

Friend, Why Have You Come?

Matthew 26:47-50 NKJ ⁴⁷ And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." ⁴⁹ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

There is a rather important distinction here in the Greek which is completely lost in the English translation. When Jesus calls Judas "friend" He uses the word, "aetaire." It doesn't really mean "friend" its more like that person who sits next to me at work but whom I never speak to and is a little annoying. An aetaire is a companion who should be your friend but one for whom there is no affection.

Jesus uses the same word in Matthew 22:12, when the man comes to the king's feast without the wedding garment.

NKJ Matthew 22:12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

This too was a man who should have been Jesus' friend but was not because he had rejected the garment of salvation which Jesus provided.

On the other hand there is the Greek word "philos" which means friend whom I love. It is this word that Jesus uses in:

John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends

In John 3:29 the best man at a wedding is called the "philos" the friend of the groom. In James 2:23 Abraham is the "philos" the friend of God.

The word philos not only means "friend whom I love," it is also a word that is used for the sign of friendly affection, a kiss.

Thus when Judas greets Jesus he "phileo" kisses him as a dear friend. But Jesus responds not with "Philos" friend but with "aetaire," that is companion or associate. The stark contrast between Judas' greeting and Jesus' makes it clear that Jesus is absolutely rejecting Judas' claim of close friendship. If I greet you as dear friend and you respond by calling me a work associate, that is a clear rejection of my claim. Aetaire in this context is one who was my companion but for whom there is no longer any love.

In the context Jesus may as well have said to Judas "You are not my friend, so why are you here."

There was a time when Judas was always welcome in Jesus' presence but now Jesus makes it clear Judas has no place in His sight. He is not his friend. This is Jesus' response to Judas, what are *you* doing here?

This is not your place. You have chosen your place among the world yet you come here pretending that you are a part of me.

Judas is the ultimate hypocrite. He comes with “friend” on his lips but not in his heart.

Isaiah 29:13 NKJ Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me,

His heart is in love with money and there is no room for Christ. No doubt Judas had all kinds of excuses for what he did. We need the money. Jesus won't get hurt. I'm just trying to provide for everyone. Its not the money I care about but the food the money will provide.

Jesus says that same to the man without the wedding garment, “what are you doing here without a wedding garment.”

Jesus says the same thing in Matthew chapter 7

Matthew 7:21-23 ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

These are all examples of people who come to Jesus with “philos” friend on their lips but not in their hearts. These are people who claim a place with Jesus yet Jesus says to them “what are *you* doing here?” People whom Jesus calls “aetaire” that is people who are not my friends.

What are YOU doing here? Do you come as philos or as aetaire?

Judas has no room in his heart for Jesus because his heart is set on the riches of this world. He cares nothing for the riches of heaven. Perhaps John was thinking of Judas when he wrote:

1 John 2:15 NKJ ¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

In Matthew 7 the people have no part in Jesus' kingdom because they claim the right based on what they did rather than what Jesus did. They say look at this and at that. Rather than saying “you died for our sins.”

1 John 1:9-10 NKJ ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Similarly, the wedding guest is “aetaire” not “philos” because he brought his own garment rather than accept the garment of Christ.

Revelation 7:14 NKJ These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The world often calls us hypocrites. They say you preach love and forgiveness, but you do not love or forgive. You condemn riches but do not share your money. You preach celibacy but you lust and make dirty jokes. To all of these things we respond yes, in those ways we are hypocrites. Yet we have come freely admitting our sin and seeking forgiveness from Jesus.

Those who admit confess their sins are not “aetaire” but are called “philos.” Judas is a hypocrite not because he is a sinner but because he comes to Jesus for reasons other than confessing his sins and to receive forgiveness.

Why are you here? If you come seeking forgiveness than you are “philos” a friend of Jesus, washed in his blood. If you come for any other reason you are “aetaire.” Judas came to Jesus to get money, he did not come seeking forgiveness. He came in his own clothes not with the wedding garment Christ provided.

The difference between friend and associate is the rejection of the gift that Jesus came to bring. Judas was at the last supper. He received the bread and the wine. He received the words of forgiveness and the blessing of Jesus. Yet although they were given to him, He did not take them. It is not hard to imagine Judas sitting there through the Lord’s supper thinking of the silver that was in his pocket. Before him was all the treasures of heaven but all he cared about was a handful of silver coins.

Why are you here? Be of good joy, your sins are forgiven.