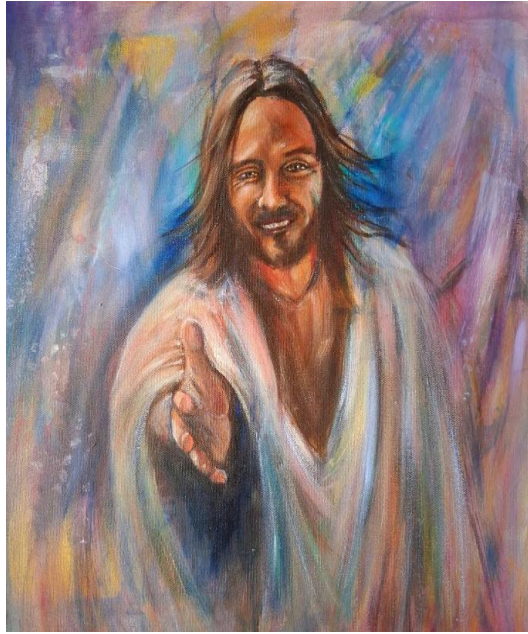


UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.... CONDITIONAL FRIENDSHIP



God's love is unconditional.

That love floods our sin-sick world at this moment.

It's here for everybody.

Everybody.

"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

A new life, a clean slate for every human soul.

Not because we're worthy.

Not because we're worth saving.

Simply because he loves us.

All of us

Unconditionally.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

The Father sees every sparrow fall, observes every blade of grass, and looks into each of our hearts with unconditional love.

"Come to me!

"I will heal every wound, break every chain, wipe away every tear!"

When we open our hearts to that love,
We are drawn to the Father through a single door:

The door of forgiveness.

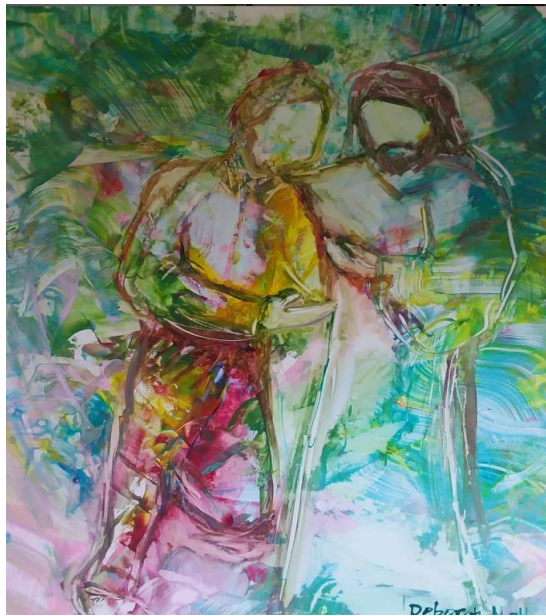
Which is Jesus, crucified and risen.

He is the door to the Father's unconditional love.

Moreover, Jesus invites us to be his friends.

But here's the mystery:

Friendship with Jesus is conditional.



“You are my friends, if you do what I command you.”

John 15:14

And what does Jesus command us to do?

Requite the Father's love. Return it!

***Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength,
and your neighbor as yourself.***

Every parable, every teaching, every command of Jesus boils down to this simple command:

Love God and your neighbor.

“You are my friends, if you do what I command you.”

In Matthew 5, 6, and 7, (the Sermon on the Mount) Jesus describes the life he empowers us to live, when we are his friends:

A life driven by love.



“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.”

John 15: 9-10

God's love is unconditional.

It's as steady as the burning sun.

But to actually know that love, we have to requite it.



We have to walk in love---toward God, toward our neighbor.

Every neighbor.

Jesus makes it possible for each of us to walk in love, if we will get under his yoke and learn from him.

And be his friends.

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

John 15:13-15



Prayer: Dearest holy and loving Lamb of God, Help us to sense your unconditional love that surrounds us at all times. Draw us into your arms. Flood us with your love. Heal us. Free us. Wipe away our every fear and tear. Oh Lord, that we would be so filled with your love that we are able to return it with an intensity like we never have before, an intensity that draws us into your very heart. As we are covered with holy love and holy forgiveness, may we enter into a deeper fellowship with you, as friends. As friends may we love you with all we have, as friends may we not let you down, may we do what you ask of us... to live a life driven by the very love you give to us. Yoke us close to you, our dear, beloved friend,...so we are empowered to abide in your love...empowered to truly love our neighbor, empowered to unleash your forgiveness to this needy world ... and as we share your love... may wounds be healed, chains be broken, tears wiped away and countless numbers enter into friendship with you as well. Amen

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2020

Featured Artist: Courtesy of Deborah Nell

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