Session 8 Friendship with God:
 The Way to Safety, Success, and Satisfaction (Jn. 15:14-15)

 *“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)*

1. Review: The convincing Power of Heroic love (Jn. 15:13-14)

*Now these three words—safety, success and satisfaction—are not the words used most in Scripture, but they are words common to our cultural conversations. They are three longings that God put in the human heart. We long for spiritual and physical safety. We long for greatness, or you might say, “success.” We long for joy or deep satisfaction in the human heart. So I want to use terms that we commonly use in our conversations with one another. This is our second time to consider John 15:14-15. We looked at this in Session 5 and now again in Session 8.*

*Let me give a quick review. I am using the phraseology, “the convincing power of heroic love.” It is important to understand this idea, so I will develop it again tonight. I have addressed it in two sessions so far (Sessions 4 and 5 ). The reason I am bringing it up again tonight is that it is very important to understanding this passage tonight about friendship with God. It is easy to miss what Jesus is saying here in John 15:13-14 if you read it really quickly.*

* 1. Jesus identified laying down one’s life for another as the greatest expression of love (Jn. 15:13). Jesus’ love for us was manifested by laying down His life for us on the cross to rescue us from God’s wrath (1 Thes. 1:10) and to model the extravagant love that the Church would display for Him and for others through history and in an unprecedented way in the final 3½ years of this age.

13“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life [to rescue from trouble] for his friends. 14You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends,
for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (Jn. 15:13-15)

*Paragraph A: Jesus identified laying down one’s life for another as the greatest expression of love that could ever be seen. Let’s read the passage, John 15:13-15; our focus tonight is on verses 14 and 15. Jesus said “No greater love has no one than this, for someone to lay down his life for a friend.” Jesus wanted to identify that heroic love is the most convincing powerful thing that can be witnessed in human relationships.*

*Then He makes a very dramatic statement that is easily missed. It is one of the most powerful statements that has ever been uttered in human history, and it is uttered by God—“You are My friends.” What a staggering statement! Friendship with God is not an automatic thing for every born-again believer. That is not what Jesus is talking about. Friendship with God is rare, though it is available to everyone. However, I believe that only a small percentage of believers press into it according to the way that Jesus is defining it in this passage (Jn. 15:13-15). That is why I want us to be familiar with this passage and to get what He is actually saying here.*

*He said “You are My friends* ***if*** *you do what I command you.” And then He said “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his Master is doing,” nor does a servant know why the Master is doing what he is doing. Then here He made a strong prophetic statement, “I have called you friends!” And next He gives this definition of one of the essential dimensions of what is included in this friendship: “For all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”*

*We are going to look at that more in another session because there is significant responsibility for that which Jesus makes known to us—which are the things that the Father wanted Jesus to emphasize to the apostles. These were truths that Jesus made known to them and thus to us—we must boldly stand for them. These were the truths that Jesus made known and that led to the authorities killing Him. When He said, “I have made known to you what the Father clearly wanted Me to tell you,” they were truths that created great hostility against Jesus. And some of those very truths were what John the Baptist said and was killed for. For these very truths the apostles went to prison and eventually were killed for.*

*So when He says, as it were, “I have told you some negative things that by natural reasoning no one would want to say publicly” [for example, on Tuesday that week, Jesus spoke some very negative things in Mt. 23-24] “but the Father made it known to Me that He wants these things emphasized by His messengers and so I told them to you.” Now, some of what He told them was very positive, but some of it was very negative and would result in great social stigma to any who proclaimed them and would surely result in great persecution against those who spoke them.*

*When Jesus says in verse 13, “Greater love has no man”—we looked at this in Session 5 in more detail that His application number one was that He died to rescue His people from the wrath of God (1 Thes. 1:10), but He wanted them to see an important second application: that in His death He modeled the way that His people would show extravagant love for Him in the future by dying as martyrs in bringing the gospel to others—And so in His death, it was not only something He did to pay for the price of our sin in the presence of God, but He was also modeling what extravagant love looked like for them. Not that all people would necessarily die, but He wanted them willing by setting their heart to pay whatever price was necessary to show their love and loyalty to Him. We know that in the generation that Jesus returns, He will use this expression of extravagant love as a public display of heroic love that will reveal the beauty of Jesus to the nations. It is a very strategic part of His end-time plan, and we looked at that in our last sessions.*

* 1. Jesus told them they would be His friends if they obeyed what He had just taught them (15:13-14).
	Here, He prophesied of their friendship with Him—knowing that ultimately they would be faithful unto death in their love for Him—even knowing that they would leave Him that night (Mt. 26:31).

*Paragraph B: We are still on the review here. Jesus told them they would be His friends if they were careful to obey what He was telling them here. They could not be presumptuous about this. He was saying, “I want you to pay attention! You need to obey what I am telling you right now if you want to enter into this rare spiritual reality called friendship with God.”*

*Actually, this is a powerful statement because Jesus was prophesying, “I have called you friends!” That is remarkable because He told them before and after this sentence that they are all going to deny Him and stumble that night, but Jesus was looking past their failure. He said, “I know by the Holy Spirit that you will ultimately show Me this kind of love!” Every one of them died for Him eventually except for John the apostle, and we do not know what exactly happened to him.*

*So Jesus is actually prophesying here. I cannot imagine a prophecy more important: “You are My friends!” because at that time they were not living out that reality, but Jesus was declaring it to them. And it was so remarkable because that very night every one of them would leave Him and abandon Him.*

* 1. Jesus defined one of the essential aspects of having a deep friendship with God when He explained that a servant does not know *what* his master is doing (or *why* he was doing it) that He had made known to them all that the Father showed Him to emphasize in His messaging—see Matthew 21-25.

