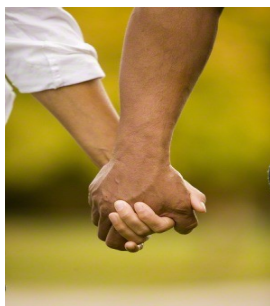


You are My Friend

Scriptures:

John 15:15

John chapters 14-17



Annie

It is almost fifteen years since Mike began a journey that changed our lives forever. When you hear “that” word it is shocking, particularly since each doctor he had seen had said his very minor symptoms were probably nothing to worry about, the tests were just precautionary. In his case it was bowel cancer, which, thanks be to God, through the diligence and caution of his GP, had been caught relatively early.

It was a strange and, often, heart wrenching journey, with twists and turns that flummoxed the surgeon and his team, and the amazing nursing staff who cared so brilliantly for Mike. So, why am I telling you this... Because, for us, the most valuable lesson that we learned during those long days and even longer nights, was that God always keeps His Promise, we truly are never alone. And He sends the most wonderful servants, ministering angels, to bring comfort, assurance and encouragement, just when it is most needed, His timing is perfect.

For me, the journey took me through dark, dark valleys when my heart just wanted Mike to be free, even if it meant he had to leave this life, which was so hard to come to terms with. But, on one particularly difficult day, I was dreading arriving at the hospital, I was so weary and I couldn’t think of any way to bring some encouragement to Mike. The tears were flowing as I drove the last few kilometres to the hospital, when, suddenly, I felt so overwhelmed by the presence of Jesus, I knew He was in that car with me. Through the sobs, I cried out “I am so glad that You are my Friend, Lord”. The peace and calm that filled the car was like a blanket enfolding and holding me, and in my spirit I heard the words “And you are My friend”.

To call Jesus my Friend is such a privilege, but to know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that He calls me His friend is astounding. Can you imagine how the disciples must have felt when He said to them that He no longer thought of them as servants but as His friends? The reason He gave them was that servants aren’t privy to what their master is doing, but friends are privileged, and, as His friends, Jesus said He had revealed the Father to them. We call it “the inner circle” don’t we when we belong to a group or a family that shares its purpose and plans, when all are included. This is what Jesus was telling His disciples, and anyone who lays down their self centred lives and answers His call when He says “Follow Me”. He was offering everyone the open door to His Inner Circle – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that amazing Circle of love and eternal Life.

That realisation that burst through my sadness at feeling so inadequate, totally changed my relationship with Jesus. Suddenly I began to truly understand that the only reason that I had been entering the depths of knowing my Abba Father was because of Him. All those verses in John’s gospel began to glow

with a light that made them so much clearer, it's only at His side, walking through the paths of this life's journey, that I will get to know the Father. When I see Jesus, I can see the Father; the only eternal Life is knowing the Father through Jesus; Jesus is the only visible Revelation of God the Father.

Now, when I see Jesus in my mind's eye, I see Someone who enjoys being with me, who relishes being beside me, whose joy overflows in opening my eyes to see more of God through His Word. And He is always smiling, always holding out His Hand to me, reaching out to stop me stumbling, directing my gaze toward Heaven and its Glory. I see my Friend, my best Friend, my true and faithful Friend.

Prayer: Abba Father, how can I ever give You enough thanks and praise for what You chose to do? To send Your Son to die in my place, bearing my guilt and sin, breaking the chains of death for me, so that I can live with You forever. And He says that I am His friend and He will be at my side wherever I may go. Abba Father all praise and glory and honour go to You. Amen.