

# Women's Ministries Promotion Week 2014

# Chosen



"Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;  
you formed me in my mother's womb.

I thank you, High God – you're breathtaking!  
Body and soul, I am marvelously made!  
I worship in adoration – what a creation!"

*Psalm 139:13-14 (The Message)*



Giving  
Hope  
Today

Semaine des œuvres féminines  
2014

# Choisies



« Tu m'as fait ce que je suis,  
et tu m'as tissé dans le ventre de ma mère.

Merci d'avoir fait de moi une créature aussi merveilleuse :  
tu fais des merveilles,  
et je le reconnais bien. »

*Psaumes 139:13-14 (Bible du semeur)*



Un don  
d'espoir  
pour la vie

*What a joy & privilege we have to serve and work with women! As you give focus to your women's ministry I trust this bundle of resources will be most helpful. Included you will find:*

- *Scripture Cards*
- *Program: Coffee Talk*
- *Devotional*
- *Worship Resources*
- *Sermon*

*A selection of PowerPoint slides and presentations including:*

- *PowerPoint slides for promotional purposes*  
*(These are available from your Corps Officer or Division)*
- *Responsive readings from [engageworship.org](http://engageworship.org)*  
*(PowerPoint slides can be downloaded at [ministryhelps.ca](http://ministryhelps.ca) under Promotion Week.)*

*All of these resources have been written and prepared by women leaders across our territory with the theme "Chosen" in mind. As you prepare to celebrate women and minister to women in your sphere of influence I pray we would be reminded that we are each chosen and loved by God and have been created with a purpose.*


*Abundant Blessings!*

*Captain Jennifer Reid*

Five fruitful and faith-filled  
*affirmations*  
to sweeten your day  
and reflect upon.

Cut apart and place on your fridge,  
on a mirror, in your Bible,  
or in some place as a reminder  
that you are **Chosen!**

Adapted from "The Spice" August 2011.  
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# Chosen

**You are loved unconditionally**  
— yesterday, today, and forever.

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

— Romans 8:38-39 (NIV)



# Chosen

**You are never alone** — hemmed in  
by God's ever-present love.

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*

— Joshua 1:9 (NIV)




# Chosen

**You are God's masterpiece**  
— knit together with love.

*"For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well."*

— Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV)




# Chosen

**You are beautiful and clothed with  
splendor** — Jesus.

*"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."*

— Galatians 3:27 (NIV)



# Chosen

**You have a divine purpose**  
— beyond what you might think or ask for.

*"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us."*

— Ephesians 3:20 (NIV)

Cinq affirmations axées  
sur la foi qui ensoleilleront  
vos journées et nourriront  
vos méditations.

Découpez et placez sur votre réfrigérateur,  
un miroir, ou encore dans votre Bible  
ou à autre endroit afin de vous  
rappeler que vous êtes **choisie**.

Adaptées de The Spice, août 2011.  
© Group Publishing: www.group.com



# Choisies

**Vous êtes aimée de façon inconditionnelle**  
— hier, aujourd'hui et pour toujours.

*« Oui, j'en ai l'absolue certitude: ni la mort ni la vie, ni les anges, ni les dominations, ni le présent, ni l'avenir, ni les puissances, ni ce qui est en haut, ni ce qui est en bas, ni aucune autre créature, rien ne pourra nous arracher à l'amour que Dieu nous a témoigné en Jésus-Christ notre Seigneur. »*

— Romains 8:38-39 (Bible du Semeur)



# Choisies

**Vous n'êtes jamais seule**  
— entourée de l'amour omniprésent de Dieu.

*« Je t'ai donné cet ordre : prends courage et tiens bon, ne crains rien et ne te laisse pas effrayer, car moi, l'Éternel ton Dieu, je serai avec toi pour tout ce que tu entreprendras. »*

— Josué 1:9 (Bible du Semeur)



# Choisies

**Vous êtes le chef-d'œuvre de Dieu**  
— tissée avec amour.

*« Tu m'as fait ce que je suis, et tu m'as tissé dans le ventre de ma mère. Merci d'avoir fait de moi une créature aussi merveilleuse : tu fais des merveilles, et je le reconnais bien. »*

