

The Chosen

Season 1 - "What Does It Mean to Be Chosen?"

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on The Chosen, let us continue to read from the Book of Isaiah 43:3-7.

"For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Today we are covering episodes 3 and 4: *You are cherished* and *You change course*.

Before we start Episode 3, **does anyone have any reflections on Episodes 1 and 2 that they were unable to share last time?**

Episode 3 - You Are Cherished (Matthew 11:25)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Children

Synopsis. The opening finds Jesus in the wilderness, praying in anguish that the Father speak through him. Jesus is living in a tent on the outskirts of Capernaum. He cooks his own food, he bandages his arm, he plies his trade as a craftsman, and he says his prayers. A young girl named Abigail discovers his tent and plays with some of the objects she finds, but she runs away when he returns. The next day she comes back with a boy, and they introduce themselves to Jesus. The two children return the next day with other children, and as time goes by, Jesus tells them stories and teaches them how to pray. Eventually Jesus packs up and goes, but not before leaving some toys and a note behind, just for Abigail.

Notable quote: "I hope my next students ask the same questions. I hope when the time comes they will tell others about me like you have." (Jesus)

[Watch reason for being here - <https://youtu.be/0DPzq53O4DI> (24:39-27:25)]

Episode Talking Points

In Sunday's gospel, we heard from Matthew 11:25, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, you have revealed them to little ones."

- *What does it mean to have the faith of children?*

Pope Francis tweeted, “The little ones are those who, like children, feel their need and are not self-sufficient. They are open to God and allow themselves to be amazed at his works. They know how to read the signs, to marvel at the miracles of his love!”

Consider the childhood of our four characters.

- *How did the childhood of our four characters impact their adult faith life?*

- Mary: Magdala was a morally corrupt town. Adding life’s traumas and tragedies, Mary likely didn’t feel cherished by anyone. Hence, wickedness and demons had a stranglehold on her life.
- Nicodemus: Pharisees probably had a solid Jewish upbringing and education. Nicodemus probably felt pride over his accomplishments and felt cherished by God.
- Matthew: Although he likely had a solid Jewish upbringing and education, Matthew’s family would have been damaged by his open display of disloyalty. By pursuing wealth, Matthew willingly gave up any sense of being cherished for who he was.
- Simon: Being a fisherman, Simon had meager learning. But Simon did stay faithful to the God of his fathers. From the Bible, we know that Simon suffered from both pride and self-sufficiency. Simon probably would have been uncomfortable with the notion of being cherished.

- *How did your childhood impact your adult faith?*

- On the surface, this episode can seem meaningless. *How did the writers use the children as a literary device for telling the story of Jesus?*

- In this episode, Jesus is seen doing camping chores, even hurting himself. *Have you ever seen Jesus portrayed doing chores before? How did it make you feel?*

- In this episode, Jesus is seen praying routinely and passionately (meal times, bed time). *What is your prayer life like? How does this portrayal of Jesus’ prayers encourage you?*

- Abigail invited her friends to meet Jesus. *Is there someone in your life who needs to “come and see” Jesus? If yes, pray for that person. Invite them to a church or to a church event.*

Reading

Let’s read from 1 Peter 1:18-19. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

God cherishes His chosen people so much, that he gave himself to get them back.

Episode 3 prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for sacrificing yourself in our place in order to bring us back to our Creator. We humbly ask to empower us to have a childlike faith and to trust that you will keep us through the hardships of life. In the words of Jude, “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

Episode 4 - You Change Course (Mark 1; Matthew 3-4; Luke 3, 5; John 1)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Matthew, James & John, Andrew & Simon, Nicodemus, John the Baptist, Joseph of Arimathea, Zebedee

Synopsis. In the opening, Simon is guiding the Romans in a boat at night, looking for fishermen who are working on the Sabbath to avoid paying their taxes, but he steers the Romans into a sandbar when he realizes they are on the verge of catching Zebedee and his sons, James and John. The Romans suspect that Simon has double-crossed them, so Matthew tells him to pay his taxes now. Simon goes fishing at night, hoping to catch enough fish to cover his debts, and he is joined by Andrew and the Zebedees — but they don't catch anything. In the morning, they see Jesus, who joins them in one of the boats and gives them a miraculous catch of fish, after which he tells them to follow him. Meanwhile, the Pharisees debate what to do about John the Baptist. John is thrown into prison by the Romans, and Nicodemus, who is still looking for the person who cast the demons out of Mary Magdalene, pays John a visit and says he has a question about miracles.

Notable quote: “You have not pursued the Lord lately...You're off to try to fix it again... No more talking. Maybe God can get your attention now.” (Eden)

[Watch “I got this” - <https://youtu.be/0DPzq53O4DI> (46:04-48:20)]

Episode Talking Points

- Where is your faith? Think about a recent experience where either you thought you felt helpless or needed a miracle. *Did you turn to God...or turn to yourself and the world?*
- Eden says she will not let Simon punish her mother for Simon's sins. The church teaches that there are no private sins...that every sin harms the Body of Christ. *How can sin, even private sin, harm others?*
- Near the end of the episode, we see Nicodemus taking to John the Baptist. *Why did Nicodemus want to know if John had performed miracles? What did he suspect?*

[Watch Simon's calling - <https://youtu.be/0DPzq53O4DI> (01:12:21-01:13:34)]

- “Depart from me. I am a sinful man. You don't know who I am and the sinful things I have done.” *Have you ever come to the Lord with such a contrite heart? In Confession or at Mass, are you truly repentant for your sins?*
- Each of us is desperate for a Savior, but to change course, we need to repent and return to God. **I was...But God... and Now.** *What are the “I was...but God...and Now” stories of our four characters?*
 - Mary: **was** broken and ruled by evil. **But God** rescued her, and **Now** she is remembered for being among the disciples and the first person to whom Jesus revealed himself after the resurrection.

- Nicodemus: **was** self-centered, proud, and confident in his leadership. **But God** humbled him and was patient with his questions, and **Now** he is remembered for seeking answers and assisting with Jesus' burial.
 - Matthew: **was** rebellious, isolated, and hated for serving the enemy. **But God** called him to follow him, and **Now** he is remembered for serving Jesus and writing a gospel.
 - Simon: **was** self-sufficient, brash, and impulsive. **But God** called him to follow him. And **Now** Simon is known as the Rock of Faith on which Jesus built his church.
- Each of us can look back on a life situation and think: **I was** [lost, in trouble, in despair] **but God** [gave me comfort, wisdom, hope, a miracle] **and now** [my faith is stronger, my life has meaning, I am not afraid]. When we repent and return to God, giving Him control, our lives change and we become the people He intended for us to be. *Do any of you want to share a "I was...but God...and Now" story?*

Read Deuteronomy 10:20-11:7

"You shall fear the Lord your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.

You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always. And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land, and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day, and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place, and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel. For your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord that he did."

Episode 4 prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for dying for my sins, for raising me to new life in Jesus, and for patiently and faithfully leading me. I humbly ask that you give me specific direction for the decisions you have to make and for the way you need to go. I pray for humility and resolve to keep following you. Amen.*