

A Friend Loves at All Times

Our Master Yahshua learned many things as he grew up. He did not already know everything. He was a regular child, just like you.

He lived in a neighborhood with His family. They were *good* neighbors to those around them. As a boy, our Master Yahshua wanted to learn things about God. Every morning and evening He would listen as His abba, Yowceph, talked about things from the Scriptures with his family. He would learn proverbs like, *“A friend loves at all times” (Pr 17:17)*. And our Master Yahshua would not just let the words he heard “drop to the ground.” He would think about the words He heard and ask questions if he did not understand... *“What does that mean, Abba? What does it mean to be a friend?”*

As his abba explained how a person can really be a true friend, He would listen to his abba’s words and would apply the words he heard to himself...

As He grew up, He did not give in to that pressure from those his age to want to be part of the “in crowd,” really trying to accepted and “liked” by all his peers. He rather wanted to learn, to grow up straight, and to attain to all that He was born for. He knew that by listening to everything His abba and the rabbi were teaching Him that he could do that.

Though He often read in the Scriptures and heard things about “friends,” he did not really have lots of “friends” yet, except his abba and imma and brothers. For He was a hard worker, helping in the house and making sure to do his chores and keep his yard clean, not spending a lot of time seeking out friends to play with. His “good friends” were his family because that is who he spent all of his time with... you need to spend a lot of time with someone to be a good friend.

Then, one day when He was older, He found some real friends. He gathered Andrew, Yochannan, Kepha, James and John. Oh, how He liked those men. He said, *“Come, follow Me! I want you to stay with Me and go everywhere I go.”* Then a little while later He called others to be his friends... There were the two men who were both called Yehudah, and there was Matthew... and He loved them, and they were such *good* friends.

He chose twelve men altogether to be with Him and they were all such good friends. Everyone could tell they were friends by how they were with each other. They would look at each other and smile approvingly. They knew what each other was thinking... They shared their hearts together. They all had zeal to do the same thing... whatever their Friend Yahshua was doing... they followed Him!

Our Master Yahshua knew what it meant to be “a friend.” He had learned lessons deep in his heart about this. He had deeply desired true friends, not just superficial friendships like he saw all around him in the villages... He had been seeking to understand what He had been taught as a child about the words, *“A friend loves at all times.”* And He now He would show these men what it meant.

They spent time together, slept together, ate millet together, talked to each other... and if one of them got hurt, his friends would be right there to help him. They were inseparable, all twelve of them, always sticking close by our Master’s side. Together they learned more about what it meant to be friends.

People started noticing this little group of friends as they went together from place to place. And when our Master Yahshua started to tell stories crowds gathered around them to listen. They would even follow them around, wanting to hear more, hardly even giving them time to eat. Our Master taught his twelve friends not to be “exclusive” but to reach out to others.

It is at this time when the religious people started grumbling among themselves about our Master and his friends. It was because when our Master talked, what He said was so interesting all the people liked to listen to Him. He gathered big, admiring crowds, who seemed to hang on His every word. This made the religious people jealous and angry. They would say, *“Did you hear what He said? That is not correct doctrine. He must be a cult leader! His words are blasphemous!”* They even went so far as to say, “He is from the evil one, Satan, himself!” No matter what He said they seemed to TRY to misunderstand our Master’s words and to find fault with Him.

Our Master knew there was something wrong with how the religious leaders were responding to Him. His

friends started to worry about His safety. One time when our Master Yahshua was speaking the religious people started to pick up rocks to throw at Him because they were so angry at what He was saying!

Kepha and John said to Him, *"We had better go somewhere else!"* for there in Jerusalem it was becoming dangerous. They loved our Master and feared that the religious leaders would try to kill him. They had learned that not only does a "friend love at all times" but a "brothers are born for adversity," allied in the same cause even when it gets really hard, so they said, *"I'll die with Him if they try to kill Him!"* But they preferred to go to some safer place and were happy when our Master headed up north to speak to the people in Galilee. People were not so religious up there and really liked hearing what our Master was teaching.

