

Chosen by God

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 + John 15:12-17

Being chosen makes us feel special doesn't it?

Games at school

Quote:

God gives us relatives; thank God, we can choose our friends.

**Addison Mizner**

Friendship is a powerful thing.

Growing up, I remember how important it was for me to have "friends". I didn't have many friends as my father was in the army and we were constantly moving, but the ones I had, I cherished deeply.

According to one study I read recently:

People 25 or younger listed friends as their most critical social network; church ranked 5th. By contrast, adults over 25 ranked church as their key social group, followed by their work relationships.

So Friendship is a powerful thing and the Bible agrees:

- "A friend loves at all times..." Proverbs 17:17
- "... There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24
- "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father..." Proverbs 27:10

What is a friend?

- a.) One who multiplies joy and divides grief
- b.) One who understands our silence
- c.) - A friend is one who comes in when the whole world has gone out
- d.) A friend is one who knows where you are, understands where you've been, accepts who you've become and still gently invites you to grow.

Why is friendship so important?

1. Friends make life complete

2. Friendship allows us to be ourselves without fear or despair
3. Friendship gives us a glimpse of the love of God

It is no surprise that one of the most popular features on Facebook is “friendship”

Facebook is - it's THE most popular social get together place on the internet. There are 400 million users (if they had their own country it would be the 3rd largest nation in world).

Facebook is a place where people can share their lives. They can talk with others, post pictures and articles they'd like people to see... And most of this sharing is done between “friends”

Friends (on Facebook) are people you've given the privilege of being able to visit your Facebook page. To “see” your pictures. And to share your thoughts. If I write something on MY Facebook page... my friends will be reading it on THEIRS.

If you're not my friend (on Facebook) you might not be able to share in those things.

So when someone invites you to be their “friend” on Facebook, they are inviting you to share in their life on the internet. That makes “friendship” on this site something of an honour.

The average Facebook user has about 150 friends. But there are many on the internet that can have hundreds – even 1000s – of friends. Some have as many as 30,000 friends who get access to their page.

Now I've got 90 “friends” on Facebook. But there is an odd thing about THESE friends. They're not all what I'd call “friends”.

Many of these are people I respect, people I like or would like to get to know. Or they are people who like what I've said... or what I've stood for. But very

few of them are what I'd call friends.

If I were sick and in the hospital... they wouldn't come visit me.

If I needed some money to help pay a bill... they wouldn't be there for me.

If I was stranded on motorway at night... they wouldn't come and get me.

They don't really know me.

They don't know the details of my life.

They don't know what I struggle with.

They might not even LIKE me.

On Facebook... they're my friends.

But, for the most part, they're just passing acquaintances. Most of them are very nice people, but they're not REALLY my friends.

And, that's what happens in real life too.

Sometimes even the people we call our friends – aren't really our friends.

They're not there when we need them.

They disappoint us or forget us, or ignore us.

I read a blog where people had shared what worried them. And one woman posted: "Are my friends really my friends?" because she had learned that, too often, the people she thought she could count on... you couldn't.

In the midst of this troubling reality - the reality that we don't ALWAYS have true friends that we can count on... Jesus tells us HE wants to be our friend.

Now, this is a bit odd when you consider the fact that we didn't make the first move. We didn't send a friend request to Jesus. He sent one to us.

In John 15:16 Jesus says "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 tells us much the same thing in I John 4:19 "We love because he first

LOVED us.”

Jesus reached out to us – first.  
Now, why is that important?

Well, because frankly, if most people knew what you and I were REALLY like... they wouldn't accept a friend request from either you or I. If people knew some of the things you've SAID/DONE/THOUGHT they wouldn't have anything to do with us.

But Jesus knows exactly what we're like... and He STILL wants us as His friends. As Romans 5:10 puts it “...when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son”

We were enemies

We were dead in our sins and messed up lives.

We weren't worth much --- to God... or anyone else.

But it was then - when we were enemies of God/ dead in our sins - that God sent us His “friend” request. Rephrasing John 3:16, you could say it like this “For God so loved you and I, He sent us His a very special friend request”

Now the way you become a “friend” on Facebook is - one person sends out an INVITATION to someone else to be their friend. The other person can then either “CONFIRM” them as a friend or IGNORE you.

What Jesus is telling us here is “I invited you to be my friend... you didn't invite me.”

John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

If we realize that He invited US to be HIS friend, that He reached out to us because we weren't worthy to reach out to Him - then it is we should be humbled that He thought WE were worth His time.

Now, unlike Facebook... where most of my “friends” aren't really my friends, not only is Jesus my friend, but my friendship with Jesus improves my

friendship with others.

Jesus said "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." John 15:12

It's a repeated command, over and over again throughout the Scriptures.

Why repeat such a command?

Because it doesn't come naturally to us. We don't really know how to love until we've learned the love of Jesus in our lives.

How did Jesus love us?

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13

You see, God isn't concerned with how many friends you have He's concerned with **how many people to whom you were a friend.**

How many people you and I laid down our lives for.

In the Deuteronomy reading we heard :

That we have been Chosen: Selected, Preferred, Special "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

We are Chosen us to be:

1. a witness - Isa. 43:10 says "Ye are my witness, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."
- 2.) He has chosen us to go and bring forth fruit. There is a job to be done in his kingdom. The job is to bring forth fruit.
- 3.) To be the vessels God uses to show the world who he is.

God has chosen us to show the world how they should live in godliness

and righteousness.

4.) Be a minister. 1st Corinthians 4:1 says “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

The word minister means: an under-rower. A under-rower was the slaves that sat in the belly of the ships and pulled the oars to carry the ship across the water.

\*\* God is the Captain and His ship is the word of God, we are his ministers (workers) to carry His word across the world.

5. We have been chosen to be the light of the world. How is the light or image of God going to shine ( Matt. 5:14 ) ? “Ye are the light of the world.” It shines through the children of God.

He has chosen us as His people  
He has called us out  
He has made a covenant with us!

For God so loved the world...and he wants us to love it and his people too.

1. He Loved Us Enough To Become One Of Us

Philippians 2:6-8

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:  
But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,  
and was made in the likeness of men:

2. He Loved Us Enough To Die For Us

Amazing love, how could it be that you my King, should die for me?

Because of this love we are commanded in John 15:12-17

This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ....

You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

In conclusion:

Christ wants us – to become friends with him – he has chosen us so that:

- a. we know He has a purpose for our lives
- b.) Jesus wants to work through your life
- c.) Jesus wants our lives to be fruitful
- d.) Jesus wants us to have lasting results in life

And because He has chosen us He has the ability to provide all that you need  
**Jesus will give you a life worth living**

**That has got to be worth celebrating – isn't it?**