



# MY BEST FRIEND, MY SAVIOR

Grace/Caminando con Jesús Lutheran Church

Easter 6 (B)  
[Mother's Day]

May 10, 2015

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## SERMON TEXT

### John 15:9-17

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✝ IN NOMINE JESU ✝

This woman as beautiful as can be.  
She's always been there for me.  
Yeah she's my mother, my best friend too.  
Without her in my life,  
I wouldn't know what to do.  
Her heart made of gold, giving love  
so freely; can't be bought or sold.  
No matter who you are or what you do,  
She's there to listen and help you through.  
Can't express how great she is to me.  
Without her, I know not where I'd be.  
No one like her, my best friend, my mother.

The blessing of having Mom as your BFF (Best Friend Forever) is not to be taken lightly. That's especially true with a Christian mom. Having a Christian mom demonstrate her friendship as a fruit of her own faith in Jesus is an absolutely priceless blessing, because such a mom becomes for us a telescope, allowing us to see and know our Savior a little bit better than we ever have before. In our Gospel Jesus gives us that stunning lable—*friend*. If we don't have people in our lives, like our moms, who are actually our friends by the love they show, when Jesus calls us friend, it doesn't really hit us; it's like it doesn't compute. But, when we have a person in our life like our mom who is our friend, someone who loves us, listens to us, helps us, ah, then

when Jesus calls us “friend” we can think, “Jesus you are just like that to me...*only more, only better.*”

Knowing better than ever what a friend we have in Jesus is so very important, and here’s why: He is the Vine, we are the branches, and it is to the Father’s glory that we bear much fruit. Well, my dear people, one of the most potent nutrients—I mean better than *Miracle Grow* for a plant—to produce this all-important fruitfulness is the good news of knowing Jesus as our friend, having that word, that truth hit us where it counts. So, today, I want us all to see better than ever what a friend we have in Jesus and wax poetic: ***My best friend, my Savior.***

### **1. Nobody loves you like your Savior loves you!**

A Christian author aboard a plane captured in words a snapshot of the old saying, “Nobody loves you like mama loves you.” He writes:

It was an unusually bumpy flight...Being a frequent flyer, [I] wasn't all that concerned as the plane was batted around...Others, however, were grabbing onto their armrests or steadying themselves on the seat back in front of them. Then I noticed a young mother caring for her baby. She wrapped her arms around her infant and pulled the child very close to her chest. Then she dropped her chin, rested it on the back of the child's head, and began to sing ever so quietly, 'Hush, Little Baby.'

In the words before us the apostle John captures for us a perfect snapshot of the absolute truth—Nobody loves you like your Savior loves you! How much does Jesus love you? Look again! ***“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.”*** Incredible! Amazing! Think how much and to what extent the Father has loved the Son from all eternity and to eternity—

beyond anything our small, finite brains can even begin to conceive or imagine! The love of God the Father for his perfect, holy, and only Son with whom he is one in essence from and for all eternity simply put is the most complete, the most perfect, the most selfless, the most dedicated love there can ever be! Jesus' love for you and me is *that* love! Jesus demonstrated that love for you and me in life. He lived in your place and mine a sinless life, never once choosing his best interest over yours, and he gave that perfection to you. Jesus displayed that unfathomable love in the most vivid and concrete way. Jesus identifies the greatest act of love, the greatest sacrifice that can be given for the good of the other person that can be shown: **"Greater love has no one than this:** (Than what? What's the greatest love there is?) **to lay down one's life for one's friends."**

It's like the love shown a little girl named Liza; she suffered from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery was a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother, who had survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked him if he would be willing to give blood to his sister. The boy hesitated only for a moment, took a deep breath, and said, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save Liza." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in a bed next to his sister and smiled, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. But then his face grew serious, his smile faded, and he turned to the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" You see, the boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood.

What that boy was willing to do for his sister, Jesus did for you and me. He gave his blood for you...*all of it!* He gave his life for you and me...*all of it!* He gave his very soul for you as he endured hell on the cross, and did so willingly and gladly out of

perfect love for his Father, who asked him to do this, and out of a perfect, holy, complete and total love for *you* and me!

And what makes that great love of Jesus' for you and me—a love as great and total as the Father's love for him—even more unimaginably off the charts is that this great display of love in laying down his life for us accomplished unimaginably great things. There have been mothers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their children, laying down their lives for them. But, as great as those ultimate sacrifices were and are they cannot cleanse their children's souls and reconcile them to God; those sacrifices cannot snatch their children from behind the hellish gates of unbelief. Even the great love and sacrifice of a mother for her child cannot keep her child from dying eternally; nor can it overcome the grave and ensure that their children rise from the dead with bodies and souls as glorious as the body and soul of God's one and only Son. But Jesus sacrifice, *his* love can and has done precisely that for *you* and me!

What'd I tell ya'? ***Nobody loves you like your Savior loves you!*** May you and I love him back with all of our heart! May we wax poetic this day and each day we're given in praise of Jesus—***My Best Friend, My Savior!*** And may that love for him not just be beautiful words spoken but beautiful and holy actions taken!