*Paragraph C: Now Jesus defined one of the essential aspects of having a deep friendship with Him, though you might miss it. We are not going to spend too much time on it tonight, but we will in other sessions. He was saying, “Let me tell you what I mean by being My friend.” He said, “I do not call you servants, I call you friends”—actually in verse 20 a couple of verses later He does call them a servant. And all of the apostles called themselves servants of the Lord, so He was not saying the servant attitude was now gone—but He was saying “I have more for you than obeying the tasks I give you as a faithful servant. I am going to actually tell you what I am doing that the Father wants you to know about. And I am going to tell you why I am doing it.”*

*He said that He would make known everything that the Father showed Him to make known. Jesus was not telling them everything the He knew from the Father. Jesus had so much more information than He ever told them, but what He was saying was, in essence, “Whatever the Father is speaking to Me to emphasize, I am not going to draw back. I know it will actually lead to My death, but I am going to tell you anyway.” And He told them some pretty heavy things in Matthew 24 about the trouble coming. He told them heavy things in Matthew 23 about the demonic nature of the political and spiritual leadership of their nation. I mean, those things got Him killed, but He said, “I am going to tell you because the Father told Me, but here is the deal: if I tell you and you enter into this friendship reality with Me, you have to stand for it too if I tell you.” That is part of what He is saying here.*

* 1. This promise of friendship is for any who are willing to sacrifice their life and resources *to rescue* *people* for love (15:13) and *to promote the messages* that the Father wants emphasized (15:15).
	This gives context for what He had in mind when saying, “if you do what I command you” (15:14).

*Paragraph D: Now this promise to have a friendship with God—and again, there is nothing more glorious that could ever be said to a human being—in the Bible there are only three men associated with friendship with God. I mentioned that a little bit in our last session: Abraham, Moses, and John the Baptist. Again, these were men who entered into a deeper partnership with the Lord in the task the Father gave them, and that task had some really political stigma and persecution elements to it, but He said, “However, if you will enter into that with Me and not back away, we will have a friendship that is dear to Me, and it will be the most powerful thing you will ever experience.”*

*What He is actually calling them to is to be willing. Meaning, we do not know if we will die, but we are willing to sacrifice our life and our resources if it comes to that in the will of God to rescue people in the will of God. Jesus of course rescued us from hell, but He is going to use His people to rescue all kinds of people in danger through history, and in particular in the generation the Lord returns. It is not only that we are willing to sacrifice our life and resource to rescue people in the will of God because there will be many opportunities for that, but also to sacrifice our life and resources even to promote the message that God is emphasizing in that particular season. Again, that is the message that got Jesus killed, it got the apostles killed, and it got John the Baptist killed.*

*Let me give you the main premise, the main point, of what Jesus is really saying here. He is saying, “If you will obey in these two areas—that you would actually lay down your life for love and to be vessels of rescue to others in obedience to Me* ***and*** *that you would actually lay down your life or be willing to do so in order to promote the message My Father is emphasizing—if you will obey in those two areas, you will obey in every other area of your life.” These are the two mountaintop areas. These are the two most challenging areas in the human experience. If we obey in those two areas, we will obey in how we spend time and money. We will obey in what we say in terms of gossip or complaining or whatever negative speech. We will obey with our speech. We will obey with our bodies and what we do with our bodies, what we put into our bodies. We will obey in those areas if we can obey in these two areas that He is mentioning in verses 14 and 15.*

*So that is the context that He wants us to understand. Again, at a quick read you would not quite understand what He might be saying. A lot folks read these passages kind of quickly, and they say that friendship with God is for every born-again believer.*

*He would say, “Well, no, that is not exactly what I am saying. I am putting it into the context that you would be willing to lay down your life and be willing to stand for whatever the Father has told Me to stand for that is getting Me killed. I am going to have friends.”*

*I am believing God for millions of believers, but even if it is millions, there are still going to be a billion or two. I do not know what the percentage is, but my point is when I see that passage, I want to put my name on it. I do not want to take it for granted. I do not want to be presumptuous, because He said, “But you have to obey Me. You have to be careful in this area because I am talking about laying your life down and being willing to stand for whatever the Father has told Me to stand for! That is what I am talking about right here!” He could look at them and say, “You know what? I already see the destiny of who you are! I see what is in your spirit! You are My friends! I am telling you in advance, though you will stumble tonight, ultimately you will stand strong!” And so Jesus’ prophecy came true.*

1. A glorious Friendship: The nature and qualities of true friendship

*Roman numeral two: Now we touched this in the other session just ever so slightly. I am going to look at this glorious friendship. I want to look at the nature and the quality of true friendship because we can engage with the Lord. I am talking about His friendship towards us right now. I am not even talking about our friendship towards Him. I have already mentioned that a little bit in being willing to lay down our life for love and being willing to stand for truth even if we lost our life for love.*

*I want to talk about Jesus the Friend here, because we kind of know Jesus our friend, but I do not know whether we go much below the surface, so I just want to give a quick overview. Because, if we really buy these elements, these biblical descriptions of friendship that God is the ultimate example of, if He really is like this towards us, then we have it made! And the good news is, He is like that!*

*However, what Jesus is really talking about—which I have emphasized this over and over in these sessions—is that He is wanting them not to let shame overcome and dominate their heart. He does not want bitterness to dominate their heart. He really cares about that, and about fear and the pain and the grief of the loss of loved ones, and the other things that we have talked about several different times. However, He is really fighting for their liberated hearts particularly related to shame and bitterness, because you cannot grow in love if you are weighed down with the shame of your failure or you are weighed down with bitterness because of how people may have betrayed you. Well, everyone gets betrayed!*

* 1. We look at human friendship as described in Scripture to gain insight into the holy friendship that God offers us. Moreover, we see qualities in human friendships that have been commonly recognized throughout history in the different cultures of the nations.

*Paragraph A: We look at human friendship here, and I am just giving you a quick, little, rapid-fire overview of the biblical statements about friendship because the point is: if this is what the Bible esteems as friendship, then Jesus is the ultimate expression of all of these qualities towards us. I look at this friendship thing and say, “Yes! That is how You treat me? This is good! This is good! Well, then, I am not going to let bitterness or pain or shame dominate my heart! No! No! I am interacting with the Great One, the Uncreated God who wants friendship with me! This is worth everything!”*

*We see also qualities of human friendship that have been commonly recognized in cultures throughout the years and we can understand friendship, meaning it is inherent in the human spirit to see things like loyalty and faithfulness as good. All of the cultures throughout history have esteemed those things in friendship.*

* 1. Let’s consider a few truths about human friendship; this is not a comprehensive presentation of
	all the virtues of friendship. *Jesus expresses to His people all that is true about deep friendship*.
	In John 13-17, Jesus especially emphasized truths that helped them overcome shame and bitterness.

