

The Chosen People / Being Chosen**071017**

It is a wonderful thing to be chosen, and it is equally a terrible thing to be unchosen or rejected. We have all probably been on each side of this situation at one time or another in our lives. I can certainly remember times when sports teams were being formed and I waited hopefully until the end but was chosen last. Gradually I developed some athletic skills and began to be chosen earlier, but was rarely chosen first.

Growing up turned out to be something of a continual drive to be chosen, and we carry this into our later years, too. We work to get the right “look” and attitude so that we will be attractive to others; we want to be “cool” or “in” or whatever the current buzzword for this is. There are many reasons for why we might be chosen; it could be because we: 1) are really good, 2) are with someone special, 3) are from a certain family or have a certain heritage, 4) we have the equipment needed for the game (or have lots of money), 5) are just lucky (random choice).

Being chosen in the game of romance is always a problem for us. It is everyone’s dream to be chosen. I certainly had my problems here, as well. Even when I did get married, I wasn’t sure I was really “chosen” or just happened to be convenient. When the marriage failed and I was unchosen, the answer to this question was clarified, but I was left with a deep need to be chosen for real. And now I had a son that also had a choice whether he wanted a relationship with me.

I gave up on thoughts of being chosen in the romantic sense. I didn’t want to enter the dating process and I decided that I could live alone just fine. But God and my cousin Steve had another plan, and I found myself spending time with a wonderful woman. The greatest thing was that she was choosing me for my character and heart. I was not about to be chosen for my looks or money, and knew that was not really the way I wanted it to work, anyway.

As for my son, he chose to come to live with me during his senior year in high school, and it was one of my greatest moments ever. I worked to support him going to college and he was very grateful, and it was always great when he called me for no particular reason. For now, he works for the same company as I do, and it is a great thrill to have him just stop by my office to chat.

In a way it reminds me of the story of the Prodigal Son, not that he went away on his own, but that there was a separation and he returned to me because he chose to do so. He is the son that I feared would be lost, and his “return” makes the time we have together all the more precious.

My personal history makes me think more about the meaning of being chosen. The people of Israel were said to be the chosen people of God, but they did not seem to fully appreciate it. God wanted to be chosen by His people, but they usually chose the things of the world around them. Being chosen is not a compliment in this spiritual plane, but it is a tremendous responsibility. Because the people of Israel did not accept that responsibility, they were unchosen. God allowed a remnant to return in hopes that they would see the light of His Goodness.

God prepared another representation of Himself the He hoped would be chosen by His creation. He sent His Son to be born as a human and grow up as a man to lead us to Him. Though Jesus was not apparently physically attractive (Isaiah 52 and 53), and we know He was not rich (though in reality he owned the world), he was spiritually attractive in a way that has never been before and will never be again. Those who choose Him do so because of His Goodness and Love, as God intended.

Jesus was chosen by the voice of God on several significant occasions (birth with the host of angels, Luke 2, baptism (Luke 3:21), and transfiguration (Luke 9:28)). Jesus was also chosen many times by people in the Scriptures. I would have liked to see His face and feel in some way His joy at one of these moments. You get a sense of this when the tenth leper returned to thank Him for healing him (Luke 17:12ff).

It is clear that God does not want those who are forced to choose Him. We must freely choose God. The real Prodigal Son returned when he realized the true love of his father and the mess that he had gotten himself into. The father in this story shows a glimmer of the joy that God must feel when we choose Him. God’s joy when we come to Him is described in Luke 15:10, just prior to the story of the Prodigal Son, in terms of great rejoicing in heaven that occurs when even one sinner repents.

It is clear that we have a choice to make. Joshua made this very clear in Joshua 24:15, and Elijah reiterated it in 1 Kings 18:21. It is not that hard of a decision to make, and once we make the right choice, we feel the power of being chosen in return.

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