



**KING'S  
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)  
**EDINBURGH**

# Friends Like These

Luke 5:17-26

## 1) The Friend who forgives.

At the centre of this remarkable story is a remarkable statement made by Jesus "*Friend, your sins are forgiven*". Jesus, the exact representation of God (*Heb 1*), who hates sin just as much as God did in Noah's generation (resulting in huge judgement)- eyeballs this man and calls him friend! He calls him forgiven. Our most basic human problem isn't our presenting need of healing or provision- it's that every human is out of relationship with God. Yet this God makes the first move and calls us friend.

To be a Christian is to be invited into God's friendship circle; into his family. It's to live not under a cloud of guilt and fear of punishment, but to know God has forgiven our sin and now calls us friends.

## 2) Friends who bring us to Jesus.

This is a lovable story! I love these unnamed friends, who love their other friend so much that they wanted to get him in front of Jesus. That's great friendship. That's the measure of love, to bring people to know Jesus.

We all need friends like that! When we're alone or disappointed or stressed or wrongly prioritised. Friends who tell us we need Jesus! We don't know if this man was a willing participant in his friends plan! Yet they seemed lovingly insistent with him.

We need to become a friend like that. Small groups are communities that care, not just a meeting we choose to attend. When someone doesn't turn up see it as your friendship duty to find out why and help them keep in community.

### 3) Friends who keep personal love for Jesus alive.

*“Jesus saw their faith”*. The kind of exploit they did only makes sense if they were all-in for Jesus! They really knew that Jesus could and would do anything. They’d watched, they’d learned. They loved him!

Beware of our cultural narrative preaching at us: “God is absent, distant, uncaring, bigoted, anti-equality, anti-love”- this will persuade you not to bother bringing anyone to Jesus! Make sure you’re reading about the correct Jesus!

### 4) Friends that have a bias to action.

They do something. They find a way to get their friend to Jesus. They problem solve, they think, they strategise, they don’t accept the status quo.

Prayer is the way we bring our challenges, problems and dreams to Jesus. This week we have a week of prayer at King’s- get stuck in- it’s what godly friends do because they can’t do it by themselves.

### 5) Friends that are OK with mess.

The roof falls in!

There’s a moment where everyone looks stupid. No miracle performed yet a hole in the roof and plaster everywhere! The life of faith requires courage because it’s simultaneously full of battles and blessings.

We live in a Kingdom that is now and not yet. A small seed that is becoming a mighty tree. In it’s future fullness *“There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* (Rev 21). But now we experience the pain and frustration of a fallen world, whilst also expecting God to break in with increasing measure and heal, restore and rebuild.

### 6) Friends who don’t seek recognition but let God get the glory.

*"Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today.""*

There's only one name mentioned in the whole story. Jesus. Not the friends, not even the man who was forgiven and healed. God always seems to love working with people who don't mind whether they get the credit! Let's be a church like that.

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## Questions:

- **Friendship with God.** Does this phrase feel remarkable or ordinary to you? Why should it feel remarkable?
  - **A better way to live.** We can be motivated by guilt or by freedom. Which of these do you tend to be most led by?
  - **Friends like these.** How can a small group become more of a community of friends?
  - **Uniting around a need.** These friends united around a need to bring their friend to Jesus. What needs could we unite around in our group?
  - **A messed up world.** What does it look like for us to live by faith in a broken world and what challenges does that present?
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