— Psaumes 139:13-14 (Bible du Semeur)



# Choisies

**Tu es belle et revêtue de splendeur**  
— Jésus.

*« Car vous tous qui avez été baptisés pour le Christ, vous vous êtes revêtus du Christ. »*

— Galates 3:27 (Bible du Semeur)



# Choisies

**Vous avez un dessein divin**  
— au-delà de ce que vous pensez ou désirez.

*« À celui qui, par la puissance qui agit en nous, peut réaliser infiniment au-delà de ce que nous demandons ou même pensons. »*

— Éphésiens 3:20 (Bible du Semeur)



Cathy Simms

Coffee Talk is a place where women gather to share life. The room is set up as a coffee shop. Try and create a warm, inviting atmosphere. Serve hot beverages and nibblers for light refreshments...available throughout the evening.

Each table contains a different discussion card that will inspire conversation. (*You can create discussion cards for any theme, and to suit any age group/audience*) The discussion cards may simply be attached to coordinating green 5x7 cardstock, and inserted into one of the clear stand up frames (available at the dollar store).

Here's how it works. Upon arrival greet your guests and invite them to help themselves to refreshments. The tables are set in small groups. (i.e. five participants per table) It is better to use smaller tables, if at all possible, which creates a more intimate setting, and makes it easier to hear the conversation.

A brief explanation is given how the evening will run. Encourage all participants to give equal opportunity for sharing, to try and focus their discussion on the topic at hand. When the time is called...for an hour I do four-15 minute intervals...they must 'change up'. (Move to another table with another group of people and engage in a new discussion.)

This is such a great way for women to get to know each other on a deeper level, share meaningful conversation, and be inspired by one another.

## (Resource for Discussion Cards) How Baby Elephants Are Trained

Elephants in captivity are trained, at an early age, not to roam. The leg of a baby elephant is tied with a rope to a wooden post planted in the ground.

The rope confines the baby elephant to an area determined by the length of the rope. Initially the baby elephant tries to break free from the rope, but the rope is too strong. *The baby elephant "learns" that it can't break the rope.*

When the elephant grows up and is strong, it could easily break the same rope. But because it "learned" that it couldn't break the rope when it was young, the adult elephant believes that it still can't break the rope, so it doesn't even try!

*Humans operate in a similar way. We learn something about ourselves at an early age and still believe it as an adult. Even though it may not be true, we operate as if it is.*



Every part of God's creation is very good and very special because it results from the loving design of Almighty God. As persons created in the divine image, we are very special. The dignity and worth of every human being flows from the divine decree, not human decision. Our essential dignity comes from the Creator of the galaxies who selected human beings alone out of the almost infinite multitudes of the created order to bear the divine image. Human beings enjoy a God-given worth and dignity that sets them apart from the rest of creation.

*Ron Sider, Christianity Today*

Share your thoughts on this quote.



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## Coffee Talk

God designed the human DNA with its 3.1 billion sub-units, those bits that determine our personal characteristics, in such a way that there is no chance that two of us could be the same. There is one chance in 64 billion that someone will have the same fingerprint as you. There are many people who will be much more talented than you in many areas of life, but there is no-one on this planet that has the unique combination of qualities that you have.

What does this say about God's care in creating humanity?



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Coffee Talk

Read Psalm 139:1-18.

What thoughts come to mind when you read this? Is it difficult to believe God is personally interested in you?



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“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. *(Ephesians 2:10)*

Do you think the opinion we have of ourselves affects our service to the Lord?

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Share your thoughts on this story and how this relates to your own life. How could this mindset become a hindrance in our service to God? How do we break free of this mindset and experience freedom from unhealthy learned behaviors?



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What impact has your self esteem had on your life? As women, how can we gain a proper perspective of ourselves?



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How can this thought transform how you live your life?



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“We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.”

(Charles Kingsley, *Bits & Pieces*)

Share with the group the things that ignite passion within you.  
What fills you up...makes you feel alive?



