

1 Corinthians 1 (26-31) – God Chooses Me

I'm not like them. I'm smarter than they are. I'm stronger than they are. I'm wiser than they are. I'm doing better than they are. We won't admit it, but sometimes we are thinking it. Or the reverse. I'm not like them. I'm not good enough. I'm not smart enough. I'm not strong enough. I'm just not enough. And sometimes, pride and insecurity can be mixed together, too.

This passage can help you deal with your pride, and also with your feelings of inadequacy, and when you feel like a failure. Understanding this truth has helped me tremendously. And I find myself needing to come back to it again and again. I can still have problems with pride. And I can still have feelings of inadequacy. And I can still feel like a failure. And sometimes I am prideful, I am inadequate, and I do fail. And I need help. And here it is.

Here is what you need to hear, to learn, to love and to preach to yourself; God. Chooses. Me. This truth leaves no place for pride. And it helps you see so clearly. God's sovereign grace in saving sinners and sustaining saints is convicting, comforting, and nourishing. I need a dose of this medicine, not only to correct me, but to comfort me, and also to help maintain me. This truth, properly understood, will help you to stay humble, and it will help to encourage you. It is good medicine for your soul.

God. Chooses. Me. And we are going to examine how this text clearly says this, and then we are going to apply this truth like medicine.

Some of the Corinthians thought it was something about them that caused God to save them, and they were proud about it. And even if they would acknowledge others as Christians, they thought themselves better than the others. They took pride in certain spiritual gifts. They took pride in their social status. They took grace as some sort of license to sin. And many of these had a false sense of assurance because they must have thought God chose them because of what they already were. They weren't actually trusting in Jesus. They thought Jesus was trusting in them.

Paul points out that most of those God chooses are those whom the world wouldn't choose. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that when it comes to salvation, we are saved by grace through faith, "*so that no one may boast*". Romans 3:27-29 says our boasting is excluded because we are saved apart from what we do or who we are. When you feel insecure, you should remember that my accomplishments don't define me. Christ's accomplishments define me. And when you're proud about your position, or you're smug about your current situation, you need to remember that my accomplishments don't define me. Christ's accomplishments define me.

Look at 1 Corinthians 1:29 and see the little phrase "so that". Now look at vs.26, and see that God does the calling, look at vs.27, and see that God chose, again in vs.27, God chose, and then in vs.28, God chose. Now in vs.29, you see that God chose *so that* no human being might boast in his presence. He chose the weak to shame the wise. He didn't choose the lovely so people would look at them. He chose the unlovely so that they would look at him.

Look at vs.31. It recalls Jeremiah 9:23-24 – *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."* Vs.31 starts with the phrase "so that" once again. Now look at vs.30, and see that you are in Christ because of God. You can't say that it was your decision to put yourself in Christ. And you see that wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption are all gifts you got from God. You didn't earn them or deserve them. The honor and privilege you get from being a child of God is because of Jesus, not you. Boast in him, not in yourself.

Taking pride because of your salvation is corrected by a proper understanding of sovereign grace. It is a humbling truth; it crushes your pride. The only contribution you made to your conversion is your sin. Salvation is all of grace so that all the glory goes to God alone. You can't think that you wear the Jesus jersey because you were good enough to earn

a spot on the team. God didn't call you to salvation because there was something good inside you that wasn't inside someone else, or because there was something great that you could do for him that someone else couldn't. Or that you were somehow better, smarter, or wiser than someone else who didn't choose God's offer. No, it wasn't anything that sprang from you that caused God to save you. As Ephesians 2:8 says, even your faith is a gift of God. As Philippians 1:29 says, it has been granted to you that you should believe in him. You can't earn, or merit salvation. And your choice to put your trust in Jesus was all of grace. As Romans 9:16 says, salvation depends not on your human will, but on God, who has mercy. And no, I don't know why God chooses some and not everyone, but I don't have to know. I can trust that he knows what he is doing and I can look at the cross and know that he is good. And if you are a Christian, God saved you despite the fact that you're just as undeserving as anyone else. Praise his name! And now, let's apply this text, this truth, to your life.

God chooses me. This is a convicting truth. It is a prescription to deal with your pride. When you feel like you're somebody, this truth helps you see that it's not your greatness, but God's grace that saves you. When you feel like you're wise, like you're powerful, like you're noble, like you're the right kind, like you're strong. Come back to this truth. When you really *have* done something. Come back to this truth. When you really *are* someone. Come back to this truth. Don't get shamed by thinking too highly of yourself. Don't get brought down to nothing because of your pride. Come back to this truth. The reason you chose God is because God acted first. We love him because he first loved us. Think about it: the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing, creator and sustainer of the universe, chose me. Even if anyone and everyone rejects me. GOD chooses me.

God chooses me. This is a comforting truth. It is a prescription to deal with your feelings of inadequacy. When you feel like you're a nobody, this truth helps you see that God chooses what the world doesn't. When someone makes you feel like a fool, or you went and did something foolish. Come back to this truth. When someone or something made you feel weak, or you

went and proved your weakness. Come back to this truth. When you're down low. Come back to this truth. When you're being despised. Come back to this truth. When you're a "have not". Come back to this truth. God acted with special saving love towards you. He didn't just leave it up to you, he made sure you would be saved by choosing you. The supreme, sovereign Lord, the one who matters most, made a choice. God wasn't stuck with me. God CHOOSES me.

God chooses me. This is a nourishing truth. It is a prescription to deal with your failures and feelings of failure. It can help you with frustration, fear, loneliness, and despair. When you feel like it's all on you, and you can't handle the load. Come back to this truth. When you feel overwhelmed. Come back to this truth. When you feel like you're going to fail, or you are failing, or you have failed, or you keep on failing. Come back to this truth. Even when you feel like you've let God down, this truth lifts you back up. Come back to this truth. You can nourish your spiritual and practical life with this truth. You don't have to prove yourself. God has proven his love for you. Come back to this truth. Even though he knew who you were at the core, and he has seen all you've done, and he's known every thought you've had, when it came to salvation, God chooses ME.

God. Chooses. Me. When I'm on top of the world, I need this truth to help me stay humble.

God. Chooses. Me. When I'm at the bottom of the well, I need this truth to lift me up.

God. Chooses. Me. When I'm feeling like I just can't do it, I need this truth to set me free.

You don't have to wonder if God chose you. If you want him, it's because he wants you. Do you want to be saved? Jesus will forgive your sin if you ask him to. In John 6:37, Jesus said, *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."* Come to Jesus Christ today, and you can come to this truth for the rest of your life. God. Chooses. Me.