It's great to be with you, students I can't believe this is already my fifth year speaking before you And one of the things I wanna share, even before I begin there's a pastor named Martin Lloyd-Jones who ministered in Westminster Chapel He was part of my doctoral studies and for the longest time he did not let anyone record their sermon Why he let them do that, can you imagine? There's no podcast, no YouTube no sermon recording back then because he insisted by saying hey, you may be able to record my sermon but you may not be able to manufacture the very presence of God that is here when the people of God come together That really spoke to me, why am I saying that? Because as we are singing together your voice, the way you sing, really encouraged me Thank you So many times, the psalmist said let us exalt the Lord as we sing I hope you don't waste your time in this college years sleeping alone, but continue to get together and exalt him together Today, speaking of which, we are talking about friendship particularly spiritual friendship What I mean by that what does the Bible have to say about friendship? Now, I can't even quote how many researchers showed that There's so many researchers, studies and research shows that people are getting lonelier, lonelier, and lonelier and your generation in particular their number one desire is belonging You want to belong You really desire to be known for who you are and truly be loved for who you are And I'm gonna argue based on the book of Proverbs today that God uses friendship greatly to really make you belong to him and to one another For the way of intro do you guys remember this thing called pandemic a few years ago? Wow About four years ago, it was January 2021 I came across an article posted on The Atlantic The title of the article said the pandemic has erased entire categories of friendship In their article, the basic premise of their article she argues that pandemic wasn't able it was not able to erase the first tier of friendship the strongest ties, such as your familial relationship your relationship to your mom and dad or your boyfriend, girlfriend, that remained strong But the second tier of friendship has been completely evaporated such as school friends, such as your colleagues such as your church community Pandemic does so much damage in erasing that this is what the author argues She says, and I quote the pandemic has evaporated entire categories of friendship and by doing so depleted the joys that make up a human life During the past year it's often felt like the pandemic has come for all but the closest of my close ties Most Americans were especially ill prepared for the sudden loss of their weak ties The importance of friendship overall and especially friendships of moderate strengths is generally downplayed in the country's culture while family and romantic partners are supposed to be the be all and end all So what she was saying, closest ties what you desire, whether it be a romantic relationship your family relationship survived just fine However, all your friends that you could have built some of you in your high school years some of you in your church friends pandemic has done so much damage so as a result, it wasn't only COVID-19 that was pandemic, but the loneliness, isolation lack of belonging has become pandemic It has affected both individually and I believe societally as well Individually, I already mentioned you are such living in lonely generation You're so content sitting at home looking at screen Pandemic has taught us to do that, hasn't it? It was already there and it accelerated to the degree that we cannot even fathom how fast it's going It promised friendship, it promised connection but all you feel much more is isolation You know it's damaged deep down in you that man, I want to have good friends Societally speaking, we just don't know how to talk to one another As you lose the second tier of friendship whatever friendship we call we just demonize each other based on ideological differences because we are just tied to, tethered to that the closest ties would think

like you talk like you only, and they lost all that As a result, society felt the damage as well Well, perhaps you are thinking today well, Jin, excuse you, I came here just to find my wife and my husband Who cares about friends? Well, who knows? God might have you lifelong friends while you're studying here There are five guys that walk along my side past the 20 years Some I met in high school some I met in my grad school years and post grad school years Friendship matters I hope and pray that as you look through some of these verses, deep down God talks in your heart, oh man I thought Christianity is all about single individual support, me and God, but no, God has saved you alone He reconciled you so that you can never remain alone You reconcile and make friends with one another May this speak to your heart How are you gonna go about it? If you read a book of Proverbs you might be surprised of all the random verses there Like, first half is generally written as a thought unit, but the second half is the individual single thought So I gathered some of the verse in the Proverbs to argue about its self-contained thoughts about what biblical friendship is all about So let's talk about three things When I say why spiritual friendship matters there are authors who wrote a book about that too Let me argue three things Today we'll talk about fragility of friendship and fundamentals of friendship and formation of friendship Fragility, fundamentals, and formation Let's go one by one Fragility of friendship Couple verse that Hanul wrote for us Proverbs 26 says, many a man proclaims his steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find? And Proverbs 27, 10 says, do not forsake your friend Did you get that? In Proverbs 26 says, faithful man who can find? 27, 10 says, do not forsake your friend By saying that, what does