

Session 11 The Glory and Responsibility of Being Chosen By God (Jn. 15:16)

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

I. GOD CHOSE HIS PEOPLE FOR FRIENDSHIP AND FRUITFULNESS (JN. 15:16)

- A. Immediately after speaking on friendship with God, Jesus assured them that it was not their idea but a privilege that began in God’s heart that He will help them to grow in until they reach its fullness.

¹⁵“...I have called you friends...¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain [be rewarded in eternity], that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another. ¹⁸If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me... (Jn. 15:15-18)

- B. *I chose you and appointed you:* This divine choosing is for every believer. Jesus wanted them to be clear that He took the initiative in their relationship with Him (Jn. 1:39, 42-43; 6:70). This is important because of the fear that they were about to face that night (14:1), and because Peter and the others trusted their commitment to Jesus more than His commitment to them (Mt. 26:33-35).

³³Peter [said], “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble” ...³⁵if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples. (Mt. 26:33-35)

- C. *I chose you:* Our relationship with Jesus was initiated by Him. By saying, “I chose you,” He assures us that He is yoked or bonded to us. He seeks to convince us—it is not us convincing Him—of a friendship that bears much fruit that glorifies God and remains (Jn. 15:8, 16). He laid His claim on us before we ever thought of Him. Thus, He is committed to uphold, oversee, undergird and be the strength in our relationship with Him. I pray, “Jesus, thank You that You chose me. Show me more!”

¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you... (Jn. 15:16)

1. By declaring that He chose us, Jesus takes full responsibility to help us to grow strong in our relationship to Him by giving us direction, provision, protection, and vindication so that we are able to bear fruit that glorifies the Father. We must talk much to Him about this as we ask for help (15:16d). We are assured that He will hear our prayers for help to bear much fruit.
2. He is more committed to seeing our relationship with Him grow than we are. His plan for our life is bigger and better than our plan for our life. We can be sure that He is with us when we face troubles. He will lead us in a way to bear good fruit even in the face of hostility (15:18).
3. Peter elaborated on 15:16, declaring that Jesus chose us as His special people (1 Pet. 2:9). We are a special treasure to Him (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Ps. 135:4; Mal. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:9). We are to proclaim or give witness to “the praises of Him” by magnifying His excellencies (Phil. 3:8) or how attractive He is—that we enjoy our relationship with Him and trust His leadership (Rom. 8:28). This is synonymous to bearing fruit that glorifies the Father (Jn. 15:8).

⁹But you are a chosen generation [people]...His own special people, that you may proclaim [give witness to] the praises of Him who called you...into His marvelous light... (1 Pet. 2:9)

⁸...I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ... (Phil. 3:8)

4. **He chose us:** This also applies to how He chose to form our inward parts in our mother's womb in a unique way with various strengths and weaknesses (Ps. 139:13-16).
¹³You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made... ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret... ¹⁶Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (Ps. 139:13-16)
 5. As creator, He chose the design of the human make up knowing it would be weak as we chose sin. He chose this as the context in which His kindness is displayed forever (Eph. 2:5-7).
⁵...we were dead in trespasses, [He] made us alive with Christ...⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us... (Eph. 2:5-7)
- D. Did Jesus choose us or did we choose Him? Both, but this must be understood in the right sequence.
1. First, Jesus chose to reveal the Father to us long before we wanted to know Him (Mt. 11:27). The reason we know the invisible God of Genesis 1 is because Jesus inspired us to seek Him.
²⁷Nor does anyone know the Father except...the one whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Mt. 11:27)
 2. His choices come from His infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge (Ps. 139:4; Jer. 1:5; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). To be conformed to the image of Jesus is synonymous with bearing much fruit that remains. "He knew what He was getting into when He called your name."
*²⁸...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called... ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son... (Rom. 8:28-29)
¹Peter...to the pilgrims... ²elect according to the foreknowledge of God... (1 Pet. 1:1-2)*
 3. Second, we must respond to His choosing of us by choosing to love Him on His terms. They had to choose to follow Him in a wholehearted way in order to bear fruit in fullness. Jesus told them how a disciple must live if they are to bear fruit to the full measure that God ordained for their lives. A disciple is an "apprentice" who is committed to obey and learn from their leader. The call to discipleship is missing in the modern presentation of the gospel.
²⁶"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother...and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not bear his cross...cannot be My disciple... ³³whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Lk. 14:26-33)
- E. One important issue that many overlook is the biblical call to press in for "the fullness" of all that the Lord calls us to and not be content with less. Paul exhorted us to press into God for the "prize" of fullness. Jesus spoke of hungering for a greater breakthrough of righteousness in our heart.
*⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness..." (Mt. 5:6)
¹²...I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ...laid hold of me [the fullness of my destiny]... ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God... (Phil. 3:12-14)*

