

What a Friend Christ Community Church February 12, 2012

Introduction: 2012 – prophetic word: year of encounters with Jesus

Have met many in the church who, by all appearances, don't know Jesus. They seek the blessing of salvation, but not the person of Jesus Christ.

The greatest regret: to have the opportunity to know Jesus intimately, personally, and to miss it

Jesus Himself is greater than any blessing, healing, deliverance, answer, victory, or provision

He IS the prize (pearl of great price, treasure hidden in the field)

I. The invitation

Revelation 3:20

"Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends."

He is inviting us into an intimate relationship that is to be celebrated by sharing meals together

Meals in the Middle East (and in NT times) were not rushed affairs (took a team of people hours to prepare)

You could spend hours reclining at the table, discussing the day and sharing heart to heart – NO MULTI-TASKING

To share a meal with someone was a statement of friendship (Jesus was accused of being a friend of sinners because He ate with them)

The table was a place of mutual trust and vulnerability. In a Jewish home, the table was considered the family altar.

Sitting at a table with someone meant you shared a protected relationship with that person.

Sharing a meal implied an inviolable relationship – to be a guest was to be under the host's protection, they are honor-bound to defend you, even at the cost of their lives

II. Putting this invitation in perspective: Biblical Overview

Genesis 3:8-9 **God** comes looking for Adam, seeking fellowship

Before sin, God (in the person of Jesus Christ) would pursue and engage in fellowship with Adam and Eve. God has always been the initiator of the fellowship

Sin enters, and that fellowship is cut off

In the Mosaic Law / Levitical Priesthood, God establishes a way for Him to dwell with man

Exodus 25:8 Let them construct a Sanctuary for me **so that** I can live among them.

Prophetic image: Isaiah – Immanuel (God is with us)

Jesus appears (God with us) and begins a shift that will change the relationship between God and man forever!

John 15:14-15 You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't **confide** in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you **everything** the Father told me.

Jesus goes to the cross, and before He gives up His spirit He declares, "It is finished!" The veil separating man from the manifested, intimate presence of God (preventing full fellowship and friendship) is torn from top to bottom.

What is finished? The era of rules and regulations required in order for God to live among men. Hallelujah! Don't sew the veil up!

We are now the Holy of Holies for the Spirit of God. People get excited about being caught up into heaven. God is more excited about living with us.

The punch-line of the entire Bible is **Revelation 21:3** "I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God Himself will be with them." Yippeeeeeeeee!

III. Sulha – Covenantal meal of reconciliation

Jacob and Laban – **Genesis 31** – share a covenant meal of reconciliation

As the first bite of food is eaten, it is understood that all past offenses are forever forgotten. By eating together they are declaring, "I will never remind of your transgression again."

Passage from Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus, pages 138-139

IV. Story of a 12 year old boy meeting Jesus for the first time (testimony)

Prayer – "Lord, make my thought life my prayer life."

V. Hearing Jesus' invitation again, anew

Revelation 3:20-22 "Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends. I will invite everyone who is victorious to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

Jesus makes Himself vulnerable by standing outside the door and waiting for my response. He wants to be hosted by me, come under my roof, eat the food I serve Him.

What does it take to open the door and welcome Him in, be His friend and confidante?

Intentionality – do it now, don't wait

Focus – train your gaze upon Him in every situation

Time – develop the ability to share every experience with Him

If you are feeling that you are not up to the invitation, remember

Jeremiah 24:7 "And I'll give them a heart to know me, God. They'll be my people and I'll be their God, for they'll have returned to me with all their hearts."

VI. Response: invitation to come forward as a public declaration that you have heard Jesus' knock and His voice, and that you are, once and for all, by faith opening the door to full friendship and fellowship.