

When God Chooses

There are moments in life when God chooses people to do extraordinary things—things they would not be able to do if God had not chosen and empowered them. The readings of this week’s liturgy provide us with two examples of this.

In the first reading, God chooses a shepherd by the name of Amos, a common man with no particular skill, to be His prophet. God sends him to prophesy against the sanctuary of the king of Israel, which has become a place of greed and injustice rather than a sanctuary of praise and righteousness. Amos is fully aware that he is not qualified to be a prophet. He does not belong to the guild of prophets. But it is Amos, not one of the professional prophets that God chooses. And because *God* chooses him, Amos becomes a powerful prophet, one of the greatest of Israel’s prophets because his power and authority come from God.

In today’s gospel, Jesus sends his *chosen* disciples on mission to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick. Like Amos, the disciples are not qualified for this ministry. They were not schooled and taught how to be missionaries. Moreover, Jesus tells them to take no provisions for the journey. They are to go in total dependence on God and preach the gospel. To their utter amazement, the disciples discover they are able to cure the sick and expel demons? How did this happen? Why did it happen? It was not because of their skill, but it was because they had been *chosen* by God.

You see, when God chooses people for a special work, they are able to fulfill that task *because God has chosen them*, and in choosing them God has empowered them.

Do you know that *you* are among the chosen? Do you realize that God has chosen *you*? That is what St. Paul tells us in today’s reading from his Letter to the Ephesians. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he writes. Why? Because God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual gift and “*chose us* in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him.”

Consider these words carefully. First, God chose us in Christ before we were born, before the creation of the world. Before we existed, God had already chosen

us for a purpose. God chose us to be holy and without blemish. God chose us to be his sons and daughters, God chose us to be members of the church. God chose us to be a sign to the world of God's own holiness. *God chose us to be saints!*

You mean God chose *me* to be a saint? Yes, God chose *you*. And because God chose *you*, you can become what God chose you to be. You can become holy and without blemish. You can become a saint. Why? Because God chose you and that makes all the difference.

Father Matera