But then one day something happened that would be a sign for them, if they could only see it. It was just a normal day, but things started coming up among them. There were some hard circumstances, and sometimes our Master needed to correct some bad attitudes in His friends. Correction is good and they needed it.

But one of His friends started looking sad. He was a little bit distant. Our Master loved him and said, *"Is something wrong?"*

"No, I'm fine," he continued to say. But really he had an offended heart! On the outside he tried to act like everything was fine. This was His friend, Yehudah. He did not open his heart. He was offended at correction. He had a bad conscience about some things... he was not honest.

Now the time for the Passover was near and they needed to go up to Jerusalem. The disciples said, *"Oh, no! Master, those religious leaders don't like you there, it is not safe."* They were worried about what would happen to Him. *"Do we have to go?"*

"Yes, we must go."

There was a heavy feeling among them as they traveled together toward Jerusalem this time. They were all comforted as our Master sat with them on evening and began read some things He had copied from the Psalms to them (Psalm 41). But then some things He read shocked them and rekindled their fears.

*"All who hate Me whisper together about Me... And it seems that misery is going to come upon Me; **deadly pain** will come upon Me for I am to become a ransom... Even one of My trusted friends on whom I rely, who is sharing a table with Me, **will betray Me...**"*

They knew this was a prophecy from the Psalms about the Messiah when He would come. They knew it must be talking about our Master Yahshua. They knew He was the Messiah. But what He read surprised them! They already knew that the religious people may turn on the Master and try to hurt him. But in this psalm it did not sound like He was talking about the religious leaders who were bringing upon Him the greatest pain, the "deadly pain" it spoke about. It said, *"My trusted friend will betray me."* Why, this would be the worst pain that could grip His soul — if one of His trusted friends would hurt him! He knew what was coming and it was going to hurt Him so badly! Could it be that **one of His twelve beloved friends** was going to betray Him? The pain of betrayal by a friend is the worst pain of all! "No, a friend loves at all times! It could not be that. This must just be one more of those things that they just do not understand," they assured themselves, "They would put that thought out of their minds!"

Their Last Meal Together

Now as they were preparing a place for their Passover meal in Jerusalem, Yahshua knew in His heart somehow that this was going to be the last meal He would have with his best friends. He sensed the great suffering that was just over the horizon for Him. The time had come.

Our Master thought, *"This is the last time I am going to sit with My twelve best friends."* But they did not know what was to take place. He looked at each one of them and thought about how He loved each of them. He liked the way they were, their peculiar little habits, their weaknesses and strengths, the way they smiled and cried... He knew them so well... how close friends they were to each other.... And then came the pain deep down in his heart because He knew the Scriptures must be fulfilled... One of them would betray Him!

He looked thoughtfully at each one of them. Yehudah (Judas) was trying to look normal as he sensed that our Master was looking intently at him. But our Master knew him so well. He knew something was wrong with

Yehudah. He had tried many times to ask him about it, but he wouldn't open up. Our Master said again, *"Is everything okay, Yehudah?"*

"Yes, I'm fine."

The Master continued to look at him... he probably felt uncomfortable, but tried to act normal.

Our Master's Last Words

Our Master Yahshua had so much on His mind, so much on His heart that He wanted to share with these friends of his. If a person knows it's the last time they will have with their friends they want to tell them everything that's in their heart. That's the way friends are.

To their surprise He went over to the corner of the room and put water in a basin and came back, kneeling down in front of them. He knew that His hour had come and that He would depart from this world to the Father. He loved them to the uttermost. The disciples eyes became big. "Why is He doing that?"He took the basin of water and began washing their feet!

The Scriptures tell the story like this: *"Yahshua, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."*

They looked at each other with wonder on their faces. "Why is He doing this?"

