

## Questions for Conversations

021124

Do you have any examples of loyalty being tested in friendship that you could share?

How does it feel to be the one expressing loyalty/faithfulness?

How does it feel to be the one receiving the expression of loyalty/faithfulness?

How has God been speaking to you lately?

What has God been saying? How can we help each other hear more clearly?

What questions do you have about this week's message?

Rob did not make a distinction between loyal and faithful. Should he have?

If you have interest, it may be helpful or interesting to look at the various anointing stories in the gospels (Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 7, John 12)

Just in terms of the action in the Bible (not the sermon) whose actions/words touch you or speak to you the most? (woman, Jesus, person upset at the gift, etc.)

Who would you be if you were there? What would you be thinking, whispering, saying?

Rob divided his comments into what the women in the story did and what Jesus did.

Regarding the woman's actions,

Anoints Jesus – He is the Messiah (anointed one)

She assumes the low position at the meal, a lesson his male disciples will have to learn by example a few days later.

Risks greatly (vulnerable presence and act and risky worship)

The "E" words that Rob mentioned for the woman's actions were

**Extravagant.** Lacking restraint in the use of resources.

**Effusive.** Expressing feelings of gratitude, pleasure, or approval in an unrestrained or heartfelt manner

**Exuberant.** The quality of being full of energy, excitement, and cheerfulness;

How does your offering to your loyal/faithful friend compare to hers?

Which of Rob's descriptions of Jesus' actions speaks to where you are today the most?

**Values her and her gift.**

**Exchanges reputation.**

**Defends from accusation.** (even to the point of giving his own life). Where do you need to hear Jesus say to your problems and enemies "Leave her alone," or "Leave him alone"?

**Steals Shame.**

How might God be speaking to you to take a bigger step toward loyalty and faithfulness to him and to that person(s) he has put in your path?

Share and Prayer

In case you are interested, this is the passage I closed the service with.

I have desired you into being for the sake of friendship. This is why you are here. I am closer to you than you will ever be able to imagine. If you accept my outstretched hand, we can begin to grow an intimate friendship. I want to get to know you, to reveal myself to you, and to live in communion with you. In your moments of failure and sin, let the cross always remind you that I will never stop desiring your friendship. Nothing can ever extinguish the flame of my longing for friendship with every human being.

As your friend, I want us to work together as partners in making my dream real in this world. I hope and dream that all people will live in friendship with me and with one another. Do not be put off by the bigness of this calling. Begin where you find yourself. Love those closest to you. See your neighbor as someone with whom I also want to be friends. Bless all who cross your path with the blessing you have received from me. Worship regularly with my community of friends, immerse yourself together in the biblical story, and welcome everyone to my table.

Above all, know that you will never be alone. Face your fears and share them with me. When you weep, I will weep with you. When you rejoice, I will rejoice with you. In your darkness and suffering, remember I am constantly seeking to bring about the hope of life and resurrection. Nothing—not even death—can ever separate you from my love. Indeed, we shall be friends forever.

Trevor Hudson, *Beyond Loneliness: The Gift of God's Friendship* (pp. 123-124). Upper Room Books.