- F. Earlier that week, on Tuesday, Jesus taught a parable (Mt. 22:1-14) to warn those who seek to enter the kingdom on their own terms. Some of the Jewish people at that time hoped to participate in the kingdom simply because they were Jewish (Mt. 3:9). His message here is that no one should trust in their nationality or religious heritage as the basis of salvation without responding to Him as King.
- ¹¹“...[the King] saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment...¹³The King said..., ‘Bind him...and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’¹⁴For many are called [invited by God], but few are chosen [by responding to God].”
(Mt. 22:11-14)
- G. Jesus taught that “many are *called* (invited) but few are *chosen* (by responding on God’s terms). This helps us to understand why on Thursday He emphasized “choosing them” (15:16) without mentioning that they had to choose Him. He had established that earlier in Matthew 20:16; 25:14.
- H. It is tragic that many are invited but only a few respond to be among the chosen. That *many* are called, but *few* are chosen highlights the balance between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will. Divine sovereignty requires human responsibility so that voluntary love is manifest.
- I. Many seek to come to Jesus on their own terms. Some are active in ministry or give money to kingdom ministries. But on the last day their lack of genuine faith will be exposed (Mt. 7:23).
- ²¹“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom...but he who does the will of My Father...”²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons...and done many wonders in Your name?’²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Mt. 7:21-23)
- J. Jesus chose the apostles, but eventually they had to choose to “come to Him” on His terms. Jesus again emphasized His requirement of obedience to be a disciple (which is synonymous with bearing fruit that remains). We will be shocked by the glory of the rewards that He gives for every act of obedience. We will never regret denying ourselves on the day that we see His generous rewards.
- ²⁴Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...”²⁷The Son of Man...will reward each according to his works.”
(Mt. 16:24-27)
- K. The principle of being chosen is applied first to our salvation and then to our ministry assignment.
- L. Paul prayed that, when Jesus returns, God would count believers in Thessalonica worthy of receiving the “fullness of all” that God ordained for them in the age to come. We do not pray to “worthy to be forgiven” for we are forgiven and receive the gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) as a free gift based on Jesus’ death. Our entrance into heaven is absolutely free. Paul was not referring to our entrance into the city, but our placement in His kingdom government in the age to come.
- ¹⁰When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints...¹¹Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power... (2 This. 1:10-11)

