

Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear by Scott Saul, (Tyndale House, 2016) – (20 Quotes selected by Matt Smethurst, The Gospel Coalition (www.gospelcoalition.org))

1. Judgment is past.

“In Jesus, our judgment day was moved from the future to the past.” [page 13]

2. Ethics and Love for the Lord.

“After 18 years of pastoral ministry, I have never met a person who fell in love with Jesus because a Christian scolded them about their ethics. Have you?” [page 18-19]

3. Wide Communal Embrace.

“The more we walk the narrow path, the wider our communal embrace will be. The more convinced we are of the exclusive claims of Jesus—that he is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through him—the more inclusively kind and compassionate we will be.” [page 22]

4. Love Is a Person.

“We must become convinced that Love has to be a person to us before it can become a verb.” [page 23]

5. Seeing as Jesus Does.

“Jesus invites us—especially when marriages and friendships get difficult—to see ourselves and each other as he sees us. Jesus sees us and knows us with an everlasting love, with a love that has saved us from ourselves and that guarantees our future perfection. In our present condition, Jesus sees us as the acorns that will become oak trees, the apple seeds that will become orchards, the caterpillars that will become butterflies, and the random cacophonies of words and notes that will become musical masterpieces.” [page 71]

6. True Relevance of Scripture.

“Unlike the liberation of slaves spoken of in Philemon, there is no place in Scripture that pronounces liberation for those wishing to pursue sexual relationships, including committed and monogamous ones, outside of the

male-female marital union. . . . This teaching is unpopular in our late modern times. Yet if the true relevance of Scripture is that Scripture shows no interest in being relevant—that is, that it shows no interest in being adapted, revised, or censored in order to be more in tune with the ever-shifting times—then the sex question is one that sincere believers have to wrestle with. We must remain countercultural where the culture and the truth are at odds with one another. This, and this alone, is what will make Christians truly relevant in the culture.” [page 75]

7. Christians and Kindness.

“Compelled by the love of Christ, we must not withhold kindness or friendship from any person or people group, and we must not engage in any sort of us-against-them posturing. This in itself is countercultural in modern society. Compelled by the truth of Christ, we must honor and obey the Creator’s design—even when his design is countercultural and, at times, counterintuitive to us. His ways and his thoughts are higher than ours.” [page 75-76]

8. Looking to Our Children instead of Jesus.

“This is what you call reversing the flow of the umbilical cord: parents demanding that their children function as their source of life; their emotional nourishment; their identity; their Jesus. This always ends in sorrow and alienation and loss. Just as in marriage, we must not place a burden on our children to provide for us the things that only God can supply.” [page 87-88]

9. Measuring your desire to serve.

“The best way to measure your desire to serve is to look at how you respond when someone treats you like a servant.” [page 98]

10. The Middle Chapter.

“Death and sorrow are merely a middle chapter.” [page 104]

11. Charity Must Include Empowerment.

“A first step toward true diversity—whether cultural, economic, political, ethnic, or otherwise—is to recognize that charity toward minorities by itself is not enough. Charity, to be truly charitable and biblical, must also result in empowerment, where the majority humbles and positions itself to follow the

minority voice regularly. Especially where injustice and inequality exist, the majority must proactively seek out ways to surrender microphone and gavel rights to the minority. Invitations to give ‘input’ must be replaced with opportunities to lead. Crumbs from the table must be replaced with a seat at the table. Otherwise, we remain stuck with an anemic, counterfeit diversity. Otherwise, particularly as pertains to race, we remain stuck with only stuff that white people like.”[page 128]

12. The Rich Ruler and His Money.

“Why would Jesus tell the rich ruler to give everything to the poor but not demand the same of Abraham or Job? It was because the rich ruler didn’t really have money. Money had him. The man who thought he couldn’t live without his money, in truth, wouldn’t be able to live with it.” [page 135]

13. Charity Starts and Ends at Home.

“Sometimes ‘charity starts at home’ is just a veiled way of saying that charity ends there too.” [page 164]

14. Barabbas and Jesus.

“Barabbas, the man of violence, is embraced as a freedom fighter. Jesus, the man of peace, is caricatured and crucified as an enemy of the state.” [page 173]

15. Partisans.

“This is what partisans do. Partisans exaggerate the best features of their side and the worst features, real or contrived, of the opposing side. They minimize and overlook the weaknesses of their side, while dismissing the best features of the opposing side. What you end up with is someone being demonized and someone else being baptized by the crowds.”[page 173]

16. Faith and Politics.

“If I feel more of a kindred solidarity with those who share my politics but not my faith than I feel with those who share my faith but not my politics, what does it say about me?” [page 174]

17. Political Loyalty.

“Under Jesus, political loyalties lose their ultimacy.” [page 175]

18. Barabbas Compared to Jesus.

“Put Barabbas to death and it ends his revolution. Put Jesus to death and it launches his.” [page 176]

19. One Messiah.

“If you are devastated or irate over the outcome of a presidential election, relax. Things will be okay. We only need, and already have, one Messiah. And he did not lose this election. If you are ecstatic about an election outcome, relax. Take inventory. We only need, and already have, one Messiah. And he did not win this election.” [page 178]

20. Mary and Martha.

“While Martha is busy trying to be like Jesus, Mary spends her energy being with him. And in being with him, Mary becomes like him.” [page 194]