

You Are My Friends, Tim Keller

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: that he lays down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I 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 have learned from my Father, I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last-- then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love one another.

The key verses are right here. Verse 13 and 14. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. I have called you friends...

In The Bride of Frankenstein... You mean you can't see how this is relevant to the text? I think it's a second or third of those old original Frankenstein movies made in the 1930s with Boris Karloff. The best of the three, I think, is The Bride of Frankenstein. There's this interesting episode where the monster stumbles in to a blind man's cottage deep in the forest. The blind man, of course, can't see the hideousness of the monster, but he perceives that the monster can't speak. And he says, "Are you afflicted as I? I cannot see, and you cannot speak. Maybe we can help each other. We can be friends." And he gets down on his knees, this blind beggar man, and he gets down on his knees and he says, "I thank you, gracious Lord, for you have heard my relentless prayers, and you have sent me a friend in my terrible loneliness." And for a very brief, but pitiful time, and very interesting, you consider all the other strange and odd Frankenstein movies that have been made over the years, this interesting episode where the monster lives in the blind man's cottage for a few days, and he listens to music.

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The blind man plays them on his violin, and the blind man teaches him to speak. And the only words the monster learns, like good and food and more, he learns. The only humanity he develops. He develops in that cottage in the spot where a person grabs him by the hand and calls him friend. And the episode ends when a group of hunters come to the cottage, see the monster, try to attack it, and in the process, burn down the cottage. And the last thing you see is the monster groping back out into the cold wilderness, just saying, friend, friend? It's comical, but what it's saying is that there is nothing more humanizing than friendship. There's nothing more life engendering than friendship, and there's nothing more horrible. There's no more horrible pain and nothing more terrible than loneliness. All kinds of studies come out all the time that show that people who got fewer friends die more readily of disease and heart attacks and things like that. Who would have ever imagined that solitary confinement would be a torture?

Why do we need friendship? And how do we get that need met? Those are the two questions that I like to ask the text.

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The first question is, why do we need friendship? Secondly, how do we know if we have friends? How do we meet those needs? Briefly, the first question, why do we need friends? Here's the answer. It's in verse 9. We need friends because we're like God and because we need God. In verse 9, Jesus, and you must remember that when Jesus uses the word love in this passage, he's talking about friendship love. See, the word friend comes up three times. It's clearly his subject. And so forth. So, the word love in this context means friend love. And he says, "As the Father and I have been eternally friends, so I befriend you." What Jesus is saying is that something in the Trinity is the basis for all human relationships. A lot of people who are critical of Christianity pick on the Trinity and they say, "How strange. The Trinity doesn't make sense. Three persons in one, one God in three persons? It doesn't make sense." And by the way, it's a tough one, but it's a tough one to figure out. It is. But I want you to consider this. Without the doctrine of the Trinity, the world doesn't make sense.

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The Trinity explains why a monster becomes human under the influence of a friend. Because you see, what the Bible tells us is before a time when there was nothing else, in the beginning, before the beginning, from all eternity, what there was before there was anything that was, there was friendship. Friendship was never created. There was never a time in which friendship was not, because from all eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were knowing and loving and delighting in each other. They were planning and talking and communicating with each other. Friendship is at the roots of reality. It's at the bottom of all things. It is something that is more profound than existence itself because in a sense, it existed before there was existence. And that alone explains just why loneliness is such a cosmic thing. Think of this for a second. When Adam was created, Adam, the first human being, created perfect, put in the Garden of Eden in paradise, and right away we're told that God looked at him and said, Here's something that's very not good. He's alone. He's lonely. And somebody says, "Why was Adam lonely?" I'll tell you why.

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Don't forget there was no sin. Adam was not lonely because he was imperfect. Adam was lonely because he was perfect. Adam was lonely because he was like God. And therefore, since he is like God, he had to have someone to love, someone to work with, someone to talk to, someone to share with. All of our other problems our anger, our anxiety, our fear, our cowards, all of our other problems arise out of sin, out of our imperfections. Loneliness is the one problem that you've got because you're made in the image of God. Loneliness, in a sense, is the one problem that arises out of our perfection. In other words, friends, are you lonely now? Have you been lonely? Do you know why? Not because there's something wrong with you. My dear friends, the more like, the less you need friends, the less you're like God. The reason

that you're lonely and you get lonely is because you're not a tree. Trees don't get lonely, and you're not a machine. Machines don't get lonely, because you're a human being built in the image of God. You're lonely because you're like him. That's the first answer to the question, why do we need friends?