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# Coffee Talk

John W. Gardner, founding chairman of Common Cause, said it's a rare and high privilege to help people understand the difference they can make ~ not only in their own lives, but also in the lives of others, simply by giving of themselves.

What have you done that you believe in and you are proud of?



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“The ultimate lesson all of us have to learn is unconditional love, which includes not only others but ourselves as well.” *Elizabeth Kubler-Ross*

What does unconditional love look like for yourself? For others? Why is love so important? Can you think of scripture references that support this thought?



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Read Romans 12:1-2 (The Message Translation)

What can God do through your everyday, ordinary life? How can you more readily recognize what He wants you to do?

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## ***Devotional Thoughts***

***"We are chosen..."***

***Dena Hepditch***

While at a Women Officers Retreat, we discovered and discussed the meaning of our names. I was a little disappointed in the meaning of 'Dena', as it simply means 'from the valley'. There were others in the group who had beautiful names, meaningful descriptions, great stories of how their names were chosen and who they were named after. Some stories shared were very interesting, and some held such deep meaning. We talked about names in the Bible and how they were so important. A name was purposely selected to describe the person and their calling. I found it interesting to note that Sarai and Abram's names were changed by God, for a reason. 'H' was added to both and 'H' represents God (How neat!) When God was added to their lives, everything changed.

I was somewhat troubled as I thought of my own name and its meaning "from the valley". Thoughts went through my mind like: Is this saying I'm someone who's always down in the dumps? Is my life a valley experience (like one would associate with pain & heartache)? It didn't seem to be a good fit, or so I thought.

I decided I would focus on the word "from" the valley, referring to the fact that I would not stay in the valley, but would come up from it. Then a friend pointed out to me a verse of Scripture from Psalm 84:6-7 (NLT) "When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs. The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings. They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem." I liked that: "refreshing springs, clothed with blessing, growing stronger"! I could work with that.

After some quiet prayer and personal reflection, God spoke to my heart and reminded me of another Scripture passage, Psalm 139. That is one of my favorite passages of Scripture. It reminds me that I am unique; I am valuable; I have worth! The creator of our entire universe, made a conscious decision to create this baby girl. WOW! Whether I was planned by my parents or not is totally irrelevant. I was planned and designed by Almighty God!

I love how verse 13-15 describes my formation as being 'knit' and 'woven together' by God's hand. When I think of someone knitting or weaving something, I think of all the strands that are deliberately chosen: they must be just the right color; the perfect texture; chosen with a particular pattern in mind. When I receive a hand knit item, it means so much to me because I understand how much love, time and effort went into its making. I still have a crocheted sweater, bonnet, & bootie set that that was given to my daughter as a baby. I have a special crocheted dress that my mother lovingly made for my other daughter when she was just a little girl. I have a gorgeous pink baby blanket that was lovingly stitched together for her as well. How precious those projects/gifts are to me because I know they were designed with our children in mind and took many hours of effort to complete - a true labor of love!

Well, God took even more care in our creation. He thought of us, before anyone else ever did. He decided what He wanted us to be like, then He selected just the right strands to join together and the perfect pattern to use. "You weren't an accident. You weren't mass produced. You aren't an assembly-line product. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on the earth by the Master Craftsman." (Max Lucado, *The Christmas Candle*) The thread of my life; your life was deliberately chosen and lovingly intertwined. We were hand-made by the very hand of God. We are unique. We are special! We are valuable! We are chosen! How awesome is that!

**Worship Outline– Option # 1**

**Marina Jennings**

**Call to Worship- “Chosen- Me?”**

**Vocal- Masterpiece – Sandi Patti**

**Prayer**

**Song 376/850 ( SASB) When I came Christ**

**Responsive Reading- “We Are Chosen” or “Chosen People”**

(Powerpoint slides for these readings can be downloaded at [ministryhelps.ca](http://ministryhelps.ca) under Promotion Week.)

