

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Diving into Friendship with God

SERIES

DATE 7/14/2024

KEY SCRIPTURE John 15:15; James 2:23

SYNOPSIS We can be friends with God. He's a friend like no other.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ This week's VBS theme was **SCUBA – Diving into friendship with God.**

I Can Be Friends With You by Petra

*I can be friends with you; there's no better friend that a man can know
I can be friends with you; and I feel so special 'cause it's you I know
I don't know the governor even though I'm a resident
I don't rub shoulders with the dignities or shake hands with the President
And I know I can be with you, and I don't have to wait in line
You're the author and creator of all the world and a personal friend of mine
When I have a problem, I can always come to You
Regardless of the situation I know You know what to do
You put Your arm around me and speak so tenderly
And I feel better just to know You care and You took the time for me
Greater love has no man than this that a man lay his life down for his friend
But You laid down for all the world to see and You proved Your love for me
I'm no special person; I've got nothing to offer You
But You treat me like I'm the only one with whom you have to do
You're closer than a brother and You're with me every day
I love You 'cause You first loved me and I'm glad that I can say*

We can be friends with God.

John 15:15

I 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 learned from my Father I have made known to you.

James 2:23

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

☞ **God is a Friend who's Real. (Thanks God!)**

Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18–19)

God proved he was real in a big way.

Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest in order to prove whose God was real. They did all kinds of crazy things and nothing happened. But Elijah made an extravagant sacrifice and prayed, and God answered in a powerful way, burning up the sacrifice even though it was drenched in water.

If you don't have a personal story of how God proved he was real, then ask someone in this church. There are quite a few stories to tell which remind us that God is real.

☞ **One true God (song)**

God proved he was real in a subtle way.

Not long after that powerful encounter Elijah was feeling all alone and was tired and afraid. God proved he was real to Elijah this time by gently whispering to him, reassuring him that he was not alone.



Sometimes God shows he's real in a quiet whisper we might miss if we're not paying attention! You can actually practice this. In your private time with the Lord close your eyes. Do what you need to do so you're not distracted. Then ask God to speak to you. Then listen. You might hear a whisper like Elijah. Or maybe God will speak even more quietly in your heart. Maybe God will bring a picture or a person to your mind. You have to take time and pay attention.

☞ **God is a Friend who Loves (Thanks God!)**

Bible Story: God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 1–3)

God called Jonah to go and prophesy to the people of Nineveh, but he did not want to, so he ran away from the Lord. You know the story... he ended up being tossed overboard during a storm at sea and then was swallowed by a huge fish. Even though Jonah had disobeyed, God didn't want Jonah to drown! So, he sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and he was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

What would you do to pass the time if you had to spend three days in a fish? Well, Jonah used the time to pray. First, Jonah thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then Jonah said he would do what God asked him to do.

Then God told Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh. This time he obeyed and when he prophesied there, the king and all the people repented of their sins. Then God chose to have compassion on them and relented from destroying them at that time. But Jonah didn't like that. You know, there are some people that are just never happy. Jonah was one of them.

Jonah didn't mind when God showed *him* love and saved him, but he was mad that God had changed his mind and saved the people of Nineveh. God loves *you* very much. But he *also* loves the people you don't like. And God wants us to love and care about them, too. **John 13:34 says, "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other."**

☞ **I have a friend (song)**

☞ **God is a Friend we can Trust (Thanks God!)**

Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)

In Mark 4 Jesus and disciples were traveling across the lake when a furious squall came up and nearly swamped the boat. Jesus was asleep, but the disciples were freaking out, so they woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

They didn't even ask Jesus to help them. They thought they were beyond help—they were sure they would drown! Maybe you've felt scared like that. When we feel worried or scared, we can go to Jesus. He's more powerful than the biggest storm, and we can trust him to help us. Jesus can calm the storms in our hearts. Jesus may not always calm your storms right away, but he's always in the boat with you! When you're scared, you can turn to Jesus and trust him.

☞ **God is a Friend Forever (Thanks God!)**

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18–20)



Since Jesus is alive, death is *not* forever! Sin is *not* forever! 1 Corinthians 15:55 says, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” Since Jesus is alive, we can live forever! In John 11:25 Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.”

Lamentations 3:22 ESV

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

I think we’ve all had people that gave up on us. Something changed and they walked away. But God never gives up. He keeps on loving us forever.

☞ God is a Friend for Everyone (Thanks God!)

Bible Story: Lydia believes in Jesus. (Acts 16:11-15)

John 3:16 says, “**For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.**”

When Jesus was alive, most of the people who knew about him lived in the country of Israel. Because God wants *everyone* to be his friend, he chose people to spread the word about Jesus all over the world. One of the people who never saw Jesus, but heard about him, was a woman named Lydia.

You find her story in Acts 16. Paul and others had gone out to the river looking for a place to pray when they encountered a group of women, one of whom was named Lydia. She was a business woman and worshipped God, but didn’t know about Jesus. But she responded to Paul’s message and was baptized.

Paul wanted to make sure everyone knew about Jesus, so he went out of his way to find Lydia and her friends and tell them. Then Lydia told us! Let’s think about people who’ve told us about Jesus and thank God for them.

☞ Count Your Blessings (song)

It’s so great that people have told us about Jesus. And we can spread that message to people who don’t know the truth about Jesus. I think we probably all know people who don’t follow Jesus. We can tell people about Jesus like Paul did. We can also *show* people Jesus’ love so they see what Jesus is like. And we can pray for people to believe in Jesus.

**☞ God is a friend who’s real.
God is a friend who loves.
God is a friend we can trust.
God is a friend forever.
God is a friend for everyone.**

☞ Thanks God (song)