Humbly bowing before his friend Kepha, He reached for his feet. Kepha was flooded with so many mixed feelings at that moment. He blurted out, *"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"*

Our Master said, *"What I am doing at this time you do not understand, but you will know after this."*

Kepha said, *"You will never wash my feet!"*

Our Master looked intently at him. He liked Kepha so much. *"If I don't wash you, you'll have no part in Me at all."*

Alarmed at the thought of having "NO PART" in his Best Friend, Kepha thrust his whole body toward our Master crying, *"Don't just wash my feet then, but my hands and head as well!"*

But Yahshua said, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. Kepha, you are clean...though not every one of you."

He knew one of His friends was going to betray Him. That's why He said, *"Not all of you are clean."* So our Master washed all of His disciples' feet. And when He came to Yehudah (Judas) He took extra time with his feet. Our Master looked kindly at him, humbly and tenderly washing each foot. It was already in Yehudah's mind to betray our Master, it was the "intention" in his heart, there was no turning back.

When He was finished washing all of their feet He asked them, *"Do you understand what I have done to you?"* And they looked at each other, none knowing how to answer the question.

Then He said, "Now that I, your Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have given you this example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. I am not referring to all of you... for one of you will betray me!"

They couldn't believe it. One of them will betray Him? *"We're your best friends. We would never do anything to betray or turn against You."* They knew that none of them would never do anything behind His back to hurt their Master Yahshua. They all got very quiet.

"One of you, my friends, will turn against Me."

They began looking within themselves asking, *"Who? Is it me?"*

The disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

Yochannan said aloud, *"Is it me?"* All of them (even Yehudah) said, *"Is it me?"*

Our Master looked at Yehudah and said, *"Go and do it."*

The other disciples didn't notice what He had said to Yehudah, for they were all being very introspective at the time saying, *"Is it me?"* ...They didn't notice Yehudah slip out. Anyway, he was always "going out

shopping,” so it did not seem strange for him to go out.

But it was so dark for Yehudah as he went out into the night and closed the door on that intimate supper.

The pain of a friend’s betrayal filled our Master’s heart.

Our Master looked at the eleven who were left, and sensed a great loss. He loved his friends at all times. His love had tried to melt the hard heart of Yehudah. But the pain of a friend’s betrayal was part of our Master’s lot.

This was the beginning of the time of greatest suffering for our Master... betrayal... “the night he was betrayed”... He said, “My little children, I will be with you only for a little while longer and then where I am you cannot come.”

Kepha said, *“What! I can’t come?”* (Kepha was always the one asking our Master what He meant, but the others were glad he did because they all wanted to ask).

“I am giving you a new commandment –love one another. You must love one another as I have loved you. Then all people everywhere will recognize you as My disciples.”

But Kepha was still stuck on the “going away” part. *“You’re going somewhere and we don’t know where? Master, where are You going?”* He has missed the rest of what our Master said about a new commandment all together. He had been so hurt at the thought of losing his friend. *“Where are You going, Master?”*

Our Master said, *“You can’t follow Me now, **but you will later.**”*

Kepha didn’t want to hear our Master say, *“You can’t.”* He said, *“Why can’t I go with You **now?** I would lay down my life for You.”*

His friend, Yahshua, was smiling kindly at him. *“Lay down your life for Me, Kepha? When the rooster crows you will have denied Me three times!”*

Kepha got quiet as it dawned on him what was going on here. He started to realize that something was going on that he was not understanding...

Our Master Yahshua was getting ready to die and now he was passing on to them his “last words.” It is serious when a great person knows it is time for him to die. The “last words” he speaks are the most important things he can communicate to those closest to him. The last words of our forefathers Jacob and King David were recorded and treasured as the most important of all the things they ever said. A person deeply considers how to pass on in his “last words” those profound things of greatest significance learned after a whole lifetime of experience.

