

# A Friend that Sticks Closer Than a Brother

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer  
August 26, 1956

Along toward the end of Dr. Simpson's ministry in New York, one of his ushers, who had himself gotten old in the service of the Lord and under the ministry of Dr. Simpson, said to somebody, and he said it with an intention to be complimentary. He said, Brother Simpson only has one sermon. He meant by that, of course, that Dr. Simpson preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, only he approached it from a different angle.

And after a man has been around as long as I have, it's inevitable that he should repeat himself. And I suppose that I repeat myself more frequently than I know. But is there any excuse for a man deliberately setting out to do it, as I am tonight? I hope there is. Because if there isn't, I'm an excuseless preacher tonight.

Because I want to talk about a verse that I have quoted so often and prayed about so much and talked about, but tonight I want to condense a few thoughts about it. And there will be repetitions, without any doubt, but it's that verse 24 of Proverbs 18. It says, a man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Now that's the way the King James Version has it.

And I looked it up in quite a number of versions, and I wrote three others down here, all standard, accepted, and off-quoted translations. One of them says, there are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. And then another version says, there are friends who only bring you loss, but there is a friend more loyal than a brother. And then another one says, there are friends who play at friendship, and there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Now, the variations here are not very many. That is, they all end up by saying that there is a friend, a loyal, loving friend, that is dear and near and closer and more loyal than a brother. But they vary only in their approach, one saying that if you want friends, you'll have to be friendly. That's King James. And the others indicating, and almost all of them indicate, that it's drawing a contrast, this verse, between a real friend and the other kind, a friend that pretends to be a friend, or that brings you loss, or that toys with friendship, and that friend who is loyal, that loving friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Now, I want to talk a little while about this friend. And I feel I ought to say it again to a new generation, to a new people who have grown up, and to you that are listening to me for the first time.

Now, let me begin by saying that everything presupposes its opposite. Have you ever thought that if it was not for the word short, there would be no meaning to the word long? If it was not for the word up, there would be no meaning to the word down? And if it was not for the word, bad, the word, good, would have no meaning to you? And if it was not for the word, large, the word, small, couldn't mean anything. Everything

presupposes its opposite. Straight presupposes crooked, and if you didn't know straight, the word, crooked, you couldn't explain that to anybody.

And so, with truth, if there was no lie, no falsehood, the word truth would have no meaning. You would say, what's truth? What does that mean? Well, it's the opposite of a lie, or if there were no truth, then lie would have no meaning. If there were no bad, then good could have no meaning.

And so in our text here, there is a friend. There is a friend. And if there were not an enemy, the word, friend, could have no meaning here. So, everything presupposes its opposite, and the word, friend, presupposes, enemy. That's why I think these versions that set in opposition a friend who is not a friend but an enemy to the one who is the friend indeed are the correct renderings of the text.

Now there is an enemy. And I wish I didn't have to say this. I wish that I could go smoothly and optimistically along and tell you that the world was safe and beautiful and nice and full of good thoughts and there was no harm anywhere. But if I did, I would be an enemy that would bring you loss. I would be a friend who would be playing at friendship.

I must tell you that there is a real, a formidable, and a dangerous enemy or enemies abroad in the land, and those enemies are ubiquitous, they're everywhere, they're treacherous, and you don't know them until they have done their harm, and they're determined and they're cruel, and they've planned the whole thing. And over all these enemies that there are, there is one grim, gaunt, hungry shadow that is the worst enemy of all, and that is the word, the enemy we call by the word death. And these enemies are too great for us.

Now I believe we're living in a world full of enemies, and they're too great for us. And these enemies are here and they're present, and no matter how we try to smooth it up, or how we, in our desire to be, to accept the popular view of things, how we try to gloss over the presence of the enemy, the enemy is here.

Now I want to tell you something, and I tell you without apology, and I don't want anybody going and saying, now Mr. Tozer said this, but I'm quite sure he didn't mean what he said. I believe in the devil.