Solomon, the author, assumes? The friend people do often forsake If no one forsake their friend he doesn't have to write it Faithful man, faithful friend, who can find? Do not forsake your friend Faithful friends are hard to find It's rare because we consider friendship as something disposable Why is that? If you wanna study more about this C.S. Lewis has written this book called Four Loves He talks about uniqueness of friendship in that book There are four types of love He argues there's agape, which is unconditional love by God and storge, like familial love, like your parents love you And there's also eros, which is more like a romantic love Although, he does argue that sometimes while eros can be beautiful it can sometimes be a substitute God So it must be ruled by and under the agape love Otherwise, as we've just quoted romantic love becomes be-all and end-all and whoever your boyfriend, girlfriend is cannot be your savior Talk that in your heart And fourthly, he talks of philia the one love that's most neglected He says that in friendship love is actually, out of all the loves is most disposable, most at risk This is what C.S. Lewis says in his book Four Loves regarding friendship The first and most obvious answer why the friendship's so disposable the first and most obvious answer is that few value it because few experience it Friendship is the least natural of loves the least instinctive, organic, biological gregarious, and necessary It has least commerce with our nerves There's nothing throaty about it nothing that quickens the pulse or turns you red and pale And then he concludes by saying friendship is unnecessary Like philosophy, like art, it has no survival value Rather, it is one of those things which gives value to survival What he means by that, apart from agape love you know how if you ever study creation mythology unlike Egyptian and Mesopotamia mythology God created mankind out of battle That's what he says But our God, triangle tells us he created us out of love Apart from God, you wouldn't be here Humanity don't be here Apart from romantic love, you and I only exist Apart from storge love, you wouldn't have been reared Somebody had to change a diaper But friendship, you can't actually get by without it So it does not have survival value but instead,

friendship enriches your life That's why you and I live Certainly, I mean, we, I think I personally believe, and I think many would argue the same way, especially in our world not only in your generation, my generation too we way overvalue Eros love whether it be the be-all and end-all I mean, it makes sense, right? A wise man said, only the fools rush in but Elvis couldn't help but falling in love But friendship, there's nothing falling into friendship about it There's nothing like, oh, man, my heart beats faster Ooh, I'm so excited about this That's just weird Why is that? Because it's voluntary, friendship's voluntary and it often requires work and sacrifice As a result, friendship is very frazzled It's rare, it's scarce nowadays because we, so many times, undervalue it Oh, man, it's all about finding the Mr. and Mrs. Wonderful That's all I need I have a great family Friendship, who cares? That's why you and I are so lonely Second thing we see, the fundamentals of friendship What I mean by fundamental is like why we long for friendship, and to begin with deep down, you want friends Why is that? And also, what are some characteristics of that? This is what Proverbs 20 and six one says, once again Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love but a faithful man who can find Faithful man who can find Truly, many proclaim love, a faithful friend truly, who can find Don't you want that? There is a researcher, she kind of rose to fame She's a sociologist professor at the University of I think Houston, I believe, and she rose to fame by her famous TED Talk, The Power of Vulnerability I believe Her name's Brene Brown It becomes one of the top five most watched TED Talk but in her book, great book, The Gift of Imperfection this is what she talks about our desire for friendship our desire for belonging Brene Brown argues, and I quote belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us Because of this yearning, this is primal we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval which are not only hollow substitutes for belonging but often barriers to it because we're desperately trying to fit in you know, by faking who we are She continues, true belonging is not something you negotiate externally, it's what you carry in your heart It's finding the sacredness in being part of something Did you get that, what she said? Even the desire for belonging, desire for true friendship it's a sacred desire even the secular psychologists argue that So students, think with me Genesis 2, Genesis 1 and 2 when God creates heaven and earth he creates the light, he creates the sea animal he creates the land, every time he creates something he always pronounces benediction, it was good But before even the sin enters, before Adam and Eve sins in a perfect world the very first time he pronounces malediction it is not good, what was that? It is not good for man to be alone In a perfect world, God says it is not good even before sin enters, what do we learn? Sure, you can say God designed the marriage but even marriage is about companionship So God makes Eve out of Adam to give him the companionship What am I trying to say? To need and feel belonging the desire for that friendship is not the sign of spiritual immaturity It's actually a very sign of spiritual maturity because innate desire for friendship is God-given desire God made you that way So introverts, don't look down on extroverts They just want some of you And it's not wrong thing to desire friendship You need that, I need that because desire for belonging is a sacred desire God made us that way It is not good for a man to be alone So if you're lonely today if you desire friendship if you just want a little bit more of your friends you're not dysfunctional, you're fine It's okay to say, hey, I just need a little bit more of you It's okay to initiate So that's fundamentals of friendship that God made us to long for that It's more not okay to say, I don't need a friend because that's fake maturity I'm great, I walk solo like an eagle Look at me, I'm great No, knock it off Deep down, you want belonging and you want friends as well

