

The KNOWING OF A FRIEND

OASIS: A SELF-GUIDED PRAYER

JANUARY 6, 2016

Time can change even the most precious of things. Time also has a way of preservation, capturing it in a still frame never to be edited. Somethings have a way of being conserved and set a part for a specific purpose, anointed by One greater than time itself.

I recently had dinner with a life-long friend of mine. We had not seen each other in close to five years due to an unfortunate misunderstanding. As I sat at the table with my dear friend I realized a couple of things. Time had not touched our friendship and neither had our misunderstanding, it had been preserved. I felt a warmth in her presence that I had remembered from long ago. A deep knowing of someone who has walked through life together, someone who has walked through valleys and up mountains side-by-side. A friend who knows and appreciates the real you. I was filled with such gratefulness to be in her presence that evening.

Although time had not tarnished our friendship time had changed my perspective. Somehow I was able to see her a little more clearly. After years of separation I was able to see her in a new light, as a woman with a level head, deeply compassionate for others, and a heart for Christ's work. I could see her humble spirit and Christ living in her in a new way. I could see the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in her throughout the years, the fingerprints of His love for her and His guidance in her life and her interactions with others.

It is incredible how being in the presence of a life-long friend can feel like home, like it's where you belong. It's a place where you are known and loved and accepted.

Jesus is this kind of friend. Time has no claim on Him nor on our relationship with Him. Nothing can tarnish the love and acceptance He gives us or the grace He extends to us. There is a warmth about His presence and a feeling of being home.

It is true that we sometimes come back to Jesus and see Him in a different light. Perhaps more clearly or more tenderly than before, or maybe with more gratefulness in our hearts.

Wherever we are in our interactions with Christ be encouraged that whether it's been five years or five days since you have sat down in His company, Jesus engulfs us in the warmth of His grace. Jesus knows us deeper than we have ever been known; yet, He still loves us deeper than we can ever imagine.

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. 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.

John 15:12-15

Who in your life has been Christ to you?

Take a moment to give thanks for those people who have shown you Christ's love. Give thanks for the friendships you have cultivated over time and through which you have learned more about God's grace.

You were handed an index card when you walked in. If you wish, write a note to your friend. Let them know how Christ has used them in your life. Encourage them.

To whom are you called to be Christ? Ask God to increase your capacity to love. To expand your dinner table with friends. Ask God to stretch your comfort level so that you may be in relationship with God's people, no matter who they might be. Write that name down on the other index card. Keep this with you this week and pray for this person every time you look at this card. Ask God to give you opportunities to spend time with him or her and to learn to love and cherish them as God has loved you and cherished you.

May God increase your love this week, pouring over you; flowing into every area of your life and extending to every person with whom you encounter. You are known and you are loved.