

Sermon 2007 Pentecost 10 (Return from NYG)

Text: 1 Peter 2:9

Theme: CHOSEN!

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, about 25,000 Lutheran Youth and their youth leaders gathered together in Orlando, FL under the theme, "Chosen." As most of you know, 21 members of Trinity, 4 adults and 17 youth were among that 25,000 who considered what it means to be chosen by God.

**"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."**

The magnitude of being chosen by God is overwhelming. But, to think of the ocean is overwhelming, until we remember that the ocean is just a bunch of drops of water. To think of the Great Wall of China is overwhelming, until we remember that that wall is just a bunch of individual bricks. And to think of oneself as being chosen by God to accomplish specific work on this earth is overwhelming until one remembers that God has created all the different components that make us who we are and put them together in just the right way for us to do what he chose us to do. And what is that?

**"...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."**

We proclaim him with our hope. Being chosen gives you hope – not the soft, formless hope of wishes and dreams. “I hope I win the lottery.” But the sure and certain hope of knowing that because Jesus rose for the dead, he has all power and he has chosen us to be his people. That kind of hope translates into confidence. We are able to confidently live out our lives knowing that our Lord has already conquered sin, death and hell and that because he is victorious...**WE ARE VICTORIOUS.**

That means that we **DON'T WORRY!** If we are already victorious then there are no worries. We don't despair. We don't fret. We don't obsess over worldly matters like status and money and appearance. You know I hear so much about low self esteem. But I think the bigger problem is self esteem that is too high! We think too much about ourselves – what we look like, how smart we are, what our station in life is, who likes us and who doesn't. Think on Christ! Think on the mission he has given **YOU – “...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”**

If you are focused on that...you don't have time to think about yourself! I do not think we need more self esteem. We

need CHRIST ESTEEM! And that brings me to the second reality of being chosen.

Being chosen will CHANGE you. It is not as though God is sitting back and demanding that you change..."you're all very naughty and I expect better things from you!" No, it is not that God demands that you do something. He has already done something. He has claimed you in Baptism and sent his Holy Spirit into you. He has revealed his will to you through his Word and he has fed you with the body and blood of his own son. GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU AND BEING CHOSEN WILL CHANGE YOU! God's love changes EVERYTHING!

The very fact of being chosen means that our lives are eternal and being eternal people, who cares about the things in life that are going to rot and pass away? So what will last with us into eternity? Not our houses and cars, not our sculpted gym bodies, not our knick knacks, not our stock portfolios. What survives eternally with us is our relationships with God and each other. This is where all our effort will be as our faith grows. As the reality of being chosen grows in our lives, the unimportant things begin to fall away and our relationships with God and

others finally is all that is left...and by the way, all that is truly helpful to us.

Being Chosen empowers us to live life in a way that before was only imagined. We live now without fear because we know the result. We live without greed because we have been given everything already. We live without bitterness or resentment because we have already won and who is bitter or resentful when he's already the winner? Being chosen by God allows us to live unfettered by the "what ifs" of life. He has already promised the victory and he has promised that all things will be turned for the good of those who love him. Now, although there are always those who would like for us to fear everything, God says you are free to live life to the fullest **"...that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."**

Remember the credit card commercial that asks, "What's on your card?" Many people think of life as though it were a credit account where everything bad we do goes on as a debit and everything good we do goes on as a payment. But this is not so! It is true that everything bad we do went on as a debit but the life and soul of Jesus Christ paid off every balance. What's on

your card? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! We don't live in the shadow of sins committed or the darkness of punishment looming. Our card is paid off and our lives are free. It is a lie straight from hell that we must be punished for our sins. Jesus has already been punished once and for all. What's on your card? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

Being chosen changes everything for us. We are filled with hope because we know that even when this life is dull or difficult, this life is only the foyer for eternity. Our paths are changed by the power of the one who lives in us as we are pulled by the Word and the Sacrament to walk the paths of Christ and to avoid the dark alleys of the world. We live free and unfettered with all the joy that is our GOD GIVEN RIGHT to have. We are chosen children of God. Our cards are wiped clean and we are the inheritors of eternal life. AMEN.