

**SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER**  
**The Seventh Sunday after Trinity**

**The Rev. Warren E. Shaw, Priest-in-Charge**

**Lessons:**<sup>1</sup>

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the fifth Verse of the sixth Chapter of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus:<sup>2</sup>

“... Sweet language will multiply friends: and a fairspeaking tongue will increase kind greetings. Be in peace with many: nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand. If thou wouldest get a friend, prove him first and be not hasty to credit him. For some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend, who being turned to enmity, and strife will discover thy reproach. Again, some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thy affliction. But in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants. If thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face. Separate thyself from thine enemies, and take heed of thy friends. faithful friend is a strong defence: and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure. Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is invaluable. A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him. Whoso feareth the Lord shall direct his friendship aright: for as he is, so shall his neighbour be also.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the twelfth Verse of the fifteenth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.<sup>3</sup>

“... This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that

a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

**Text:**

From the Second Lesson: "You are my friends if you do what I command you."<sup>4</sup> In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Homily:**

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”<sup>5</sup> “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”<sup>6</sup>

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St. David’s Anglican Catholic Church  
Charlottesville, Virginia

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms and Lessons for the Christian Year (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxviii (PECUSA 1928, rev. 1943).

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiasticus* 6:5-17 (KJV).

<sup>3</sup> St. John 15:12-end (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> St. John 15:14 (RSV).

<sup>5</sup> St. John 15:12 (RSV).

<sup>6</sup> St. John 15:14 (RSV).

Please note what Jesus is *not* saying here. He is not saying that His love is conditional or that salvation depends on obedience to His commandments. He died for us “while we were yet sinners”, as the Apostle says.

What Jesus is saying is that there are certain people who enjoy a special relationship with Him in this world. That relationship is the friendship He refers to, and it does depend on obedience to His commandments.

When you have a friend, you understand what that person is about. You know his character. You understand his philosophy of life. You know what she desires and what she values. You know what motivates her. You what he likes and what he will not tolerate. You and your friend share your hopes, your dreams, and your fears. You know that your friend will stand by you, just as you are committed to stand by him.

Jesus says, “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

There is really only one commandment that leads to that kind of relationship with Christ. He states it clearly and succinctly: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

The Lord does not command us to love Him. He commands us to love one another. Actually it is the same thing. St. John says in his first Epistle: “If anyone says, ‘I love God’ and hates his brother he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

But it is not just some vague feeling of good will that Jesus commands. We are to love one another as He has loved us. Jesus is calling us to represent Him to each other. He com-

mands us to love with a stubborn love that does not go away even when it is not returned. He commands us to love sacrificially, even to the point of dying for each other. He commands us to love proactively, seeking each other out in order to make each other's life better. That is how Jesus loved us, and that is how we are to love one another.

This kind of love, I hasten to say, has nothing to do with emotions. It does not involve any positive attraction, erotic or otherwise, that you might feel. Emotions are not reliable. They come and go and change directions like the wind. But the love of Christ is constant and reliable. It never goes away or even subsides. It is based on commitment; not on feelings. It does not overlook faults; it seeks to correct them. This kind of love confronts wrongdoing and demands responsible behavior. But it also forgives and harbors no thoughts of revenge.

Jesus demonstrated that kind of love when He came into the world, and that is the kind of love He requires of us, if we want to be His friends.

The Son is the perfect image of the Father. He does nothing of His own accord. Whatever He does is in obedience to the Father. Whatever He says is what He has heard from the Father. So to know the mind of Christ is to know the will of God.

Those who love as Jesus loved are friends of Christ and know the mind of God. Those who love steadfastly and unselfishly are friends of Christ and know the mind of God. Those who love in spite of rejection and persecution are friends of Christ and know the mind of God. Those who seek out the weak and the undesirable and minister to them are friends of Christ and know the mind of God. And those who are friends of Christ and know the mind of God are able to pray to the Father in the Name of Christ.

Jesus says that whatever we ask of the Father in His Name, the Father will give us. But that's not a magic formula for getting what we want.

Janis Joplin used to sing, "O Lord, won't you give me a Mercedes Bentz." I've even heard people say that prayer doesn't work because they asked for fame and fortune and they didn't get it. Or they asked for victory over an enemy and they lost.

To ask in the Name of Jesus is to ask for the things that Jesus desired and the things that God wants us to have. What are those things? Well, let's look at the prayer that Jesus gave us.

We ask in the Lord's Prayer that the Kingdom of God will come and the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask for our daily bread, the things we need to sustain ourselves. We ask for the forgiveness of our sins and the power to forgive others. We ask not to be deceived by the tempter but rather to be delivered from his clutches. We can ask for these things in the Name of Jesus, and be confident that God will give them to us, because they are all things that God intends for us to have.

We seem to know instinctively that the prayers of some people are more effective than the prayers of others. St. James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is of much avail." There is a reason for that. The righteous man is a friend of Jesus, and the friends of Jesus pray in His Name for the things that God wants us all to have.

Does that mean you? Are you a friend of Christ? Do you know His mind? Do you share His values? Do you support what He is about and what He intends to do in the world? You are His friend, and you know these things, if you love as Jesus loves.