**Morning Praise @ Home 5th May 2024**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading John 15: 9 – 17

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**Reflection from John**

*“You did not choose me,”* Jesus said to his disciples in today’s gospel reading, *“but I chose you.”* And it’s true. Jesus chose his disciples. And when he did, he was continuing a long tradition that we see throughout scripture, and throughout the history of the church, of God choosing *unlikely*people to accomplish *surprising* tasks. And the message for today is that he has chosen you too.

Among those chosen in the Old Testament there were:

Joseph – chosen by God to preserve God’s ancient chosen people.

* And Moses called to liberate God’s people and lead them to a new future.
* And David - a shepherd, poet and musician who became a great leader; but most of all, a man after God’s own heart. Chosen by God to be king.

And in the New Testament there were countless others - starting with Mary - the young woman from the small town of Nazareth, that no one would have expected to become the mother of God’s son. Such an unexpected choice. But Mary had a remarkable faith, an open heart, and a willingness to do whatever God asked of her.

So, in our Gospel reading Jesus makes surprising and unlikely choices to do God’s work - Fishermen, tax collectors, not a religious leader among them. No experts in God’s word, no scholars. If anyone was asked to pick a team to start the church, the disciples would not have even made the practice squad.

They only had one thing going for them: Jesus chose them.

I reckon that Jesus could see that they needed to be reminded of this. That he chose them. They were all scared, anxious, confused.

Jesus had commanded them to love one another, reminded them to abide in him, told them that he would be leaving soon, to prepare a place for them. They really didn’t know what to think of any of this.

They needed to remember that Jesus chose them. They didn’t choose him. He chose them – those particular people, after prayer and discernment. To continue to bring Jesus love into this world, and to bear his fruit, fruit that will last.

They may not have felt particularly qualified to do this, or very confident that they could pull it off. Except for one very important thing: Jesus chose them.

How many times, I wonder, would they come back to that assurance? How many times would they remind themselves that they didn’t choose Jesus; he chose them? When they were ignored or laughed at? When they were hated and persecuted? Imprisoned? When some of them were even killed? How many times did they remind themselves that God’s own Son chose them, and he chose them for a reason? Jesus chose them and entrusted them with his mission, to go and bear the fruit of the kingdom. And he promised that as long as they would abide in him, they would do just that.

Those disciples were chosen by God’s Son for a particular purpose in this world. But they’re not the only ones. In fact, if scripture tells us anything, it is that each of us has also been chosen by God for a particular purpose in this world. That’s you and me. Yes, you and me.

When Peter, that unlikely leader of the apostles, tells us that we are:

*“a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people.”* He is speaking about you and me.

*We are c*hosen by God to proclaim God’s mighty acts. Chosen by God – hand-picked you might say – and appointed to bear the fruit of God’s love in this world. Don’t look around for someone else. That’s you and me. **Amen**

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Thank You, Heavenly Father, that You loved me so much that You sent Your Son to die for me. And thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your immeasurable love towards me. I pray that I may I keep Your commands and remain in Your love, every moment of the day, just as You kept Your Father's commands and remained in His love.

Lord, we pray for your Church worldwide. May it spread your word and love to all corners of the earth, crossing language, culture, and national boundaries. Strengthen us in times of difficulty and persecution, and help us to remain steadfast in our faith.

We pray for the leaders of our world. May they be guided by the love you command us to show each other. May this love influence policies and decisions that affect the welfare of people and our planet.

We lift up our local community to you, asking that we may reflect your love and friendship. May we care for one another as you have cared for us, and may we find joy in obeying your commands.

We pray for those suffering in body, mind, or spirit. Surround them with your love and peace, and provide comfort in their distress. May they know they are loved as friends, not just servants, in your Kingdom.

We remember the joy of obeying your commands and the love we are called to show one another. Help us to love each other as you have loved us, and remind us of the joy that comes from being called your friends.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**