**Praise Choruses**

Who Am I? (Casting Crowns)

How He Loves us (David Crowder Band)

He Knows My Name (Paul Baloche)

We Will Remember (Tommy Walker)

**Special Music- ‘Thou Hast Called Me by My Name’ (Band, Songsters, Vocalist)**

(Can be used as Congregational Song band tune –270 Healing Stream)

**Message- Chosen**

**Appeal time-** Fill a treasure chest with clear rocks or jewel like stones purchased at a dollar store. Invite the congregation to come and take a stone as a reminder that we are God’s treasured possession- chosen by him.

Chorus- He knows my name

**Song: 354/562 (SASB) I’m the Child of a King**

Benediction

## **Worship Outline Option #2**

**Marina Jennings**

**Call to Worship**- Monologue – Esther

### **Praise Choruses**

Who Am I? (Casting Crowns)

How He Loves us (David Crowder Band)

He knows My Name (Paul Baloche)

We Will Remember (Tommy Walker)

**Video:** Psalm 139 (I am Fearfully and Wonderfully Made) – Danielle Rose(Running time: 3:57)

Fearfully & Wonderfully Made- Matt Redman (Running time: 5:08)

(Both available on youtube.com)

Prayer

**Scripture Reading** Psalm 139 (Paraphrase included)

**Song** 376/850 (SASB) When I came to Christ

**Special Music:** Masterpiece – Sandi Patti

**Message-** Chosen

**Appeal time-** Puzzle pieces can be handed out or placed at the front. People are encouraged to take a puzzle piece and reflect on how each piece is different but important to the completed picture. People are asked to think about how each piece is unique and in the same way we are uniquely made, chosen and gifted by God for the greater good the entire Kingdom.

Appeal song- Thou Hast called me by my Name

Song 354/562 (SASB) I'm a Child of a King

Benediction

**Call to Worship (Option 1)**

**Chosen-Me?**

**Marina Jennings**

**Reader 1:** Me?

**Reader 2:** Chosen?

**Reader 3:** Yes- *chosen* from birth!

**Reader 4:** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you!

Before you were *born* I set you apart! (Jeremiah 1:5)

**Reader 2:** Me?

**Reader 1:** Chosen?

**Reader 3:** Yes- *chosen* by God!

**Reader 4:** But now this is what the Lord says- he who created you,, O Jacob,  
He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by  
name; you are mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)

**Reader 1:** Chosen?

**Reader 2:** Me?

**Reader 3:** Yes, *chosen* to do God's work!

**Reader 4:** "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit- fruit that will last." (John 15:16)

**All:** **CHOSEN!** From birth, by God, to do His work!

**(This reading is most effective if Readers 1 & 2 are walking from the back of the church asking the questions to the congregation as they make their way to the front of the sanctuary. Readers 3 & 4 should be located on the platform responding accordingly. It is meant to be read fluently with quick responses.)**



## **Call To Worship (Option #2)**

### **Esther- Chosen for Such a time a this!**

**Marina Jennings**

As I reflect I realize, all my life I have been chosen! Mordecai, my cousin was so gracious. He took me in when my mother and father died - he raised me as though I were one of his own! I am so grateful for his loving care at such a lonely time in my life. He could have cast me aside, forgotten any responsibility to me at all really but he chose me! But what I didn't see then was how it was a part of God's bigger plan for my life! Looking back now I understand that HE is sovereign indeed!

They were difficult days for us as God's chosen people. Living in a foreign land, exiled, longing for our homeland. Mordecai did his best to keep our focus on Yahweh - but Persia was not our country- people did not worship the Lord our God and we suffered greatly because of it.

One day word got out that King Xerxes had Queen Vashti killed because she refused to go to him when he called for her. Before long the King was seeking for a new Queen and countless young, eligible ladies were gathered from the Kingdom- imagine my shock when Mordecai suggested that I present myself as a possible Queen??? I was certain he had lost his mind! But I should have known Mordecai was completely aware of God's leadings! As God should have it- I was selected to be one of the women to be brought before King Xerxes. I kept it to myself that I was a Jew. For a full year along with the others I was given the best in beauty treatments in my preparation to meet the King. To be honest, I did not see myself as being anything extra in the looks department, but- when I was paraded before the King- he found me attractive and I found favor in his eyes. Much to my surprise, before I knew it I had been crowned Queen! Imagine, me, orphaned Esther? I was chosen again – for the second time in my life. How could God have been so gracious to me? Awww, but I have learned that God's plan for my life was no coincidence in fact his hand was on my life from the very beginning!

