

### Kingdom Friendships #3: The Finale! – Giving Friendships

**A. Original sound**

**B. Zoom Recording to Computer**

**C. YouTube Live stream**

**D. Post both links on FB**

E. Welcome to all go get your LS supplies!

- a. It's Sunday morning.....in a weird season
  - i. season of disruption and in a season of pandemic, social unrest
  - ii. first Americans launched from US soil into space
- b. Perhaps some of the initial energy for connection with start of pandemic digitally waning
- c. We're talking about friendship – wanting to be with one another
- d. And yet the great difficulty and complexity and confusion about what it means to meet together in person again, especially with so many kids
- e. We're excited to start together discerning The Body

F. Lords Supper video

- a. Go get your supplies for LS
  - i. Grape juice and break or crackers if you have em
  - ii. Or get creative with any similar food and drink!
- b. Ben's going to lead us through a time celebrating the Lord's Supper together and singing a hymn before Ms Elisha leads our Sprouts Time!

**G. PLAY VIDEO**

**a. Optimize + audio**

H. Thanks Ben for leading us

- a. And thanks to Dan and Stephanie Chitwood for getting the Blessing Box made and installed with our brothers and sisters in Christ at 1<sup>st</sup> Free Methodist

**I. OK It's time for SPROUTS with Ms Elisha**

**a. (spotlight Elisha if needed)**

J. Dismiss kids to sprouts video if they want

- a. Veggitaes – LETTUCE Love one another
  - i. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plZe9u\\_HeY8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plZe9u_HeY8)
- b. Or can join us here on zoom for our teaching time!
- c. 3-4 minutes Mingle –
  - i. Before we hear a personal story from our own Chris Brubeck
  - ii. What's been something sweet this last week with family or friends?

K. Something we love and want to do more of together is share testimonies.

- a. Stories about what God's done and is doing in our lives.
- b. Today we're going to hear from our own Chris Brubeck about a specific way he's been leaning more deeply into personal renewal.

**c. SPOTLIGHT CHRIS BRUBECK**

- d. CHRIS prays for teaching

L. Thanks so much Chris!

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1. Today is the Finale, the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of a little trilogy of focus the last few weeks on KINGDOM FRIENDSHIPS
2. And this fits more broadly in a teaching series we've been in during this pandemic season called "New Normal"..... rather than looking to get back where we used to be, we're sensing God leading us to something new.... Something better. Something renewing, revival in our personal lives, our churches, and out land.
3. **SLIDES**
4. Been pretty rich. Series broken into 2 halves. 1<sup>st</sup> half looking at developing personal renewal – spiritual habits that help our roots go deeper into God.
  - a. Main passage
    - i. Jeremiah 17 – tree → produces FRUIT for others → OTHERS CENTERED
  - b. Recently we've been talking about CHURCH renewal, since personal renewal leads to corporate renewal
    - i. Because that's what we long for – a fresh reviving movement of God transforming our church and our land.
  - c. Focus Passage:
    - i. 2 Chron 7:13-14 → If my people repent and pray, I'll heal their land in pandemic → RENEWAL
    - ii. <sup>13</sup>"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, <sup>14</sup>if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."
5. So we've seen how Renewals are built on prayer
6. And they're also built on repentance
7. **[BACK TO ME]**
8. We're in a season of pandemic. We're in a season of upheaval and uncertainty both in our culture and in our churches. It seems so hard to grow. Renewal and Revival seem almost out of reach. Nearly impossible to believe God could do major movement in our culture.....
9. Do we need to repent of anything?
10. Not in order to win God's approval --- for those in Christ, that's the whole deal! The Gospel is that through JC's death and resurrection those who put their trust in Him have COMPLETE approval from God apart from our performance. We're loved and accepted and known and adopted as sons and daughters of the King forever, no matter what, forgiven completely, forever. Done deal.
  - a. If you haven't ever become a Christian, recognized your own bankruptcy, inability to please God on your own, your rebellion against him and your settled decision to make life work apart from Him, then that's your call
    - i. Repent of your rebellion, and ask Jesus to save you forever
    - ii. Repent and believe in Jesus and his work for you.
11. For the rest, for those in Christ, who have responded to the loving rebuke of Christ and who have turned to him in repentance, do we need to repent? Is that done and over?
12. Or is repentance something we keep doing?
  - a. A LIFESTYLE of repentance

