. Now love is going to cope over a multitude of sins.

But there's some things that we need to be iron sharpening iron. We need to be creating some sparks because we really care about that other person.

You know, it's just another way of saving them from ruin. Sin and folly will ruin you just as much as bankruptcy and cancer and losing your job even more.

And a friend who doesn't care about my soul is hardly a very good friend. Jesus said, what does it gain you? What does it gain, man, if you gain the whole world and yet lose your own soul?

My soul, my spirit is more important than the whole world. And a friend that doesn't care about my soul, about my never dying, living before God in heaven or in hell forever and ever, they don't care about that.

[32 : 58] My soul? Then what kind of friend are they? They don't care about the very most important thing about me. Friends care about us all the way down.

So yeah, they are good for me on happy days. They're good for me on bad days. But all through it, they're going to stick with me. And sometimes sticking with me means giving a thoughtful, kind, loving rebuke.

That's what sticking together means. Number three, how do friends stick together? Proverbs 27, 9 shows us another way. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart.

And the pleasantness of one's friends springs from his earnest counsel. How do friends stick together? Well, by giving advice, by giving counsel, by sharing wisdom, by talking with each other.

God's love. And, you know, what this proverb says is that is one of the joys of life. So there you are, you're confused, you don't know what to do, you have all these different possibilities, and you've been ruminating, you've been chewing it over in your mind, you've been waking up in the middle of the night, and you don't know what to do, you don't know what to think, you don't know where to go, and you sit down with your friend over coffee, you call them on the phone, and you hash it out, whatever it might be, you hash it out, you talk it out, and what happens?

[34 : 38] So much of the time, confused things, where you can't see clearly, all of a sudden, oh, they snap into focus, they become clear. Those areas where you were doubting, and you were second guessing, third guessing, fourth guessing yourself, all of a sudden, it's like the way opens before, and you say, oh, that's what I need to do, that's the direction I need to head.

And you get more good thinking done in two hours with your friend, than 48 hours, all thinking by yourself. We need that, don't we?

Ellen Jacobs is a professor at Wheaton, and he wrote a biography on C.S. Lewis, he also wrote a biography on a book called How to Think, and in that book, he makes this very insightful comment that, you know what, we never think by ourselves.

We're always thinking in conversation with people, and sometimes those conversation partners are bad, and sometimes those conversation partners are good. We never think by ourselves. Now, here's the beautiful thing of having a friend to think with you.

You just get better thinking done, and you get it done quickly. So, are you keeping your problems all to yourself, and you're just trying to work them out on your own?

[36 : 06] Proverbs says, you need a friend to help you think. This is one of the ways that you learn to lean on your friends. This is one of the ways you learn to not be wise in your own eyes.

You just say, there we are, here we are, I'm facing this, I don't know what to do, help me out. I'm blind to things, and your friend will help you to see. So, a good friend is a wise friend.

And, now, it's not just hearing your friend yammer and talk, that's not what we're talking about. But earnest, heart level, God-saturated, biblical wisdom is sweet.

It smells good, it is a joy to the heart when you get it. That's how you stick together. Heart level, wise counsel, that's gold. Now, I have two final pieces of application, and it's this.

If all of that is true, that real friends are rare. You know, David had Jonathan. We never hear about Jonathan number two coming along.

[37 : 10] It was a one-time sort of thing in David's life to have someone like Jonathan so close. I'm sure David had other friends, but none quite like Jonathan. But, if they're rare, they stick with you in good times and bad.

They've proven themselves over the years. They've gone through the valleys with you, and they've helped you think through things, and they've protected you spiritually.

That's their job. That's what it looks like to be a good friend. Then, how important is it to choose your friends wisely? Again, you can't choose your family. But, there's no sort of outward force making you choose your friends.

And so, Proverbs says, you need to choose your friends wisely. Proverbs 13, 20, he who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion, a friend of fools suffers harm.