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The second answer to the question, though, is we need friends because we need God. See, Jesus says, As the Father has loved me, so I love you. In other words, the relationship between God and the Father and the Son inside the Trinity is the basis for all friendships. But then Jesus turns around and says, "What you need is friendship with me above anything else." Listen, human friendships, friendships with the other human beings are indispensable. Nothing can replace them. Adam needed Eve even when he had a relationship with God. And yet at the same time, we have to understand that what Jesus is saying very clearly here in the Bible says is that the actual need for a friend, as we're going to see, is so profound that no human friend will ever be able to deliver satisfaction because no human being can actually fulfill those needs because all human beings, like you, are imperfect friends. And you are going to spend a lot of your life being very bitter and very upset because people let you down, and you will never, ever, ever be able to actually have human friends until you see that ultimately, the friendship that you really need and the only way to really, really satisfy this deep need that comes from before the foundation of the world, before the foundation of time, is friendship with Jesus.

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Jesus says, "I've made you friends." This is an amazing thing. No other religion holds this out. The Eastern religions say, God is beyond emotion. God is beyond grief and joy and tears. If he's beyond those things, he is beyond friendship. And that doesn't sound like a very great God to me. The ancient Greeks said that God was *apatheia*, which means apathetic, meaning God is not capable of relationship. He's not capable of emotion. The Bible says otherwise. And even the Old Testament just says, Moses was a friend of God, and Abraham was a friend of God, and the Jews, before Christ came along, the Jews knew that friendship with God was possible if you were a superb person, if you were one of the greatest persons that lived in history, like Abraham and Moses. And Jesus comes along and has the audacity to say, Friendship of God is something available to everybody who is one of my disciples. Why do we need friends? One is because we're like God, but secondly, because we need God ultimately as our friend, or our human friendships will never satisfy us. Now, that's the why. Why do we need God?

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I mean, why do we need friends? Now, secondly, how do we meet that need? How do you know if you're friends with God? How do you know if you're friends with human beings? If you look at this passage, it gives us a marvelous couple of marks of a good friendship. It's just two, just two. So, I think you can remember. If I give you three or four, you won't remember them, but you'll remember two. And this is something that not only you can use as a way of gauging the depth of your friendships with other people, but also the depth of your friendship with the Lord, or whether you have one with the Lord. Those two

marks are this. Look carefully and you see this passage tells us that a friend is someone who always lets you in and never lets you down. First of all, always lets you in. He says, "You're not just my servants, because servants don't really know the heart of the one they serve. They don't really know the mind of the one who serves. I let you in. I tell you secrets. I let you see who I am."

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A friend is someone who lets you all the way in. Then, secondly, a friend is someone who never lets you down, who puts him or herself out for you. That you see in verse 13. I lay down my life for you, says Jesus. See, those are the two things. Another way to put it is *candor and constancy*. Always lets you in, never lets you down. If you're one and not the other, you're not really a friend. In other words, if you pour your guts out to somebody, but you're not there for them, you're not a friend. You're a therapy group, but you're not a friend. On the other hand, if you're there for somebody, but you never let them know who you are, then maybe you're a social worker, a professional, in that sense, with that person, but you're not a friend. By the way, I'm not saying social workers can't be friends, but you see what I'm saying. So, the point is, candor and constancy, always lets you in, never lets you down. Now, just for a second, let's briefly apply each of those to both our horizontal and our vertical friendships. Real brief.

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One. Horizontally, for a moment. When Jesus says, I have told you everything, that's the reason you're my friends. I'm letting you in. He's showing you that what friends are, friends tell secrets. If somebody says, "I know her, I work with her, I do all these sorts of things with her, but I feel she's guarded. I don't feel like I know what she really thinks. I don't feel like she's really letting her hair down with me. I don't feel like she's really being spontaneous." What does that mean? That person is not your friend. And one of the most important parts of the art of friendship is just this. If you have trouble making friends, it's either because you start to open up your heart and tell secrets too quickly for the other people. So, they feel coerced. Worst, they feel like you're forcing your way in. Or you don't tell the secrets quickly enough. You don't move to deeper and deeper levels of intimacy quick enough. The art of friendship is that you open up and you encourage the other person to open up, and there's a mutual choosing of each other. You see, Jesus says here, I have chosen you to be friends.