That's what I want to tell you. I believe in the devil. I believe that he exists. I do not believe that he is a euphonious expression which has been invented to cover everything undesirable. I believe that he is a being. I believe that he exists in the world. I believe in the devil. And I believe that he is the criminal who would like nothing better than to report himself dead.

They tell about a criminal who reported himself dead, got somebody else buried, and the report went out that this terrible man was now dead and in his grave. Somebody else had been mistakenly identified as this criminal. And after they got him buried and the police let down on their vigilance and they stopped locking windows, he went back to work again. And he could work much better after he had had himself pronounced officially dead.

And the devil is the kind of devil that doesn't seek to be known. He seeks to be unknown. He seeks not to be praised and accepted and hailed. He seeks to be thought non-existent. And he is back of every book written to prove he doesn't exist. He's back of every sermon preached to show that he doesn't exist. He's back of every apologetic statement made by any half-believing preacher who says he doesn't exist or throws any doubt upon his existence.

The devil is a reality. He is the essence and the concentrated terror of all that is antagonistic and hostile and cruel and brutal and sadistic and deadly. And he's out to get everybody that he can get.

Now the Bible tells us in Genesis that he came and tempted Adam and Eve. And it tells us later on in the Scriptures something about how he got where he is. And it tells us that he came to our Lord Jesus Christ and tried to tempt Him and ruin Him. And Paul talks about him and says that he blinds the minds of the unbelieving.

And we hear about him in the book of Revelation. And we learn of his ultimate disposal and fate. And the church fathers and reformers and saints and holy men and women who have lived down the years have all believed in him as a being. He is an enemy. Now he's the real enemy that makes all the other enemies real and gives strength and fiber to all the others. So, I believe that there's an enemy.

And then I believe there's another enemy that we call sin. Now again we have euphonized this thing and by dressing it up in a lovely garment we have tried to smooth it out. But sin is still sin. We have to hear of a man stealing a month-old baby and leaving it to die in a brush heap before we're made to see that sin exists.

But remember sin has every color and every face and every complexion and wears every face and has every form and takes on itself every kind of a body and appears with many masks and under many disguises and in many guises. And sin, from the abstractions of the mind to the outward fleshly sin of murder or adultery, sin is an existent thing and sin is an enemy.

Now the world is full of these enemies, full of them. You walk among them, you move among them. And the past is an enemy to a Christian. The criminal's past is his worst enemy. If a criminal did not have a past he would not have an enemy in the wide world. But it's the fact that he's got a past and the fact that his handwriting or his fingerprint or his mugshot as they call it or some witness to his crime can be produced to pin his past to him, then his past becomes an enemy.

And every sinner's past is an enemy to him. Don't forget that my friend. You've lived down your past, but your past is your enemy because we've all sinned and come short of God's glory and there isn't a son or daughter of Eve anywhere on the earth's surface above the age of accountability who hasn't got a past. Past may be lurid and terrible, or it may be very dull and ordinary but there's sin in that past nevertheless and for all of us sinners the past is our enemy.

And then the law, the law of God, they talk so freely now about the law. Once I was standing waiting for a streetcar years ago and it was raining and I crowded into a

doorway and a man crowded into the doorway with me and while we waited on the streetcar, I said a word about God and religion to him and the gospel and he told me, he wasn't angry nor hostile, he was just telling me what he thought. He said, I think the Ten Commandments is enough. He said the Ten Commandments, they're enough, that's enough. The keeping of the Ten Commandments, that's enough. He said, I don't believe that there's any need for any other religion or any other gospel than the Ten Commandments.

Well, streetcars have a way of coming even though it seems they never do, and we didn't finish that and I didn't convince him. But my dear friend, there isn't a sinner in the wide world that can turn to the law as a friend for the law is not your friend. The law is not a friend after you've broken it. Until the penalty has been paid, the law is an enemy.

