

Nov 7 10 Communion 2Thessalonians 2:13-17

GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU

Here is something to think about today: **YOU** have been chosen by God himself. No other persons have been involved. God himself has created you in your mother's womb and breathed life into you so that when you came into this world you are a child of God **chosen by him for redemption**. In the Message translation we read: "*God picked you out as his from the very start.*" That ought to make you feel good this morning. Out of all the people in the world he has chosen you. Turn to a neighbor and say, "God has chosen you!" But don't get a big head because in reality he has picked each one of us to be his children, saved by the grace of God to do good works, and to go on to perfection and live with him forever and ever. Not bad for people like us, sinners, those who rejected him at one time, those who still refuse to believe in him. It's amazing but true; **YOU** are the chosen, chosen by God to receive forgiveness and grace, eternal life and so much, much more. Hard to believe but it's true.

Those of us who follow baseball know these days following the World Series are days when teams begin to plan for the next year. Each year more and more stars opt for free agency to see how much they are worth. Jason Werth is going that route. Maybe the Cubs or Cardinals are interested, or even the White Sox. Those with the big bucks, like the Yankees and Red Sox, will try their best to lure that one

player or maybe two or three they think will help them get to the World Series. The players just sit at home enjoying themselves as their agents do the work getting them big bucks and long contract... and maybe on a contender. The chosen of baseball. It happens every year. The bright stars that teams pin their hopes on, as well as their money belts. Yes, they are the chosen ones, the ones General Manager open their pocketbooks to join their organization.

God has his chosen ones as well. They didn't get big bucks, but they are on heaven's team with a greater reward than any ball player can receive. You see, they get the gift of having a crown and hearing God say "Well done my faithful servant." Besides that, the chosen have a mansion built for them in glory under the direction of Jesus Christ. Can't beat that...and it doesn't get any better than sitting around the table with so many saints and family telling tails, learning, enjoying God's amazing grace.

We can search the Scriptures to find chosen ones. People like Adam and Eve the first couple. Out of dust comes Adam, out of Adam comes Eve. God said 'go and multiply' and they did. Noah, the only fellow who God could find that followed him before the flood, and his family was called by God to go and begin again after God destroyed the sinful world. Abraham and Sarah were called by God to new lands and to be the parents of God's new chosen ones. Add in Moses, David, the prophets of old, toss in the disciples and you understand each one of these had a

special calling from God. They were chosen people to do God's work on this earth. They came from a variety of backgrounds. Farmers, fishermen, shepherds, religious leaders, Pharisees and others chosen by God. No training needed. Just availability. Hebrew, Gentile, male, female, young, old, black, white, Asian, you name it, God's chosen people.

Today Paul continues in his letter to the Thessalonians to let them know that they were chosen by God. Paul recounts and praises them for their journey thus far in the faith. **READ 2:12-16**

On this Communion Sunday let me remind you of your calling.

First **God chose you to be saved.** That's pretty simple. He calls sinners to come to his Son Jesus to find salvation. Though we all know John 3:16 I wonder how many have read the next verse that says, "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*" Jesus reached out in love to the hurting, the lost, those who had lost hope and said, "Come, give me your burdens... your pains... your lost dreams. Come, trust in me... gives me your broken hearts."

Peter tells us we are God's chosen people. We are "*a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God,*" Now listen up to why God has chosen you as Peter continues to say, "*that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*"

We all like to be chosen for something. I liked being chosen to be on a team. I'm sure we all like being chosen for a special part in a play, or just being in the play makes you feel 'special.' In the church recently people have been chosen to serve on committees. We believe they will do a good job. Or as I have always heard from a DS when being appointed to another church 'you have the gifts and graces that are needed.' I have, and will again this Advent season; choose some to assist us in our Advent services. I have chosen some to help with communion every month as well. I hope those who serve communion feel the importance of being God's servants at a time like this. The most important thing in my life is that God has chosen me for salvation and has called me to serve his people and share his message. I do that with humility and by God's amazing grace. As I once said, "we are all God's chosen people, not his frozen people." God continues to knock on those hearts who do not know him. He knocks in the early years, and keeps on knocking until you either open it to him, or until your time runs out. God doesn't want any to be lost, but all to inherit the Kingdom of God. Maybe some of you remember an old, old song that went "Open the door, Richard. Open the door and let me in." Maybe that was God calling me way before I knew him well.

The second thing is this; **God chooses you to share in his glory.** When you read Ephesians 2:10 we find why God has chosen us for salvation. "*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God prepared in*

advance for us to do.” Listen to the Message translation: *“He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do.* Listen to the last verse of that. *“Work we had better start doing.”*

As we know when Moses led the now chosen people to the Promise Land it was God’s intent that they would be his witnesses. When we get to the New Testament Jesus’ final words to the disciples were they would be his witnesses to the world. That was why they were to wait until they were filled with the Holy Spirit because then they were given the power and his presence to proclaim his glory so that those who listened would have a chance to know God. The Book of Acts is the continuing story of how the church grows and God’s glory is spread from one place to another. You have been chosen to be part of the Book of Acts because your stories bring new people into the fellowship of believers. The hymn writers proclaim, “We’ve a story to tell to the nation that will turn their hearts to the right, a story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light. For the darkness shall turn to dawning and the dawning to noonday bright and Christ’s great kingdom shall come on earth the kingdom of love and light.” We the church, YOU are his witnesses chosen by God to be his witnesses. That’s what some of our hymns are all about. Singing praises and his glory.

Next week we will give praise to God through our celebration of the many Golden Pillars, those who are 80 or above for their faith and their perseverance.

They have come a long way on their faith walk and have planted many seeds of faith through their ministry at this church and in this community. So we will take time to give them thanks for that service.

Today you entered this Sanctuary with various feelings. Some came not thinking about anything. Some came after struggling with a child or a spouse. Kids might have come wishing they were still getting a few more winks. Some came thinking about health issues, or the aches and pains they are suffering. Some come with other feelings seeking answers, direction, and wisdom as God asks, “What do you want from me?” Hopefully they will find that which they came.... even if you aren’t fully awake or are drifting off in your thoughts.

Think of it, we have an empty cross and beneath the cross we have the altar of prayer and grace. An Easter hymn says, “At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away. It was there by faith I received my sight and now I am happy all the day.” Glory! That’s what I say this morning, Glory! I may not always feel on top of the world, but God’s glory still reigns and He Is Lord! I love my Jesus and I hope you do too.

We are invited to come, just as we are, warts and all, to that table where we glory in God’s grace and mercy because he has given us new life through his Son. At this communion table we remember his love and that he has chosen us and as chosen people we are his witnesses and because he died he opened the doors to

paradise. That's why each communion Sunday we are invited to release our troubles to the Lord and watch him work on our behalf. Come give your aches and pains and watch his healing hand bring comfort. Come to the table of grace and receive forgiveness.

That's what this day is all about. And Paul says, my friends who are called, *"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."*

So shall it be!