Dear Friends in Christ,

In my sermon this past Sunday, I sang a song my mother used to sing to me as a child. It is called Tell Me Why. I forgot to mention that my mother liked to sing songs. All. The. Time. Whenever she met someone for the first time, she was known to think of a song with their name in it and she usually either sang it or said, “just like the song _____!”

Another song that she like to sing was actually a Girl Scout song called “Make New Friends.” Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold! This is the start of the song - of course my mother never sang the rest of it but whenever I spoke of friends or friendships, this song came up.

My husband, Ed, is going to meet up with an old friend this week - someone he hasn’t seen in 58 years. He and David were good friends from the third grade until the eighth grade. Then, Ed’s family moved to another state. David found Ed on Facebook after all these years and they spent hours talking on the phone. Then, Ed decided to go visit him. Talk about some friendship gold!

Speaking of friends, I am going to join 5 of my college friends for our yearly visit next month. We try to get together at least once a year either at one another’s homes or an agreed upon location. We always have a fun time together. Often we plan what activities we would like to experience together but we usually just have long walks and maybe do some shopping. We spend the rest of the time talking and enjoying one another’s company.

Isn’t it wonderful to have friends like this?

As I’ve grown older, I find it harder to make new friends. I guess many of us are more set in our ways and making friends takes effort. We have to make time for the other person, ask curious questions, learn to listen, and hold ourselves back when we realize that we may be too much for those who don’t know us.

We often talk about Jesus as our friend. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear… goes the hymn. The song goes on to say that if we just tell Jesus our burdens in prayer, what comfort he will give us! The hymn also suggests that when our friends in real life forsake us, we need to come to Jesus as well.

I think going to Jesus as your friend is a wonderful idea. However, just like our “normal” friendships, it can’t be all one-sided. Sure, we want Jesus with us. But how often are we spending time with him? A quick prayer before bedtime does not a friendship make. We need to spend quality time with our friend Jesus. We have to make time to talk to him *and to listen to him.* This means being quiet and inviting his presence. Asking for him to talk to us through other people, circumstances and scripture. This means we have to open our bibles as well as paying attention to what is happening around us. What is Jesus trying to tell us?

When we actually take the time to grow our friendship with Jesus, we will find him saying these words from Make New Friends: “A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long, I will be your friend.”

May you cultivate all your friendships this week and always,

Your Friend,
Amelia