And so, we have this sin, look, look, the lying and the stealing and the cheating and the swearing and the drinking and the uncleanness. In all of these things we have forfeited our right to be protected by the law of God and the law has turned from being a potential friend to being an actual enemy.

And then there is change. I don't know whether you feel the way I do about all this change, change, change and decay and all around I see. Change and chance are busy ever and there's a change going on all the time and we've rather accepted it. No matter if your boat is moving toward the falls and ready to plunge over, there's some big mouth orator who will get up and say, we must accept change, yes sir, we must accept change from the flat faceted surface of the water to the roaring bellows below. There's always somebody to defend change.

But have you noticed that change rarely does anybody any good? Have you noticed after you're about middle age that changes are never for the better after that? Have you noticed it, fellow? Have you noticed what change does to you from that time on? If it doesn't take your hair, it changes its color.

And so, change slowly and insidiously and sometimes quite rapidly takes us downhill to the grave. Change, change, always changing, always motion, always the shifting undulation of life, always and always it's our enemy.

If you could always stay three years old, wouldn't that be wonderful? Or if you're in good health, if you could always stay sixteen, or if you could always stay twenty-three, and after old mother nature has stampeded you along, if you could only stay thirty, if you could only stay where you want to stay, but you can't. Change and chance our busy ever, and so change becomes our enemy.

And unless we're right with God, change makes us from what was better to worse. And the moral condition goes from better to worse and never from worse to better, however it may seem, unless there has been the miracle of God wrought in the meantime.

And so, with cold hostility these enemies go on, and I believe in them. I believe they exist. I believe that they are real. I believe that they are here. And I believe that some of them are intelligent. I believe at least that they are directed by intelligences. I do not believe that we're in a world of luck and happenstance. I believe that we're in a world of directed hostility.

I believe that just as the communists way back in 1914 or 1910, even as early as that, began to lay their cold plans to destroy the world, so Satan had laid his terrible plans, and I don't think Milton missed it too far when he pictured Satan in paradise lost as talking to his demons in the world below and deciding that instead of fighting God head on or instead of accepting hell or wherever they'd been driven to as their final abode, that they were to go back and fight God by flanking him. Fight God by coming in from the side and destroying that which God loved most.

And so said Satan, I will myself go, and I will tempt this man, this great being that God has made so much like Himself, and I believe that I can appeal to His self-love, and I can destroy Him.

Now Milton doesn't give chapter and verse, but it's easy to find chapter and verse in the Scriptures, and that just happened that way, and Satan came and he's still here. And the same devil that tempted Adam, and the same devil that tempted Job, and the same devil that tempted Jesus, and the same devil that down the years has tempted men and ruined them, that same devil is present now.

There is an enemy. And if there were no enemy, there would be no gospel or any need of one. If there was no enemy, there would be no Bible or any need of one. And if there were no enemy, there would be no friend and no need of one. But because there is a hostile, cold-eyed, level-gazed, deadly, determined, thoughtful, cool enemy out to get us, and to get you and your child, and that little, infant that was born into your home less than a month ago, out to get him there is the coldest, most hostile, most sadistic, most incredibly vile and wicked being that the human mind can conceive.

And he has as his help sin and the flesh and organized society and temptations of every sort. And young people raised in this hot age, this age of pepped up jazz, this age of paint and hollow sounds and colored lights, this age of fun and frivolity and circuses and bread, this age of jokes and silliness, young people reared in such an atmosphere of this are openly challenging the men who lead the church and are saying, why should you tell us that there are things young people shouldn't do?

Why do you tell us that there are shows we shouldn't see, and that drinking is wrong, and we shouldn't gamble, and that we shouldn't do the things the world does? Isn't that old-fashioned and wrong? And we all have to go on the defensive, because Satan has flanked our young people, and he couldn't meet them head-on because we had verse and chapter, so he came in from the side. And a whole generation of evangelicals have been taught to go with the way of the world, and they've been taught by men who ought to know better, who set an example of worldliness before them.

