

GREATER LOVE
By Donald G. Levell

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you (John 15:13-14).

When we think of the word “friend,” we usually think of someone for whom we have brotherly or sisterly affection, someone to whom we are attached or are close to, someone who shares our same interests. Jesus, as Lord and Master, says to His disciples, “You are my friends if you do what I command you.” We, who were previously God’s enemies, are now called friends of God because of His great love for us. The love that the Lord Jesus expressed for us goes much deeper than feelings. Jesus’ love shows a commitment even to death. It depicts a decision which led to the ultimate sacrifice: the giving of His Life for them and the whole world!

Jesus explains His love for His sheep in John 10:11, saying, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep,” and in verse 15, He says again, “I lay down My life for the sheep.” Jesus demonstrated love on a plain that had never been seen before. His love extended to people beyond those obedient ones who were his friends, who hung on every one of His words, to enemies who hate and have hated Him. Liars, thieves, and murderers surrounded Him and jeered Him as He suffered for them on the Cross! What kind of love is this? The apostle Paul says, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8). John, the beloved, says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” in the same selfless manner (1 John 4:11).

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