

# The Chosen

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

### Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on The Chosen, let us read from the Book of Isaiah 43:8-13.

"Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me." I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and I am God. Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?"

Today we are overing episodes 5 and 6: You are a witness and You are made new

The Old Testament tells us again and again that nothing is impossible for God. This episode begin Jesus' public ministry and a reminder that truly, nothing is impossible for God.

### Episode 5 - You Are a Witness (Luke 2; John 2)

Biblical Characters. Jesus, Mary the mother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Nicodemus, Thomas and the disciples so far (Simon, Andrew, Mary Magdalene, John, Big James, Little James, and Thaddeus)

Synopsis. The episode opens with Mary looking for 12-year-old Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem. Joseph finds him in the Temple, and Mary asks Jesus to help them "get through all this" as he matures into his spiritual destiny. Eighteen years later, Mary goes to Cana to help Dinah, an old family friend, prepare for her son's wedding. Simon goes home and tells Eden he has left his nets to follow Jesus; to his surprise, Eden is happy to hear this. Simon and Andrew join Jesus and the other disciples as they go to Cana to attend the wedding. The wedding runs out of wine, and Mary asks Jesus to intervene. Jesus, after some initial resistance, fulfills her request and changes some water to wine, knowing that he is now inaugurating the public part of his ministry. Thomas, the man who provided the wine, is puzzled by what he has seen, and Jesus tells Thomas to meet him in Samaria in 12 days. Meanwhile, Nicodemus doesn't get the answers he's been looking for from John the Baptist.

**Notable quote:** "He is here to awaken the earth, but some will not want to waken. They are in love with the dark. I wonder which one you'll be?" (John the Baptist)

## Episode Talking Points

- *Did you notice the two mysteries of the rosary that start and end the episode?* [Joyful - Finding Jesus in the Temple; Luminous - Wedding at Cana]
- *Did you notice the juxtaposition between the Mary and Jesus in the opening scene and Mary and Jesus when the wine runs out?*
- *Did you notice the Jewish prayer being said before drinking the wine?* ["Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth the fruit of the vine..." vs "Blessed are you Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine..."] Much of the prayers at Mass are based on Jewish prayers.
- *Have you ever thought what it must have been like for Simon and his wife after Simon said "yes" to Jesus? What did you think about Eden's response?*

Thomas sees something he cannot unsee. Each of our characters sees or experiences something they cannot unsee, but not everyone went out and told others. Jesus instructs his disciples to testify on his behalf, to spread the good news of God's salvation.

- Mary: was healed of the 7 demons and continued to witness subsequent miracles. She was the first witness of the resurrection, and Jesus instructed her to tell the others.
  - Nicodemus: saw that Mary was healed which is an act only a person from God could do. Although he saw, he stayed partially blind in not believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Hence, he kept his thoughts secret and even met Jesus at night, symbolizing that Nicodemus may have preferred the dark.
  - Matthew: saw miracles that he could not explain, but instead of remaining blind, Matthew's eyes were opened. He went on to tell people by writing his gospel.
  - Simon: experienced a miracle that changed his life. He went on to lead the church, preaching on Pentecost, and evangelizing the good news all the way to Rome.
- *Have you ever had a personal experience with Jesus? Have you ever testified to others what God has done for you?*
  - *What are some factors that cause you or others to resist having faith in God?*

Many things vie for our attention. We set goals and 5-year plans, opinions and political affiliations, needs and responsibilities, relationships and reputations to maintain, and specific ways we want our lives to unfold.

- *Has God's plan ever interfered with your plan in such a way that you yearn to remain in the dark?*

[Watch miracle of the wine 46:00 - 47:15]

- *Did you ever wonder why Jesus waited until he was 30 to perform a public miracle?*
- *How is this public miracle by Jesus like an artist cutting into a stone?*
- *Did you ever wonder how much pain and suffering Jesus and his family saw and experienced before the Wedding at Cana, knowing that Jesus could help but it was not his time?*

Mary says “Do whatever he tells you.” That is Mary’s instructions to us as well: Do whatever Jesus tells you.

### **Read John 10:30-33, 37-39**

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

**Episode 5 prayer:** Dear God, thank you for the Bible, our written record of history and the testimony of your actions in the world. Thank you for your intervention in my life and in the lives of those around me. Thank you for Jesus, your only Son, who was willing to exercise your power and love on earth — not for his sake, but for ours. I humbly ask for courage and opportunities to tell others what I’ve come to know, believe, and understand about you. Amen.