## 2. A heart only a Savior could love!

As we bask in and dwell on this incomparable, one-of-a-kind love of Jesus, I call on us to wax poetic and do the things Jesus calls us to do in love and praise of him for this reason above all: You've heard the expression—He has a face only a mother could love, right? (I often say that about the guy staring back at me in the mirror every morning!) Well, the truth is often we children sometimes display *hearts* only a mother could love.

A case in point, recently, I visited a mom who related to me the heart-breaking story of her unrequited love for her daughter. The mom told me how her grandson cares for her, helps her, calls her, visits her. But, then, with obvious pain she lamented how her only daughter never does. She was even bracing herself for the coming pain of having Mother's Day come and go without so much as a call from her only daughter. The thing about this is that even though the mom knows this, even though her love for her daughter has been so one-sided and she painfully longs for the day her daughter will give back even one little drop of the love shown her, that mom *still* loves her daughter! She *still* thinks of her, *still* prays for her, still stands ready and willing to help, to give, to sacrifice for her girl at the drop of a hat!

That daughter displays a heart only a mother could love, and her mom does, her mom loves her! That's the most amazing, praise-worthy aspect of the incomparable, one-a-kind love Jesus has for you and me! Listen, when we think about how much and to what extent Jesus loves us, what is the only thing that makes sense? To love him back, right? With all of our hearts! How does Jesus say we can show our love for him? V. 10—"**If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love.**" V. 14 —"**You are my friends if you do what I command.**" So, obedience, complete, not selective obedience, not obeying only the commands we feel like obeying and disregarding the rest. As a WELS pastor well said, selective obedience is not obedience, it's convenience. Well, what is Jesus' command? What is essentially his *one* command? Vs. 12 & 17—"**Love each other.**" How? In what way? "**As I have loved you.**"

At this point I want you to have two thoughts in mind: one, what *that kind* of love actually looks like in our lives and two, how well we've actually done at showing that kind of love. Thought #1: It's been said that the reason the editors of our hymnal put the

wedding service right next to the funeral service is because both services involve the death of a man. :) But don't get me wrong. Marriage is also the death of a woman, because the love with which Jesus has loved us involves *the death of self*. Loving someone that way, as Jesus loved you, means you don't want to have your way. It means you won't be happy if the other person isn't. It means that your love *will be* an exercise in frustration!— You leave the window up when you want it down, you watch someone else's favorite TV show and listen to someone else's favorite radio station, you're passionate even when you have a headache, you stop what you're doing to help the other person, and you do so without sighing, you learn to be patient without sulking, you do an extra chore without being asked, you don't interrupt when they're talking, you let the other person take the credit, you sacrifice your time to listen and, at the same time, are considerate of someone else's time, you reach out to a hurting soul and give up your comfort and money to make someone else comfortable and happy. That is loving each other as Jesus loved you. Thought #2: how well have we done at loving each other like that? All too often our love is like the two hikers walking through the woods. As they were walking, suddenly they came upon a mama bear. Immediately, one of the men took off his boots and started lacing up a pair of running shoes. His friend cried out, "What are you doing? We can't outrun that bear, even with jogging shoes." "Who cares about the bear?" the first hiker replied. "All I have to worry about is outrunning *you*." All too often our love for each other is like that: me first. I'll help you, if I have time and it doesn't cramp my style.

And so, you and I, by nature, have hearts that only a Savior could love...and, what a Savior, what friend he is! He loves us; he loves us to this unimaginable extent—"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." He loved us in the greatest way that we could possibly be loved, making the ultimate self-sacrifice for our

greatest good—the laying down of his life for you and me! He loves us with an eternal and, therefore, unchangeable love, as he calls to mind when he tells us—**You did not choose me, but I chose you!** Before the creation of the world he chose us to be his own by his great sacrifice of love; before the creation of the world, he chose to connect us to him, the Vine, through baptism and the good news of him that we might bear abundant fruit to his glory and the glory of the Father. Because Jesus loves us with that eternal, unchangeable love, even though we are by nature self-focused and prove it by the ways we do not love him enough to love each other as he loved us, still Jesus loves us, still he forgives us, still he intercedes for us, blesses us, throws his arm around us and calls us—my friend—and he always will!

What a friend we have in Jesus! May we love him and be his best friend, waxing poetic with our hearts, mouths, and our glad and willing obedience to his command to love each other:

This God-man as beautiful as can be.  
He's always been there for me.  
Yeah he's my Savior, my best friend too.  
Without him in my life,  
I wouldn't know what to do.  
His heart made of gold, giving love  
so freely; can't be bought or sold.  
No matter who you are or what you do,  
He's there to listen and help you through.  
Can't express how great he is to me.  
Without him, oh, I know where I'd be.  
No one like him, **my best friend, my Savior.** Amen.

## SOLI DEO GLORIA