- b. Now, secure in God's love and acceptance of you, you're FREED to look at your stuff and not flinch
  - c. Freed to see how deep the rabbit hole goes
  - d. FREED to hear the next steps, the gentle rebukes of our loving father
  - e. Inviting us to leave our old ways of living that brought harm and live more fully as he would, as he designed your life to flourish
  - f. And maybe, just maybe experience significant healing in our land..... REVIVAL in our day
13. So I'll ask again: Is our loving father trying to show us next steps of repentance for revival to break out in our church?
14. Today we are talking about friendships.....
- a. Our focus passage for these last teaching on Kingdom Friendships has been:
  - b. **[SLIDE]**
  - c. **John 15:12-17** <sup>12</sup>My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command. ... <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup>This is my command: Love each other.
15. Here is the Jesus' call to his followers to love one another as I have loved you
- a. We are to love like he's loved us, who laid down his life for his friends. You and me.
  - b. This is Kingdom Friendship, straight from the Source.
  - c. **[BACK TO ME]**
16. so we'll ask it again more focused: Is God speaking gentle words of rebuke to us about the quality of our relationships with one another in our church?
17. I believe he is.
18. Our culture teaches us a quality of relationships that moves in a starkly different direction to Jesus's description of Kingdom Friendships
- a. Our culture teaches us to be basically Selfish and self-centered... including in our relationships
19. Shows itself in 2 main flavors:
- a. 1<sup>st</sup> flavor tastes something like this:
    - i. I'll give to others.... I'll even be sacrificial! To a point ... while it's working for me.... To get a friend, comfort, companionship, fun, or the status of being a connected influencer
    - ii. But as soon as it's not working for me, when it gets hard, when I'm giving more than I'm getting, when it's costing me time I hadn't planned to give, energy I hadn't planned to spend, then I'm out
    - iii. But I'll do it subtly
      - 1. I wont flame out in a huge mic drop moment to clear the air
      - 2. I'll smile and politely give an excuse why I'm busy this time, or tired, or previously engaged or somehow unable to help
        - a. Until eventually I withdraw completely.
          - i. The sin of selfishness gives grows into
            - 1. apathy and indifference

- b. Not just about not returning calls and texts.
  - c. Stops pursuing, initiating
  - d. Moves on with other interests.
  - e. Even blame the other person for it when we think of them
  - f. It's SO easy
    - i. .... To let friendships die at JUST THE TIME when they become most needed
    - ii. When the messiness gets to the surface
    - iii. And most potential to metamorphosize into KINGDOM friendships
3. At root, this flavor is practical indifference
- b. Self-centeredness can also show itself in our 2<sup>nd</sup> flavor: an unwillingness to be known – to be given to
- i. Usually rooted in a settled sense of shame or self-hatred
    - 1. If anyone knew the real me, they'd reject me
  - ii. Or a crippling fear of groups, people.
    - 1. Deep insecurity, loneliness, sadness, depression, anxiety
  - iii. They pop in and pop out quickly in gatherings
    - 1. Don't initiate conversations
    - 2. Struggle to carry on a conversation if initiated with
    - 3. Usually not very engaging, withdrawn
  - iv. Or they simply don't show up
    - 1. Sporadic at best
    - 2. Content to live on the fringes of community
    - 3. Where nothing is required of them
      - a. And they can stay in control
    - 4. Only giving, only showing up when they want to
    - 5. And Self-centered → though it expresses itself in seemingly opposite ways
      - a. The withdrawn, disengaged is still focused and centered on themselves
    - 6. Such that they're utterly unable to think of others, how they might bless or encourage, what they might give
      - a. Their entire time is spent protecting themselves from others, from the potential that others might see their lack and reject them
20. Which flavor of self-centeredness do you most need to repent of?
- a. Self-Centeredness is a cultural sin that has infected all of us.
    - i. Like Covid in the building, we all breathe the same air and eventually most all of us will get sick, even if we don't recognize it
21. Dear friends, this ought not be.
- a. Self-Centeredness, no matter how subtle or nice, or socially approved, will hamstring our ability to make and sustain Kingdom Friendships
  - b. And thus, I'm convinced, will hamstring our ability to participate in Church Renewal and revival.