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You cannot possibly force yourself into a friendship. You have to open yourself so that the other person can choose you and you choose them. And you do that by telling secrets in stages, progressively. And that's really at the heart of what it means to be a friend horizontally. But what about the friendship vertically? The Bible tells us that Jesus says that you can be his friend. I remember I mentioned this at the top of the service. Psalm 25:14 says, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*. The Hebrew word for friendship is the same Hebrew word as the word for secret. And that's the reason why if you go to Psalm 25:14, you'll see that people don't know how to translate it. Some of the translations will say, The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him. Some will say, The counsel, C-O-U-N-S-E-L, The counsel

of the Lord is with those who fear him. Some will say, The secret of the Lord with those... It's the same thing. The Bible says that if you actually have a relationship with God, that's a saving relationship, if you really come to God through Christ, you will not simply be a servant of his, but you will be a friend.

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Somebody says, "Well, how in the world can you have friendship with God?" Jesus Christ's religion is a religion of friendship. Muhammad writes a book, leaves the book, and he dies. What have you got? You've got Muhammad's book. Buddha leaves sayings, and then he dies. What have you got? Buddha's sayings. Confucius writes down all of his Proverbs. What have you got? You've got his Proverbs because he's dead. Jesus Christ, though, leaves himself. The Bible says, Jesus himself says, "When you receive me as your savior, it's not just my words that come to you, but I come to you." Remember, that's all what chapter 14 is about. My Holy Spirit will come in and live with you. When you're reading, and I've done this, especially back when I was trying to figure out if I wanted to be a Christian or not. When you read the sayings of Lao-tzu, when you read the sayings of Confucius, you're having an intellectual, albeit a stimulating and wonderful, intellectual connection with a tremendous mind, a tremendous mind. You're having an intellectual connection with a dead man. And when you read the Bible, if you're a Christian, when you read the Bible, you know that you're not just having an intellectual connection with a dead man, but a personal connection with a living person.

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If you don't know what I'm talking about, then you don't know friendship. You may be a servant of God, but you are not his friend. You know what it means. You read the scripture and it moves around. It's not like another book. Ephesians, Paul says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart will be lightened so that you may grasp the love of God." When you read the scripture and you find that the words leap out at you, the words dig into you, the words convict you, the words thrill you, they get big. They change you. They come and become part of you. You realize as you're reading the Bible, unlike any other book, somebody's there. You're not just reading a Bible. You're dealing with a person. There's friendship. I'll tell you, not only that. Christianity is different than other religions in this. You know what it's like to go... You're driving around and you can't find out where you're going, and you really don't know how to get there. So, you see somebody on the side of the road and you drive up to them and you say, "Hey, how do I get to Mechanicsville from here?"

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Well, maybe the person will say, "I'll tell you," and he may draw you the map. And so, at that instant, you know the entire road from Mechanicsville, from there to Mechanicsville, and you know where you're going and when and how long it'll take you and everything. But what if the guy says instead, "Well, it's very hard to tell you. It's very complicated. I'll tell you what. Let me jump into the car. And I'll tell you every stage of the way, I'll tell you where to go? And then where to go? And then where to go?" In that case, the man is not giving you the plan he's giving you himself. He's not giving you the whole map. Instead, he's giving

you a relationship. And it's through a relationship that you're going to find your way. Christianity says, "Do you want guidance? Do you want to know where you're going? Do you want to know what your gifts are? Do you want to know the future?" You don't get it through a crystal ball. You don't get it through tarot cards. You don't get it through magic. Instead, God gets in the car with you.