So then, fundamentals of friendship What does Bible say about how true friendship look like? Proverbs 17, 17, Hanul read it for us Proverbs 17, 17 says a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity True friends, students, are there for you when you are down You know, it's so easy to cherry pick friends You're good for, I just wanna go into this little circle You're a cool kid, I wanna be with you Ooh, there are cooler kids, goodbye No True friends are born for adversity One of my favorite books that I read in 2015 is actually, don't judge me, it's a children's book It's actually called Wonder Maybe some of you read that I heard it was made into a movie, actually I didn't get to watch a movie But in that book, my favorite quotation it's written by R.J. Palacio In that book, my favorite quotation is spoken by Charlotte who is a friend to Augie If you read the book, you know what I'm talking about If you haven't, it's a great book Children's books are for you, too My favorite book that Charlotte says in her yearbook she says, it's not enough to be friendly You have to be a friend What she means by this? So many times, we wear this facade I'm so friendly, I'm so nice But as soon as things get difficult, you withdraw You don't press in But it's not enough, students, to be just friendly You have to be friend to one another It's time for born for adversity time that is difficult True friends will stand by you when you're weak and vulnerable They're not just friendly in good times but stand right there with you at your worst and at your weakness Have we been, then, let me ask you have you been that kind of friend to one another? How are you doing, students? Proverbs 27, five to six, says this The first characteristic we just look at true characteristic of friendships that they are faithful Second thing we are about to look at, there is candor Proverbs 27, five to six Better is open rebuke than hidden love Faithful are the wounds of a friend Profuse are the kisses of enemy While true friends are there in good season and bad season they are faithful True friendship also includes candor Now, so many of us have tendency when Proverbs 27, five and six says better is open rebuke than hidden love it talks about truth and love in friendship must marry one another But often, you and I all have tendency Some of you are all about truth Speak your mind, but there's no love Some of you are all about oh, we gotta love one another We are too afraid to speak truth But true friends, Proverbs 27 open rebuke is better than just hidden love Those two, faithful are the wounds of a friend Those two must marry each other What happens? When you just have truth, but no love that will result in peace breaking You are telling me all the truth but you don't even care for me It will result in peace breaking Some of you are opposite There's love, but there's no truth That will result in peace faking You are just being friendly but you are not true friend enough to be able to speak the truth that your friends need to hear But when truth and love really marry each other there is peacemaking, there is friend making And true friends are able to do that Maybe some of you know one of the most famous Irish poet, Oscar Wilde He is the author of The Importance of Being Earnest He says something like you know your enemies might stab you in the back but true friends will stab you in the front True friend, are you able to speak truth truly in love to one another? What kind of friend are you? It's not enough just to be friendly You have to be friendly, press in know how to ask hard questions In love, you are able to weep with them not just confront them They're marrying one another Is that you? If some of you are sitting here you have that kind of friend, treasure that I need that, you need that Lastly, third thing we learn in Proverbs here Now is a talk about formation of friendship After talking about how friendships are rare and the characteristics of why we want it and what are characteristics of good friends how are you making friends? Let's talk about the formation of friends And in this case, I particularly borrow this from C.S. Lewis, late pastor Tim Keller as well

as Wesley Hill who wrote a book, Spiritual Friendship First thing I want to say is how do friends meet? Friends are actually discovered, not manufactured What I mean by that, you cannot walk around I need a BFF, I need a BFF, can you be my friend? Can you be my friend? You're like, no, I can't do that, that's weird, too much You cannot just walk around I just need the best friend right now I just want you to be my best friend forever Friendships are often discovered by product of seeing the same beauty on the same journey Do you think, students, it's an accident that on 2025, October 26th, whatever the date is you're sitting here at this time with whoever you are next to you you're in this class together Out of so many years, you could have been a billion places but somehow, somehow, it got so fit that he brought you to Caron University You could not have manufactured that And it's God-given, treasure that opportunity Because you guys are on the same journey together in this precious four-year, three-year, two-year some of you, seven years left, who knows what Yes C.S. Lewis, once again, in his book Four Loves says that friendship begins by saying oh, you too? I thought I was the only one Meaning, oh, you see the same thing You realize