

by Rev. David Nelson  
Pastor of Discipleship

## Friendship is God's Idea

I hope you've been enjoying this basketball season. I hope part of your enjoyment - in addition to non-stop action, excitement and suspense - is seeing friends at the game. For those who've lived here your whole life or for *a long time*, coming to our gym to watch a game probably brings you into contact with life-long friends. Hopefully, your times at a game have also given you opportunity to make some new friends. I know I've met a lot more people in and around Stanley through my children's sport than I would have otherwise. I'm always seeing people around town I've spent time with on the sidelines.

Friendship is something we all need. All of us were designed to live in close relationship with God and other people. Friendship describes in part the close relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost in the trinity. God's greatest work on behalf of man - even greater than creating and sustaining us - is His work to restore us to friendship with Himself even while we were His enemies.

In Romans 5:8 Paul wrote, *God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Sinners are those who are in disobedient rebellion with God; thus, God made the first move toward fixing our broken relationship - not us. That's why the Apostle John wrote, *We love because He first loved us.* (1 John 4:19)

The story of Forrest Gump provides a great example of God-like friendship. In his youth, Forrest finds friendship with Jenny - a girl whose home life is an absolute mess. According to Forrest - at least in the movie - he and Jenny were *'like peas and carrots.'* However, as Forrest and Jenny grow to adulthood, various circumstances take them in different directions and Jenny's messed up home life leaves her looking for answers, affirmation, and love in all the wrong places.



Through all of it - no matter what Jenny does, no matter how many times she shuns or forgets Forrest's friendship - he remains faithful to being her friend and loving her no matter what. Everything seems to be against their ongoing friendship; for example - Forrest wrote Jenny a letter every day while serving in Vietnam only to find, while convalescing in an Army hospital that none of the letters he wrote were received by Jenny. They all came back to him stacked, tied and stamped - "return to sender."

In the end, Forrest's ongoing love triumphs and he and Jenny end up together. That's the way it is with God's love and friendship. No matter how wayward and distracted we are - if you're the object of His love, you will end up with Him! Not that I recommend living in rebellion, estrangement, and distraction from God - but just to say His love is strong enough to overcome anything in your past.

John captures Jesus' explanation of friendship with God as such,

*'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <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, that he lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. JOHN 15:9-15*

So you see, once you're with Christ; once you know you're His - obeying His commands is the way to show and fully experience your love for Him. AND, if that weren't enough - notice from verse 12 above, *Love each other as I have loved you...* - even in obeying Jesus commands we experience friendship. Friendship is God's idea. I hope you're enjoying it here and elsewhere - but most importantly, I hope you're enjoying an everlasting friendship with the One Who invented friendship!

Your Friend in Christ,  
Pastor Dave

## Upcoming Youth Events

### Youth Group

Middle & High School

#### Sunday Nights

Bible Study  
6:00 - 7:30pm

#### Wednesday Nights

Open Gym, Eat Out, etc.  
6:30 - 8:00pm

### Children's Ministry

Infant - 5th grade

#### Sunday Nights

##### Nursery

Infant - 2 yrs.  
6:00 - 7:30pm

##### M&M Kids

Mission Minded  
3 yrs. - 4 yrs.  
6:00 - 7:30pm

##### Imagebearers

Kindergarten - 5th grade  
6:00 - 7:30pm

## Kids ask tough questions...



### Q. Why are we here?

We are here to bring glory to God. Glory is high renown, high honor, fame, weightiness, magnificence and great beauty. The Bible tells us, *God created man in his own image* (Genesis 1:27.)

The Bible also says over and over that God is glorious and great, and everything He does makes His glory known. As His image bearers, we increase His honor, fame, magnificence and beauty. We are rightly called by some, *the crowning glory of God's creation*. We see that in the Bible as well as it is devoted to telling us how God has worked throughout history to fix what was broken right after the beginning when man rebelled against God. By saving people, God also brings Himself more glory and fame.

## Mark Your Calendar!

Our Basketball / Cheer Finale

will be

Saturday, November 21, 10:00 AM.

We'll enjoy a special guest speaker and a trophy presentation. Each team will recite their team verse. Practice up on your free throws... we'll also have a free throw contest.



*Luke 16:10a*

**“Whoever can  
be trusted  
with very  
little can  
be trusted  
with much...”**

I've always admired legendary college basketball coach John Wooden. When asked about the most valuable piece of advice he'd ever given his players, his answer surprised me. It was quite simple, "Put your socks on correctly." Over time, Coach Wooden noticed that his players weren't smoothing out the wrinkles around their toes and around the heel which caused painful blisters. He also made sure his players laced up their sneakers correctly and wore the right size. Of all the advice he gave his players, why was this the most important? This was important because he couldn't coach a team to victory while they sat on the bench with blisters. And so it is with God. If we won't listen to His instructions on the small things in life, we remain on the sidelines unable to make a difference in the big moments in the game of life.

Written by Jenna Sampson



**First  
Presbyterian  
Church**  
Stanley, North Carolina

*Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ*

Sunday Morning

8:30 Worship Service

9:45 Sunday School

11:00 Worship Service

Sunday Evening

6:00 Care Groups

Youth Activities

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at

[www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org)

Team Rosters  
Game Schedule  
Parent's Corner