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God gets in your life with you. And it's through friendship with him. It's through knowing him, through following him, through listening to his word, through letting him teach you through the circumstances of life that you will find out where you're supposed to go. *The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him.* Your future, the secrets, come to those who enter into a friendship with him. He lets you in. If you're willing to receive him as savior, he tells you secrets. He tells you who you are. He tells you what your gifts are. He tells you who you should marry. And somebody says, "I've been waiting for that. How does he do that?" He doesn't give you the map. If you think he's going to give you the map, you want tarot cards. You want the religions that give you a map. You want magic. You want power without friendship with the deity. But God instead says, "I climb into your life with you." It's like getting into the car. I give you myself and therefore, you never know. So, when the guy gets in the car and give you directions, you really never know more than a block or two ahead where you're supposed to go next.

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But when you get there, he says, "I'll let you know exactly what to do." "But I'm not there yet." "That's right." "But I'd like to know before I get there." That's not how Christianity works. Christianity works through relationship. He gives you his friendship. Do you understand that? A friend is someone who lets you all the way in. Then secondly, a friend is someone who never lets you down. It says in verse 13, Jesus Christ says, Here's the greatest love of all that a friend can do, and that is to give his life for a friend. Now, a friend is somebody who puts him or herself out, makes sacrifices. Let's, again, apply this horizontally, and then let me apply it vertically. Horizontally, let me tell you an interesting story. On Martha's Vineyard, there's a little village. And for years and years, like most of the villages on Martha's Vineyard, it was very, very isolated, and therefore, most of the people intermarried. And for a long period of time, 10% of the village was deaf. The reason for that was because since they intermarried, there was a genetic anomaly which was passed on through generations and generations.

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Finally, a few years ago, because there was enough intermarriage, because of the mobility of society, there was no more intermarriage inside the village. The genetic strain went away and the deafness disappeared. But a historian, before it was all disappearing, a historian did some research and discovered something interesting. That though all these people were deaf in this village, the deaf people married at the same rate as the hearing people. The deaf people graduated from school at the same rate as the hearing people. The deaf people had the same income level as the hearing people. Then she went over to the Massachusetts mainland that had lots and lots and lots of services for deaf people, which that

village had none. And she discovered that on the mainland, deaf people married only half as often as hearing people. Deaf people made only 33% as much as hearing people. Deaf people graduated from a school only half as often as hearing people. And she said, "What is going on here? Why would it be that in the one place in the whole United States, where there's no public services for deaf people, that deafness was not a disability."

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And she suddenly realized why. Everybody in that village learned sign language. Everybody. And so, growing up, you always learned both your English and sign language. And she suddenly realized that every place else was serving deaf people, and so they really weren't being helped that much. But at Martha's Vineyard in this little village, they gave deaf people what? Friendship. These people were committed to them. It's exactly what Jesus Christ says when he says, A servant doesn't know about the business of the one he serves. A servant is a professional. A servant is somebody who comes in and delivers the services, and then he's out of there. But a friend is someone who lets you into his life, and you're in their lives, and so forth. Quickly, if you want to know how we're supposed to deal with our social problems, it's that way. Martin the former rector of all saints, of all angels. I mean, it was one of those nice groups of people, of All Angels Church on the West Side, had a homeless ministry, and they were feeding a lot of homeless people on Sundays. Then one day, Martin cut it down and said, "No, we're only going to feed about a third as many as we usually do."

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And everybody got upset about it, and I asked him why, and he says, "Because that is the greatest amount of homeless people we can feed and still befriend them." He says, "You see, we don't need to just deliver services. The only way these people's lives are going to be changed is if we actually make them our friends. And I know that we could feed this many, but we can only befriend this many. And that's how many people we're going to befriend." And what do you see? This is not a Republican or a Democrat speech, because the Democrats say, "Our social problems are going to get worse until government provides more service delivery methods." And the Republicans say, "Oh, no, things are going to get worse till the private sector delivers services to these people." And the Bible says, social problems are going to get worse until we befriend the people with needs. Friendship means you put yourself out, you get involved, you lay down something for them, you lay down your schedule for them, you lay down your convenience for them, you lay down something for them, or you're not a friend.

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And that's the only way to humanize people. It's the only way to transform them. That's the horizontal application. But the vertical application, Jesus Christ says, "You can't be my friends unless you see that I have laid down my life for you." What is so big about that? You say, "Lots of people, I've heard of a lot of people who died for their friends." Not like this. Listen, if I see you in peril and I see you about to die, and I risk my life and lose my life saving your life, it's not true that I have actually I have given my life for you.

