

Anyone see the rugby match yesterday?

Didn't England do well? No I think we were all watching the Ireland match.

Before the game we were all waiting to see who was going to be on the team – who was going to be left out.

Want to start by thinking a bit about this business of picking teams.

In youth club I notice Tim goes down the line 1 – 2 – 1 – 2 – 1 – 2

Not always the way it is done – some of you may have experienced something like this:-

*Video – Jeremy Lin Picked last*

The man left feeling left out, humiliated, that he didn't matter to anyone. Our second lesson, Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Thessalonians, has a very different message.

**God picked you out as his from the very start.**

Each of us matters, each of us is special in God's sight. I often find myself thinking back on two passages of Scripture and the context in which I heard them, that bring this home to me.

The first was in the context of a sermon that Desmond Tutu preached at a service in Capetown, long before the end of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. He quoted from the call of Jeremiah.

Jer 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
and before you were born I consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah, you were no accident; Jeremiah you mean something to me; Jeremiah I have a purpose for you.

All of you, young, not so young, male, female, tall, not so tall, thin, not so thin – none of you is an accident, all of you are special, special to God, special to those who love you.

The other passage I think of comes from Jesus' teaching to his disciples on the night before he died. He says to them, 'You did not choose me, I chose you, that you should bear fruit, fruit that will last.'

Each of us chosen, each of us special to God, each of us having a purpose in God's sight.

If you are special to God and you are special to God, and you are special to God – that should mean that we are special to each other.