So many things happened in Persia, too many things to recount, but one day I heard that Mordecai, my cousin, was greatly distressed and seen at the city gate wearing sackcloth, the clothes of mourning. I sent Hathach, the eunuch to my cousin to see what his sadness was all about. Then I heard what was happening. Haman, the Kings official, was scheming a cruel, evil plan against God's chosen people. He was trying to pass an edict that would annihilate every Jew in Persia! How could he do such a thing? We were God's treasured possession! But God is greater than any evil planning and He was about to do a miraculous thing- and He chose me to be his vessel!

Mordecai told the Eunuch everything Haman had planned. Right down to the bribe money he promised to pay to have us wiped out. My cousin begged me to go before the King and plead for mercy on behalf of my people. What was Mordecai thinking? Didn't he know such actions were punishable by death?? I sent word to him that I couldn't possibly do as he requested. But my cousin said something that changed my heart. He told me if I remained silent- I wouldn't escape and I would perish. Then he said something that changed everything, he told me God had put me in this place- made me royalty for this important time in the history of our people. I knew then I had to do something. My heart was racing, my palms sweating but I knew I had to approach the King. Me, Esther, chosen again- not by family, or a foreign King but by God himself! The people prayed and fasted for me as I prepared to do what God had asked of me!

Well, the rest is history really. The King heard my request, Mordecai my loving cousin was honored, Haman got what was coming to him and God's people were spared! Jews celebrated everywhere for God had been faithful again!!

It is still hard for me to grasp that I was God's choice for that time! But on that day, even though I stepped out in fear and trembling, I discovered what God could do through me! Chosen!! It still amazes me- what a wonderful thought- chosen by God!

## **Scripture Reading**

### **Paraphrase of Psalm 139**

**Marina Jennings**

Lord you have investigated everything about me and you are fully aware of every intricate detail that makes up me!

Your awareness of my every move amazes me! Whether I am sitting down or walking about you see me. You can even read my thoughts before I think them! You know my comings and goings. You are so personal you recognize the things that are uniquely me.

My words are predictable to you- nothing I say surprises you at all.

I am surrounded by you. I am completely shut in by your protection. The loving touch of your hand is always on me. I constantly feel you gently nudging my life.

My mind cannot comprehend it! The knowledge of who you are and what you are capable of is over my head!

I know even if I tried- I couldn't escape you. You are everywhere- from the highest heavens to the darkest, dingiest parts of the earth. No matter where I put my head down- your presence encompasses me.

Yes Lord, you are everywhere, all the time! Morning, noon and night your watchful eye is on me. From my closest breath, to the farthest shoreline- your hand is upon my life. You guide me and your grip on me is firm and strong!

Sometimes I feel like the darkness will swallow me up- totally consume me. But you aren't afraid of the dark- darkness- light it's all the same to you! You are not threatened by it in any way.

I am your creation! Every single, intricate part of me inside and out was your original design. While my mother carried me you were assembling every part of me- making me according to your blueprint!

You delicately handled my creation. My anthems of praise rise before you when I consider that you reverently shaped who I am. I am wonderful to you! I am a one of a kind original! It is amazing to me that you chose how you wanted me to be. What your hands are capable of is wonderful, of this I am fully aware.

From conception your awareness of me was unimaginable! Hidden from everyone else but not from you!

Before I had eyes, ears, limbs and a heart you saw me! You have written a storybook about my life, every minute determined and laid out from start to finish. Even before my first breath you knew my journey from beginning to end! My life is an open book to you. Not one chapter written without you knowing what would happen next!

What you think matters to me- the fact that I am on your mind in such a personal way is unfathomable to me! Your thoughts about me are so plentiful I couldn't even begin to count them. It would be like trying to count the grains on a sandy beach. How is that even possible?

I fall asleep and rest, but when my eyes open you are still there- you never leave my side- even through the watches of the night you never take your eyes off of me.