No. I have sacrificed a few of my years, and I've given you a few more. I have a few less, and you have a few more. I can't give you my life because my life is already forfeit. I was going to die anyway. The Bible says that death is an executioner. The Bible says that none of us voluntarily die. All of us have death coming to our door someday. Our lives are forfeit because it's punishment. The wages of sin is death. There's not a single person in this room that can die voluntarily.

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You can give up a few years, but you can't give up your life because your life is already on its way out. Jesus is the only friend who didn't have to die at all. Jesus is the only one because he had a perfect record and death had no claim on him. That's why in John 10, it says, Jesus says, "No one takes my life from me. I lay it down voluntarily." There's not a person in this room that can possibly do that for someone else. You can lay down a few years, but you can't lay down your life because your life is already out of there. In other words, you're just paying your debt a little early. But Jesus is the one who said, "Because death has no claim on me, because my record is perfect, if I die for you, that just doesn't give you a few more years. That means that I pay for every sin and every debt you've ever had. I can vanquish death, and it's hold over you. I'm your substitute. I stand in for you. And, if I lay down my life for you, that's real friendship, because not only am I the only friend that doesn't have to die, am I the only one who's ever done that for you, but my death actually saves you. It doesn't just give you a few more years. Greater love has no one than this. What I have done puts me in a class by myself. My death for you is the basis for your entire life and your entire future. Because I die, my Father can receive you into his family."

Now, listen, this is the secret. This is the secret. You remember I said, Friends tell you their deepest secrets? This is his deepest secret. And if you don't hear this, and if you don't accept this, you can't be his friend. Why do you think right before he dies, Jesus says, 'Up to now, you guys have been my servants. But today I want to call you friends.' This is where the friendship is based. I have laid down my life for you. I've had people say to me, "I shared something very intimate with that person, and that person didn't get it. They just laughed, and they just changed the subject. They didn't know how deep this was. They didn't know how close to my heart it was. And I can never be that person's friend again. I was so badly hurt."

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You know how that is. Most all of us have had that experience. Jesus Christ, this is the secret. He is sharing it with you. Anyone who reads it, he's sharing with anybody here today. He says, "If you want to just be my servant, if you want to be running around being religious, if you want to come to church and do a lot of busy things for me without really knowing me personally, yeah, then that's fine. You can do that. But if you want to be my friend, if you want to have eternal life, if you want to know me personally, you have got to be absolutely amazed, and you've got to build your life on the fact that I have laid down my life for you." We talked about this last week, Martin Luther and John Wesley, for a number of years, remember we said last week, they were ministers. They fed the sick, they fed the hungry, and they healed the sick, and they visited in prisons, and they preached, and they taught the Bible. They were servants

who weren't his friends. They were busy trying to earn, their good works, through their good works, God's acceptance. You see, in other words, God was their employer, not their friend. God was their tax collector, not their friend. How do you treat an employer? You say, "Well, what's required? That's all I want. And if I do what you require, then I get my wages." How do you treat the tax collector? Just tell me how much I owe, and I hope there's enough left on for me to enjoy myself after I paid you. And that's the way a lot of people are with God. He's your tax collector. You're his servant, see? He's your employer, but he's not your friend. You know how Martin Luther and John Wesley became friends? The minute they recognized that his death did everything for them, the minute that they began to tremble, like I said in the beginning of the service, they trembled with awe and amazement at the magnitude of what he did. And when they began to say, he laid down his life for me. Why would Jesus Christ take this burning agony into his soul for me? And they realized what Jesus was saying is, because you're my friend. And that transformed them because when they began to see that his death meant everything for them, they moved from being servants to being friends.

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Conclusion. Three little applications. Number one, some of you have to see that though you're very busy and you're very religious and you're very moral, you're not his friend. When I was talking about how when you're studying the scripture, you can sense him dealing with you personally, and you said, "I don't know what you're talking about." That's a sign, friends. Please don't feel bad in the wrong way. Realize that he's actually coming to you right now and he's saying, "Look, up to now, you've been my servant, so I want to call you my friend." "How do you do that?" you say. You've got to move over from simply being busy, see? And being moral and say, "I see that because you lay down your life for me, that's my only hope. You have accomplished everything for me. I'm going to live for you. You're number one in my life. I receive you as savior and Lord," and you move from just being a servant to being his friend. Secondly, Christians, there's some of you, there's some of you who don't open up to people because you're afraid if somebody really sees you all the way down inside, at best, they'll yawn, at worst, they'll flee.

