

Pentecost 2019
Acts 2.1-11///Romans 8.8-17///John 14:15-16, 23-36

→last week I marked 7 years without my dog Alex...a companion that I had for 15 years and every so often I vacillate back and forth about the possibility of getting another dog...especially when I see other pets and how their owners care for them...

→and make no mistake....most pets are often well-cared for by their owners...because when you get right down to it....a pet really is a member of the family.

→and sometimes those treasured pets are expensive pedigree pure-breeds and sometimes they are simply “rescue animals” taken from an unpleasant fate of the animal shelter.

→imagine....having the opportunity to interview one of those rescue pets...and asking them such questions as...

“How did it feel when you were caged up at the shelter”...or “what did you think when you were finally picked to be the one to get a new home.”

→if that animal could speak...it would surely say that...that day was the most important day of their life...the day that everything changed...and that there will never be anything so transforming in their life...as the day their new owner stopped and said... *“I choose you!”*

→isn't it wonderful to be chosen?...*PAUSE*

→remember the days when we use to choose sides on the playground for a game and someone called out your name?

→or how it felt to be interviewing for a job, or trying out for a part in a play or applying to college...and opening that letter, or receiving a phone call or looking at the posting and finding out that you were selected

→or when you dropped to one knee with an engagement ring in your hand and a proposal in your heart...and.....she said yes...

→in fact, [you know] one way of common interpretations of meaning.....behind the wedding ring on your finger.....is to see it as a permanent testimony to the whole world that someone beloved in your life chose you...he chose me...she said yes

→it's great to be chosen...

PAUSE

→and on the other side of the coin...it is also painful to be un-chosen...to be the one whose name is not called or the one passed over for the promotion or the one left with unrequited/unanswered love...

→and not one of us...gets through life without feeling the sting of being the un-chosen one

→and perhaps....that stinging memory is the reason we celebrate all the more...those shining moments when we are favored with the grace of being chosen, selected and loved...

→we don't take these moments lightly or for granted....especially if we have known the pain of being the rescue animal looking out through the bars of a cage called "unchosen."

PAUSE

→today is Pentecost Sunday, one of the red-letter celebration days of the Church when we remember how the Holy Spirit came upon the believers waiting in the room to be chosen

→because on this day...we were “chosen”...chosen to be the disciples and bearers of the gospel message to the ends of the earth.

→and today we find that our world and our mission is not that much different than what hear about in today’s readings.

→.....we hear of people from many nations gathered in Jerusalem, from different countries with a diversity of language and culture

---and yet they all shared the common experience of being chosen as we have been

→our 1st reading from the Acts of the Apostles speaks most distinctly about this....when we hear about the great diversity among the people gathered.

→they came from all different walks of life, different backgrounds, different cultures
YET TOGETHER THEY EXPERIENCED THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

and in our Gospel, we are told about the differences and diversity of the community, and yet, no matter how different WE MIGHT BE....we all belong to the same body, the same church, the same community....if we love and keep God’s commandments

→i.o.w. no matter how different we talk, how different we live, how diverse we might be...the Spirit is the same for each and every one of us

→and **that is what** we celebrate today...being chosen in the Holy Spirit

PAUSE

→ ...the common bond we have...the unity and togetherness we share is rooted in being chosen by God...

Chosen to receive and live the same Spirit....the same message....the same challenges...

→we are all members of God's family wholly and exclusively...because God reached out and rescued us...He chose us

→and whether you think about those people listening to Peter that day in Jerusalem or you think about ourselves here celebrating the feast of Pentecost, the presence of the Spirit is the same for each one of us...from way back then to today.

→when the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost...the believers and disciples were infused with a boldness and confidence to live and bear witness to the love of God revealed in Christ...

→they never got over, nor took for granted that God chose them...included them in His family and gave them the inheritance of glory...

→and today we continue celebrating the fact that God has chosen us

→the bestowal the Holy Spirit to you and me....this Feast of Pentecost..... is a gift,

→a gift that gives us a new way of life...a new way of living...with the challenge to live the Spirit...to make the **SPIRIT** a part of who we are

PAUSE

----our world is becoming more and more diverse each day and all of us are different in so many ways

---our cultures, our traditions, our way of life...our opinions and views...they are all different

but the life of the Spirit in each one of us...remains the same

→and Pentecost, celebrates this Spirit..... it celebrates the presence and the message of God in each one of us

PAUSE

→we have all been chosen by God...not because of anything we have done...but because of what God has done for us...

→we have been chosen...not because we are pure-breed thoroughbreds but because we are spiritual mutts...

→so allow the Holy Spirit who dwells within us to be our official papers of adoption...setting us free to act and live as the children of God

→and let us never, ever get over this good news...

God chose us!