

What does it mean to be chosen?

“Called”

By the expression “many are called” (or “invited”), Jesus points to a universal invitation to the kingdom of heaven and those who have responded.

Called, klētos, implies that a relationship is present. This is different from the verb kaleo, which is the act of inviting.

(Romans 8:28) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

The called have responded to the invitation or calling of God.

“Chosen”

Those chosen are “the elect” (eklektoi), which for Jesus is an alternative expression for his true disciples. Not only have they been called, they have remained with Him.

We become chosen by responding to not only God’s calling, but the specific purpose for which we have been called.

(1Peter 2:9) But you are a chosen generation (eklektos), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Our initial response doesn’t automatically result in becoming the elect. There are those who come but refuse to submit to the calling that the Lord has placed upon their life. There is no follow through.

Israel and her leadership had been known as the “chosen,” but this privilege was lost through unresponsiveness to Jesus’ invitation to unite and cooperate with His kingdom work.

(2Peter 1:10) Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.

Notice the progression in this text:

(Revelation 17:14) “ ... those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

(Matthew 25:23) His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

(Philippians 2:12–13) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

The working in us that God does is sanctification. When we cooperate with this work by faith, His grace brings transformation within.

One could say that justification gets you into the wedding (responding to God's calling), while sanctification keeps you in attendance (as one of God's chosen). (See parable in Matthew 22)

Marvin Moore writes about the difference between justification and sanctification:

“Both justification and sanctification require our faith, but they are quite different kinds of faith. With justification, we simply believe that God has forgiven our sins and applied Christ's righteousness to cover our sinfulness and that He accepts us as sinless, even though we are still very imperfect. We trust that “Christ's character stands in place of . . . [our] character” defects, and we “are accepted before God just as if . . . [we] had not sinned.”² As Paul put it, “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:22, NIV). We can't do a thing to deserve this righteousness, and the harder we try to deserve it, the less of it we receive. With justifying faith, the only personal discipline we have to exercise is simply putting aside our doubts and believing that God is on our side because He has promised to be there.

Sanctifying faith is quite different. You still can't look into yourself for any goodness that would qualify you to receive sanctification, but you do have to believe that you can overcome a particular temptation or character defect with God's help. And you have to follow that up with intense effort to obtain the victory. You can't do this on your own. You have to believe that with the Holy Spirit touching the nerves in your brain and His power in your mind, victory is possible. Through it all, you have to keep in mind that “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). That's why the apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). Jesus' and Paul's assurances are also for you. You can do all things through Christ. All things are possible for you in your character development—if you believe.” (Marvin Moore, *The 144,000 and Nearness of Christ's Return*, pp. 186-187, Pacific Press)

It is the Holy Spirit that works in us. We cannot change ourselves. But we are called to surrender our lives to God and cooperate with His work in us.