Why, they used to say of the old Puritans that they didn't believe in bearbaiting, which of course was sort of like cockfighting, only they used bears, they said they don't believe in bear-baiting, and the reason they don't is not because they pity the bear, but because they don't want anybody to have any fun.

So, they say, you don't believe in worldliness because you don't want young people to have fun. It so happened, I was converted when I was seventeen, and I believe exactly then what I believe now. Not that I'm rigid and unchanging, I think, I adapt where

adaptation is proper and right and necessary, but I saw the world then as being a hollow old whore with a mask, a painted grinning mask, and I see it so still.

And the world, the flesh, and the devil are our enemies, but somebody says, can't we help ourselves? Well, there are some who try it, and they say, I'll help myself, I've got courage, I'm not going to lean on a God that may not exist, I've got courage. What grounds are your courage on, tell me, tell me, how can you escape? Where are you going to go for help? Tell me.

If a wild cell gets loose in your body, tell me how you're going to fight cancer off. Tell me. One of the greatest women athletes ever known in the history of the world, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, lies very, very low tonight, and I'm sorry, she was a wonderful woman, I'm sorry. She lies very low tonight, she laughed, and she kept her chin up and she made funny cracks, and she did her best, but cancer's too big for the greatest woman athlete in the world.

And her great overgrown hulk of a tender-hearted husband, who is himself a professional wrestler, there he is, he could pick everybody on his platform up and three or four fellas from down there in one hand and throw us over his shoulder. But an enemy has got a hold of his wife, and he can't do a thing. He can flex his great biceps and swell his great chest, but he's as helpless as a two-day old kitten. Babe Zaharias is dying.

No, self-help won't do, my friend, just as you can't fight a disease germ or a wild cell loose in your bloodstream. So you can't fight sin. And so you can't fight the devil. And so you can't fight the law that you've broken.

But some say, I'll ignore the whole thing, and it'll go away. Babe Zaharias can't say that. Some things don't go away when you ignore them. They only bore in deeper. When you try to ignore it, it's true, nevertheless. There's an enemy, there's a past, there's a broken law, there is a hurt God, there's a crucified Savior. There is justice in the universe.

And then some say, well, improvement, we'll improve ourselves. Well, I believe there's improvement and certainly there's a vast gap between what a man is and what he can make of himself. All our schools are built upon the belief that man can change and improve and make himself better, that he can learn, that he can purge out of his mind superstitions and wrong ideas, and that he can fill his mind with good knowledge and good thoughts, and he can educate himself, he can improve himself. We all believe that.

But what skill can restore a forfeited life? The soul that sinneth shall die, said Paul to the Christians, you were a four-time dead in your trespasses and sins. What self-improvement can restore a forfeited life?

Some say others can help me. How can I help you when I can't help myself? How can you help me when you can't help yourself? How can the third man help us when he can't help himself? How can a hundred helpless men help a helpless man when the hundred helpless men with all their pooled wisdom can't help each other? How can they help us when they can't help themselves?

And there isn't anybody, remember this, sir, remember this. There isn't anybody that can ever take your responsibility before the enemy or the judge. Nobody. Somebody puts a ticket on your car, and you know somebody, maybe you can get off. I think it's a poor way to do, and I don't think a Christian would do it.

He'd do what I did once when I boarded Mrs. Hines' car and got arrested. Huh? I had R.R. Brown in the car with me, and I said, talk him out of it, Brown, but he didn't. He didn't talk him out of it. I had to go back, stood up there, felt like a criminal, fined me a dollar and told me not to do it anymore. And I told them I'd never do it anymore, so help me, and the next time I went through their town, I'd slow down to a walk, and we smiled, and that was it.