*Paragraph B: Let’s consider a few truths about human friendship and, again, this is not anywhere close to a comprehensive presentation of all of the virtues of friendship. That would take a book. However, it is kind of a quick rapid-fire. The point is, Jesus expresses this friendship in fullness to everyone who says yes to developing this friendship with Him. When I look at this quick overview of friendship, this is my view of the personality of God. This is what God’s personality is like. If I buy into this, my heart has strength and confidence even in my weakness and in my stumbling and in the journey and in the delay. This is what His personality is like.*

* 1. A friendship is a relationship between those who have a bond of mutual affection, enjoyment, trust, and support. True friendship is a great gift. God created us with a longing and need for friendship.

18…God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper…” (Gen. 2:18)

*Paragraph C: I am just going to give a simple, basic definition of friendship between humans—us, one another—but it is also between Him and us. Friendship is a relationship between two people who have a bond of mutual affection. They have mutual enjoyment of each other. They have mutual trust, and they have mutual support. These are elements even of how the Lord views us and how His friendship is towards us.*

*True friendship is obviously one of the greatest gifts of life. Nobody can live without friendship; everyone needs it. Back in Genesis 2, it was God’s observation that it was not good for man to be alone. People think that it is their observation and that they are trying to talk God into it. Before Adam ever sinned, God declared, “Loneliness is trouble for you. It is not good for you to be lonely. I will make you a partner. I will set you into deep relationships.” And that is His will for all of His people.*

*God created a deep longing in all of us for deep friendship, and we never have to apologize for that. Now, some people have a spirit of rejection, and so they make human friendship the major thing of their life. Though it is a key component, it is not to be the dominating force of our life where we are living in pain all of the time because of the absence of it. Millions of people do that, yet God put this longing in us.*

* 1. The deepest, most rewarding relationships are those that enjoy friendship. Even the strongest romantic attraction between people will die if it lacks friendship. A strong bond between parents and their children will diminish if it lacks friendship. Friendship does not need a binding contract as marriage does nor family blood as children have but friendship implies *mutual desire to be together*.

*The deepest and most rewarding relationships are those, obviously, which enjoy genuine friendships. However, I want to apply this. What I mean is even the strongest romantic attraction between a man and a woman will die if it does not have a growing friendship. I have seen so many couples over the years; I mean that first year or two they are so crazy about each other, they can hardly leave the room. However, about year ten and fifteen there are all these other attitudes because the friendship did not grow. They thought the attraction would just take care of itself. It has to be nurtured by a growing friendship. It is the same with parents. The strongest bond between a father or mother and their children will diminish; it will weaken if it does not have a friendship at the root that is growing.*

* 1. Loyal friendship contends for each other’s kingdom destiny, personal honor, and family blessing. Jesus will *“outdo”*His people in showing them great honor forever (Ps. 8:5; 1 Cor 3:22; 1 Pet. 1:7).

10Love…with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (Rom. 12:10; ESV)

*My point is that friendship is not a small thing. In our relationship with God, friendship is foundational though many believers never enter into this dimension, and that is one reason they do not have the strength within themselves to overcome shame or bitterness or fear or pain of loss because they are not interfacing and engaging with these truths with Jesus. However, if we engage with these truths, we will have strength in our heart to overcome these things.*

*I will share just one of my long-term simple definitions of loyal friendship. I have used this as a litmus test of my friendship and loyalty towards people. It is really, really simple. I wrote this down years ago, and this is what I check out when I am interfacing with people and having a hard time or there are disappointments.* ***Loyal friendship includes contending for each other’s destiny in God, contending for their personal honor and contending for their family blessings.*** *When I have a conflict with somebody, and I move from there, I know that loyal friendship has to be strengthened. That is my litmus test.*

*However, the real point I am making is that God is contending for our destiny! He really is, for our greatness. He is contending for our honor. He is contending for our family’s blessings, not just us in our own lives. He is! And because I believe that about Him, I can just smile and say, “Lord! Thank You show me more! Show me more of this!”*

*There is a verse, Romans 12:10 which says, “Love with brotherly affection,” and here is this unusual phrase from the ESV, “Outdoing one another in showing honor!” This translation, “outdo one another,” I think it is in the New American Standard as well and as in several other translations. About fifty years ago when I was about sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen years old in our youth ministry—I was in a Presbyterian youth group—and because of the Jesus Movement lots of people were getting saved. One of our youth leaders, Bob Lehleitner, spoke on this truth like every other time he spoke. He used this verse and would say, “I challenge all of you,” and we were all challenged: “Outdo one another in showing honor. Outrun each other!” And he did not have like a hundred different messages, but when he got the microphone you knew that Romans 12:10 was going to be discussed. And so I heard this verse over and over in the early 1970s. And it is true, but the Lord is saying, in effect, “I am going to outdo you in showing honor. Watch, I am going to give you more honor than you ever give Me!”*

*Again, with this overview, this snapshot, of friendship, I am not mostly talking about how you should treat others, even though that is a good thing to check your heart with, but I am really talking about how Jesus relates to you. That is really my point tonight. However, I am happy if you apply this and strengthen your friendship toward people as well.*

*Can you imagine the Lord outdoing you in showing honor? He gives you more honor than you give Him! Like again, when that spark unearths just a little bit of insight, and I think, “My goodness!”*

*You know the common thing which I have heard so many times over the fifty years, “I can’t take it anymore! I can’t keep going!” and I always say “Well, the other options are really bad; you really do not want to go there!” It is a really normal thing to imagine we are getting a bad deal with God, that we are not being treated like we deserve. I have good news for all of you, and of course you all know it: we are getting treated much better than we deserve, trust me. And you know that, and I know that, but it is very, very human to say, “I can’t take it anymore!”*

*And I have said, “Well, what are you going to do? Sin? I mean what do you mean, you can’t take what? It is hard. I know it is hard, but your only option is friendship in relationship with Him, using the truth of God’s word.”*

* 1. ***Friends are trustworthy***: Friends are trustworthy in how they act and in what they say in about to each other. They uphold their stated values and commitments; thus, you can believe in them even when you do not understand what they are doing. Jesus is the most trustworthy friend who loves
	His people at all times—even in the face of their weakness, deficiencies, and failures.

