

# Connect the Jots

## *Friend of Sinners*

Part 09 – August 3, 2014

Welcome to a place where we diagnose the deceptions that blind us to truth and take ‘em to the Great Physician. Today, we’re connecting the jots, with a simple question:

### **Are you God’s friend?**

I know He’s *yours*; but are you *His*? “Well sure; I’m His *child*. He’s my Father.” True. “I’m a believer, a follower, a disciple, a student, an ambassador ...” Yes, but are you a *friend*?

### **We sing about Jesus’ friendship to *us*, but would we have enough reason to sing about your friendship to *Him*?**

It’s easy for me to get studying confused with companionship. So often, as believers, **we become experts at serving the Lord, but remain amateurs at being His friend** ... which brings us to our first Jot: The supper at Mary and Martha’s, good friends of Jesus.



... a woman named Martha opened her home to [Jesus]. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “**you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.**” – Luke 10:38-42 NIV

**What had she chosen? To be His *friend* instead of His *servant*, to be *with* Him, listen to Him, and get to know what He’s like. A friend can certainly serve a friend. But, **Martha was acting like, and taking on the anxiety of, an actual *servant*.****

“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 15:15 NIV

Starting with the Father’s first prophetic word in the Garden to the serpent regarding how the Savior would one day deal with him.

“He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” – Genesis 3:15b NIV



This was fulfilled when He lay down on the cross, so His heels could be struck with a spike, so He could do battle, and die, and thereby crush the head, the power, of sin and death, for *us*.

*“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”* – John 15:13 NIV

**So, do you take the time to sit and listen to your Friend?**

Have you ever had family devotions that felt like a chore? **Friendship with Jesus isn’t a job, it’s a relationship. There’s no angel waiting to stamp your spiritual timecard.**



And, never was the contrast between these two views more evident than at Jot #2: The supper at Matthew’s, a tax collector.

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and ‘sinners?’” – Luke 5:29-30 NIV

*“Um, He seems to prefer to be with those who enjoy His company. And, those who see their sin clearest, feel His love deepest, and enjoy His friendship most’est.”*

And so, they tried to defame Him by labeling Him as ...

... a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.” – Matthew 11:19b NIV

Notice, however, that **they don’t claim He’s a friend “to” sinners.** He is, of course. But, that doesn’t make their point. **A benevolent person can be a friend “to” any number of needy people, without being a personal friend “of” any one of ‘em.**

They’re saying, “You people don’t know much about Him. But, you know everything you need to know about these tax collectors and sinners. So **just know that He’s their friend.**”

And, they unintentionally spoke a profound truth. **Jesus chose to associate Himself with the likes of us, as the Friend ‘of’ sinners.**

**When He looks at you, He doesn’t see the sins He’s forgiven. He sees a beloved child, created in His own image; a worthy heir being transformed by His glory.**

**But, does He see a friend? That one’s up to you.** He’s got your creation, salvation, and transformation covered; but your *friendship* is a freewill thing.

And all of this plays out in Jot #3 ...

The supper at Simon the Pharisee's, when a sinful woman interrupts a cordial gathering ...

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners.'" But wisdom is proved right by all her children." [Want to see one of wisdom's least likely children being proved right? Just listen to the Word ...] Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. [Why do you think Jesus' feet are being emphasized? That first prophetic word, given by the Father, regarding the Savior: Why is it He'll come? Who is it He'll save? Who is it He'll battle? How is it He'll win? How is it He'll die? It's *all* in that first Prophecy describing how He'll heal with His heel] When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him [on His heel] and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." [Who He'll heal] Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." ["But will you listen?"] "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. ["But you didn't listen."] Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." – Luke 7:34-47 NIV



**Every believer is forgiven *much*.**

**This isn't about the amount received, but the amount *perceived*, and therefore *appreciated*.** In this way, are you more like Simon or the sinful woman?

**Are you more of a religious acquaintance who accommodates Jesus?**

**Or, the faithful friend who falls at His feet?**

**The better we see ourselves in the light of His love, the better the friend we can't help but become, and the more our love can't help but grow, for the One who lay down His life for His friends.**

Even those who sold Him out; which brings us to Jot #4 ...

The Last Supper on the night He was betrayed, just *before* Judas departed.



Jesus replied, “Friend, do what you came for.” – Matthew 26:50a NIV

*Okay, now He’s just taking the Friend-of-sinners thing too far!*

And, I’m so glad, so glad to know that *His* friendship holds when *our* friendship won’t, because, after Judas left, He told His disciples how to tell if they’re *actually* His friends.

“You are my friends if you do what I command.” – John 15:14 NIV

Wait. What kind of a friend demands *that*?

Depends on what the command is. If the command is selfish, it’s a bad friend. “If you don’t loan me the money I want, you’re not a friend!”

If the command is selfless, it’s a good friend. “You need to see a doctor right now. Get in the car; I’m taking you to the hospital.”

The more selfless the command, the better the friend.

So, let’s ask our Friend exactly what His command *is*.

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. [Well, leave it to Jesus to have the most selfless command ever conceived!] Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. [Which is? To love each other as I have loved you] 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. You did not choose me, [as a friend] but I chose you [as a friend] and appointed you to go and bear fruit [as a friend]—fruit that will last. [BFF Fruit!] Then the Father will give you whatever you ask [as a friend] in my name. [“But remember, my friend,”] This is my command: Love each other.” [“And you’ll choose and ask wisely in My name”] – John 15:12-17 NIV

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better.”

Will you?