But if you, if you know somebody, sometimes you can get off before the law. But who's going to be responsible for you before the broken law of God? There are friends who pretend to be friends. There are friends who play at friendship. There are friends who bring you only loss. But who's the friend that'll stand for you? Where is that fellow, that man that tempted you into some iniquity? Is he going to stand before the bar of God and be judged for your iniquity? No, you will. Nobody can take my responsibility on himself. I stand all by myself alone.

So, the world is full of enemies, and the broken law, and the slow, cold approach of that blood-chilling war we call death, wearing us out and beating us down and flattening us out at last. But there's a friend.

Now, if I stopped here and dismissed, you could justly say, Tozer is a pessimist, and I'm not going back to hear him. If I hadn't anything else to say but what I've said up to now, I'd better have stayed home and so would you, because I've simply been telling you the terrible negative side of human life.

But there's another side, and it is, there is a friend. Spell that Friend with capital letters. Let that Friend, the word, Friend, glow there. Let it glow there. There is a Friend.

The tremendous powers are friendly. I believe in a friendly heaven, and that God is a friend, and that Jesus Christ is a friend. The law of God can never be a friend to any man that's broken it, for heaven can never be a cheap police court where you can know somebody and get off. Justice must be done, and the law of God must be vindicated everywhere in heaven, earth, and hell. But I still believe there is a Friend there.

You and I, I was thinking about it today and wondering why I wasn't happier over the gospel and why the people aren't happier over the gospel. And I thought of those who are behind the Iron Curtain, where they're in danger every minute of their lives, where they stand in bread lines to get a little bit of black bread, and where they can't call their soul their own, and where they're afraid of every unidentified shadow, lest it be an enemy. And then when by some way they get to the United States, they've been known to fall down and kiss the ground. And I've heard them interviewed on the air, and I've heard them say in broken English and with broken voice, oh, how glad, how glad to be in America.

Our political parties fight and tell each other they're ruining the country and everything but get to come out from behind that Iron Curtain and see that old lady that stands so

tall and noble there at the foot of Manhattan with a torch in her hand, and you'll thank God on your knees for America. And for a country that's never known freedom, how beautiful freedom is.

But you and I, we complain, if they won't let us part more than an hour, we complain over trifles and forget that God Almighty has given us a bit of His own free heaven here on this lovely continent we call America. And God's been so good to us that not all the pooled efforts of all the politicians for 200 years have been able to take our liberty away from it. We still have it. And I wonder if we aren't the same when it comes down to the gospel.

The man who cuts himself and tries to let the blood out and let his sin out, the man who cuts the chicken's head off and tries to atone for his iniquity, the man who crawls on his hands and knees to the Ganges River, the man who stands with raised hand on the riverbank and prays to Gitchi Manitou, the man who fasts or raises his hand and holds it till it withers, or who sleeps on beds of spikes or walks through fire, don't laugh at them. They've got religion in them, they've got a religious yearning in them, and they want reality, and they can't find reality. And they go down to the last without finding it.

Oh, how good it would be for a man or a woman like that to be told there's a Friend, there's somebody up there that isn't mad at you, there's somebody up there that knows your dust, there's somebody there that became your friend, not in a morbid sentimental way, but he became your friend in the only way He could. He became your friend first by taking on Himself your nature without sin, your nature.

An angel couldn't be my friend, he could be my messenger, my servant, God's messenger, sent to be servants and messengers to them who shall be heirs of salvation, but imagine making a friend of an angel. Imagine talking freely with Gabriel. I couldn't do it; I don't know whether you could.

For a man to be my friend, he has to have my nature, and he's got to know all about me, and he has to understand me as a friend understands me. You can teach a chimpanzee to eat with a knife and fork, but you can't make a friend out of a chimpanzee, he doesn't understand you. He's got to have your nature to understand you.

And the Second Person of the Trinity took my nature, and He took on Himself the form of a man. And as the old creed says, as I've repeated so often, He is man, not by the degrading of the manhood in the flesh, but by the taking up of the Godhood in the flesh, but by the taking up of the manhood into God. He elevated humanity into God, and thus became the God-man and walked among us.

