

Ordinary Time 15B 2015

When God Chooses Us

God is always asking us to do extraordinary things: things we didn't think possible, things we couldn't imagine doing if it were not for the power of God at work in our lives. For example, when Israel and its king fell into idolatry and greed, forsaking their covenant with God, God chose Amos, a shepherd, to be his prophet. Amos didn't have any qualifications to be a prophet. He was not a professional prophet. He had spent all of his life watching sheep and tending vineyards. But when God chose and called him, Amos became one of Israel's greatest prophets—not because of his own gifts and talents, but because God chose, called him, and sent him to be a prophet.

Something similar happened to Jesus' disciples. At a certain point in his ministry, Jesus sent them to do what he had been doing: to preach the gospel, to heal the sick, and to cast out demons. Like Amos, the disciples were not ready or prepared for this mission. And to make matters worse, Jesus sends them without any provisions for the journey. But to their amazement, their mission is successful beyond anything they could have imagined. They cure the sick and cast out demons—not by their own power and strength—but because Jesus has sent them on mission, because Jesus chose them to be his disciples.

God is always choosing and electing people to do extraordinary things. In fact, if you are baptized and sitting in this church today, God has already chosen you, yes you, to do great and extraordinary things. St. Paul puts it this way in today's second reading: God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish. ... so that we might exist for the praise of his glory.

Before you were born, God chose you. Before this infinite cosmos came into being, billions and billions of years ago, God chose you. Before you knew God, God chose you. God chose you in Christ to be holy and blameless so that you might live and exist for the praise and glory of God. God chose you in Christ to be a saint!

God chose me to be a saint? You must be mistaken. God chose me to be holy and blameless? You must be mistaken. But I am not. God chose everyone in this church, without exception, to be filled with the holiness of Christ. You see, the call to sainthood is for the many, not for the few. It is for everyone who is baptized in Christ. But how is this possible? How can I, sinful person that I am, be a saint? I know my faults and my sins. Yes. But do you know the grace of God at work in you? Do you know the power of God at work in you? Do you know you have been called and chosen to be holy? The day we realize we have been chosen is the day we become God's saints.