

Sermon July 25, 2026; Spokane Friends Church; "It Only Takes One"

Scripture: I Samuel 25

'You've Got a Friend', lyrics by Carole King, 1971.

'You just call out my name and you know, wherever I am
I'll come runnin' to see you again
Winter, spring, summer or fall
All you have to do is call and I'll be there -
You've got a friend.'

Each one of us can name someone who might call us, or already has many times – downhearted, lonely, troubled and they need someone. Not just anyone. They needed us. They needed you. You were the one and *only* one they trusted just then.

This is part of being human. This is part of God's intention in creation. God did not create us into oneness – meant to survive alone. God's idea was to thrive in reliance, care, relationship, and hope with other humans and with Godself. God gave us all we would need to function fully, including structures to hold our lives in safety. And God trusted us.

One of the things God loves about us is that we're risk takers. We're curious and willing to do things that other creatures can't do or wouldn't try. We have, and we do. But in this, we've broken down many of the structures God intended for our safety. We've stretched the limits of God's provision for us. An important break has been our trust in God and in one another. We've gone too far. We no longer feel safe, act safely, provide safety for one another. We've forgotten that we were created to be friends.

One of the marks of early Friends/Quakers was how dangerous their lives were. They went against the call of the King and worshiped God as they were led – following the leading of God's Holy Spirit found in prayer and meditation. They leaned on the gathered witness and clearness of decision making with a group of people they worshiped with, knew well, and trusted. They cared for the spiritual and physical needs of their Meetings and their communities. Their witness of trust in God was visible to everyone who knew them, by their dress, their behavior, and their enterprise in the world. Even in the way they disciplined their members,

people could see the care they gave to one another. One person mattered as much as the whole meeting mattered.

You matter as much as any other person matters to God. The choices you make matter. The attitude you carry, matters. How do you walk in creation? How do you move through your life – in conversation, in attitude, in decision making? Particularly now, when all the structures of our lives seem to be bending out of shape, and the provisions God has given us to hold us in safety seem to be falling away, it's important to consider our place. What role does each of us have in our responsibility as humans, as created beings, to one another?

Do we wait for someone to call? Or do we call out to them?

If we see an apartment building on fire, do we wait for someone there to call the Fire Department, or do we call the Fire Department for them?

A wealthy businessman has a full bank account, but an empty heart. In fact, it's grown hard over the years since he first started his business. He spends most of his time crowing about his success and drinking his money away. He's forgotten the favors that others have shown as he gained his wealth. One such person has sent word asking for help in return, and the businessman refuses with an ugly, surly response. The man is so offended and angry, he threatens to kill him. The structures of healthy relationships are obviously torn apart here, and at least two lives are threatened.

The businessman's wife makes a choice. She knows well the mean and cruel ways of her husband, especially when he's drunk. She also knows many people her husband has done business with. Her husband's life may be in danger. What can she do? She takes it on herself to put together a 'peace offering' of food and wine, meat and bread, sweets and all, and takes it to his office, asking to speak with the offended man. She acknowledges her husband's foolishness, asking him to forgive her husband. Then she puts it to this man that to kill her husband would mean a crime against his own life, when God will secure the destiny for her husband and a lasting destiny for *him* - without this murder on his conscience. The man sees the wisdom in her argument, thanks the woman for her good judgement, and thanks God for sending her to him.

The man's name was David. The woman's name was Abigail. Her husband's name was Nabal. David would become the King of Judah. Nabal would soon die. Abigail would become David's wife.

What if Abigail had not gone to see David? "David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgement and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, surely as the Lord lives, if you have not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak."

What if? Sometimes, it only takes one person. One gesture. One conversation to change an outcome. Perhaps to save a life – or many lives. To change the future. What if you had not answered that phone call? What if that person had not taken time to talk with your child? What if your parent had not spoken to your teacher? What if? What if? What if?

We do not live solitary lives. We cannot shut down; we cannot exclude ourselves from the world around us. We must engage. It may be the *last* thing we want to do. But we must find a way to enter into the larger life of connection with the structure of the world. It can be exhausting but also exhilarating. And it doesn't mean that we have to go *anywhere*. Quakers have great examples of moving the world with letter writing. Margaret Fell, the Mother of Quakerism, moved us all with her letters written from Swarthmoor Hall in the Lake Country of England. Your thank you notes, your texts, your phone calls, your times spent online in worship or in friendship... 'your one wild and precious life' that Mary Oliver wrote about and that God gave us in the garden, is a gift to be given. What are you doing with it?

It may cost you something. Exactly. It may be uncomfortable. Exactly. It may be difficult. Exactly. It may be risky. Welcome to the world as it is. What is God's intention for you friend, in it?