So, when Christ became a man, it was not to the degradation of deity, it was to the elevation of humanity, and He's our friend. He accepts all responsibilities. He charges Himself with everything that's against me.

And so, I can say I know Somebody. Before the broken law, before the enemy, before sin and the devil, I know Somebody. And He accepts my responsibility for my forfeited life, and He can do it because of who He is. He can do it because He's man and God, not one or the other, but both. He can do it because He's Jesus and Lord. And His Jesus name is my man name, and His Lord name is His God name. And He's both, God and man. And

because of what He did, always remember, friends, that you'll never get any lasting help nor protection nor safety by manipulating words or thoughts. Always remember that. Saying things over or repeating things over will never help you. Always remember that Christian paganism won't help you.

There's no magic in anything. You can go to sleep under a cross and go to hell in the night. There's no magic in a cross. There's no magic in blessed water. And there's no magic in a biscuit. And there's no magic in oil on your forehead after you're dead. I don't believe in magic; I believe in Christ. And He can because of what He did. I don't let anybody talk you into thinking what a nice person you are.

Dale Carnegie and the gentlemen in New York and a few others have gained great popularity by telling us that we ought to remember what wonderful people we are. But brethren, there has been a long, noble stream of sincerity from Abel who offered blood of a lamb down to the latest Dayak converted in Borneo. And they've never started by saying, I think I'm wonderful. They always started by saying, depart from me, O God, I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

And the doctrine that I'll be all right if I'll just chuck myself under the chin is a doctrine of damnation and deceit. I must begin with a forfeited law. I must begin with forfeited life and a broken law. I must begin with a God who can't receive me and the law that can't approve me and an enemy that I can't deal with. I must begin where David began.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my sin. For in sin was I born and in iniquity was I conceived. I must begin there. I must begin by not raising my eyes but gazing down at the floor and beating my breast and saying, have mercy on me, a sinner. And then the Friend comes. He's only a Friend to the friendless.

If you've got a friend in a book, or if you have a friend in a technique, or if you have a friend in a crucifix, or if you have a friend in a bottle of water, or if you have a friend in a chain of beads, he can't be your friend. But if you have no friend, no friend, no friend, my God, no friend in the universe, no friend, no friend.

I have friends in this congregation tonight. I have people in this congregation tonight that if I were to go to them and say, I want to borrow \$1,000 without signing anything, they'd hand me \$1,000. I've got friends here that if I'd go and say, I want to borrow your car to take a trip, they'd lend me their car like that and walk. I have friends here that if anybody came and attacked me, they'd fight for me down to the end.

I have friends like that, but I haven't a friend that could go before the terror and thunder and lightning and fire and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words and dare therefore in white-faced terror to defend me before the broken law of God. Not a friend have I got. I haven't a friend that can help me in that terrible day, that day of terror when I face the Judge. Not a friend. Neither have you.

That pretty little girl that you're going with or that you're married to, oh sure, she believes that you're a cross between King Saul and King David and Liberace. All right. Very good, very good. I wouldn't want her to think anything else. But in that day of

terror, that day when the voice of God shall entomb the universe and the world shall fall apart, she can't help you then.

Big old, bulgy-muscled Zaharias stands with tears beside his wife and watches her die. And your dearest closest friend would have to stand before that terrible bar of judgment and see you led away. If indeed we do would see a thing like that, I don't know what that could happen. But I know they couldn't help you.

Well, some don't come to the Friend, but I tell you there's a Friend. And I want to close on that note. I want to tell you that Jesus Christ is your friend. Jesus, lover of my soul, says the song, lover of my soul, He's your friend. The proud and the self-confident say I don't need Him. And the quiet lonely soul says I'll think my way out. And the meek self-effacing soul says I'm too bad. But there never was a man yet so bad that he didn't have one friend. Never a man. Never one lonely man.