17A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Prov. 17:17)

*Paragraph F: Friends are trustworthy. They are trustworthy in how they act. Again, this is how Jesus relates to us. Friends are trustworthy in what they say. Proverbs 17:17, “A friend loves at all times.” Jesus says, “I love you at all times. I am that friend who loves you at all times.” A friend will uphold their stated values and commitments. In a friendship, one will make these declarations, and, because we are human and weak. there will be those stumbles and failures, but where there is a diminishing of those, we want to return right back to our commitments and our values. Jesus is the most trustworthy friend of all times. He always upholds His values and His commitments even in the face of our weakness and our deficiencies and our failures. He says, as it were, “I love at all times! That is My word! I am the One who defined what friendship is about so you can trust that is what I am like!”*

* 1. ***Friends share compassion and empathy***: Friends stand with one another in difficult circumstances including spiritual struggles and failures. They seek to understand what their friends are feeling and then respond accordingly. This fulfills the law of Christ and thus expresses the personality of Christ.

2Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2)

*Paragraph G: Friends share compassion and empathy. They stand with one another in difficult circumstances, struggles and failures. Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens and fulfill the law of Christ.” I like to say it this way: “Bear one another’s burdens and fulfill the personality or identify with the personality of Christ!” He bears your burdens! He does not tell you to bear burdens more than He bears them for you. However, with a lot of folks they do not think of Jesus in this way, but we want to do that.*

*A friend will seek to understand what their friend is feeling. They want to respond accordingly and they will speak words to strengthen their friend’s heart. The Lord says, as it were, “I will send people to speak words to strengthen your heart. I understand how you feel and I am going to cause different verses of the Bible jump off the pages so to speak, and I am going to have you hear them through the mouths of others, and I am going to speak in ways that, if you will listen to Me and be attedntive in ways, will strengthen your heart.”*

* 1. ***Friends are honest*:** They speak honestly to those they love about blind spots in their character or plans. They speak up in seeking to be helpful even when it disagrees with what their friends want. Many confuse God's correction with rejection. God disciplines those He delights in (Prov. 3:12). People are in trouble when He ceases to correct them—Jesus was silent before Herod. (Lk. 23:9)

5Open rebuke is better than love…concealed. 6Faithful are the wounds of a friend… (Pr. 27:5-6)

*Paragraph H: Friends are not just affirmative. They are honest; they speak about our blind spots. And again, these are good verses regarding our human friendships with one another, but that is not really my focus tonight. Proverbs 27:5-6 says, “Open rebuke is better than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” The reason I am saying this is many people confuse God’s correction with God’s rejection. So when the Lord corrects, they say, “Oh no!” and just want to give up, but I say, “No, no, if the Lord is correcting you, then He is committed to the friendship!” His correction is His commitment to the relationship. We are only in trouble when He ceases to correct and says, “You are on your own now. You have turned Me away time and time again.”*

*I mean when Jesus stood before Herod, He would not talk to him, and when Herod said, “Hey, do some miracles!” it says that Jesus would not say one word to him. That is trouble when you need correction and Jesus will not say one word to you. Proverbs 3:12 says, “God disciplines those He delights in” because He is committed to the relationship.*

* 1. ***Friends are loyal***: Friends keep their promises and do not speak negatively about their friends. They have a loyal heart of support towards a friend who stumbles and then sincerely repents. Your secrets are safe with a true friend so you can be open and vulnerable. Jesus covers His people who repent of their failures—giving them confidence to run to Him and not from Him after they stumble.

6Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man? (Prov. 20:6; NAS)

8Above all things have fervent love…for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” (1 Pet. 4:8)

*Paragraph I: Friends are loyal. And again, you could use the terminology in all kinds of ways. Some of the terminology overlaps, and so I am just laying out some general ideas: they keep their promises; they do not speak negatively about their friends. Proverbs 20:6 says, “Many a man proclaims his loyalty.” They say, “I am loyal! Loyal to the end!” But Proverbs says that it is really hard to find someone who follows through on that. Many say “I am loyal,” but over in the corner and under pressure, they will not be loyal. It says, “Who can really find a loyal man, a trustworthy man?”*

*Now, of course, when we read that, we want to be that trustworthy person because that is virtuous to claim it but it is rare to do it when no one is looking. Staying loyal is hard, particularly if your heart has been bruised a little bit by that person, but I have good news for you. There is a trustworthy Man who proclaims His loyalty and is true, and His name is Jesus.*

*I love this verse in 1 Peter 4:8. Peter said “Above everything…” Now if you are going to say “Above everything,” it has to be a pretty intense thing that you are going to say next, right? “Above everything have fervent love,” and he says, as it were, “Let me define it: love covers a multitude of sins.” It does not mean that they do not matter, but it does mean that you are not going to disregard the relationship, you are not going to turn on them because of their faults, but you are going to cover them and work with them to get through them.*

*The average friendship, even in the kingdom of God, uncovers one another’s faults, but “above everything cover one another.” And again, I am not talking about holding somebody’s secret vice privately while they are injuring people and prolonging their brokenness and addictions. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about in our relationships one with another our goal is not to uncover but our goal is to cover and redeem. Bring them to repentance, but that is not my real point. Here my real point is that is how the Lord treats us! He says, in effect, “Above everything here is fervent love. It does not dismiss the relationship because there are faults, and it does not make the faults known to others. It goes after that area of blind spot to see redemption.” And the Lord says, as it were, “That is how I treat you. I cover you time and time again.”*

* + 1. A friend does not use private information about a friend against them or in a way to hurt them.

28A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends. (Prov. 16:28)

*Now this is more of a human thing. A friend does not use private information about a friend, against their friend. Nor does Jesus. In many relationships, even in the kingdom of God, one will use private information to put down someone else and dishonor them in some way. Proverbs 16:28 says, “A whisper separates best friends.”*

*“Hey, I cannot tell anyone else, but I want to tell you. Did you know what the real deal is with that guy?” A whisperer, the word most of the time slips out in very subtle ways, but the point is Jesus is not a whisperer. Jesus says, “I see everything and, yes, I will speak the truth to you. However, I want to cover you, and I want to give you a reason not to quit in shame and dishonor. I want to give you a reason to run to Me and not from Me when you fail. I want to give you confidence that with Me together we can get through this thing.”*

* + 1. In His relationship to His people when they sin, Jesus honors what He said in Matthew 18:15.

