

## BEST FRIENDS

(John 15:9-17)

Intro: Granddaughter Lorelei.  
#Her mom Kellie.  
\*Visiting this week.

Lorelei and I.  
#Had a play day one day.  
\*Playing on the playground.  
+Swing.  
+Slide.  
\*Riding her bicycle.  
+In the driveway.  
\*Blowing bubbles.  
\*Racing.  
+Involves Lorelei:  
=Running.  
=Screaming.  
+While I try to catch her.  
\*Playing "Duck, Duck, Goose."  
+Another form of tag.  
\*Playing "Hi, Ho, Cherry-O."  
+Board game.  
+Counting game.  
\*Building with wooden blocks.  
#Somewhere amidst the fun and games.  
\*Lorelei got real:  
+Quiet.  
+Serious.  
\*She said to me:  
+"Rev., thanks for being my very best friend."  
\*Maybe Lorelei says that:  
+To all the guys.  
+To her playmate of the moment.  
=I got to thinking about:  
-Friends  
-Friendship.

In our Gospel Lesson for today.  
-Jesus calls us friends.

## I. Friends.

### A. Not slaves.

1. Slaves.
  - a. "Servants" in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).
    - John 15: 15.
  - b. Don't know what the master is doing.
    - If they know "what."
    - They may not know "why."
2. Slaves simply obey orders.
  - a. "Theirs is not to reason why,"
  - b. "But theirs to do or die."
3. Jesus' friends also obey.
  - a. Out of love.
  - b. Out of joy.
    - "I got to" becomes:
      - # "I get to."
    - Duty becomes:
      - # Joy.
4. Jesus has made us his friends.

### B. Not Equals.

1. Human friendships.
  - a. Unless they involve:
    - Abuse.
    - Co-dependency.
  - b. Mutual.
    - Lorelei can choose me.
    - I can choose her.
  - c. Reciprocal.
    - Give and take.
    - Back and forth.
2. Jesus' friendship with us.
  - a. Has elements of reciprocity.
    - Give and take.
    - Back and forth.
  - b. But it is not mutual.
    - Jesus calls us his friends.
      - # If we are:
        - \* Faithful.
        - \* Loving.
      - # But he never calls himself our friend.
        - \* Regardless of what the hymn says:
          - + "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

- Jesus commands.
  - #We don't command.
  - #We ask.
- Jesus has commandments.
  - #We have prayers.
- Jesus chooses us.
  - #We don't choose him.
    - \*That's the nature of God's grace.
      - +We can accept the gifts:
        - =Love.
        - =Faith.
        - =Forgiveness.
      - +But we can't:
        - =Demand them.
        - =Earn them.
        - =Pay for them.
    - \*God is the actor.
      - +We are the reactors.
    - \*We are Jesus' friends.

## II. Friends Are Chosen.

### A. We May Choose Our Friends Based On What They Can Do For Us.

#### 1. Did you ever choose up sides?

- a. When you were playing sports.
- b. We did.

- Instead of counting off.
  - #1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2.
  - #Based on:
    - \*Size.
    - \*Age.
  - #Which would have been:
    - #Fairer process.
    - #Friendlier process.
- We tossed a baseball bat.
  - #Whoever hand came out on top.
    - \*Got first pick.
- We spun a football.
  - #Behind the back of one of the captains.
    - \*Strings.
    - \*No strings.
  - #If you called it right.
    - \*Got first pick.

2. We picked to win.
  - a. We picked the best players first.
  - b. We picked the players.
    - We thought would help us win the game.
    - #Friendship took a back seat to winning.
    - #How humiliating to be the last one picked!
    - \*Player no one really wanted.
3. We choose:
  - a. Winners.
  - b. People who can produce.
  - c. People who can do something for us.

B. Jesus Chooses Lovers.

1. Not those who are going to love him back.
    - a. Although I won't say that's not important.
  2. But those who can love one another.
    - a. Who can pass on the love.
    - b. Who can multiply the love.
      - Jesus chooses us.
      - #To bear fruit that will last.
      - \*Fruit that:
        - +Looks like.
        - +Tastes like.
        - =Love.
      - Not a warm, fuzzy emotion.
      - #Which all too often is about ourselves.
      - \*I love:
        - +That car.
        - +Cherry pie.
        - +Mint chocolate chip ice cream.
      - \*I love you.
        - +What can you do for me?
- But:
    - #Acceptance of divine discipline.
    - #Moral force that does the will of God.
  - Something I read this week.
    - #"Love can endure only if it produces more love."
    - \*What do you think about that statement?
  - Mother Teresa.
    - #Once said at a National Prayer Breakfast.
    - \*"America has become a selfish nation,"
    - \*"In danger of losing the proper meaning of love:"
      - + "Giving until it hurts."
      - =What do you think about that statement?

III. Greater Love Has No One Than This, To Lay Down One's Life For One's Friends.

A. Jesus Laid Down His Life For His Friends.

1. Laid it down.
  - a. By being lifted up on a cross.
  - b. Giving until it hurt.
2. Laid it down.
  - a. Not for one friend.
  - b. But for countless friends.
    - For you.
    - For me
3. Took it up again.
  - a. John 10:17-18.
    - Gospel from two weeks ago.
    - Good Shepherd Sunday.
  - b. On the third day.
  - c. So that love could produce more love.

B. Could We Ever Lay Down Our Life For A Friend?

1. Two boys.
  - a. Playing on a 100' mountain of sand.
    - Several years ago.
    - In south St. Louis.
    - Along the Mississippi River.
  - b. Sand began to slide.
    - Burying the boys.
  - c. Tim Murphy.
    - One of the boys.
    - 16 years old.
    - #Died.
    - #Saving his friend's life.
    - \*Not on a cross.
    - \*But on a mountain of sand.
  - d. Derrick Ellis.
    - Boy who was rescued.
    - #12 years old.
    - #Small for his age.
    - Next day described how his friend Tim had saved his life.
    - #"He pushed me up."
    - #"He grabbed me and pushed me up,"
    - \*"But when he pushed, he kept going under."
    - #"He told me that he knew he wasn't going to make it,"
    - \*"But he said he'd hold me up."

- #When the sand came down on us,"
  - \*"Tim kept shouting for the other boys to help me"
  - \*"Because I was little."
  - #"He kept holding me up until the sand covered his face."
- 2. Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."
  - a. That was one moment of love.
  - b. How might those moments be multiplied?
    - Perhaps not through our physical death.
    - #Like:
      - \*Jesus.
      - \*Tim Murphy.
    - But in ways that might actually be harder.
    - #Dying to:
      - \*Pride.
        - +Desire:
          - =To be right.
          - =To be in control.
          - =To do it our way.
      - \*Selfishness.
        - +Desire:
          - =To win.
          - =To be the best.
          - =To get to the top of the sand pile.
        - Regardless of what that does to anyone else.

Concl: In water and Word.  
In bread and wine.

-Jesus gets:

#Quiet.

#Serious.

-Jesus says:

#"Thanks for being my very best friends."

#"Bear fruit that lasts."

#"Abide in my love."

#"Love one another."