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But don't you see, Jesus Christ did not say, I've been looking at you and I've decided you're worthy of being my friends. That's not what he says. He says, I've chosen you. You did not choose me, he said, I have chosen you to be my friend. I have laid down my life simply because I love you. In Deuteronomy 7, God says to the Israelites, "I did not love you because you were the greatest of nations. I loved you because I love you." Jesus Christ says to his disciples at the garden, he says, "Would you please stay awake with me for one hour? I'm about to die. I'm under such pressure." Now, isn't that a normal thing? Somebody calls you up and says, "I'm having the worst night of my life. If you're my friend, why don't you come over and just sit with me? I think I don't know what's going to happen. I think I'm going to die." So, you run over, you sit down on the couch, he starts to pour his heart out for you, and you promptly go to sleep. What friend is that? In the garden, remember the three disciples?

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Jesus says, "Just stay awake with me and pray for me," and they instantly fall asleep. That's a picture of you and me. The reason that Jesus Christ is a friend to you and me is not because we are good friends, but because he's a good friend. He loves you not because you're perfect, but because he's perfect. And that means that he already loves you, not on the basis of anything you've done. What you've got to say in your heart is, "The stars may fall from heaven, but his love for me will stand. It's not based on anything in me. It's not based on my just desserts. It's not based on my merits." And when you know that he loves you like that, you don't have to be scared of opening up to other people. Lastly, Christian friends, if you want a motive for changing, you need to repent to Jesus Christ as your friend. This is just a little trick in a sense, but it's worked on me for years, and I just want to share it with you very personally. There's a place, and this is the end. This is the end. Psalm 55.

[00:32:08.290] - Speaker 1

There's a place where David says, "If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it, but it is you, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship and walked with a throng to the house of God." There's two ways to repent. Have you done something wrong that you feel bad about? There's two ways to repent. The one way is to come before God and say, "I can't believe I did this. You are the great king. You are the great sovereign. You are holy, and you are of more holy eyes than can behold iniquity. And I don't know why you don't just blast me off the face of the earth." And that will not help you change. But you could also go and consider that if he's your friend, don't you realize in one sense, Christians, because you're in Christ, your sins are wiped away and they can't condemn you. But in another sense, because you're his friend, your sins hurt him worse than an enemy's. That's the reason why David says, "If an enemy insulted me, I could endure it. But my friend..." And see, Jesus Christ, think of him saying this to me, to you, "Tim Keller, if my enemy had done this, that's one thing. But you're my friend. Look at all I've done for you. Look at how I've laid down my life for you. Look at all I've given you. How could you treat me this way?" And don't you see there's a repentance that just creates crushing guilt. And then there is a repentance that creates melting grief that melts me back into shape. All my excuses, all my rationalizations fall at my feet when I realize I've hurt this friend who has laid down his life for me and who will never let me down, ever. And because he's that friend and because he will never let me down, not even now, my repentance before him creates a grief that's clean. It's a clean grief. It changes me. It gets me back into shape. I get up feeling better for my repentance, not crushed. And what you have to say down on your knees is, "You lay down your life for me, I certainly can lay down my life for you. Because when you lay down your life for me, you are crushed. But when I lay down my life for you, I'm going to be filled."

[00:34:18.260] - Speaker 1

Do you know how to repent like that? Do you know how to repent to a friend? Until you do, you will not get the power to change. In some ways, all of us are like the monster, groping out there saying, "I know I could really be human. I know I could come into my own if I could just find the friend that my heart longs for." Well, Monsters, here he is.

Let's pray. Father, as we consider what you have just said to us during the offertory, during a couple of moments of silent meditation, we pray that you would show us how we can give this wonderful gift of friendship to other people around us because they need it so much, and how we can strengthen and establish our friendship with you, which our souls need so much. Show us what to do now. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.