When Frank, what's his name, I've forgotten now, robbed a bank down here on Michigan or near somewhere in the loop, raced out onto Michigan Avenue in a car. Those great big handsome square-shouldered policemen they have on Michigan Avenue, they're directing traffic. One of them tried to stop him and he turned his gun on him and killed him. He raced one more block and that policeman tried to stop him, and he turned his gun on him and killed him. Two men, do you remember? Caught him in a very short time. Sentenced him to die.

Harry Lundquist, a Baptist, a Swedish covenant preacher in this city, walked with him to the chair. But before he went, he repented and sought the face of his God and Dr. Harry Lundquist believed that he was a true Christian and that he died a true Christian. It's possible.

The young man who was sentenced to die and was soon to go to the chair, they asked him whether he had anything to say and he said, no, I have nothing to say but if you don't mind, I have something to sing. Well, it was not regular, but they said, all right, go ahead. So, he stood up there and sang, Is there anyone to help us when the end is drawing near? Yes, there is one, only one, the blessed, blessed Jesus, he's the one.

It's too bad they have to wait until that time, but he did thank God, he did. And if you could ask that man on the cross there that died a thief and a traitor there on the cross, if you could ask that man who said, have mercy on me, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, if he could have sung and had known that song, I think he could have sung it there from the cross, Is there anyone to help us, one who understands our grief?

Yes, there's One and there He was dying between them on the cross. The one on the other side died with curses but he wasn't any worse than the one on this side who died in peace. The difference was, one of them repudiated his righteousness and took the Friend, the other clung to the tattered remnants of his spotty righteousness and died. You've got a Friend, sir, you've got a Friend, madam. There's a Friend and His name is Jesus.

And He died for you and He rose and He lives and He pleads and He's your friend. There's a Friend. And all around you the enemy, but there's a Friend. And all you have to do is turn to Him and say, O Jesus, Jesus, friend Jesus, I don't know much about theology,

and I'm all mixed up about churches and baptism and all that, but Jesus, they say you're a friend. He'll take you as you are and ask no questions, except that you throw yourself in His arms and on His mercy and He'll be responsible for you before a broken law and an outraged God. He'll be responsible and He can do it because of who He is and what He did. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ tonight, will you? Let's pray.

O Christ, we thank Thee that we ever heard Thy name, Thy wonderful name, Thy golden name. We thank Thee, we call Thee, Jesus. And that's Thy man's side, that's our side. And we call Thee Lord Christ and that's Thy God's side. So, Thou dost unite in Thyself, God and man.

Father, we thank Thee we believe in Thy Son. We daren't, daren't face the future alone. We daren't face the treacherous foe. We daren't face tomorrow's uncertainty. But we throw ourselves in the arms of our friend, Jesus Christ. Jesus, what a friend for sinners.

Jesus, lover of my soul. Will Thou grant that some here tonight may go home and kneel down by their bedside tonight and say, O Friend, I take Thee tonight. I take Thee as my sufficient Savior and Helper and Advocate and Lord, my Lamb of God, my Husband, my Shield, my Protector, my Advocate above my Savior by the throne of love, I take Thee.

Let nobody go out of here tonight without this Friend. We thank Thee for all our friends, for all our friends, we thank Thee for them, dear Lord. And we thank Thee they'll go with us until we stop breathing and they can't help us anymore. But we can sing, I'll praise my Savior while I've breathed. And when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers.

So, when our earthly friends have reached the end of their health, our nobler powers will awake, and we'll sing more loudly than ever. Blessed be Thy name, we thank Thee, Jesus.

But the undertaker and the embalming fluid and the grave and fiery judgment, we can last from our place under Thy wing, under Thy feathers. For Thou art our Friend and we thank Thee Thou stickest closer than a brother, closer than any brother, for Thou art our Brother and our Friend.

Graciously bless us now, for Christ's sake, amen.