

Pre-eminence; Friend (*ahab*)

There are two things I want to talk about today:

Col 1:18 talks about the word *pre-eminence*. Since our Master has the greatest of all abilities, faith and grace, He *is* pre-eminent. He does not strive for pre-eminence, it is just the fact that He is pre-eminent. He has the greatest rank, therefore He has the greatest influence. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — the God of Israel. He must come to have pre-eminence in all things.

In 3 Jn 9 you see a man named *Diotrephes*. He is one who had selfish ambition. He loved to have the pre-eminence. He was ambitious to have pre-eminence; he did not deserve it, but he strove for the pre-eminence.

(Our Master did not strive for the pre-eminence. If you have authority, it is not something you worked for, for God gives His authority to those whom *He* chooses and gives gifts how He chooses, so there is no striving, and are no ambitious people in the Body. There is no need to be ambitious because our Father chooses whom *He* wants to raise up and promote.)

Diotrephes wanted pre-eminence; he would not submit to John's authority; he loved to be first. John said this man would not receive him, but he wanted to be first and he always, even from when he first came in, had a secret desire to be elevated, and it came out in subtle ways — in his attitude, his defensiveness to authority, he would resent authority instead of appreciating it, and finally he strove to be the head of that church. John said, "He would not accept my authority, he used insinuating language and maliciously talked about me." It was subtle but it came out more and more in the open as months and years went by. In contrast to him, the other man, Demetrius (mentioned in verses 11-12) who was of the truth, was not like this.

We can see that word pre-eminence in Col 1:18 and 3 Jn 9 who has it and who does not have it, who strives for it and who does not have to strive for it. This is written for our example.

This man had ambitions to be distinct and superior and notable above all others. He wanted to be outstanding, to gain possession of, to gain the right to be the head. It is important that we see the selfish ambition in this man so we can judge ourselves and help others to judge themselves with this if they have a tendency to want to be first, are defensive, wanting to be right, not receiving authority, not taking people's suggestions — so we can curb this thing that would otherwise destroy the Body.

Friend

The next thing is the word *friend*. Though I may have thought that I had friends when I was in the world, when I became a disciple, I soon found out I did not have any friends in the world.

A friend is someone who would lay his life down for you. The word *friend* in the Hebrew is very near to the word *love*. In 3 Jn 1, John had a friend and he wrote to this friend, "To my friend Gaius." He had a friend. In Hebrew, the word for that friend, is a person who has affection for another person — *ahab* — friend; affection. [The Portuguese translation says, "my affectionate Gaius."] In Hebrew there is hardly any distinction between the two words. Abraham had a friendship with God. He was called the *friend of God*. God referred to him as "My friend Abraham" — it was a friendship, an affectionate-ship that people had for one another. 2 Chr 20:7 talked about a "*friend of God*" (in Hebrew — *ahab*), it means a lover of God. The word *lover* can be many connotations, good and bad, but this is talking about a lover of God — one who has affection for God.

Isa 41:8 — Abraham My friend. God had a friend in Abraham. God loved Abraham and Abraham loved God in an affectionate way. This goes deeper than shallow emotion, but is a very deep love for Him. 1 Cor 16:22 — Whoever does not have an *affection* for our Master will be cut off. We would be cut off from that friendship that we have with God and with our Master if we don't have that affection. And vice versa. Isa 41:8 comes from 2 Chr 20:7. Jms 2:23 talked about Abraham being a friend of God or one who had affection for God — a lover of God. Abraham was God's lover. We have a lover — a heavenly lover — a lover who has come into our hearts (Rom 5:5).

Even back in Dt 6:5 our creator God has commanded us to love Him. The only reason He commands man to love Him is to stimulate that part in man that recognizes God. You cannot say to someone, "I command you to

love me (or to submit to me).” But He was only trying to *arouse* that *instinctive* love that all man has for their Creator which has been lost and suppressed in them. In the same way, in the New Testament, a wife is commanded to submit to her husband. But that command is given only to arouse that innate desire in a woman to be submissive to her husband. That command (Dt 6:5) arouses that instinctive thing in a man to love Him.

God loves His people — that love is an affection for man, especially His people Israel (Dt 4:37). He has an affection for Israel. The reason we love Him is because He loved us first. My lover (*ahab* in old Hebrew) — to be in love, lovely; it describes the love between people, a man and woman, a friend, to have love for a son (Gen 22:2), between a slave and a master these are all ways the word is used in old Hebrew. Look at Pr 17:17. A friend has affection at all times, loves at all times. A friend who is a brother, but closer than a brother — he is born for adversity. Weren’t you? When you married your husband, you were born for adversity. You were born to suffer anguish and adversity to maintain that friendship, thinking the best, loving at all times, regardless of what tries to come between you and divide you.

Pr 18:24 — “A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” We have to be careful who we regard as our friend. There are two different types of friends: one type is the many friends that are not affectionate friends; they are worldly friends. But there is an *ahab*, a lover, who sticks closer than a brother. Oftentimes we find that our natural brothers and sisters and wives and children turn out to not be our friends, for when we become disciples they turn against us — and instead of loving us, they despise, persecute, and come against us.

