

“With Jesus in the Upper Room - Lesson #5: The Chosen Life”

Scripture: John 15:7-17

Graphics: last supper table, Jesus, chalice, towel, basin

Big Truth: The last moments of Jesus’ earthly relationship with the disciples were in the Upper Room around a table, eating a meal together. Those last moments were Jesus’ opportunity to give the most important lessons he wanted them to know and follow. The people of the Panama UMC are called to sit with Jesus and learn the lessons he taught to be the disciples Jesus wants us to be.

Focus Phrase: The Chosen Life is joyful, connected, fruitful, and appointed.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

B. Grab your bible and open with me to John chapter 15.

C. John chapters 13-17 contain what’s known as the Farewell Discourse. It tells us Jesus’ last words - his last conversation and most important teachings - to the disciples that had gathered around him for three years...and were now gathered around THIS table with him.

i. In John 13, we read of the time when Jesus washed the disciples feet and told them to live a foot washing lifestyle.

ii. In John 14, He then told them to have faith in Him and promised them everlasting life.

iii. He then also told them He would send the Holy Spirit - the Paraclete or *Called Alongside One* - to be WITH them after he was gone.

D. But then, He wanted them to know even MORE about what was coming. In fact, Jesus wanted them to know that they weren’t just to live a foot-washing lifestyle...they were living an entirely NEW life.

E. And in John 15, Jesus said this to the disciples, “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.”

F. In John 15, Jesus taught them Lesson #5, How to Live the Chosen Life. That’s the title of our message today. And that’s the lesson for us today, as disciples of Jesus in 2021.

G. If you’re taking notes, here’s where we’re headed: **The Chosen Life in Jesus is joyful, connected, fruitful, and appointed.**

H. Let’s pick up the table conversation in John 15, starting in verse 7...

2. Scripture

A. READ John 7-17

B. “You did not choose me, but I have chosen you.” The basis for the chosen life is that fact that the disciples were chosen by Jesus.

- C. Now, when the disciples heard Him say that, they may very well have flashed back to the day when Jesus stood at the shore of the Sea of Galilee and said, “Come, follow me. Drop your nets...leave your father’s business, and follow me. And I will make you fishers of men.” That day Jesus chose them to be his disciples.
- D. Peter, James, and John may have remembered that day when Jesus choose them to go up on the Mount of Transfiguration, giving them a sense that He was way more than just a rabbi...that He was God.
- E. On those occasions and others, Jesus chose them to do something or see something. **But Jesus was talking about more than that here.**
- F. Before He left them, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that the relationship He would have with them going forward was so much more than the relationship they had with them up to that moment...at that table that evening.
- G. And, it would be different than any of their current earthly relationships could even come close to describing.
 - i. Being chosen by Jesus wasn’t just a matter of following Him for a few years instead of fishing or having a special preview of his divinity on a mountain.
 - ii. Being chosen was more than sitting around that table that evening hearing these final lessons from Jesus.
 - iii. **Being chosen was about taking on a new life after Jesus was gone, with the presence of Jesus’ Spirit.**
- H. When Jesus said, “I have chosen you,” he was saying,
 - i. “I am choosing to give you my life, which I’m laying down for you.”
 - ii. “I am choosing to take you to the Father’s heart of grace and love.”
 - iii. “I am choosing to give you all the gifts you need to be fruitful for me and to love like I’ve loved you.”
 - iv. “I am choosing to bring you MY joy in doing all this for you.”
- I. Jesus needed this group of disciples to KNOW what it meant to be chosen. They would need to know this stuff when the going got tough and they were tempted to throw the towel in.
- J. And Jesus’ number one focus for the life he was choosing for them was to abide in Jesus and his love...and allow Jesus to abide in them, just as the Father abides in Jesus and Jesus abides in the Father.
 - i. The disciples would need to stay with Jesus’ mission. Even when the cost was high. Even when their lives were in danger, they needed to abide in Jesus.

