



indicate how God chooses to use it – gently, firmly, lovingly, honestly, mercifully – that’s who I say Jesus is as God’s anointed representative in our midst – in Jesus, we see most clearly the authentic human living that God intends for all of us – that’s why we keep coming back to his life and teachings so frequently with such a hunger – there is a deep desire in all of us to be reoriented by the work and witness of God’s Messiah as our most loving Friend

**At this point in our ponderings, then ...**

All of these words have something to teach us about following Jesus, about Christian discipleship – but all of those ideas must point to a loving intimacy that I think can best be captured in English by the word ‘Friend’ – what difference does it make in your life that Jesus has chosen to be your most intimate friend? – that’s the reality in which we live, whether we recognize it or not, whether we understand it deeply or not, whether we let ourselves revel in its grace or not – that’s the gift God offers everyone – I trust your appreciation and gratitude for that gift has deepened in this service of worship