

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 15

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the gospel of John

Again, we are in the portion of scripture referred to as the Upper Room discourse where Jesus pours Himself unto His disciples – just a few hours before He is arrested and hung on a cross.

Let's pray...

[Jhn 15:16-21 NKJV] 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 "These things I command you, that you love one another. 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

[Jhn 15:16 NKJV] 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Now, once again – it is important to keep this verse in context.

Keep in mind what Jesus had announced to the eleven remaining disciples at the end of our study last week.

He addressed them as friends –

He was no longer going to address them as servants

There is going to be an intimate relationship between the Vine and the branches

Jesus is going to provide the disciples and us insight / reason for what we are called to do.

This was unheard of in that day – the master gave an order and the servant was required to do it – no question asked.

Now in Jesus' day, the normal thing for a young disciple or learner was to choose his rabbi.

Rabbis didn't choose their disciples; they simply gave them permission to tag along

And as they tagged along, they would watch the rabbi, they would listen to the rabbi and they would pattern their life after the rabbi they were following.

That was the entire point of following the rabbi – the disciple wanted to be like him

So we could say that when a disciple picked a rabbi to follow, he was saying in essence, “I can be just like you”

And I am pretty sure – this was the mindset of the eleven remaining disciples that were there with Jesus in the Upper Room.

However, Jesus flips it around and tells them

You did not choose Me, but I chose you

Instead of the disciples seeking the rabbi they were going to follow – Jesus had gone to the disciples and told them to follow Him

He chose them

Instead of the disciples saying “I can be just like You”, by Jesus picking them, He was changing it to, “I know you can be just like Me”

The Greek word that is used here for chose – means to pick out; choose out of many

Back when I was in Elementary school – we used to play dodge ball during lunch

Everyone would line up against the fence and the team captains would “choose them out of the group”

That is what Jesus is telling the eleven remaining disciples

And more importantly – that is what Jesus is telling the believer today

You did not choose Me, but I chose you

Some people might be thinking, “Wait a minute – I was the one who chose to follow Jesus, I was the one who responded to the altar call, I was the one who raised my hand up”

From our perspective, we think that we're the ones that are making any kind of decision.

But in reality we've chosen Him only because He's already chosen us.

I made the point last week and in our midweek study this past week.

God is always the initiator!

We simply respond to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives

And the good news is that Jesus Christ has made salvation available to everyone!!!

[Jhn 6:37 NKJV] 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

I didn't chose Him – He chose me

And I am thankful He rescued me

And I am thankful He chose me

And here is the thing church – God choosing us took place a LONG time before we chose Him.

Paul wrote -

[Eph 1:4 NKJV] 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

I believe that something that we need to grasp about this amazing truth is His affection for us – His love.

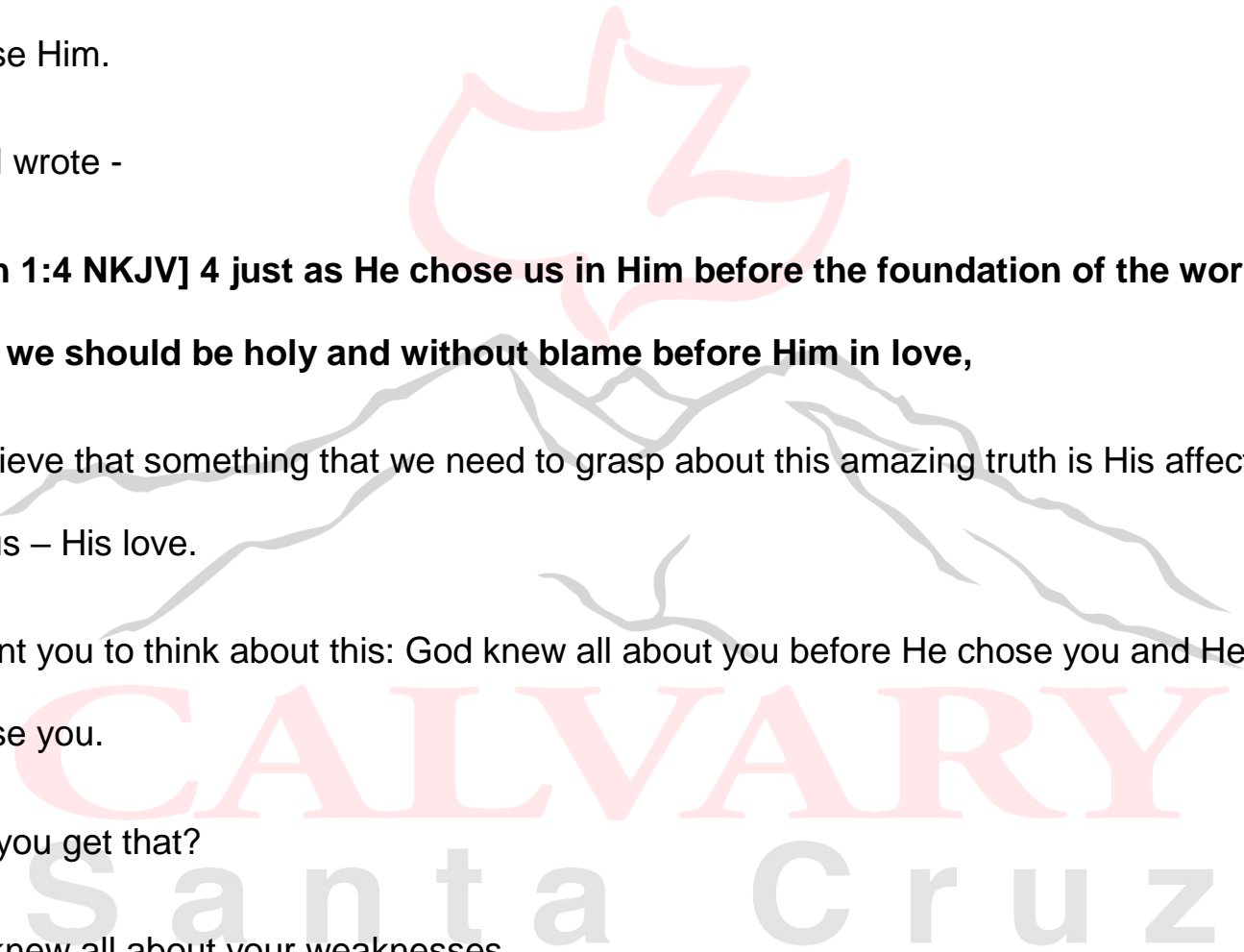
I want you to think about this: God knew all about you before He chose you and He still chose you.