15“…if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone
…16But if he will not hear [repent], take with you one or two more…” (Mt. 18:15-16)

*I heard Stuart say this a year or two ago. I loved it then, though I had not thought about that the well-known passage in Matthew 18:15, “If your brother sins, go tell him his fault between you and him alone,” did you know that is how Jesus confronts our sin? He comes to us alone! And very often this biblical process is ignored. When someone sins, a friend goes to another friend about the friend who sinned. They do not go to the one who stumbled. Instead they go to someone else to kind of build a little support and to build a storyline and to get the word out. This is in the very opposite to Jesus.*

*I remember speaking with Stuart, and he said, “Did you know that when Jesus sees your sin that He comes to you alone.” Now He will give you opportunity after opportunity. However, there is a time when, if you do not repent, He will bring it to the next level, which is not my point here. My point is that His friendship is like this. He is not trying to embarrass you and shame you. He is trying to redeem you and win you! He wants to give you a reason to run to Him and not from Him. However, the good news is the reason is real, but most believers do not appropriate that. When they have a failure in their life, the One they run from most is Jesus instead of being the One they run to the most.*

* 1. ***Friends delight in mercy***:Friends delight in showing the mercy that they have received. God gives mercy to those who fear Him and who seek to obey Him—mercy give them a way out (Ps. 130:4).

18Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity…because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)

4But there is forgiveness [mercy] with You, that You may be feared. (Ps. 130:4)

*Paragraph J: Friends delight in mercy. Who is like the Lord? Who is like Jesus? Micah 7:18 is one of my favorite verses, “He delights in mercy!” He loves to give mercy. He is not like, “Well, I will grit My teeth and give you one more shot at this! You know I have forgiven you like three times already. How many more times are we going to go through this?” He delights in mercy.*

*Again, He gives mercy with the hope of redeeming the heart to righteousness. The point is not to empower them to go forward in their failure. The point is to give them a way out of their failure. A lot of folks continue in their failure because they see no way out and they are shame-filled. A shame-filled heart, a condemned heart, a person who feels mostly accused does not have power in their heart to rise up in love. They are just surviving and trying to make it through the day or through the week. I have good news for you: He delights in mercy. He enjoys giving it to you. He enjoys you connecting with it. When you say “Oh!” He says “Oh! I love it when it touches you! I delight in this!”*

* 1. The quality of Jesus’ friendship far surpasses anything that we can imagine.

9…“Eye has not seen…the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)

*Paragraph K: We could go on with twenty more qualities of His friendship, but that is not my point. My point is just to set a trajectory to push us in that direction of interfacing with Jesus in this friendship. And I want more than just forgiveness of my sin; I want this rare friendship quality that I mentioned earlier that Abraham, Moses, and John the Baptist had, because I believe God is going to have a multitude of friends who do what He said in verses 13-15, who are literally willing to sacrifice themselves—their life and their resources—to rescue for love if it is in the will of God. They are willing to stand and bear the reproach of whatever the Father is telling the Son to speak to the Church.*

*“Eye has not seen, ear has not heard,” we hear this verse all of the time, and I put it in about every other handout. It has never entered into the heart of a man the quality of what God has prepared for His friends. Well, you can read this a little more on your own as I am just saying the same things over and over because, remember, one of my main spiritual gifts is repetition. However, I like you getting different terms on the same concepts.*

* 1. Jesus as our friend rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). He understands all aspects of our life that are unknown, unnoticed, and misunderstood by others. We will never ever be alone—Jesus’ is always engaged and attentive to us—in this age and forever.

15Rejoice with those who rejoice…weep with those who weep… (Rom. 12:15)

*Paragraph L: Paul said, “Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.” That is what Jesus does. He rejoices with us when we rejoice. He weeps when we weep. He is the ultimate Friend. Again, I am struck how many of the truths that Jesus is highlighting in John 13-17 that will help the heart overcome shame, help the heart overcome the pain of the bitterness of betrayal, help the heart to overcome fear. Jesus is again contending for their liberty and the breakthrough of their hearts. That is why He is telling them.*

*And as He is talking in John 15, “Abide in Me and I love you like the Father loves Me,” He says, as it were, “I am going to go to the high mountain top. You can be a friend at that unique and unusual level if that is what you want, but you cannot be presumptuous in the area of obedience. You have to be careful to obey Me, and you have to do it on My terms.” And again, I have said that over and over.*

*Jesus weeps with those who weep and rejoices with those who rejoice. He understands all of the aspects of our life, the areas that are unknown to anyone else, the areas that are unnoticed, the commitment, the dedication, the ways you are pouring yourself out that nobody notices or even cares about, things that you are doing that are misunderstood by other people, He knows it all.*

* + 1. ***He celebrates with us in our victories***. He rejoices with us in our triumphs. Jesus alone knows our true greatness in His grace and our nobility in redemption as His Bride.

*He celebrates in our victories. He sees the victories in our heart, even the small ones, and He celebrates them. We say, “Well, so what, you ought to do that by now!” No! He alone knows our true greatness in the grace of God. He alone knows who we are in the billion-year picture of His kingdom. He alone sees the height of our nobility as sons and daughters and as the Bride of Christ.*

* + 1. ***He knows our deepest desires***. He knows the depths of our longings, dreams, and intentions to love Him and to help others—even when we fail to walk them out.

*He not only celebrates our victories and triumphs, He knows our deepest desires. He knows the longing you have to obey Him and the ways you are stumbling, but He still sees the longing.*

* + 1. ***He honors our sacrifices***. We occasionally make heroic sacrifices out of our love for Him. We have joy and strength in knowing that He recognizes these as love for Him.

*He honors our sacrifices. Over our lives we have occasionally made these heroic sacrifices of obedience, and we have joy and strength knowing He sees every one of them and never forgets them, though others may not agree with them or even ever notice them. We have this strength and joy of knowing that He sees them and they matter to Him.*

* + 1. ***He understands our pain.*** Jesus sees our pain and walks with us through difficulties, disappointments, and setbacks physically, financially, socially, spiritually, etc.

*He understands our pain.*

* + 1. ***He helps us in our struggle with sin***. He walks with us through every season of life.
		He sees our pain when we fail and understands our weak human frame (Ps. 103:10-14).