I am saddened by those who treat you with disdain. If only you could wipe out the evil in man's hearts! The way they abuse your name. The way they intentionally slander your character- it makes me realize we are on opposite sides of the fence. We don't see you in the same way at all!

Take a careful inventory of my life. Search out the intentions of my heart; examine me and bring before you all the fleeting thoughts that fill my head and cause me to be on edge.

Lord if there is anything that I have within me that is insulting or distasteful in your sight- show me, bring it before me so I can rid my life of the garbage that is offending to your character. Give me the grace to walk in your ways always and forever!!!

**Sermon**  
**“Chosen”**

**Scripture Text: Psalm 139**

**Pamela Pinksen**

Let me share a true story which is 25 years old. A lovely young girl, about 15 years of age, is sitting at a school gymnasium score table with her two closest friends. There aren't many people in the small gym that beautiful sunny Saturday, just four local church youth groups coming together to enjoy a May long weekend co-ed basketball tournament. All of a sudden, from the left side entrance of the gym, in walks a handsome, athletic young man. He catches her eye and she remarks with confidence, staking her claim on this guy in front of her peers - "he's mine!" As the day unfolds, the focus becomes less and less about the basketball and more and more about gaining his attention. His ability to score 50 points in a single game only adds to the appeal, or perhaps, just maybe, was he showing off for her? Of all the young teenage girls there that weekend, she would hardly hope to be his first pick. After all, many times at these gatherings, her friend Lisa was the one the boys went for first. And although it becomes quite evident that she is not the only girl to take a liking to him, by the end of the tournament, the words that she is so delighted to hear trickle back through her messengers, "he likes you!" She can hardly believe it. "He picked me!" Her heart flutters as those words sink in. Well, 25 years later and after more than 20 years of marriage, He's still mine and I'm so glad that he chose me.

Nothing in the world can make us feel more special than being chosen. And contrarily, nothing can be as disheartening as being rejected. It doesn't matter if we are young children or older adults, whether it's being passed over for a certain selection or special honour or it's being left out of a party invite or gathering, rejection can be absolutely heartbreaking. In life, there are so many times when we are broken by the hurt of someone's rejection, by love scorned, or by disappointments. In our fallen world, the message that we get so often is that we are unwanted and we do not belong. The enemy often taunts, "you're a nobody." "Nobody loves you, no one cares." The loneliness, neglect and rejection cause us to cry out in distress. But God hears that cry. When the world says, "You do not belong," God's gentle voice of love calls back, "you do belong – you belong to me. I have chosen you."

The truth is that God has chosen us before the creation of the world, Paul says to the Ephesians (Eph 1:4-5) that in love God planned for our adoption through Jesus Christ. It is hard for us to even comprehend that the God of the universe, the Creator, Governor and sustainer of all things, has chosen to lavish his love and grace upon you and upon me. In a world where the strong, the beautiful, the talented and athletic are hailed and praised above all else, God acts to ensure that the last, the least, the lost, the broken, the used and abused, the unloved, and the rejected will know that they belong to the King. They have been chosen by grace to receive the Crown of life, to be the object of God's love and redeeming power.

As we look to Psalm 139 this morning, it tells us of some pretty powerful truths concerning a God who has chosen us. It's a very beautiful and moving Psalm. One commentator states that "for all its height and depth, it remains intensely personal." That is because it speaks of a massive, omniscient, omnipresent God who reaches down to choose each one of us. It humbles our hearts and leaves us in awe of being chosen by God. Psalm 139 will help convince us of this truth as it gives us three affirmations of being chosen by our Loving Father God.