Did you get that?

He knew all about your weaknesses.

He knew all about your mistakes.

He knew all about your habits.



He knows all the dumb things we already did and all the dumb things we are going to do and all the dumb things we think and He chose us anyway.

Chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world, that's affection, that's love.

When Jesus picked His 12 disciples, did He understand what they were going to do to Him?

Do you think He understood all that was going to happen?

You bet He did.

Did He know that Peter was going to deny Him?

Did He know that every one of them was going to abandon Him when He was arrested and nailed to the cross?

And did Jesus know that Thomas was going to doubt Him?

And He still chose them –

And He chose us!

Church -

The love of God is so amazing - that knowing all that I am and all of my mistakes, He would pick me anyway.

We have been chosen –

And we have been chosen for a purpose

and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain

We were created with purpose and we were chosen for a purpose

The word appointed there – is actually the word “ordained”

Jesus has chosen them because He has a job for them to do

He has called them to service – heavenly service

And the same goes for you and me

The believer has been ordained / we have a purpose

[Eph 2:10 NKJV] 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

When we were teenagers – we were looking for purpose

“Why am I here?”

Then we get later on in our years, some of us go through a midlife crisis and we continue to ask the same question

What is our purpose?

Jesus answers that question here for us.

"You didn't choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you should--"

What's the next word –

At the count of three – I want everyone to say it

1,2,3 Go!!!!

"I've chosen you and I've specially ordained you that you should go."

Church,

God never selects any Christian to stop

"I picked you, I chose you out of the group so you can stop where you are at and go no further"

There is motion applied here –

He didn't want us to just sit around, look at each other, sing a few songs and just watch life go on.

He said, (Mark)

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The command to tell people about Jesus applies to all of us.

Have you ever wondered why we aren't just taken to heaven immediately after receiving Jesus?

One of the main reasons why we still have to hang out on earth is to be here to tell others about Jesus.

Here is the thing church,

One of the greatest hindrances to the believer walking in obedience to what we are called to do is that somehow we believe that we are unqualified to preach the gospel or that we are unqualified to talk to someone about our faith or we are not trained to do it.

Verse 16 – is our ordination

And everyone here is as qualified in serving the Lord as I am

Church, the most important thing that we can all do to train ourselves in serving God is to be a man or a woman of this book.

Again, the most important thing that we can all do to train ourselves in serving God is to be a man or a woman of His Word

There is no shortcut in serving people in God's name than this book

This is it!!!!

It is the Spirit of God

Working through the people of God

Using the Word of God in people's lives

That is it

That is what ministry is

And the more that we know of this book – the better

So we go!

Not only is our purpose to go –

We are called to bear fruit

Now, we have been talking about bearing fruit for the last few Sundays as we have studied ch 15.

I believe that fruit that Jesus is referring to – if we keep this in context – is love

As we abide in Him, as we are connected to the vine – we bear love

Not a love that last for a few days, weeks or months –

Not a love that is based on our emotions or our circumstances

But the love that He demonstrated to you and me

A sacrificial love

An agape love that we can only bear as we abide in Him.

And notice the last portion of verse 16 again –

that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you

This promise that Jesus makes to His disciples and to us –

Is that the outcome of our purpose – the ministry that we have been called to do

It does not rest solely on our shoulders –

Our job is to abide and go

The outcome of our purpose is in God's hands – "He may give you"

And as long as we ask according to His will, so that the Father will be glorified – He will give to us because of our standing relationship with the Vine.

