ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH – HOLLAND, MN

 July 2019–NEWSLETTER No. 7

**A Treasured Possession**

God in Deuteronomy tells Moses in Chapter 7 to declare to the Israelites, “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” Because of God’s declaration, Christians consider themselves to be God’s special treasured possession, a people set apart from the world as very special though still in the world. Some would take this to mean that Christians consider themselves to be better than others; that we look down on unbelievers as those who are here to serve us because of our special status before God. But God goes on to tell Moses why God chose them.

“The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” So, God didn’t choose Israel because they were greater than others, or better or smarter, or holier than anyone else. He didn’t choose them because of what they could do for him. He chose them simply because He loved them. His choosing is all about him and not about those chosen.

This doesn’t make much sense to us. We choose based on what is chosen. Go to the supermarket. How many choose the fresh fruit that looks bruised, over-ripe, is moldy or in some way damaged. Don’t we choose according to what is the best available for what we want, not according to what is the worst? If we are honest, we choose what we consider to be the best. But God doesn’t.

He decides according to what He loves, according to the promises He made. Christians rejoice that their being chosen wasn’t contingent on their ability or status. Christians aren’t better than others, we readily admit we are broken, sinful and unclean. But still God chooses us because of Jesus, His only Son. Because of His suffering, death and resurrection we are remade into God’s special possession. God declares us to be His holy people based solely on His love for us. He saves us and wants all to believe. Christians do not consider themselves better than others, for we are not, but we are saved solely because of God’s love for us. We consider ourselves as special because God says so, just as God wants all to be part of His treasured possession.

In Christ’s service,

 *Pastor Petrich*