### **1) God has chosen to know you. (Psalm 139:1-6)**

It is hard for us to comprehend the full knowledge God has of us. It's like a mother's intuition magnified 1,000 fold. We all know about mother's intuition. This was exemplified for me when I became pregnant at 16. I attempted to hide my pregnancy for as long as I could, as I tried to build up the courage to break the news to my parents. The amazing thing was my mother knew my secret. Before she was even told, she knew. How is that possible? I might not have understood it at the time, but now I'm a mother of three. Mothers know things. Yet although as a mom, I intuitively figure things out, there are still things that I miss. God doesn't miss a thing. He is acquainted with every thought, he knows every quirk, he sees each secret tear, and he knows our darkest fears. He has chosen to know everything about you, and about me. The Message paraphrase says, "I'm an open book to you." There are so many in this life who do not give us the time of day. People we admire even, but they might not be interested in getting to know us, or to know our favorite things, our likes and dislikes. Most couldn't even care to know our name. But God has chosen to know each one of us. And no matter how much he knows, he loves us still. It's mind-blowing but true. He has chosen to know us.

### **2) God has chosen to be close to you. (Psalm 139: 7-12)**

There is an impulse inside of us all at times to take flight. Our flight impulse is as old as the Fall. We get overwhelmed and we want to get away, to escape reality. We get frustrated in our relationships, and we want to leave. We've probably even expressed about life, "Stop the world, I want to get off!" And in our guilt and shame at times, we have wanted to run from God. The Psalmist states how foolish we are in thinking that's even possible. The question was once posed: "Where is God?" The answer came back, "Where are you?" Anywhere we are, God is there. He will not allow us to be left alone. So many times he repeats in his Word, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." It doesn't matter how dark it gets. It doesn't matter if we have rejected him and we want to flee his presence. He never leaves. He is with us through it all - The highs and lows, the mountains and valleys, the good times and bad. Even in the darkest, messiest places of life, He is there. He has chosen to be close to you.

### **3) He has chosen to plan for you. (Psalm 139:13-17)**

Not only does God know us and is close to us, but he is active in planning out a purpose for each of us. And that is a good plan, a good purpose, to give us life, a hope and a future! These verses give us a glimpse into the

mind of our Creator as He so lovingly fashions us in our Mother's womb. He is planning a full, abundant and blessed life for each of us. Yet, so often, we go off in our own paths without consulting Him, without submitting to His will day by day and we wonder why we feel so lost and unfulfilled? God's plan from the beginning was that we would dwell with Him and that we would share life with Him. He desires to show us more joy and peace and purpose than we could ever imagine. It was a plan that not even sin could foil, as He sent his Son, Jesus, to redeem us from our empty ways and our selfish paths, to free us to walk in God's way. He has planned to give you free abundant life in Jesus. Have you discovered God's plan for your life? It might not be some great calling to a specific vocation, or some secret answer disclosed in a sealed envelope that you see yourself as struggling with God to open. His plan is for every single day, that you would share your life with Him, let Him lead the way and then you will be blessed and used of Him to touch the lives of others. God has planned to give you the best life imaginable. Have you sought him? God has chosen to plan for you.

### **Conclusion:**

Max Lucado in his book entitled "Grace" talks about a program around the turn of the twentieth century known as the Orphan Train Movement. It was a program whereby orphan children were transported from crowded cities in the US, like New York City and Boston, to willing foster homes across the country. It's estimated that 250,000 orphaned, abandoned, or homeless children found new families through this effort. The children would typically arrive in a town where local community leaders had assembled interested townspeople. The children would usually be put up on a "stage like" podium for viewing and inspection. The townspeople would inspect the children, perhaps feeling muscles and checking teeth, and after brief interviews take the chosen ones home. Children might sing or dance to attract interest. Sadly, many siblings were separated during this process because the parents only wanted to take one child. Can you imagine the joy and delight of those children who were among the "chosen?" But, can you imagine the heartbreak of those who were not? God, in all of his greatness and majesty, all-knowing, all-present, all loving, chooses us. Even though we have been marred by sin, broken by rejection, God looks on us each and says, "I, the Lord your God has chosen you.... to be my treasured possession." Deut 7:6. "How deep the Father's love for us how vast beyond all measure that he should give his only son to make this wretch his treasure." The cross of Christ stands forever to say "I chose you." God will not reject us, he made us, and we belong to him. Henri Nouwen said that the truth of being the beloved of God is the core truth about our humanity, and when we are blessed with that deep truth, we can walk through life with a sense of well-being and true belonging. May we find freedom and life in our belonging as we choose God because in Christ, He has chosen us!