This man who is a friend of fools was a fool because he thought these kinds were the good friends, but now he's a friend of fools, and he suffers harm.

[38 : 22] Now, he who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Then, just a couple of pointed applications is, young people, if you're not married, be careful who you marry.

you don't want to be yoked, stuck, to a fool because what is going to happen is, you will suffer harm.

And so, be careful who you share your heart and your life with. Your health and well-being and spiritual life, your joy, your safety is all wrapped up in this, so choose wisely.

Now, that's marriage and that's friendship. A friend of fools becomes a fool and they will harm you.

It's just a matter of time before you suffer. Their advice, their example, their life, their thought processes will end up cutting you, their selfishness, the fool in the book of Proverbs is not just someone who's dumb, they're morally deficient, so their selfishness will end up cutting you like a sword because in reality, the fool is most bent in and concerned about himself and so when push comes to shove, if it's you or them, they're going to choose themselves, so you're going to suffer

harm, so choose your friends wisely.

That's the first piece of application. The second is this, this verse, Proverbs 18, 24 that we've been looking at, there's a friend who sits closer than a brother.

[39 : 59] I'm sure most of you thought of Jesus when you heard this verse, and that is the last piece of application. There is a friend that will stick closer than a brother.

There's a friend who's the best friend of all, and so the last point of application is make Jesus your friend. that is the gospel, that God is now reconciling sinners to himself.

He's making friends of sinners. What is it, John 15? Jesus says, I lay down my life for my friends. Jesus died to save his friends, and he is the ultimate friend who says, I will not let you come to ruin. I'm not going to let it happen. I'm going to put everything, all my glory, all my comfort, all my joy, on one side, and I'm going to choose you to make sure that you are saved, that you don't go to pieces. I will not let you be destroyed. There was only one step between life, between us, and death. There was.

[41 : 19] we were in the exact place where David was, where death was coming for us, and it was not going to be good.

And Jesus said, what do you want me to do? What do I need to do? I will save them. And he put himself completely at our disposal. You know, Ruth, remember Ruth's oath to Naomi?

She said, may God deal with me ever so severely if I leave you. well, for Jesus, God did deal with him ever so severely precisely because he would not leave us.

He wouldn't leave us no matter what. And so that meant taking our sins upon himself and going to the cross and being crucified there and being punished by God there.

He's doing it for his friends. He's doing it because he will not let them come to ruin. And even if it meant facing his father's wrath and his father's rejection, he said, I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake you.

[42 : 38] Now, that's the kind of friend Jesus is. So, Christian, is Jesus your friend? is he saying to you, I will never let you come to ruin.

I'm going to stick with you no matter what. And that's what he is saying. That's absolutely true of you. If he's your friend, then you should be rejoicing, you should be taking comfort, you should be taking encouragement, you should be going to your friend and using your friend and talking with your friend, you should be taking joy in that and taking courage from that.

Now, if you aren't friends with Jesus, then really, the gospel is this free offer to say, look, here he is. This is the kind of friend he can be for you. This is what Jesus does for his friends.

He doesn't use them. He lays down his life for them. And then you should take him.

Take him. Take him to be your friend. Well, let's pray. Our heavenly father, you are the giver of life and love and every good and perfect gift and we would put our friends into that category of good and perfect gifts.

[43 : 57] We would put Jesus Christ in the category of our greatest gift from you. And so we say thank you. Thank you for your overflowing heart, for your overflowing love to us.

Thank you for your word. I pray that you would help us and give us grace to be friends, to be good friends, to be self-sacrificing friends, that we would see how Jesus is a friend to us and that we would go and do likewise to our friends.

And I would pray especially, especially for those who don't know you, Lord Jesus, who are still holding you off, even while you're offering yourself to them.

I pray that you would have mercy on them. Break down their defenses, show them the poverty of their existing friendships, show them the poverty of their own souls and their own need, and then give yourself to them as they repent and as they believe.

Do this for Jesus' sake, I pray. Amen.