II. WEAK PEOPLE ARE CHOSEN TO BEAR FRUIT THAT REMAINS

- A. ***That you should go and bear fruit:*** He assured them that He had chosen them to be His friends which included being appointed them to a specific mission that would bear fruit that would remain.
- ¹⁰***“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love...¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another...¹⁶that you should go and bear fruit...”*** (Jn. 15:10-12, 16)
1. Fruit bearing includes keeping His commands (15:10) to love God and people (15:12, 17).
 2. Fruit bearing includes being His witnesses to unbelievers as we gather fruit for eternal life.
- ³⁵***“...look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! ³⁶He who reaps...gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps rejoice together.*** (Jn. 4:35-36)
- B. ***Go and bear fruit:*** We are to “go” or take the action of being His witness (Jn. 20:21). Jesus marked our life with being chosen and then sent forth with a kingdom mission. The more that we feel the reality of being chosen by God for this, the more steadfast we will be in difficult times. Apply the promise in 15:16 that the Father will give us “whatever” we ask in prayer to ask for help to witness to unbelievers by giving us insight, boldness, and opportunities (by sending people across our path).
- C. Jesus calls, ordains, and qualifies weak people in His own way and timing (1 Cor. 1:26-29). Throughout history, God has called many to serve in areas where they had no previous experience.
- ²⁶***For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷...God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...²⁹that no flesh should glory in His presence.*** (1 Cor. 1:26-29)
1. The apostles were uneducated men (Acts 4:13). The apostles were fishermen, tax collectors, zealots or political activists, or from other non-religious occupations, yet they were the most effective spiritual leaders in the first century. This is the result of Jesus having chosen them.
- ¹³***When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*** (Acts 4:13)
2. Paul’s appearance and speaking was unimpressive (2 Cor 10:10; 11:16).
- ¹⁰***“For his letters,” they say, “are weighty...but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”*** (2 Cor. 10:10)
3. Consider Moses (Ex. 4), Jeremiah (Jer. 1), Gideon (Judg. 6), and Joshua (Zech. 3:3).
- ¹⁰***Moses said..., “O my Lord, I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”***
¹¹***The LORD said..., “Who has made man’s mouth?...¹²Now go, and I will...teach you what you shall say.”***¹³***But he said, “...please send by the hand of whomever else You send.”*** (Ex. 4:10-13)
- ⁵***“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born...I ordained you a prophet...”***⁶***Then said I: “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”***⁷***The LORD said to me: “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you.”*** (Jer. 1:5-7)

III. HOW THE CHOSEN ARE TO LIVE TO BEAR FRUIT THAT GLORIFIES GOD (JN 15:5-9)

- A. Jesus is the life-giving vine, and His disciples are branches that express His life (15:5). We can only bear fruit as we cultivate a lifestyle of abiding or connecting with Him. We do this as we abide in His word (15:7) and in His love (15:9) so that the sap of His divine love flows in and through us.
- ⁵***“I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...⁷If...My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done...⁹As the Father loved Me, I have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:5-9)***
- B. ***Without Me you can do nothing***: Our labors in ministry will come to nothing (15:5) unless we are intentional about abiding in Him. We are wise to determine for the rest of our life to learn and experience what it means to abide in Christ. It is the secret of all fruitfulness.
- C. ***My words abide in You***: One practical yet essential activity is to pray-read the Word so that His words abide in us. This is one of the absolute non-negotiable areas in our spiritual life that the enemy will continually attack. We must resist all that keeps us from prayerfully searching God’s Word on a regular basis. Nothing is more important than long and loving mediation on God’s Word.
1. The Word will not abide within us unless we prioritize spending time in it. My youth leaders warned me that it was presumptuous for me to think I could be a powerful or fruitful man of God without a cultivating a strong prayer life.
 2. Leaders in the kingdom who truly bear fruit and who make a difference in people’s lives are not formed in a lifestyle of “prayer on the run.” Most do not really believe that.
- D. ***Abide in My love***: Another practical focus is to abide in His love (15:9) or to live focused on understanding and expressing God’s love (15:9c) that is to abide or live in an on-going conversation with God around the two truths in 15:9a, b—God’s love for God and God’s love for me. We are at rest when we are confident that He is for us, His eyes are upon us, and He delights in relating to us.
- E. ***By this My Father is glorified***: The glorious result of being chosen by Jesus and responding to Him by a lifestyle of abiding in Him is to bear fruit that glorifies the Father (15:8), to experience joy in our heart (15:11), and to be used to love people by helping them and by inspiring them to love Jesus more (15:12). These are the things which Jesus had in mind when He said, “I have chosen you.”
- ⁸***By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (Jn. 15:8)***
- F. We are called to make the Father look attractive to unbelievers in a fallen world. Some unbelievers will ask us the reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15)—they will ask how we live with peace and contentment even in difficult circumstances and why we are kind to people who mistreat us. We can tell them it is because we enjoy our relationship with God and that our conversation with Him around His Word is delightful. We feel pleasure in obeying Him even when it requires that we deny fleshly comforts. We have joy in His excellent leadership in difficult circumstances instead of being offended or afraid, being sure that it will eventually work for our good (Rom. 8:28) even if it takes years to see. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.” –John Piper
- ¹⁵***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [answer] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you... (1 Pet. 3:15)***