Our Master Yahshua knew this was the last chance to tell His eleven best friends the most important things He needed to communicate to them. Somehow His friends began to catch on to the significance of these moments. They focused totally on his words and drank them in like the thirsty ground of a parched desert. Our Master knew that His friends would never forget these words and would pass on everything He said.

So He said, *“Don’t be troubled and trust in God. In My Father’s house there are many dwelling places. I am going to prepare a place for you and then I will come back and take you to be with Me. You know the way.”*

Thomas was the brave one to speak up. *“Master, we don’t know where You are going. How can we know the way?”*

Our Master said to him, *“Thomas, I am the way, the truth and the life.”*

These were some of His most famous words.... How many times have those words been repeated in the history of mankind?

Though they could barely understand, his friends hung on His every word.

He told them many things... you can read his “last words in John chapter thirteen through sixteen.... Such wonderful words... and so important!....

The night was growing late by now and our Master still had much to say. “There’s one more thing I need to tell you. I am the vine and you are the branches; if you stay close to Me you will bear good fruit. But if you are disconnected and thinking of yourself, your fruit will wither up. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love just like a branch abides in a vine.”

“If you keep My commandments, that is the way you will abide in My love! Because I have kept My Father’s commandments and was abiding in His love. So, you see, it is not complicated!”

“So, this is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. For a greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends.”

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you!

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you my friends, for everything that I heard from My Father I have passed on to you...” (*You never keep anything back from your friends. Our Master makes it very clear. He really knows what it means to be a friend. So, now you know what a friend is.*)

Then our Master knew it was time to go. It was time to test his own ability to be a friend! Yes, he must stand the test. Would our Master love His friends “at all times”? Even when to the point of death? Would He show the “greatest love”?... For He had just said that there is NO GREATER LOVE THAN THIS – to lay down your life for your friends. So, their last meal was almost over, the time had come to go. It was time for the greatest love and the greatest, most “deadly pain”!

Then Yahshua lifted His eyes up to heaven and cried out, “Father, I pray for the strength to go through this and for My friends that they will keep their unity and not divide so the world will know they’re My disciples....” He prayed the most amazing prayer for his friends...

“Let’s go.” Our Master had gotten everything that was in Him out to His friends, his last message to those he treasured most.

His eleven friends knew what they needed to know. They walked up a nice hill to a garden that they always used to go together. Not long after they arrived their other friend came. The one who had gone out into the night! It was Yehudah!

Yehudah said, “*Shalom, Rabbi,*”[teacher] and kissed Him on the cheek.

Oh the deadly pain that filled our Master Yahshua’s heart as he said to this man who He had spent the last few years of his life with, through all their joys and sorrows...*“Do you betray Me with a kiss?”*

Yes, this was the friend that fulfilled the prophesy in the Scripture about our Master... his beloved friend had betrayed him!

It says in the Proverbs, “*A friend loves at all times.*” That means in the good times and the bad times...

This was one of those times... it is easy to love when all is going well, but a “friend” loves at all times.

That is how you can tell if it is a real friend. A friend will love you even when your feet are dirty. He will love you enough to get down and humble himself and wash your feet. And a friend also will “let his feet be washed”! He will not be so proud to say, “You cannot wash my feet!”...like Kepha did. A friend will open his heart, extend his dirty feet to be washed. Yehudah betrayed our Master because he closed his heart, hid his dirty feet. Even though he allowed his feet to be “washed physically,” since his heart was closed and offended it did not cleanse Yehudah. Yehudah was not clean.

Our Master has set us an example of what it means to be a real friend... He says we will be blessed if we follow his example. That means “at all times.” Washing His friends feet was not a “ritual.” He made it clear that if it is only an “outside” thing, like with Yehudah, it does not good.... We are His friends if we do what he commands... and we are friends to one another!

Our Master went on from that lovely garden that dark night to suffer through the deadly pain of betrayal and die as a sacrifice to make sure His friends were “clean.” He loved at all times...