### **Episode 6 - You Are Made New (Mark 1-2; Matthew 8-9; Luke 5)**

Biblical Characters. Jesus, Mary the mother of Jesus, Nicodemus, the Leper, the Paralytic, and the disciples so far (Simon, Andrew, Mary Magdalene, John, Big James, Little James, and Thaddeus)

Synopsis. The episode opens with us learning Shmuel ordered the arrest of John the Baptist without consulting his teacher, Nicodemus. Jesus and his followers return to Capernaum. On the way, they are met by a leper who has heard about the miracle in Cana and asks Jesus to heal him if it is his will. Jesus does this, and the healing is witnessed by a woman named Tamar. Jesus then goes to Zebedee’s house, and a crowd gathers to hear him teach. The crowd attracts the attention of the Pharisees, who come to see the new teacher for themselves, and it also attracts the Romans and Matthew, the latter of whom is still puzzled by the miraculous catch of fish that he witnessed. Tamar shows up with some friends who are carrying a paralytic on a stretcher. Since they cannot push their way through the crowd, they go up to the roof and let the paralytic down into the house through an opening. They ask Jesus to heal him if it is his will. Jesus forgives the paralytic’s sins — which shocks the Pharisees — and tells the paralytic to get up and walk. As the Romans disperse the crowd, Nicodemus tells Mary Magdalene he needs to speak to Jesus, while Jesus makes eye contact with Matthew just before leaving with the disciples.

**Notable quote:** “If God did something that you felt contradicted the Torah, would you tell him to get back in that box you have carved for him, or would you question your interpretation of the Torah?” (Nicodemus)

## Episode Talking Points

- *Over the years, are there examples of parts of the Church putting God into our carved Biblical box?* [Sun revolves around the Earth, slavery is not wrong, religious war is good, God's language is Latin, women cannot be lectors nor eucharistic ministers]

Matthew tells Quintus, "Conquest is not simply conquering nations, but imposing a new way of life."

- *How does this quote relate to Jesus as the Messiah?*

[Watch miracle of the paralytic]

- *Why did the writers place Matthew next to Abigail and her friend?*
- *Why did Simon say to Matthew, "At least you brought your tablet"?*
- *Although Shmuel and Nicodemus are both Pharisees and claim to have faith in God, why were their reactions to the miracle so different?*
- *What is your reaction to hearing about a miracle today? How does it differ from others that you know?*

In this episode, before each miracle the person with great faith asks the same question of Jesus: "If you are willing..." How many times do we ask God for something but fail to ask, "If you are willing..." Remember that phrase since it becomes a focal point in Season 3.

The topic of this episode is transformation. Sometimes it's easier to come to Jesus than to stay with Jesus. We experience a crisis or need that drives us to Jesus. But then our old patterns of behavior reemerge.

The cycle of sin: God's plan, we deviate, we need to be rescued, we repent, God forgives, and we follow God's plan...but then we deviate.

As we follow the stories of the disciples, we find each disciple at a different level of growth regarding their faith in God and in Jesus. Transformation happens slowly in some and faster in others, depending on the circumstances or season of life. But Jesus is patient with each of us because He knows that when God declares and saves and proclaims, no one can turn it back. But we also do not know the hour of our death, so do not delay your transformation.

Let's look at our 4 characters and their cycle of sin and transformation:

- Mary: was demon possessed and governed by darkness, but in an instant God rescued her and forgave her. Now she is a disciple. *Is Mary's transformation finished? Will she never sin again?*
- Nicodemus: As he witnesses the people around him being transformed, Nicodemus remains skeptical but recognizes that maybe he has deviated from God's plan. *Will Nicodemus remain resistant to transformation? Will he become a disciple?*
- Matthew: As he witnesses the unexplainable that could only be acts from God, Matthew becomes open to the possibility of transformation. *Why will Matthew's transformation be slower than Mary and Simon?*

- Simon: Like Mary, Simon's transformation was rapid. *Will Simon struggle to retain his transformation?*

### **Read Jeremiah 31:31-34**

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

**Episode 6 prayer:** Dear God, you are the good shepherd. I hear your voice, and I follow you, for you give me eternal life. Yet sometimes, I lack trust in you, and I go astray. Seek me out when I am lost, for I do not forget your voice. Please help me to see what is true and to make the right decision. Help me to stay the course. Amen.