- c. If we want healing in our land and in our churches, if we want renewal and revival to break out in historic proportions
  - i. We must repent of our self-centeredness
  - ii. And our failure to love our fellow Tallgrassians like Jesus would
    - 1. Through our indifference and self-protection

22. What would Jesus do?

- a. Its become a trite cliché, wristbands at church camp
  - i. I had a WWJD bracelet!
- b. But it's older than you think.
  - i. It's really the foundation of the Christian life, and the call of Jesus on your life to live your life now as a LITTLE CHRIST
  - ii. Do what he would do in your life, were he you
    - 1. In specific situations, decisions
- c. I've been recently reading an old book from the 1800s
  - i. Referenced strongly in that Minibook I mentioned a few weeks back "Prayer Meetings that Changed History"
  - ii. A novel called In His Steps by Charles Sheldon
  - iii. The most famous book you've never heard of
  - iv. It's fill title is IN HIS STEPS: WHAT WOULD JESUS DO
    - 1. In 1896, for his Sunday night services, minister Charles Sheldon thought he would do something a little different....write a story, which would continue one chapter a week, about various persons who applied "What would Jesus do?" to their lives.
    - 2. a group of regular American church-people who decide to take their minister's challenge and commit for 1 year to live their life by doing nothing without asking WHAT WOULD JESUS DO in this specific situation, and as best they could, once determining the answer, to follow through with it, no matter the consequences.
    - 3. It then follows what happens as a result in their lives, their church, and their city ... and the massive work of God and renewal that results
    - 4. Sheldon was soon preaching to a packed crowd. When the story was over, it was published, one chapter per week, and finally the publisher printed a ten-cent paperback edition which sold 100,000 copies in a few weeks
  - v. One of the best selling books of all time
    - 1. In part because "the original publisher, failed to register the [copyright](#) in the proper form. Other publishers took advantage of this, publishing the book without paying the author [royalties](#). Thus lower prices and multiple publishers led to larger sales."
    - 2. Something that quite likely was God's great idea all along.
  - vi. It has my heart by the strings – a simply scaffolding idea for my life
    - 1. Built on repentance for socially approved quiet and practical selfish living
    - 2. On prayer for God to move, and guide, and empower
    - 3. And could lead to tremendous results
      - a. To great movements of God
      - b. Renewal breaking our and transforming OUR church

- c. Revival spilling over into OUR CITY, OUR LAND
      - d. Think of it!?
    - 4. There's a reason this book featured prominently in that minibook account of historic revival movements of God.
    - 5. It captured the hearts of millions and catalyzed real revivals.
  - vii. You can get it in e-Book for free online, thanks to the Gutenberg Project
    - 1. I'll try to link it when I post this teaching
23. Brothers and sisters, Why not take up this challenge –particularly in our relationships with fellow Tallgrassians
  - a. Do nothing in relation to other TGians without first asking “What would Jesus do” and then, to the best of your abilities, having decided the answer, commit to doing it..... no matter the consequences.
  - b. I'm proud that our church has a general ethos of valuing relationships and being genuine
  - c. THAT'S SO GOOD! – But perhaps God wants to sharpen our edge.... To call us out of complacency with something we may regard as a strength....
  - d. And to take it to the next level.....
24. Embrace the wisdom of 2 Chron 7 that invites us to embrace a lifestyle of repentance for our failures to love (both sins of commission AND OMISSION)
  - a. And pray for God to do more than we could ask or imagine
25. Found your life on the vision of the Tree in Jer 17 who puts roots deep into the nourishment of God so that you can thrive personally AND produce fruit for the blessing of others!
  - a. Move beyond the human default of self-centered living to KINGDOM living, imitating Christ by laying down your life for your friends – for the JOY SET BEFORE YOU
  - b. THIS is the life that really fulfills
  - c. The life the TRULY matters
  - d. Pastor and author John Ortberg put it memorably in his excellent book “Everyone's Normal until you get to know them”
    - i. **[SLIDE]**
    - ii. “I have never known anyone who failed at relationships – who was isolated, lonely, unconnected, had no deep friendships – yet had a meaningful and joy-filled life. Not a single person. The twentieth century was littered with people who achieved great things but never connected. People who accumulated vast amounts of wealth, fame, or power, but never acquired an open heart. People who had a Rolodex of contacts [today we might say THOUSANDS of FB Friends] but not a single [real] friend. Every one of them died with bitter regrets. Every one.  
Conversely, I have never known anyone who succeeded at relationships – who cultivated great friendships, who was devoted to their family, who mastered the art of giving and receiving love – yet had a bad life.  
No matter how little money we have, no matter what rung we occupy on anybody's corporate ladder of success, in the end what everybody discovers is that what matters is people. Human beings who give themselves to relational greatness – who have friends they laugh with, cry with, learn with, fight with, dance with, live and love and grow old and die with – these are the human beings who lead magnificent