*He helps us with our struggle. He walks with us in every season of our lives. Again, He understands when we fail. He understands our frame as David said in Psalm 103. I love that! He said that God forgives us of everything as He understands our human frame that we are but dust. Again, in John 13-17, over and over Jesus is highlighting phrases that represent truths that have many implications even though He just puts a phrase out there to help us not allow shame to dominate our heart, the trouble of shame or bitterness, etc.*

1. Friendship with God is the only way to Spiritual safety
	1. Jesus’ multifaceted message in John 13-17 was spoken to equip His disciples to walk in *joy*
	(15:11; 17:13), and *not stumble* or fall away (16:1), in the face of great pressures. Jesus spoke this in context to the persecution that they would face (15:18-26). The word translated stumble is from the Greek verb ***skandalizo*** which means to give up one’s faith by being ensnared by sin (Lk. 21:35-36).

1These things I have spoken to you, that you should not…stumble [fall away; ESV]. (Jn. 16:1)

*Roman numeral three: Now I am going to look at these three things: safety, success, and satisfaction. Again, these are just common terms in our cultural conversations. There are other biblical terms for these as well. Everybody wants these things. Everyone wants safety, and everyone wants success or to be great, to succeed. They want to have satisfaction, they want their heart’s desires fulfilled, everybody does. We all have different language for it but we all want those things.*

*And what I am saying to you, even though I have already touched on these things in other sessions, I am just going to give them quickly here. It is the friendship path that will cause these things to come into fruition in our lives. It is these ten or fifteen qualities of friendship when we see He sees us this way, and we run with wholeheartedness to Him, then we put ourselves into the position to receive these things that we long for. Every human heart longs for these things.*

*Friendship with God is the only way, and He is talking in John 13-17 about spiritual safety. He does not use the word, “safety.” He says, “That you would have peace.” He says, “That you would have love.” That is your spirit not drawing back and falling away from the Lord. That is what He is talking about.*

*In John 16, we have looked at this a little bit, He said, “These things I have spoken in these five chapters are so you will not stumble.” And the word “stumble” is in the New King James; that is the translation I use. Other translations use the words, “that you will not fall away from the faith.”*

*The most dangerous trap of human history is going to be on the global stage, Luke 21:34-36. Jesus said that there is trouble coming that is going to ensnare and entrap multitudes in the human race. And it is the most dangerous trap because it is spiritual danger. We are mostly concerned about physical danger, we all are, and that is human, and there is nothing wrong with being concerned about that.*

* 1. Paul prophesied of a falling away in the end times (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22. Paul presented it as being as obvious and significant as the appearing of the Antichrist on the world stage. This apostasy is the greatest social tragedy in human history.

3Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus’ return] will not come unless
the falling away comes first and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed. (2 Thes. 2:3)

*Well, John 13-17 addresses spiritual safety more than physical safety, much, much more. When we read Matthew 24, the famous end-time teaching of Jesus, He talks and warns much more about deception than He does persecution or tribulation. We think more about persecution and tribulation, He spoke more about deception because that is spiritual danger. It is dangerous spiritually to be swept away into deception and to be stuck in compromise because it can have terrible, terrible eternal consequences. It is dangerous at a number of levels spiritually.*

*It takes a while to adjust our attention to see the value of spiritual dangers as far more dangerous than physical danger. They kill you now, and in one second you are forever in eternal bliss of glory you cannot imagine. There is nobody that has been martyred who one second later was not happy about it. Their friends and loved ones are not happy about it, but they are saying, “Oh my gosh! What took me so long! Oh my goodness!”*

*You know all the time I talk about that book, “Imagine Heaven,” that I have been encouraging people to read, by John Burke. I have been reading it this last year and almost everyone that has a near-death experience, almost every one of them, they stand there and they do not want to come back when asked, “Do you want to stay?” They say “Yes! Are you kidding? This is not vacation. This is vacation times a thousand! This is like unbelievable pleasure and goodness!”*

*Nonetheless, it is our human nature that we get preoccupied with the physical danger, but a great apostasy, a great falling away, is coming at the end of natural history right before the Lord returns. This falling away is the greatest tragedy in human history. Millions are going to step away from their faith.*

* 1. The Lord has promised to make a way for His disciples to walk as overcomers (1 Cor. 10:13).

13…God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

2I saw…those who have the victory over the beast [the Antichrist]… (Rev. 15:2)

11And they overcame him [Satan and the Antichrist] by the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 12:11)

7“…for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:7)

9…the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations… (2 Pet. 2:9)

24Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless… (Jude 24)

*However, in this next passage here, I want you to know this: that the Lord has promised to make a way for His disciples. Victory is within reach for everyone who wants it because the generation of the Lord’s return will be the most victorious generation, but it starts off as the most broken, perverse, tempted generation of human history, the most angry. There is more sexual sin, more brokenness, more addiction, more alcoholics and drug addicts. That is the generation that becomes the prepared Bride. And so, a lot of folks do not know that; they look around and say, “Oh we are such a mess!”*

*The Lord might say, “I am going to show you My intervention, I am going to take hundreds of millions of people in addictions and brokenness and give them a vibrant spirit. I am going to show My power and glory in that time.” The Lord would say, “Do not conclude that you have just gone too far. You are not even close to it, and you have not seen My manifest glory and what is going to be happening.”*

*1 Corinthians 10:13, “God is faithful,” verse 13 “Who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able but with the temptation will make a way of escape. In essence, He says, “I promise you that if you will just talk to Me, slow down and just talk to Me a little bit, I will make a way out for you in that temptation.”*

*Revelation 15 gives a picture of those who have victory over the Antichrist. Beloved, these people who have victory over the Antichrist were originally a broken, disoriented generation, but they have come to such a place in those final years where the Lord has moved so that multitudes are seen with victory over the Antichrist. As a matter of fact, they were martyred but they did not cave in at all. Again, we think, “Oh Lord, I do not know! I am different than they are.” No, you are not different than the multitudes in the earth.”*

*Revelation 12, and there is another group. Well, it is the same end-time Church, but here, “They overcame him” speaking of Satan and therefore, by implication, the Antichrist.*

*Revelation 19, the end-time Church is like a wife that is ready. She is not a Laodicean Church being rebuked. By the seventh trumpet, the last trumpet. God has done something so remarkable that hundreds of millions, I mean a billion plus are made ready in their love and in their righteousness, but if you went backwards five, ten, twenty years, their lives were such a wreck that nobody could imagine it. One of the great trophy cases in heaven is the Lord’s power of the end-time Church and the transformation of them.*