that So friendship, in other words friendships are not manufactured initially It's often discovered So the fact that you are here is no accident You can discover many good friends, Lord willing They can go lifelong However, once it's discovered it must be cultivated in order for it to grow Get that? When it's made, it's often discovered yet once it is made, it must be cultivated In other words, it does not naturally grow That's why friendships are so disposable Believe it or not, student as you get older and older and older friendships are rarer, rarer, rarer It just becomes a much more acquaintance Take this opportunity Take full advantage of it I might get fired by saying this but it's okay at times to not get A plus It's okay There are times it's okay to get A or A is too high, B plus Take time to be with one another Why? Why do I say once friends are discovered it must be cultivated? Proverbs 27, 17 says this Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens one another How does iron sharpen one another? Those two irons must come in contact with each other in order to sharpen If two irons just hang out here it's not gonna sharpen Air is not gonna sharpen that It must come in contact It must share proximity, share the time together in order for it to sharpen one another If you treat just friendship as something that you use and dispose it will never truly sharpen you But it must come in contact We live in a generation of productivity We get up, look at our journal, look at our cell phone This is my to-do list for the day We want to give our time to productivity, not friendship But one time, a friend of mine shared this It really spoke to me My longtime friend, one time I just saw a friend of mine I haven't seen in a long time a friend of mine said Jin, let's spend some garbage time together I'm like, what is that? You mean like let's spend some quality time? No, a friend of mine intentionally say garbage time I'm like, okay Friend of mine actually later I found was rebelling against, oh, we have the quality time I have 10 minutes Tell me all your hopes and aspirations, fears and dreams and then I gotta go And then sometimes discussions all about theological in-depth It's okay to just chill It's okay There's nothing to look down upon board game, students It's okay to just get together and do something together Often quality also comes in quantities but because we live in such a busy, busy time and generation we are so distracted We are not willing to give our time But I know students today, I know you're busy It's midterms this week, next week, after fall break You might have to study during fall break But will you give yourself margin just a little bit? Do some study party with your friends That was one of my favorite party when I was in college and grad school We just get to go do our homeworks together I felt like we were like comrade Your life is miserable, me too, I'm

miserable too We just have to get this thing done But it was great I got my work done Why not get together? Create margin Give some time to that And one of the last thing I wanna say C.S. Lewis said true friendship is the least of jealous category of friendship When you open up your friendship there are people who are in need of you to just reach out today If you and your BFF are just tight like this open up, welcome one another Your friendship is far richer when you bring other people's as well So today we talked about why friendships are so rare so hard to find And the desire for friendship is a natural thing It's a God-given, sacred desire And true friends are faithful and kinder There's truth and love together And so I encourage you, once friends are discovered cultivated, take time to sharpen one another But if I just ended here today then I was like, okay, I'm gonna go get it Let's make friends Where is your really God-given motivation for that? John 15, 13 says, greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friend And later in 15, 16 says, no longer I call you servants but I have called you friends Jesus did not lay down his life for productivity Jesus laid down his life to make you his friends His friendship to you involved the sacrifice of himself It wasn't all about self-preservation but it was all about self-donation He gave himself fully for you and me Deep down, students, you and I know we have not been best friends to one another but Jesus, the way he loved you to make you his friend it's not just a role model but he empowered us to do the same thing today So would you lay down your life for one another? That kind of friend is worth pursuing today Look to Jesus You were once enemies of him but for you, to make you his friend to reconcile you to God he laid down his life for you and me May that be our ultimate hope that we can be better friends to one another Let me pray for us God, forgive us We have not been the right kind of friend that you have called us to be Oh Lord, you initiated, you pursued and your pursuit for friendship with us was relentless to the point that you gave up your life for us God, we find true, ultimate friends in you that faithful friend Now, motivate us, help us to extend that very love that friendship to one another God, how wonderful would it be after this chapel, after today we realize, God, I thought maturity's all about me and myself, my independence but God, I need you, not only you, and one another And may you blossom many friendship and God, I pray that you do blossom many lifelong friends while they are here at Cairn University And Lord, we are selfish being, we are busy being so we get that this friendship thing is disposable but in that, help us to be counter-cultural help us take time to be truly holy before you and one another That miracle may take place in our university in the lives of students who are gathered here Thank you, Jesus, for making us your friend We are so grateful May we extend that love well to you