

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

Think back through the highlights of your life. What makes these events memorable? Graphic situations? Sights, sounds, and smells? Response to tragedy? Joyful emotions of celebration? Embarrassment? Personal enlightenment? Life-changing experiences as well as natural life passages?

Imagine the impact of what the disciples saw, heard, and felt over the 3-4 years of Jesus' "public" ministry. Hundreds of miracles - thousands of people stories - heights of exaltation as well as the lows of deep disappointment. Not to mention coming to terms with your once dead Master returning to life after you witnessed His public humiliation and death!

The Gospels were recorded between 60 and 80 AD. John had many years to process what he had seen and heard - day after day - floods of deep, influential memories. In addition, he had the Holy Spirit to retrieve every etched moment, every character, and all the amazing experiences.

From John we gain much insight to what it meant to be a close companion of the Son of God. His experiences invite us to engage this same closeness in our own relationship with our King.

Notice John says, "Many other signs ...not written;" but "these are written." John has made a selection. But what is the significance of the signs as John saw it? The signs were selected to produce conviction "that you may believe," and a spiritual result, "and that believing you may have life." John chooses eight of Jesus' 33 or so recorded miracles or signs for his Gospel:

1. Water to Wine, Chapter 2 Sadness to Gladness
2. Healing of Nobleman's Son, Chapter 4 Disease to Health
3. Curing of Bethesda Paralytic, Chapter 5 Paralysis to Energy
4. Feeding of 5,000, Chapter 6 Hunger to Fullness
5. Walking on Water, Chapter 6 Agitation to Tranquility
6. Sight to Blind Man, Chapter 9 Darkness to Light
7. Raising of Lazarus, Chapter 11..... Death to Life
8. Miraculous Catch of Fish, Chapter 21 Failure to Success

What would each of these miracles imprinted upon the souls of each of His followers?

How does Jesus feel about friendship?

"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. - John 15:15 How do you feel about your friendship with God?

How does God feel about being friends with the world?

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- James 4:4

2 Corinthians 3:12-18 talks about the special friendship that we can enjoy with God. What do you think about this passage?

Apparently humans have a great capacity for friendship (1 Samuel 18:1). How do you think this kind of friendship develops? Who would you count among your closest friends and why? Would God make your list?