*It says in 2 Peter 2:9, “God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.” The godly, meaning they have set their heart towards God. It does not mean that they are doing that great. They are in temptation, it is tough, and He says, “I will make a way for you.”*

*I love the verse, Jude 24, “He is able to keep you from stumbling.” This word, “stumbling” is the same one from John 16 where He says, “I told you these things so that you would not stumble, so that you would not fall away.”*

1. Friendship with God is the only way to success in God’s eyes

Okay, now there is spiritual safety, even for you, because I mean we all know that they are going to get the breakthrough, but, I have been pastoring for forty-five years plus and so many people and even in a group like this have great confidence in the majority of people in the room but not in their own walk with God because they have not interacted with the Lord in these ways. So I want us to see this friendship with Jesus. Put your name on it and begin to receive Him in the quality of friendship that He is actually offering us.

* 1. Obedience to Jesus is the only reliable pathway to true success or greatness. He calls one’s life choices “great” as they obey Him. This is attained without regard for outward achievements/impact. It is based on the size of one’s heart response to Him. We are not left guessing what He calls great.

19Whoever breaks…the least of these commandments…shall be called least in the kingdom…
but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:19)

*Roman numeral four, A: Friendship is the only way to success or, we could call it, “to be great in God’s eyes.” To be great in God’s eyes means that God calls our life choices great. Obedience is the only pathway. I am calling it success here because I have three S’s here: safety, success, and satisfaction. It is really greatness that we are talking about. Jesus talked about it when He said, “Anyone that will do what I say, I will call their life choices great on the last day.” He does not leave us guessing to what He calls great. We can look at it in the Sermon on the Mount with the eight beatitudes. Okay, there is no question.*

*It is like the prayer I have prayed over the years, “Lord, shock me now; do not shock me then!”*

*He would say, “It is clear: do the eight beatitudes do those and set your heart to those. It is clear: take a stand that you would be willing to obey Me no matter the cost, and you will be a dear friend of Mine. We will do this thing together and I will be with you and you will never be alone! You will never, ever be alone, I will aways be with you!” We are not left guessing to what He calls great.*

* 1. The call to love God is the point that Jesus *emphasized* *most* in John 13-17 (14:15, 21, 23, 24, 31). Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience. He calls us to love God on God’s terms or by His definition of love. He is the most qualified to define love (1 Jn. 4:16).

*Paragraph B: The call to love God with obedience is the point most emphasized in John 13-17. You know, these five chapters I call the greatest teaching by the greatest Teacher in history, Jesus. The point most emphasized is loving Him with a spirit of obedience.*

* 1. Serving Jesus faithfully and denying our lustful desires are “the theater” that God chose for us to express our love to Him. Jesus takes this personally. Some think of lust as only about immorality, but lust includes covetousness, anger, bitterness, retaliation, complaining, slander, and more.

*Paragraph C: Again, I have said this point over and over, but I just love saying it: serving Jesus faithfully and denying our lustful desires is the theater in which God has chosen for us to express our love for Him. When I say serving Jesus faithfully, I am not talking about preaching a good sermon on a platform or leading worship at a conference. I appreciate that, but that is not at all what I am talking about. I am talking about serving Jesus in your life assignment. People’s life assignment—their home—there are difficult issues, there are financial problems, there are pressures, there are people mad at them, and they are saying “Augh!” and the Lord says, “Now, serve Me there! Do the eight beatitudes there!*

*That is what I mean by serve God. I am not talking about what you do on a stage. I mean that is one percent of it. I am talking about in your home, in those relationships that are like, “Oh, this is tough!” Where there is delay of promises, when there is lack of provision, and even little sense of His presence, and He would say, “Stay with Me! Stay with Me! I am watching you. Serve Me in that context.”*

*“Well, Lord, if I could get a breakthrough in a new setting and revival, I will serve You!”*

*“No! I want you to serve Me in this context! And I want you to deny lustful desires.” I have written here that lust is much more than immorality. You know lust includes covetousness, anger, bitterness. Retaliation is a lust, etc.*

* 1. Each of us has a different struggle according to our own personality and life circumstances.
	Thus, we each have a different “*assignment*,” from which we offer our gift of obedient love to God.

*Paragraph D: Each one of us has a different personality. Everyone has a different situation and different life circumstances. Even people in the same family in the same home have different ways of thinking and feeling and interpreting. Everyone has a unique assignment in their life circumstance, and that is where the Lord says, “That is where I want you to offer Me the gift of your love, in that circumstance.”*

*I can think of—well, I don’t want to just point out this group—but I think of a number of godly women in their lives, many of them are alone, have children, they have a husband who did A,B,C, who knows. Their body is unhealthy. They are struggling. They do not have any money. They are a Mary of Bethany. Life and the promises are not working, but they will not give up! They will just not give up! That is unbelievably precious to God!*

*And of course I could pick a hundred different life circumstances, but I have seen ladies like that over the years, and I mean their kids are grumbling, “Mom, you are blah, blah, blah,” and yet they say, “I am going to be a Mary of Bethany! I am going to love God! It is hard, but I am going to do it!”*

*And the Lord would say, “It is more dear to Me than you know!” That is the assignment in which we offer gift of obedient love to God.*

*So we can have success; God calls that greatness. He does not call great when there is a large number responding. I mean that is cool, but it is not the large number responding, it is our heart’s response that God calls great. That is the way to success. Friendship, interfacing with Jesus in friendship will put us in the position to have success in our spiritual life.*

1. Friendship with God is the only way to satisfaction or joy in this life
	1. Jesus promised to satisfy and strengthen His people with joy to enable them to have a vibrant heart that overcomes dark emotions in the face of pressures and temptations (15:11; 16:20-24; 17:13).
	Joy is a feeling of deep satisfaction, pleasure, or delight that things are good or are working for our future good—according to how God defines good. For more on this, see my message on Session 11 (John 15 Pt. 1) titled *“The Promise of Joy and the Illusion of Happiness* (Jn. 15:11), and Session 9 (John 15 Pt. 1) titled *“The Superior Pleasure of Obedient Love”* (Jn. 15:10-11)

11“These things I have spoken…that My joy may remain in you…” (Jn. 15:11)

