



TOUCH POINT

No Choice in the Matter – TouchPoint for May, 5, 2021

John 15:9-17 (The Message) ⁹⁻¹⁰ “I’ve loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you’ll remain intimately at home in my love. That’s what I’ve done—kept my Father’s commands and made myself at home in his love.

¹¹⁻¹⁵ “I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.

¹⁶ “You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you. ¹⁷ “But remember the root command: Love one another.

Grace and peace from the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

We speak a lot about choice in our culture. The choice is yours! ... It's up to you! Only you can choose! I like that last one?! Only you can choose!?

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

Oops!!! I thought only I can choose! I thought the choice was mine...

It's that old Subject-Verb-Object thing. We haven't gone there in a while. When it comes to the bottom line of our relationship with God. Who is the subject? Whose activity is the verb? And who is the object?

It's all rather simple. Whoever is the subject and whose activity is the verb... is God. Whoever has the final say is God... That is one of the definitions of God. The one with the final say. God is that beyond which you cannot go. The final word.

An umpire in baseball is god. Even after instant replay. A judge in a courtroom is god. In presidential elections, the Electoral College is god, not the popular vote.

Whoever has the final say is God... That is one of the definitions of God. The one with the final say. God is that beyond which you cannot go. The final word. That's why the temptation in the Garden of Eden is to be god-like and to know and have the final say over good and evil and my life.

Now we live in a society based on 'I think therefore I am.' In that sentence I am the subject. My activity is the verb. And I am even the object. Now there is a name for people who think they are the subject... their activity is the verb... and they are the object of existence... They're called

narcissists.

So, what do we do with this statement from Jesus?

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

What do we do with this statement that says when it comes to us and God...we are not the subject... our activity is not the verb... and God is not the object?

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

What do we do with this statement that says when it comes to us and God... God is the subject... God's activity is the verb... and we are the object?

What do we do then with all of our religious statements that begin with, “I believe,” “I accept,” “I decide,” “I choose”? They're nice I suppose. Good for you and good for me that we do all those things, but are they the final word? ... Apparently not.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

It's a theological Copernican revolution if you think about it. Just as the sun doesn't revolve around the earth, God doesn't revolve around me. I revolve around God.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”

Now this brings up a few questions for me: Does God have a choice over my life? Does God get a choice in the matter of my life? You see, if God can choose me whether or not I choose God, can God choose to do other things?

Can God choose to die for the ungodly? As we read in Romans 5

Can God choose to save all of us by grace? As Ephesians 2 states.

Can God choose to be a God of love and not fear and punishment? As 1John reads

Can God choose to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth? Eph. 1

Can God choose to reconcile all things in Christ? Col. 1

Can God choose to make every knee bow and every tongue confess? Philippians 2

Can God choose to bring about a time of universal restoration? Acts 3

Can God choose to make all things new? Revelation 21

Can God choose to be our God and make us His people? Jeremiah 31

Can God choose to forgive those who crucified him as he hangs from that very cross they hung him on? Luke 23

And can God, when he is lifted up on that cross, choose to draw all people to Him? John 12

Can God choose to come back to life after being crucified and say to those who denied, betrayed, crucified and ran away from him, "Peace be with you... Receive the Holy Spirit"? John 20

"You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

Well, if all of this is true, where does that leave us? Don't we have to do something? Well, if you insist on having to do something, how about this? You are now freed to enjoy life? You are now freed to live by grace? You are freed to see life as a gift and not a test?

That's something, isn't it? If you feel you have to do something, then live as if you don't have to do anything. Make the something you have to do, nothing. Now, what do you want to do?

Why is it we demand a **free** will, and then **require** we do something with it? It makes no sense. You have something greater than a 'free will'. You have a "FREED WILL".

"You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

"Really God, you choose me.... Even in my times of doubt?"

"Yes Thomas, even in your doubt!"

"You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

"Really God...Even when I deny you? **"Yes Peter, even in your denial!"**

"You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

"Really God...Even in my total betrayal of you?" **"Yes Judas, even in your betrayal."**

"Take and eat. Take and drink. My body and blood given and shed for you and for ALL people?"

Can God really choose to do all these things?!?! Not only can God choose!!! God has chosen!!!

For neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation**, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, last time I checked, I was a part of creation... and nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. NOT EVEN ME!

"You did not choose me, but I chose you..."

Apparently, God is a rather choosy God... and that's a good thing.

Amen.

Spirit in the Desert

Opening Song

Be Still

(London Fox Taize Choir)

Be Still, know that I am God.

Calm Me Lord

(Margaret Rizza)

Calm me Lord as you calmed the storm.

Still me Lord, keep me from harm.

Let all the tumult within me cease.

Enfold me Lord, in your peace.

Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

Come Drink of Living Water

(London Fox Taize Choir)

Come drink of living water. Never thirst again.

The Meal

The Lord's Prayer

(Monastery Choir of St. John of San Francisco)

Benediction

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

(John Rutter, St. Paul's Cathedral Choir)

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you. To shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you. And give you peace....