The Invitation to Divine Friendship – Session 1

"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."(Rev 4:11)

I. Series Introduction:

God who doesn't need anything or anyone desires friendship with us. It's at the very center of His heart and always on His mind. This was His vision even before we were ever created. He (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) was dreaming of the garden where He would walk with us in the cool of the day—a place where unbroken conversation flowed from unbroken connection. And more than just wanting to love humanity, God wanted a relationship filled with friendship. He didn't dream of servants. It never crossed His mind because He already had those in the angelic beings. He didn't dream of just filling the earth because it was too barren. For He made all things, and the earth was full of His fullness. He didn't even dream of having a family, connected by a shared bloodline, although that's where His desire for friendship would flow from. He never even dreamt of distance in the relationship. He didn't just dream either, of a Bride, consumed with love and expectations of how their needs get met. No! God longed for real friendship. Where there would be a choosing and delighting in the beauty of the connection. All God wants, who needs nothing, is a Divine friendship where we would enter into an unbroken love that never ends, where fellowship is perfect and love for one another is unified and the covenant of love is never disrupted or destroyed. And from the beginning of the beginning, the Godhead is desiring for this type of friendship, a place of knowing and being known, happens daily with us.

II. Where we are going:

If this is God's absolute desire (remember, His will is for continual prayer or in easier terminology, continual talking to Him which flows through the perfect lens of friendship) then how do we know Biblically this is accurate and not just some fanciful idea? Which Biblical characters in Scripture pursued this in their lifetime? And lastly, how do we pursue it in our lifetime– giving God the only thing He desires but doesn't need, yet will never demand or take?

A. **A Biblical look into seeing the God who desires friendship and the evidence it's true–**
Salvation is the prerequisite for friendship. When we came to know the Lord, we didn't just come into a contract that says now I'm saved. The reason from God's perspective was not that now they don't have to go to hell or they are so poor and lost, I feel bad so I'm obligated to do something about it.. No, the whole reason salvation came into being was that God had a dream and a deep, intense desire for friendship. I'm making a pretty **bold statement** here and now we are going to deep dive into the scriptures to see for ourselves!

B. The beginning and end of a story gives a pretty great picture about what the story is all about. We will start the story of the desiring God for friendship in Genesis and end in Revelation. In Genesis 1:2 the Bible says, " And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." From this text you can see and feel that the spirit of God was *anticipating* and had an *expectation* that SOMETHING good was going to happen or be birthed. What was Elohim (the God who is three in one) so excited for as He was hovering over the face of the darkness of a void earth? We can see in the first chapter of Genesis that God created all things and gave them the command to go forth and to keep increasing after their own kind. But were His creations His favorite? NO! Then God said, "Let's make man in our image, after our likeness….So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female he created them.

C. The most awe striking creation is babies made in our genetic image. God Himself feels the same way about us. It was why he was hovering and everything in creation was created for and with us in mind. No where in scripture does it say that creation was made for God but it said it was made for us. He made everything with us in mind that we might enjoy friendship with God. The garden of Eden was a beautiful place made for us. Gen 2:8 "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man whom He had formed." And he put everything in the garden that man would need to eat, flourish and grow. He even put God Himself in the garden to be with them. Gen 3:8 " And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day…"
Gen 3:22-24,"***Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now lest he reach out his hand take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever—therefore the Lord sent them out of the garden of Eden…He drove out the man, and at the East of the garden of Eden he placed the Cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."*** Even in driving out Adam and Eve from the garden was the desire that the friendship that was broken at that moment would one day be restored. If he didn't drive them out they would have eaten of the fruit of the tree of good and evil and would have frozen forever in a state of sin and brokenness but because God drove them out, He continued His plan to redeem them back to full relationship with Him. We know that Jesus made it possible for us to be restored to the Father so that unceasing fellowship and prayer would be restored. Surely, what the enemy meant for evil, God turned for good.

D. Let's skip ahead to the end of the book and read from Revelation 1:5-7,"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him…" and again, ***"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."(Rev 4:11)***
God is never looking for a contractual agreement. Or surface level acquaintances. He doesn't feel trapped within the relationship hoping for a way out but bound by His Word and commitment. He is

looking for friends to share with Him in delight and joy yet in suffering as well. God is seriously looking for intimacy in friendship. It's important for us to see and understand that!
Through trial and tribulation, which Revelation spells out in detail, God is looking for those who will endure to the end despite famine, persecution, & sword. He's looking for friendship not obligation, in fear of consequences. And when Jesus returns He will find a Bride waiting in longing, filled with love, looking up to the Heavens. In Rev 7, John sees men and women clothed in white robes coming up out of the great tribulation, with washed robes and made white in the blood of the Lamb and it says in verse 15-17 a most remarkable thing:

E. Therefore they will always be before the throne of God, serving him day and night in his temple, and He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst, the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat, and the Lamb will be their shepherd and he will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Why is God saying these things? If we were servants only to God, wouldn't it only be acceptable to expect they would do their job and get a pass into heaven for enduring? Perhaps, may I suggest, that they are friends of the Lamb? For out of their friendship with God, they endured many things for love and friendship. He made these special promises and declarations because of friendship. Every act of love and friendship was remembered. Injustice, pain, trial, temptation, He spoke to those things and made a promise to them from it. It's this friendship that was cultivated that God remembered and tenderly made these promises to. Friendship with God is not only Biblical and filled with truth but God's absolute desire.

III. Conclusion:

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed…without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead…yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." Many of those who believed against all hope that God could possibly desire friendship and in hope believed that friendship could be theirs, pursued it and were welcomed into the depth of it. All were average people,like you and I, who dared to believe the Biblical account of friendship with God is true but also it was FOR them!
They didn't believe the liar, Satan, who would say it was for all but them. They didn't believe the narrative that they were disqualified despite shortcomings, weakness, failings, temptations etc. They dared to believe God!!
Romans 8: 35, 37-39, Who shall separate us from the love (the friendship) of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loves (or who has befriended) us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God."

An invitation through the word to friendship with God says a lot about who we are to God and what our life could look like if we delve into it with Christ. If we take this seriously, this will drastically shift our relationship with Him and change the conversation we have with him. With the revelation of friendship with God our "continually talking" gets some divine upgrades. Here's the benefits: 1. Prayer graduates from religious duty and lists to dialogue with a real person. 2. This means that God can really be known. 3. It means He wants to talk with us and hear from us. 4. We want to posture our hearts in a way that cultivates friendship. 5. We want to prioritize interactions with the God of friendship. I pray today you would ask for grace to pursue friendship with God in a more intentional way. I dare you!