

Luke 9:28-36

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Preacher: Roddy Rankin

[0 : 00] Well, let's return to the third reading we had, the one from Luke's Gospel, chapter 9. Read again verse 35.

The words from heaven, the voice from the cloud which said, This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him.

This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him. And I'm really interested especially in the chosen bit, which is the way Luke reports the transfiguration and the voice from heaven.

Matthew and Mark speak about the beloved Son. But it appears that in addition to that, as the text of Luke gives it to us, God also mentioned the fact that Jesus was not only his beloved, his Son, but that he was also chosen by God.

Now, a lot of people respect the morality of Christianity. A lot of people respect the teaching, the holy book, the institutions of Christianity.

[1 : 40] But not everyone who respects, not everyone who likes to take good sight of the teaching of Christianity and apply them to their own lives, appreciates the fact that true Christianity is a focus not on a book, not on a set of teachings, but true Christianity is a focus on Christ himself.

And you may have people say to you in one way or another, why must you Christians be always on about Jesus? Why do you have to keep harping on about Jesus?

Yes, certainly the great man, but must you keep on speaking about him? Can we not just take his teachings and try and live them out?

Do we have to have this focus on Jesus himself? Now, it's not really acceptable in terms of who Jesus is and what the Bible tells us about him to think of Jesus just as a great man.

He was a great man, but there are other great men and women about in this world, and Jesus cannot be put alongside the great.

[3 : 05] It's not even acceptable to say that Jesus is a greater than others, because then it's possible that an even greater than he may come along in the course of human history.

Nor is it really acceptable to call Jesus the greatest. in human history. As though you compare Jesus in the same way with other people, as you might compare yourselves with one another.

Jesus doesn't come into the same class of being, if you like, as the rest of us in this world. He is a man, but he is not simply a man, nor even the greatest man.

He is the God-man. He is unique. He stands in a class of his own. There is no other like him.

And this uniqueness of Jesus, this peerlessness, this way in which Jesus is without any compare, or without any others like him, has to be recognized by us, of being the center and the heart of the Christian message.

[4 : 34] Our Jesus is more than the greatest man. There is no one like our Jesus. He is absolutely and totally alone.

You can't even say he is very unique, as people sometimes do. The word unique means there is only one. So if you are unique, you are unique.

And Jesus is unique. One of the reasons why Jesus is unique, and the one we are going to look at tonight, is that he is chosen by God.

Now, from the very beginning of this universe's history, however you understand that, the Bible tells us that God's Son was there, created.

All things were made by him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. And whatever processes, or whatever means he used to achieve that end, it's not our interest at all tonight.

[5 : 53] Jesus, though, is the creator, and we are here tonight, because we are part of that creation. We belong to the created order, which he brought into being, we are his creatures.

He created man, but man did not remain as he was, pristine from the hand of Jesus, from the hand, rather, of the Son of God, the Creator, because man turned against the Creator.

Man sinned. man, in his pride, thought he could find a better way than what God had said to him.

And we read about that in Genesis chapter 3. And there, at that point, God, for the first time, promises that there will be someone who will come from this line of mankind that has begun in Genesis, there at the beginning, Adam and Eve, who will be determined in transforming the history of mankind.

Genesis 3.15, I will put enmity, God said, between you, the serpent, the snake, the devil, Satan, the tempter, the accuser of man and the adversary.

[7 : 19] I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He, this one who is going to come, will crush your head, Satan.

He'll crush you. Although you will strike his heel. You'll have a go at him, but he will crush you. The offspring of man will crush the head of Satan.

But which offspring? Who is it going to be? And we understand and know from the flow of the Bible's teaching that what is enshrined even at the beginning is the Christ, the one whom God has anointed and chosen, but who will that be?

Who is the seed of the woman? First of all, we recognize that everyone is chosen by God in one way or another to fulfill one purpose or another.

God chose Paul, for example, my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles. Jesus, actually, is the one saying these words. He is my chosen one.

[8 : 29] we, the Christian church, are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do.

We're all chosen. We're all here for a purpose. And God's chosen us all to fulfill a certain sphere and to fulfill certain works in this world.

But God did promise that it would be one specifically who would be chosen to be the Christ, the one who would crush the kingdom of Satan.

We read in Isaiah 42 God saying to this one who is to come, here he is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.

I'll put my spirit on him and he'll bring justice to the nations. And in Isaiah 61 this chosen one speaks himself and says the spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me.

[9 : 35] And there's the choice of God. I'm the one who's chosen. I'm the one who's anointed to preach good news to the poor and so on. And then the expectation and the flow of history reaches its climax.

The chosen one comes. He comes to the world. He comes because God chooses a mother. The angel went to that woman Mary and said greeting you of all the women in history you Mary who are highly favoured the Lord is with you.