- ii. And when the disciples abided in Jesus, they abided in the Father because Jesus abided in the Father.
 - iii. Jesus described this abiding like a grape vine. The disciples would know all about grape vines. Jesus said earlier in John 15 that if the branches stay connected to the vine and the vine stayed in the hands of the Gardener, then the branches would bear fruit. The fruit, the branches, the vine, and the Gardener all stay connected or abide.
 - iv. The clear message from Jesus here was that the disciples needed to stay connected to Jesus, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, after he was gone, so that they not only stayed connected to the vine together (the source of their mission and instructions), but they would also bear fruit.
 - v. Fruit-bearing is Jesus' way of saying that they would increase the number of people that were brought into the Kingdom of salvation through them. That's the mission. That they would show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
 - vi. And if the heart of Jesus was abiding in them and they in the heart of Jesus, then the fruit they would bear would be souls being won for Christ.
- K. The road ahead for the disciples - this Chosen Life - would be filled with times of indecision after Jesus was gone. The mission would be filled with times of doubt and fear. They would need to keep going back to the well of Jesus' life and love in order to spread this incredible message about Jesus to the world.
- L. Jesus said in verses 7-8 that if the disciples abide in Him, then they can draw strength and power and wisdom from Him...that God would be glorified when they take that strength and produce fruit for the kingdom...and that process proves that they are disciples...that they are chosen.
- M. Jesus went on to say that the main focus of them abiding in Him is that they abide in His love. Stay focused on his LOVE for them. When they lost hope or were ready to give up, or felt alone, they needed to go back to that moment when Jesus washed their feet...when he was simply loving them.
- N. Then, they could rise up and remind themselves of Jesus' commandments, and go out to the world to love and serve others, in order to share the truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They were chosen for this!
- O. And when they did that, they would experience the thrill - the joy - of seeing lives changed and God glorified.
- P. Living the chosen life for the disciples was abiding in Christ's love, remembering the mission, going out to love and serve, and bring glory to God.
- Q. Jesus finished this part of the Farewell Discourse by saying to the disciples that he now considered them **friends and not servants**.

- i. What he meant by that was that there was no time left to speak in parables or metaphors or hide anything that was going to happen to him. They needed to KNOW this, plainly and clearly!
 - ii. If someone is a servant, that person doesn't know what the Master is doing...and the Master doesn't tell that person.
 - iii. But when someone becomes a friend, on equal terms, then the person shares plans and dreams and doesn't hold things back. Friends share the good and the bad and everything in between.
 - iv. Because Jesus viewed the disciples as friends, he was telling them that they were now the ones to carry on with all that he taught them...to live the Chosen Life...not the life that THEY wanted, but the life that Jesus was giving to them...to bear fruit...to love...and be missional.
- R. The final lesson Jesus taught was how to live the Chosen Life...to live Jesus' life in the world after He was gone. The disciples were chosen.

3. Application

- A. I don't know about you but I was usually picked for a dodgeball team near the end of the process. It's not just that I wasn't very good (which I wasn't), it was that I'd try to hide behind the guys in front of me so as to not be noticed. Eventually, I couldn't hide behind anyone so I would join the team and do my best given what I had. I wasn't usually in very long!
- B. Being chosen by Jesus to live the Chosen Life has NOTHING to do with whether or not you got picked in school to play dodgeball or any other sport or activity. It also is not a matter of some being chosen and some NOT being chosen. We are all CHOSEN because Jesus willingly did the very things that prove God's love for every ONE of us. Our RESPONSE to that chosen life is up to us, through the grace offered by the Holy Spirit.
- C. A more appropriate picture of what it looks like to live the Chosen Life might be the young child who lives in an orphanage. She's old enough to know that she lives in an home for kids without parents. When someone comes to the orphanage to adopt a child, they're choosing to love that child, to incorporate her into their lives, and to raise her as their own. Someone once said that adopted children may not be born from the adopted mother's womb, but is certainly born from that adopted mother's heart. They were chosen to be with them and to love them and be loved by them. And, that child has a future as part of that family, takes on the characteristics of that family, and knows the joy of being chosen.
- D. Jesus is not in the business of choosing people so that he has a team to win a game. **Jesus chooses people to live a life that carries on the mission that Jesus gave first to the disciples and now to us.**