17 "These things I command you, that you love one another.

This is the third time Jesus had given this commandment to His disciples during this evening.

He mentioned it in 13:34-35, in that the world would know we belong to Him by our love for each other.

He repeated it again in 15:12, in the context of how we would abide in His love if we kept His commandments, namely loving each other.

Notice that Jesus didn't command – you need to like each other

Or you need to just get along with one another

Or simply find a way to put up with one another

He commands the disciples and us to love one another

If we do this one thing, we will effectively continue His mission and fulfill our purpose

This verse is a turning point in the Upper Room discourse

Because up to this point Jesus' teaching to His disciples has focused on their relationship with Him and their relationship with one another.

Up to this point – it's been about abiding in Him and loving one another

But everything is going to change in the conversation

Because it is the results of this abiding and this love for one another that will produce a hostile response from the world.

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

By "if" Jesus is NOT saying the world might hate His followers;

He's saying "when" His followers experience the world's hatred, they are to remember that the world hated Him long before.

Jesus is saying that our love for one another and our love for Jesus is going to be so radical to an unloving world, that some response, of those in the world, will be severe animosity towards you and me.

Those who abide in Jesus should expect to receive hatred from the world because of their union with Jesus

Which tells us that abiding in Jesus is not always easy

The bottom line is that those people who belong to this fallen world system will always love those who are like them—

Why?

because darkness loves darkness.

Those who belong to the kingdom of darkness will always hate and persecute those who belong to the Kingdom of light because—the light exposes the darkness:

The world does not, cannot love Christians.

The reason why is because the world lies under the control of Satan & he is resolutely opposed to God

BTW – just a quick reminder, all Christians were once (past tense) hostile enemies of God until God mercifully chose to extend grace to them through Jesus

The mercy of God is crucial to understanding this passage

We were once in the world - but we are no longer in the world because He chose us out of this world – and that is why the world hates us.

Now, here is where the problem occurs

This is something that we need to consider and pray about

None of us like to be hated

It's just human nature to want people to like us—

even when it comes to unbelievers.

And because of it, many Christians believe they can be a 'friend of Jesus' while at the same time be a 'friend of the world' also—

[Jas 4:4 NKJV] 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

So, what do we do in order to help people like us and not hate us?

And one of the things we tend to do is – we compromise

So what happens is that we have a loveless church, a compromising church and therefore we have an ineffective church –

We are no longer fulfilling our purpose

We are no longer going

We are no longer loving one another

We are no longer abiding

All because we don't like being hated

[1Pe 4:4 NKJV] 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with [them] in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of [you].

What Peter is saying is that your friend you used to hang out with before you became a believer – they are going to start talking behind your back, they are not going to want to hang out with you anymore. They will hate you – because they will be convicted of their sin

20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

So, we are hated by the world because we are not of the Word

We are hated by the world because the world hates Jesus

And here in verse 21, Jesus tells us that we are hated by the world because it does not know God.

Now, I had you make a note of the word know – very important.

Turn to the right to John 20

In John 20, we have the footrace between John and Peter to the tomb – after Mary told that Jesus was no longer in the tomb.

Look at verse 8

[Jhn 20:8 NKJV] 8 Then the other disciple (John), who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.

The phrase he saw means “to see and understand.”

In other words, John saw and understood why the tomb was empty (Jesus had risen) and therefore he believed.

The same Greek word is used to refer to John and is used by Jesus here in verse 21

In other words, Jesus is telling His disciples – this persecution that you are going to face – the reason you are going to face it is because those that persecute you don't know God.

Wait a minute – were not some of the persecutors – the religious rulers.

And the problem is that they didn't know God because they didn't want to know God.

We often think that a person doesn't believe in God because they lack information and all we need to do is provide the missing information and 'viola'—people would automatically get saved!

But in reality, the truth is that often the problem isn't in their head—it's in their heart!

(Psalm 14:1)

[Psa 14:1 NKJV] 1 To the Chief Musician. [A Psalm] of David. The fool has said in his heart, "[There is] no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

They willfully reject the knowledge they have about God

The reason so many refuse to commit themselves to believing in God is because—then they would have to acknowledge His authority over their life—and they can't handle the thought of that!

So, they either have to do away with God altogether (atheism) or recreate for themselves a god in how they want god to be (idolatry)

Church, all who desire to live godly in Christ will be persecuted.

On one side you have love and the other side you have hate?

Which one will win out?

And as we look at the world today – we might have the tendency to think that hate is actually going to win.

That the world system is going to going to overcome the love of God

Turn to 2 Cor 4

We will close with this

[2Co 4:16-18 NKJV] 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward [man] is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen [are] temporary, but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

We know how it ends

Therefore, we go and bear fruit and love one another – because He chose us.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

"The fool says in his heart there is no God" (Psalm 14:1)—

but the greater fool is someone who does believe in God but then lives like He doesn't exist!

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