And in a loud voice it says Mary exclaimed her cousin Elizabeth exclaimed to her blessed are you a man woman and blessed is the child you'll bear.

This woman is chosen. This birth is the birth of the chosen one. And if you want to go down to the level of what actually happened God chooses even one of the eggs of Mary one of her own eggs is chosen and fertilised and implanted by God himself that's truly amazing to think about so that the virgin Mary is with child and the child is born in due course and given these wonderful names it is birthed like Emmanuel Jesus Christ the Lord Saviour Son of the Most High God Now we may not understand why

God chose Mary and God chose Mary's son her first born in particular the Bible doesn't tell us that but the Bible doesn't usually tell us why God chooses anyone to be anything it's something to accept to accept that when the time had fully come as Paul says God sent forth his son when God's time was right when God's purpose was ready he did it for his reasons and it had to be as far as God was concerned it had to be Mary and it had to be at that time that place that woman that context there in Galilee God spoke to that woman there in Judea Bethlehem she was there with

[12 : 33] Joseph for the census and she gave birth to her firstborn Jesus we don't even know why it has to be a Jewish child we don't know why it has to be a son of Abraham why not another race we don't know why the Jewish people were chosen to carry back the responsibility of being the people through whom the one who would crush the head of Satan comes and it was a burden for them because it meant that they became the particular object of Satan's hatred he didn't want the one to be born who would crush his head and so he sought and still does seek to gain well first of all the destruction of the Jews and his revenge these days upon Jews for bringing forth from themselves this one this the son of

God Jesus Christ the unbelieving Jew of course could resent that but the faithful Jew saw it as a privilege Elizabeth said why am I so favoured that the mother of my Lord should come to me what a privilege to have Mary come and visit me the one who is carrying the chosen one of God and Jesus herself responds which did my soul glorify the Lord my spirit rejoices in God my Savior that he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant from now on all generations will call me blessed for the mighty one has done great things for me holy is his name so this child who was born to

Mary is the chosen one he is the one in whom the carol says the hope and fears of all the years are met in he's the one in whom the whole of the expectation of prophecy and of history meets in Jesus and this this one grows the word was made flesh and he dwelt among us says John and it turned out to be someone who matched his identity as the chosen one of God as we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth and so it is here in verse 35 but again the father speaks to that select troop of the disciples this is my son whom

I have chosen my beloved the one whom I have set my special love upon this is the unique one listen to the son of course existed before Jesus that's why I corrected myself earlier on in the sermon you can't say that Jesus created the world really because of course there was no Jesus until he was named Jesus by Mary and Joseph but the son who took that human identity existed before the conception and the womb before man before the creation the son is the one who is from all ages past he is the eternal son of

God there's no one else with that identity of course God has many sons and many daughters who have been adopted by him into his family who have grace and his mercy but he only has one whom he calls the son there is only one eternal one who exists from all ages and the Jesus of Nazareth is the one whom the son actually takes into union with himself so that he becomes the God man and so that we can call Jesus the son of God even though he is also the son of Mary and that Jesus can therefore speak as he is the God man can speak of his eternal past and say you know before Abraham was I am God and he can pray father glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world existed even though his human existence was a mere thirty two years in this world challenge and it can happen very subtly that the church begins to give a wee bit of leeway on this matter and that we as individuals surrounded as we are by people of other faiths who hold in his team other religious figures prophets leaders gurus whatever that we should begin to place

[19 : 18] Jesus in amongst all these figures in our thinking and we can't do that and we mustn't do that because you can't call God the son you can't call Jesus Christ the greatest or greater than because he doesn't compare with people he doesn't compare he is unique he is totally in another order the rest is creation he's the creator and it's so important that we hold on to this uniqueness he's the one God's chosen and there's no one else God has not chosen others in this way that's why in this remarkable episode which we call the transfiguration at the end of the appearances of

Moses and Elijah when they've been and they've discussed with Jesus his crucifixion and so on as it says in verse 31 they go because they don't stand with Jesus and at the end verse 36 when the voice had spoken they found that Jesus was alone Moses and Elijah they've gone back to heaven they just don't stand with Jesus you can't put them alongside Jesus that's why Peter's suggestion well meaning though it undoubtedly was is so misconceived in verse 33 it's good for us to be here let's throw up two shelters one for you one for Moses one for Elijah and look as charitably they didn't know what he was saying you can't you can't just put them in their little shelters and have them alongside each other

I mean Peter and the others they esteemed Elijah and they esteemed Moses but it's totally misconceived to put Elijah and Moses alongside Jesus and this Christ God God actually stresses that in this situation you've got the three men there Moses Elijah and Jesus and God if it were points to the one and he says this one is my chosen one this is the one who matters in the whole stream of things Jesus my eternal son my beloved so you've got to put Moses and Elijah away where they belong as simply human servants of God men of like passions they're men like themselves Peter James John and you've got to put my son where he belongs he's the one who plays shone like the son whose clothes became like lightning he's different he's unique and so earlier on in the chapter you find this speculation about who