*Finally, I shared on this about a month ago, or in the last couple of weeks or whenever it was: the only way to satisfaction or I called it joy. Jesus promised to satisfy and strengthen His people with joy, and then He gave all of these negative situations in Matthew 24 and John 13. I outlined twelve different problems that they would face. Jesus said, in effect, “And I will give you joy even in the face of those twelve problems!” Nine of them were in Matthew 24 and three of them were in John 13, and He said, in effect, “I will give you joy and peace, even in the presence of those.” And of course whatever they experienced in the early Church is a template for what the end-time Church will experience even more, yet the joy will be ever-present. “For these things I have spoken to you,” in John 13-17 “so you will have joy and so you would have satisfaction in your spirit.”*

I have written the titles of those messages for those of you here for the first time or two. I shared more of this in detail because this is such an important subject, and I told a little more of my own personal journey of how the Lord changed my mind set in some areas so that joy was actually attainable and doable when it did not look like it was.

* 1. ***Satisfaction***: Many define *joy* and *happiness* in different ways. I speak of *“divine joy”* as that which is imparted to us as we relate to Jesus. I speak of “*natural* *happiness*” to describe the good feelings we have related to favorable circumstances—relationships, possessions, achievements, etc.
	2. The greatest satisfaction and pleasures available to the human heart are the spiritual pleasures that come to us as ***God reveals God*** ***to us***. This happens most in context to friendship with God.

*Paragraph C: The greatest pleasure, the deepest satisfaction the human heart can have is when God reveals God to us. That is the friendship reality. It happens most in the friendship context. I feel a little sad because so many believers will read, “You are My friends,” and say, “Cool,” and move on. That is a goldmine statement! One of the most dramatic glorious statements every spoken in human history to humans. “You can be My friends! You will be My friends, but you have to stand with Me in this deep way.” Beloved, put your name on that, and it will be a fountain of joy! That does not mean that your outward life will be easy, but you will have something on the inside. Again, I did spend quite a bit of time speaking about that, which sessions was that? Session 9 back in our last semester, in our last series.*

* 1. Joy is found in discovering that ***“He is enough for me”***—that is, in relating to Him and living for Him. *“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”* **John Piper**

*Paragraph D: Joy is found in discovering He is enough for me! I mean I want more than just relationship with Him, but if I have that when I do not have the other stuff, it still works! If I have all of the other stuff—favorable circumstances, finances, friends, my health—but I do not have that interaction with Him, then that is not enough. If I have Him relating to me in this way it is enough to have joy. Though I do appreciate the other things, and I will take them anytime God wants to give them, but I do not need them to have joy, though I do enjoy them when they come, and I always ask the Lord for a double portion.*

* 1. Jesus is “the” true vine (15:1). He is the source that satisfies the human heart and empowers us to love. He is the vine that satisfies us far more than wealth, prominence, entertainment, romance, etc.

1“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (Jn. 15:1)

*Earlier in John 15:1, Jesus said, “I am the true vine,” and I like that word, “the.” “I am the true one.” He is the only source that satisfies or brings joy to the human heart. Favorable circumstances cannot do that, even though I like them and they are enjoyable for a few moments, but they do not ever touch that deep place of the human heart. Jesus is the true vine that satisfies far more than wealth and prominence. We look to finding joy in those, but He says, “I am the vine. I am the source. Look to Me!” He said that in John 15:1 and now here in John 15:14-15, He is saying, in effect, “I am offering you friendship in a very special way if you want it. Anybody can have it if they want it and I will make it available to them!”*

* 1. Friendship with God is the only reliable pathway to true spiritual safety, success, and satisfaction.

*I will end right here with this: friendship with God is the only reliable path to true spirituality, to true spiritual safety, to true success, spiritual in this age and physical and spiritual in the age to come, and true satisfaction. Friendship with God is such a big reality, but it is so easily passed over and just kind of relegated to a verse, and then we move on to the next verse. That is why I am kind of camping out a few sessions on this phrase, “I call you My friends!”*

*I think, “Oh my goodness, that is unbelievable!” I mean, it is almost unbelievable, and I should say it is indescribably glorious, but in reality it is almost unbelievable that the Genesis 1 God who became a Man wants me! Not just in His kingdom, not just in His family, but as His good friend that He shares His heart with and that I get to stand with Him in the greatest love and in boldness and faithful witness with Him! I want to be Your friend to the end!*

*Well, amen and amen! Let’s go ahead and stand up before the Lord.*

*Lord, I put my name on this verse! Lord, here we are before You!*

*This is more than just a human natural friendship; it is more than that. There is nothing like this available to the human heart. I want to highlight these two areas that are common to all of us:*

* *the shame of our failure or deficiencies which can mean ten different things to ten people*
* *or the bitterness that we feel tempted with because we have been betrayed by trusted friends or family members, and the pain and residue of that.*

*You are saying, “I do not want any shame in my mind at all about how bad I am or how much I am failing!” because you cannot grow strong in love with that a giant hinderance like that. The Lord wants us liberated from that, but it is not a one-time deal. It is like over and over and over, where we get liberated a little bit, and then it comes back, and then we get free again.*

*If you would like prayer for those two issues, either of those issues, I invite you to come up and stand on these lines. And it is not like you have to come up here as everyone faces those here and there over the months and years.*

*The enemy just makes sure that we are shame ridden because if we feel accused, we will quit. He knows that he can make you quit if he can get shame in your heart. I am going to ask the Lord to wash us with the water of the Word. A revelation of Jesus’ quality of friendship. I know that these are great ideas, but these ideas can just bounce right off our mind. Talk to Him about these, get these truths in your mouths, and then say, “Show me more!”*

*Come, Lord, come and liberate the heart of Your Beloved. Come and wash our minds with the water of the Word. Lord, we are here to love You!*

*And He would say, “I see that more than you see it in you!”*

*Come with the Spirit of grace upon our minds right now. I break strongholds of lies off minds!*

*About thirty or forty of you come up and lay your hand on a shoulder and pray a Bible truth over them. Just say any Bible truth. Just lay your hand on them and ask the Lord to touch them. You do not even have to quote it correctly. Just say a truth over them, and many times it will be exactly what they have been asking the Lord for. Just pray for two or three people and then go ahead and slip out if you want.*