lives. When they die, not one of them regrets having devoted themselves to people: their friends, their neighbors, their children, their family. Not one.”

- e. Hear again the words of Jesus, your Savior and Friend, saying
    - i. My friends, love one another. As I have loved you, love one another. This is how the world will know that you’re my disciples, if you have THIS KIND of self-giving love for one another. I promise, you’ll never regret it.
  - f. At the end of your life, everything in your house, bank account, and driveway will disappear
    - i. And all that will be left..... are people.
    - ii. Relationships in whom you’ve invested your heart
    - iii. These are the things of True Eternal riches
    - iv. Are you giving yourself to relational greatness?
26. How do we do this? How could this look
- a. We’ve already looked at some of these
  - b. Kingdom Friendships are (5Cs)
    - i. Courageous
    - ii. Constant (loyal)
    - iii. Care-fulness
    - iv. Candid
    - v. Christ-centered
  - c. They prioritize
    - i. Conversations that linger
    - ii. Technology that deepens
    - iii. Proactive planning
    - iv. Identify & address the enemies of friendship
  - d. These are greatly helpful categories
  - e. Another way to put it would be: Kingdom Friends do LIFE together
    - i. They are centered around more than just affinity, shared interests in hobbies
    - ii. Their greatest, weightiest commonality is Christ and His Kingdom Life
    - iii. And everything flows from that core focus
      - 1. Learning Biblical Truth
        - a. CONTENT-ful conversation.
        - b. Committed to learning and growing together in the Truth of God’s word
        - c. To helping one another’s roots grow ever deeper INTO the true soul nourishment of God’s Word
      - 2. Intercession
        - a. Prayer!
        - b. Kingdom Friends really pray together. Often. Powerfully.
        - c. About more than praying for the annoyances in your life to lessen,
          - i. But praying powerfully, with vision and drive, for God’s Kingdom to come in your lives and land MORE than it has
          - ii. For God to strengthen your friend in truth, courage to act as he would

- iii. For protection against the evil one's schemes, and for courage to fight well in the battle
    - iv. And vision to see what God's up to around us and how he might be calling us in to what hes doing
  - d. Remember, all major movements of God in history, ALL renewals and revivals are built on ..... PRAYER
  - e. And Kingdom Friendships are so built on prayer
- 3. Fellowship
  - a. Deep connection and intimacy
  - b. There's a friend who sticks closer than a brother!**
    - i. Prov 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin [read: shallow friends..... FACEBOOK Friends], but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
  - c. The deepest friendships in your life will be centered around Christ as you do real LIFE together
  - d. This is a kind of fellowship that's both Fun and Functional!
    - i. It's strong enough that it doesn't require fun as the only experience
      - 1. Functional friendship FUNCTIONS to help one another walk more closely with God and produce more Kingdom fruit!
    - ii. And in so doing, it's best able to revel in the deep enjoyment of fun together
- 4. Extending LIFE to others
  - a. Kingdom friends are never self-protecting, closed, holy huddle
  - b. Kingdom Friends are open, outward looking
    - i. Inviting others into the life of Christ you share
    - ii. Not flippantly, or recklessly, or irresponsibly, but strategically, committedly, Missionally
  - c. Kingdom Friendships are always meant to bring more life to others
    - i. To bear MORE fruit, to pour out more and more
    - ii. In the World's system, this is a threat, will deplete you, leave you empty and harmed
      - 1. Scarcity mentality!
    - iii. But in God's Kingdom, the love of Christ pours our into our hearts in the same measure we pour out into others
      - 1. It NEVER runs dry as long as it's poured out!
      - 2. ABUNDANCE mentality
      - 3. Luke 6:38 <sup>38</sup>Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
      - 4. **Give yourself ... to relational greatness**