Jesus is in verse 8 Herod's very concerned about who Jesus is perhaps it's John the Baptist raised from the dead or Elijah or one of the prophets and again in verse 19 Jesus actually asks who the crowds say he is and some say John the Baptist Elijah one of the prophets but no you must understand and this is why God is pointing it out here Jesus is different no one else has been chosen to be the Christ to be the one to crush the kingdom of darkness Jesus is the son and the saviour he's the Christ he's God's choice but another implication of this is that wherever there are or wherever there is truth there is also error and wherever there is that which is of value there are tentacles and there will therefore be and there have also been false

Christ Jesus himself said so that's a part of the life that we're living in he said in Matthew 24 another place you know from now on to the end of the world he says there will be false Christs people claiming to be chosen by God in a unique place but they're not because God has not chosen them and they can't appoint themselves no man can appoint himself to any position in God's work and you certainly can't appoint yourself to be the son of God or the Christ of God only God appoints Hebrews 5 4 no one takes this honour upon himself he must be called by God just as Aaron was so Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest but God said to him you are my son today I have become your father and he says in another place you are a priest forever in the order of

[25 : 16] Nehemiah God has chosen even Jesus didn't choose himself Hebrews 6 even though he himself of course uniquely could he waits to be appointed by the father and so as we read in number 17 only Aaron's rod budded only the tribe of Levi's rod budded of all the tribes only Aaron's rod budded to show God's choice because God wanted to stop people from taking a role to themselves that he himself hadn't chosen them for so it is with Jesus Christ so it is that anything that Jesus has been sent into the world to do we can't do for him we can't take to ourselves and so when it comes to salvation when it comes to

God having chosen Jesus to be the saviour we can't we can't take any part in that we can't appoint ourselves to do a little to help him we can't appoint ourselves to suffer a little for sin we can't appoint ourselves to do some good deeds to add to the tally of Jesus good deeds we can't do anything that Jesus has done as the unique chosen one of God to be the saviour we stand and we look at him chosen and appointed doing his work and we watch the spectators in history of Jesus going about his lonely because it's a unique task of taking sin upon himself and entering into this world with that burden from the very beginning born under the law identifying with humanity identifying with humanity sins even being baptized along with those who are confessing their sins having none of his own to confess he identifies with those who are confessing and he's saying

I'm here to carry sin and he carries it that lonely path which takes them up from Galilee to Jerusalem to Pilate's judgment hall and along the way of tears and the way of sweat and the way of sorrow the way of pain and anguish and suffering up to Calvary itself and up onto that cross to die absolutely and totally alone we can't do anything but watch we read the gospels and we spectate because none of that belongs to us God's chosen Jesus to do it and so it is that if God has chosen

Jesus to do it and he's done it and he's paid for sin that we must never ever attempt to do anything about our own salvation to make it happen do you understand what I mean you cannot and you must not try to put yourself right with God you can't God hasn't chosen you to do that you haven't got that position he chose Jesus to do that and Jesus has done it and he has crushed the head of the serpent the one who comes and loves to accuse us he's got no business nor right to do that because Jesus has defeated the accusations of Satan against

Christians we are no longer unsaved we are no longer carrying our own sins before God because Jesus has done that for us and all that Satan would try to bring against us has no place no justification no truth in fact because Christ the chosen one has done all that's needed for our lives to be put right with God so we don't try and do it ourselves but then also we don't try and go anywhere else than to him to be put right with God he can't go anywhere else only Jesus has been chosen and to watch people choose other saviours to watch people choose to try and save themselves or to watch people choose not to bother about being saved in the first place or to think that they even need it breaks their hearts just reminds me of when I was a young Christian speaking to someone who was very near and dear to me about the newfound salvation salvation

[31 : 28] I had and he said to me God I don't need to be saved and it broke my heart if you don't need to be saved then what's it all about that Jesus came why did you have to go through all of that God God has chosen him because he needed to choose someone because he loves us and he wants us to know his salvation and his mercy and eternal life so we don't look anywhere else we don't have to we look to Jesus we've got to submit to God's choice Peter says as you come this is one of the men who saw this event he says as you come to

Jesus the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him you also like living stones have been built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ for in scripture it says see I lay in Zion a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame now to you who believe this stone Jesus is precious but to those who do not believe the stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone and the stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall you reject Christ you reject the one God the one God has chosen and you've got nowhere to go nowhere else but if he is the one God has chosen then you choose him as well

God God says yet this is my son whom I've chosen listen to him listen to him don't listen to anyone else but to him you don't need to go elsewhere if God's chosen Jesus then you choose him too God's chosen Jesus don't you reject him there are no other choices this is my son whom I have chosen listen to him let's pray now