

## More Than Servants

John 15:9-17

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But radio ministry is just one part of what we do at Heralds of Hope. We also distribute Bibles and literature. And our newest publication is called *Hope Herald*. It's a study guide designed to complement the teaching you'll hear on this broadcast. We would be happy to send a copy of this study guide to you if you just write and ask for it. I will give you the contact information at the end of the program.

It is good to be here with you again as we continue learning from the teachings of Jesus. In John 15 today Jesus calls us friends not servants. This truth is amazing. Jesus Christ, the focal point of history, the Son of God, the most powerful force in the universe, He calls us friends! Wow, words fall short when you try to describe the majesty of our Savior.

Have you thought about the difference between a servant and a friend? Their ways of thinking are totally different, and it shows itself in all they do. Jesus calls us friends not servants. Think back to the Old Testament, Exodus 21 to be exact. This passage gives us the rules and expectations for servants during the Old Testament period. However, there were some servants who chose to be a servant for the rest of their life. Instead of being set free, they would continue serving their master. The servant who made this choice would be radically different than the servant who was waiting for his freedom. They were a still a servant, but it was much deeper than that.

So, in the Old Testament the Israelites were allowed to have other Israelites as their servants. However, God instructed the Israelites to let them go free in the seventh year. Their servants would serve them for six years, then in the seventh year they were required to let them go free. And when they were freed, they were not allowed to let them go with nothing. They were required to give them some of the flock and some of their harvest. This was not a cruel form of slavery. God wanted His children to remember they had been slaves in Egypt and God redeemed them. As God had blessed them, they were to bless others especially their servants.

However, if the servant liked His master and wanted to stay with Him and continue serving Him he could do that. They would take the servant to the door and put an awl through his ear into the door. This would signify the servant will be a servant for life. Imagine the difference between a servant who had

his ear pierced and one who was going to be free in a few years. I am guessing all they did was affected by the changed mindset.

As Christians serving Christ, we have similar change in outlook. We are like the servant whose ear has been pierced. We have chosen to serve Christ and we want to serve Him the rest of our lives. Serving Him is where we want to be, this is what we want to do. We are not working for our own freedom, just longing for the day when we can walk away. We are here and we are His. He is our King, we are honored to serve Him, and incredibly through all this Christ calls us friends. He doesn't look down on us as servants, instead we are friends. Romans 8 even calls us joint heirs with Christ. That's Incredible! So we gladly serve Him, but we are so much more than servants. Here is Pastor J Mark Horst to tell us more.

The Lord wants us to be better people. He longs for us to have a higher life, a better life. Man was made in the image of God, for fellowship with God, and for His pleasure. Then came sin bringing suffering and separation from a holy God. So, God moved in redemption and sent Jesus to restore us to the Father.

But too many people are satisfied where they are. For some reason they believe that everything is locked in. Some religions claim there is nothing you and I can do. The Christian faith holds out the possibility of rising, of doing better, of being MORE THAN SERVANTS.

The Bible says that to be a Christian will put a totally new outlook in your mind. In John 15:9-17 Jesus explained to His disciples about being more than servants.

9 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

10 *If ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

12 *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

13 *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

14 *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

15 *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant does not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

Oh yes, more than servants, that's what Jesus said: "You are no longer servants, you are my friends." Jesus' words to the disciples contain some encouraging STATEMENTS for us to attain to the level of being more than servants.

Let us begin where Jesus began: **Obedience Brings Love.**

Jesus said, "Continue in my commandments, keep my commandments and then you will abide in my love." Then He suggested how, "That's the way I did; I kept my Father's commandments, and so I am abiding in His love. And if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."

So, continue in love. It's the Father, it's Jesus, and you. His commandments are a way of life. They get right there on the inside where attitudes are made. It's the basic heart attitude of following in the commandments of Jesus. He said, "That's the way your joy is going to be full." Joy comes from such obedience. No one can love the loving Savior without obeying Him.

Jesus at another time asked this question, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Ah yes, obedience brings love. He encouraged them, "Continue in my commandments, keep on doing them and then you will continue to abide or live in my love." So, obedience brings love.

Jesus then defined the commandment and explained how **Love Brings Friendship.**

What is His commandment? He said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." That is a very high standard. To love one another as Jesus loved us is, I say, a very high standard. He said, "No greater love has anyone than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends." That is love's greatest act, a self-sacrificing act.

To be a friend of Jesus is to follow Him without any question or argument. If you want to be above a servant, then your friendship must respond to Jesus in unqualified, unquestioning following of what He said. He said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." That kind of love brings friendship. Listen to Him, "I do not call you servants anymore, I call you friends." I call you friends.

My dear friend, I would like to introduce you to the most wonderful friend there is, even Jesus. Love for Him brings friendship.

Loving obedience grows into blessed friendship and **Friendship Brings Fellowship.**

A new kind of relation, a very close relationship. Jesus spoke to the twelve, "I don't call you servants anymore because I have shared with you everything my Father has made known to me." Just ponder that, "Everything I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you."

Then He went on to say, “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” Oh my friend, that is a most wonderful relationship, to realize that Jesus is so much interested in you that He chose you. Yes, I think we can make that application. I know He’s talking to the disciples here, but I believe we can apply that to you and me. Jesus has chosen you.

The question, of course, is how have you responded to that choice? Have you found that friendship brings fellowship? That kind of fellowship is very real and close and intimate.

Then there’s a new result. He said, “You are going to bear fruit, and your fruit is going to remain because I have chosen you and ordained you and sent you out to bear fruit.” My friend, I would like to help you be more than a servant. I want you to be a friend of Jesus.

These statements can help so much: obedience brings love, and love brings friendship, and friendship brings fellowship.

Now, Jesus wants us to be His friends. For that reason, He tells us what He did. Do you know Him as your own very intimate friend? To add this new dimension to your life, these statements are highly important. You can be more than a servant, but what have you done about becoming Jesus’ friend?

My friend, was this teaching helpful? If you’d like a copy, either in print or on an audio CD, just contact us and ask for it by the title. Or log onto our website [heraldsofhope.org](http://heraldsofhope.org)

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And when you contact us, you can request our Bible Study Guide, *Hope Herald*. It follows these radio programs and will help you learn more about what we’re studying from John’s Gospel. So, ask for your free copy of *Hope Herald* today.

Here’s the contact information again. Our email address is [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). Or write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a free copy of this teaching. It’s available in print or on an audio CD. And you can also request a free copy of our newest publication, *Hope Herald*. It will help you gain more value from our study in John.

And don’t forget our Bible teaching programs are available to you all the time and any time at the website, [heraldsofhope.org](http://heraldsofhope.org).

Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Pastor J. Mark continues our study from John’s Gospel. You won’t want to miss it. And until then, keep looking to Jesus. He’ll give you hope for today.