

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". John 15:13

Introduction: The draft lottery -- from number to friend

- "Friend" = "a favored companion."
 - "A single soul dwelling in two bodies": Aristotle
- I. Friendship found in the Bible
- God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend, Ex. 33:11.
 - Abraham is called the friend of God, 2 Chr. 20:7, James 2:23.
 - Abraham's seed, the faithful of Israel, are called the friends of God, Isa. 41:8
 - Lazarus is called a friend by Jesus, John 11:11
 - Jesus was a "friend of publicans and sinners", Matt. 11:19
 - Even when Judas betrayed Jesus the Lord called him 'friend' Matt. 26:50.
- II. Friendship seen in sacrifice
- A. Jesus great sacrifice was voluntary
- "Lay down his life", ...no one murdered Jesus
 - He makes this clear by several statements that He made during life and during death: John 10:18; John 18:37; Matt 27:50.
- B. Jesus great sacrifice was vicarious
- Vicarious = "performed or suffered by one as a substitute for another or to the benefit or advantage of another."
 - Jesus tells us his life was given up "for his friends".
- C. Jesus great sacrifice was Vicious
- Betrayed by Judas and deserted by the disciples - Matt. 26:47-56
 - Beaten by the Temple guards - Luke 22:63-64
 - Rejected by the very people He came to save - Matt. 27:17-25; John 1:11
 - Beaten and Scourged - Matt. 27:26
 - Mocked by the soldiers and crowned with thorns - Matt. 27:26-29
 - Stripped naked - Matt. 27:35
 - Crucified - nailed to a cross and hung up to die - Matt. 27:35
- D. Jesus great sacrifice was Victorious
- He knew that in His death, He had become the atonement for our sins. John 19:30
- III. The inspiration of sacrifice
- The sacrifices we can make today

Conclusion: "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier."

Monday -- There are several places where God and Jesus referred to certain ones as their friends. For instance, in the Old Testament, God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to his friend, *Ex. 33:11*. Abraham is called the friend of God, *2 Chr. 20:7, James 2:23*. Abraham's seed, the faithful of Israel, are called the friends of God, *Isa. 41:8*. In the New Testament a man named Lazarus is called a friend by Jesus, *John 11:11*. In our text, the disciples are called Christ's friends. Even more amazing is the fact that one of the charges His enemies made against Jesus was that He was a "friend of publicans and sinners", *Matt. 11:19*. But, even this makes sense against the backdrop of *Matt. 26:50*. In that verse a man named Judas is leading an army to arrest Jesus and the Lord calls this Judas "friend".

Tuesday -- Our study this week looks at the wide use of 'soldier' or 'military' metaphors used throughout the New Testament, because such concepts were often used to describe the Christian movement. Read for instance *2 Timothy 2: 3 "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."* In Washington's time we know of the privations and misery of the Continental Army, without shoes in the dead of winter & poorly fed. But they believed it was their duty to give life to a young nation. See also *Philippians 2:25 "But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier"*.

Wednesday -- As we learned last Sunday, you lay down your life for your friends. This is a guiding concept of military service, especially in battle. Your 'fellow soldiers' are paramount! (*Philemon 1:2*) Or *Acts 10:7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.* Who are your friends? How are you a friend to them? Are they to you? Is your bond close enough to "lay down your life for them?" Remember your greatest friend is Jesus Christ...and he did lay down his life for you! Notice the tone of Jesus 'laying down his life'... Jesus wasn't forced to die on the cross by God...he willingly, loving made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

Thursday -- We are asked as followers of Christ to live a life modeled after His. (*Ephesians 5:2*) "live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." But our sacrifice can never be the same as His, (*Hebrews 9:26*) and we can never repay the debt to him...He paid the debt for us! We can only accept it joyfully. Read also *Hebrews 10:5*

Friday -- In the Bible, Satan is often seen as the head of evil forces and archenemy of God; he has humanity in his power. Christ is the Warrior of God who enters the battle, defeats the devil, and rescues humanity. This conflict motif pervades the gospels (*Matt. 4:1-11; 12:28; Mark 3:27; John 12:31*). The warfare between Jesus and Satan was real. Yet, divine victory was so certain that Jesus could say in anticipation, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (*Luke 10:18*). Victory imagery is also prominent in the epistles. (*1 John 3:8*).