Pr 27:6 —

verse 9 — the sweetness or affection of a friend;

verse 10 — neighbor means friend;

verse 17 — a man is sharpened by his friend.

The *love (ahab)* you are to have for your neighbor is the same word for *friend (ahab)*. Your neighbor is the one you love as yourself. You are to have affection for your neighbor as you have affection for yourself. If he is poor and you are rich and you do not do anything about it (you who live in the world), you are going to the lake of fire. Just as *in* the Body, 1 Jn 3:17, “if you see your friend or brother who has need and you close your heart to him, the love of God (Rom 5:5) is not in your heart” (only doctrine).

Jn 15:13-15 — The difference between a son and a slave (Jn 8:35-37) is Jn 15:15. We do not work as slaves anymore. We work as sons because we have vision. “I don’t call you slaves but friends.” You don’t tell your slave what your purpose is; he just works. But a father reveals everything to his son, brings him along with him. Jn 8:37 and Jn 15:13-15 go together.

Isa 41:8 — *ahab* — “Abraham my friend” (*ohevi* — the man that loves me). It is talking about a real true love that God has for us and we have for others.

1 Cor 13:4-7 — Just like David Derush went to New Zealand and met Nun and he knows that Nun loves him, and just like Ha Quinai wrote me a letter expressing his love for me, we have a friendship; we love one another. That is the love that Jn 13:34 talks about. And all men will know we are His disciples and that is how we know we have passed out of death and into life — because we have that kind of love for one another (1 Jn 3:14).

Rom 5:5 — We love with the love that our Father poured out within our hearts. We have love to love with, so use it on your brothers and sisters and all men.

Demetrius in 3 Jn 12 was a man whom John was settled about. He regarded him as a friend and said he was of the truth. He was at rest in his presence — they were friends. Gaius was his friend also. Verse 15 mentions *the friends*.

David and Jonathan — *they* were friends. They were lovers. They had that affectionate-ship with one another (2 Sam 1:26). Sometimes when you read about their friendship you almost cry because he was so loyal to David, and David loved him so much. David cried when Jonathan died. His love, it says, was greater than a woman’s. There was a wonderful friendship, a wonderful love between them.

It had *nothing* to do with homosexual *love*. Homosexuals like to justify themselves by David and

Jonathan's relationship, but they have it wrong. Some things in the bible are just too wonderful. Read it sometime — about the love between David and Jonathan.

We are developing. Over the last 20 years we have developed many friends who we love no matter what the cost. We do whatever is needed for one another. We are the most blessed people on the face of the earth because we have many friends [who stick closer than a brother].

This is so we can understand a little more about friendship. Love is defined in 1 Jn 3:16. *That is what love is.* If it is not that kind of love, you don't really have a friend. You don't really have any friends if you don't have this kind of love. Love is defined by this action: that He laid down His life for us so we lay down our lives for Him by laying down our lives for our brothers. Greater love has no man than that, that a man would lay his life down for his friend (Jn 15:12-17).

So we have to choose our friends well. How do you choose a friend? We have someone who chooses them for us, from before the foundation of the world; and they come to us; and pretty soon they repent and we become friends. But we have to test that repentance to see if they are really serious because some people say the right words (Lord, Lord) but do not really mean it. They just want to join the club. But a person cannot come in unless he is broken-hearted. I don't think Francisco ever *had* a broken heart, he never really fell in love with the friend of Abraham. Did you fall in love with Him? Do you love Him with an affectionate love?

ha-emeq — I was thinking what a great loss it was — like in a battle when you lose a piece of land, a strategic part of the land, like when you lose that most important part of the land — what a loss it was when the enemy got his hands into love. When he got into the love in humans and perverted it, what a great loss that was. Because now you hear about love — *all* the songs say "I love you, I love you;" all the graffiti on the walls, "I love Joe, I love you." On the bank it says, "Paula, can I say I love you?" But they don't *know* what love is.

Somebody wrote on the sidewalk in English, "I love you," to some person. But they don't know what love is. What love *is* — 1 Cor 13 — does not *exist* in the world — that is the kind of love that anyone would love to just have a taste of that love. But *God is love* and he created man in His image, so man knew what love was, but then the enemy came into that part of man and twisted something and they call it love but it's not love. It's so *far* from God. When you were reading what love is (1 Jn 3:16) — I was thinking also: 1 Jn 4:10, "love *consists* of this: not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent His Son as atonement for our sins." And that is really right because the Son came here and died as an atonement so that now we can really *know* love. People say, "for the love of God" and "I love God; do you love God?" (and all the Catholics there would say "Yes." But it is not that we loved God, but *He* loved *us* — with a real love. And sent His son for us. And now our love can be changed and that perverted thing in us can be straightened out. All those things in 1 Cor 13 that love is — that is something wonderful to reach for. That is reaching for God Himself — that is true love.

We are thankful for the rain last night. That was our Father's love for *man*. It didn't rain last night because he loved the trees and the grass. Everything He created, He created for man — He love *man*. Adam used to walk with God in the garden. Two cannot walk together unless they are friends. *Friends agree* with one another. Jn 17:21-23 — a whole nation of friends. They are the light of the world (Isa 49:6; Jn 13:35).