

LAMPLIGHTER

OCTOBER 2008

THEME: JESUS SAID... “CHOSEN BY GOD!”

JOHN 20:30, 31

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

(John 15:16 NIV)

Dear Fellow Citizens of Heaven,

As I write this devotion/Bible study, we are days away from choosing the next President of the United States. Voters will be going to the polls to decide who the best candidate, in their informed opinion, should lead our country for the next four years. While this process is an important privilege, it reminds me of the time in school when one feared being picked last for a game. This choosing process became the measuring rod for talent and popularity and no one wanted to be picked last because it really meant that the team really got stuck with you! In other words, neither group really wanted you.

What a horrible feeling of not being wanted! This feeling was equal to not being loved as well which really are two of man's most basic needs. If you can recall those feelings of days gone by, then you know how good the message of Scriptures is to our ears. The Scriptures reveal God's love for His people. Frankly, we, as God's people, are unlovable, stubborn, and obstinate. We are no different than all who walked this way before us. Moses said in Exodus 34:9, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.” Jesus noted in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 15, verse 19, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.” Solomon writes in Proverbs 29:1, “A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.” Paul confesses in Romans 7:24, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” In all these passages there is nothing that one could consider as flattery.

There is not even a hint of any quality that would make us loveable, but over and over again the Scriptures proclaim the love of God for sinful man. God in His mercy chooses to love us. We are his CHOSEN ones in whom he delights! Isaiah 42:1 NIV: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.” Isaiah 45:4 NIV: “For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me.” Isaiah 65:9&22 NIV: “I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will my servants live...No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.” This is not only a popular theme in Isaiah, but Jesus stresses the same idea in John 15:16, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.” 1 Peter 2:9 NIV: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

Amazingly, in Jesus Christ, God has chosen us to be His holy people. This choice was not as if God got stuck with us on His team, but He chose us even before the very foundations of the world were laid. As you go to the polls to choose the next president, remember that you first were chosen by God, and whether your candidate wins or loses, you are always a winner in Christ. For you are His heavenly child and the heir of an eternal kingdom.

Close with prayer, the Lord's Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #62 “Children of the Heavenly Father”