a. **And God will give to you..... Overflowing the cup, spilling all the way into your lap**

iv. And results in net gain of love, friendship, life

v. **John 15:11**

1. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

27. God himself wants to fill you to overflowing with joy

**28. In relationships**

**29. [BACK TO ME]**

- a. His way calls you to GIVE FRIENDSHIPS that GIVE FRIENDSHIPS
- b. You're no longer stuck waiting for that affinity-based friend who is like you
- c. Now, anyone in Christ can be a Kingdom Friend
  - i. Go fast go alone, GO FAR Go together
  - ii. We've got ETERNITY in view. We want to go far. Together.
- d. American pop view of friendship just wont hack it
  - i. Nowhere near strong or supple enough to bear the weight of a life on mission for the King
- e. We're called to invest deeply in Kingdom Friendships with .... THOSE people
  - i. Even those people you struggle to like
  - ii. Are annoyed by
  - iii. Have nothing in common with
    1. They have kids, and you don't
    2. They're married and you're single
    3. They like sports, I like books
    4. They're into fitness, and I'm into board games
    5. They wanna go hunting, I wanna build legos
    6. She wants to wear a mask everywhere, I don't
    7. He's a right-wing republican, she's a left-leaning democrat
- iv. ALL can be deep friends because our greatest point of commonality is CHRIST!
- v. GIVING FRIENDSHIPS that GIVE FRIENDSHIPS, to all types of ppl
  1. Tears down the barriers that divide us!
    - a. Race, gender, political leanings, life stage, you name it
  2. Even when it takes work
  3. Isn't natural for a while
    - a. Great work of the enemy is to dupe believers into thinking good friendships should just happen.... And shouldn't take work
    - b. Lie!
    - c. The best things in life are worth worked at!
    - d. This is true of any marriage! Why wouldn't it also be true of our other intimate relationships?
  4. In fact, in my life, its been the chosen, intentional, work-at-it relationships that have often been the most surprisingly rewarding to ME
    - a. Little experienced reality that our differences can be great gifts
    - b. Able to see and do things differently for GOOD I would have missed

- c. Sweetness of experiencing committed relationships through thick and thin, oriented around JC
  - vi. So worth it --- and leads to much joy
- 30. So that even when pain comes (and make no mistake, this kind of vulnerability necessarily runs the risk of relational pain) – but even when it comes, we are not crushed
  - a. But drawn DEEPER into Christ, the source of life and comfort
  - b. So himself can sympathize with our pain and weaknesses
  - c. And is able to heal and enlarge our hearts for ministry
  - d. For indeed, he knows that it's the healed heart that enlarges
  - e. And that pain increases our capacity for joy
  - f. He's a genius!
  - g. And we know that he is able to make all things work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.**
- 31. So we end asking,
  - a. What would Jesus do?
  - b. *What would Jesus do* in my relationships
  - c. *What would Jesus do in my relationships* with TGians?
  - d. What loving rebuke do I need to hear from my Father?
    - i. What relationship-stymying sin do I need to repent of
  - e. What relationships do I need to pour into? ... initiate doing LIFE together?
- 32. Who knows what God might do as we humble ourselves, repent of our failure to love one another, repent of our self-centered living, our indifference, our scarcity-mentality,
- 33. And pray for God to do something incredible
  - a. That's why, as a church, we're committing again to a 24 Hour prayer for this. For our church families and friends.
  - b. Starts tomorrow morning. Encourage you to join us and sign up for one or two 30 minute slots
  - c. We've got another prayer guide to help us pray for one another
  - d. Sign up on the SignUpGenius link
    - i. Paste in chat
    - ii. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0d48aeae2da7ff2-tallgrass2>
- 34. Who knows what God might do with a church like ours committed to humbling ourselves, repenting, and praying for one another?
  - a. And give yourself to relational greatness that endures death, and endures for eternity
- 35. Brothers and sisters, why not ask what would Jesus do? And then go do it.
  - a. It's my prayer that Tallgrass would ask that question.... And experience the answer.

*Resource: Loving Gods Way*