- E. Let me say that another way that makes it personal: Jesus has chosen YOU to live a life that carries on the mission that Jesus gave to his disciples.
- F. In fact, the life he's asking you to live is HIS life. He chose to buy your life on the cross because he loves you. **Now he's giving that life back to you to do with it what he did with His.** Jesus was chosen to be the Savior of the world, to sacrifice himself so that the world would know how to be saved.
- G. He is choosing you to sacrifice yourself so that the world will know how to be saved through faith in Him.
- H. And living that Chosen Life means that you abide in Jesus, lay down your life in love, and bear fruit in joy.
 - i. First, **Abide in Jesus' Love as a Friend**
 - a. William Barclay wrote, "The idea of being a friend of God is "lit up by a custom which obtained both at the courts of the Roman Emperors and the eastern kings. At these courts there was a very select group of men who were called the friends of the king, or the friends of the Emperor. At all times they had access to the king; they had even the right to come to his bedchamber at the beginning of the day. He talked to them before he talked to his generals, his rulers, and his statesmen. The friends of the king were those who had the closest and the most intimate connection with him, and who had the right to come to him at any time. Jesus called us to be His friends and the friends of God. That is a tremendous offer. It means that no longer do we need to gaze longingly at God from afar off; we are not like slaves who have no right whatever to enter into the presence of the master; we are not like a crowd whose only glimpse of the king is in the passing on some state occasion when, if we tried to come nearer, we would promptly be arrested. Jesus did the amazing thing—He gave us this intimacy with God, so that God is no longer a distant stranger, but our intimate friend."
 - b. Jesus calls you to press into THAT level of the relationship that He wants to have with you. To trust Him. To rely on Him. To share all the details of your life with Him. In a word, to ABIDE or STAY connected to Him at all times of your life.
 - c. It's only when you pray and talk to Him, learn about Him more, and act like He did that you can abide in Him.
 - ii. Second, to live the Chosen Life, **Lay Down Your Life in Love for Others**
 - a. It seems ironic that Jesus would choose you to then ask you to give yourself up for others...but that's exactly the point.
 - b. It's not YOUR life...it's HIS! He bought it. He wants you to use your life to love others.

- c. Imagine if someone gave you a valuable classic car as a gift. They have restored it specifically for you. You take it out and crash it. They fix it free of charge and return it to you. This happens a few times and you need to decide how you will receive this valuable gift. Love it, use it with joy, but also stop crashing it or put it away and not use it. What do you think the giver wants you to do with the car?
 - d. Jesus gave you your life at great cost. He doesn't want you to work to repay a life debt. He wants you living your life in loving service that helps others find the gift of salvation themselves.
 - e. The chosen life is a life of abiding in Jesus. The Chosen life is laying down your life in love for others. And...
- iii. The Chosen Life is one that **Joyfully Bears Kingdom Fruit**
- a. William Barclay again: "A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces. It is true that the Christian is a sinner, but he is a redeemed sinner; and therein lies his joy. How can any [person] fail to be happy when [they] walk the way of life with Jesus?"
 - b. Jesus not only wants you to bear fruit for His mission, but to **JOYFULLY** bear fruit.
 - c. You have been **CHOSEN**, church! You have been **CHOSEN**, disciple!
 - d. Jesus has given himself. Jesus has given the Holy Spirit. Jesus has taught you and empowered you and gifted you to bear fruit...to invite people to worship, to share your faith, to love people and walk with them through life.
 - e. Start by telling people about our worship livestream! Tell them about Easter Morning
 - f. Bear fruit! Make disciples! Love people! Joyfully!

4. Conclusion

- A. Maxie Dunnam said, "There's a place in God's heart that only YOU can fill. If you were the only person on earth to love, Jesus would've died for you."
- B. He has chosen each of us to live the life he wants us to live...the life he died for us to live. **SO THAT OTHERS** may live the life that Jesus died for **THEM** to live.
- C. We cannot waste the chosen life. We cannot seek **ANY OTHER** life.
- D. All who are in Christ Jesus are a beautiful classic car (some of us more classic than others!) restored and ready to use for God's glory.
- E. Live the Chosen Life! Let's **PRAY!**