

2. Called, separated and declared

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The Book of Romans has life changing truth but it must be approached with effort and determination to understand what the Holy Spirit said through apostle Paul.

At the same time, there are a lot of misconceptions in Christianity.

I'd like to list three examples:

1) **Callings of God to be pastors, Bible teachers, elders or deacons**

2) **Witnessing to nonbelievers about the Gospel message of Jesus Christ is limited to those who are involved in ministry, especially those who get paid from the ministry.**

3) **Being a saint of the Living God**

I believe that the Holy Spirit is going to speak to all of us through the pen of apostle Paul about being called, separated for God's work and declaring His message to everyone around us and clarifying these misconceptions.

A. PAUL'S CREDENTIAL

Romans 1:1-2 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the Gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

1) A bondservant of Jesus Christ

Paul was set free from the bondage of sin and death of satan when he came to Jesus. He became a free man. But he chose himself to be a servant of Jesus Christ for the rest of his life by choice.

'Bondservant' is 'duros' in Greek.

Exodus 21:2-6 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free," 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

That shows that the servant became a bondservant to his master for the rest of his life by his own free will. He no longer wants what he want, but he wants what his master wants. That is the concept of 'Bondservant'.

The word Paul used for 'servant' would be meaningful to the Romans, because the majority of the Roman Christians at that time were slaves. There was an estimated 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. A slave was considered on as a piece of property, not a person.

In loving devotion, Paul had enslaved himself to Christ, to be His servant and obey His will. That is what Paul wants us to know. And that is what we want to be, too. We are set free from satan when we become born-again Christians, but because of our love for our Savior Jesus we choose to be His bondservants for eternity.

One thing we must remember is that even though a servant of Jesus Christ, is a higher title than monarch of the world, it is because of our Master, not because of ourselves.

2) Called to be an apostle

The word literally means “one who is sent” like the root word of ‘missionary’ in Latin. But its usual sense in Scripture is not so generic.

Here are some qualifications of apostle:

- A person who was an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus – Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:8
- A person who had been personally appointed by Christ – Matt. 10:1-7; Acts 1:24-26; Gal. 1:1
- A person who was called to govern the early church – 1 Thess. 4:8; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14
- A person who taught or wrote with authority of the Holy Spirit – 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16).
- A person who performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit without any mishaps.

This term was used as a title of the eleven disciples and Paul.

Notice, though, that Paul has not sought the office of apostle. God “called” him to that position. He doesn’t see his ministry as one of his own making or as a product of his own ambition. He, by God’s grace, fits into God’s plan. Not vice versa.

The reason why I said this is because there are some Christian denominations which designate some people as apostles. They have no biblical ground to do so. A good example can be found in Acts 1:26. When the apostles realized that they needed one more person to replace Judas, they chose Matthias. But what happened to this poor old Matthias? We never heard ANYTHING more about him. Because he was not the one God chose. Paul was the Lord’s true successor as an apostle to the failed Judas.

Some people think that being a pastor or Bible teacher is something they just want to do so because they feel like it. You can try it. But I guarantee you that you would be one miserable person if you do not have the call of God for that position. Or some people just miss out on their calls because either they don’t listen or they’d rather pursue their own selfish desires than obey the Lord.

When I realized that I was called to be a pastor of a church somewhere in the United States, I was rather stunned. I didn’t go out and bought a church sign to start a church right away. I waited upon the Lord for five years before we started a Bible study here in Sahuarita.

If the Lord is calling you to be a pastor or other positions, He will affirm you of His calling and confirm you with signs or through other godly people. Then you have to wait upon the Lord for His time.

3) Separated

When Paul was a Jewish rabbi, he was separated as a Pharisee to the laws and traditions of the Jews. But when he was saved by Christ, he was separated to the Gospel and its ministry. By the way Gospel means “the Good News” as some of you already know.

What does it mean to be separated to the Gospel of God? It means that we as born-again Christians should live the life that the Bible tells us to live, not the way carnal people live.

When we put our trust in Christ, we were made righteous positionally. God declared us righteous by justifying us because of the life and death of His Son. But justification also marks the beginning of sanctification – the process of our becoming righteous practically, being set apart to God by the Spirit to grow out of sin and more fully into Christ.

We will never be perfectly sanctified until we get to heaven, but we will move toward perfection. We will change. We will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, conform more and more to the will of God and live lives that are pleasing to Him.

Sin will always be present with us in this life, but its influence over us will be lessened over time in the process of sanctification.

But all of this sanctification process depends on our willingness to be changed by the power of God. I've seen some Christians who have been saved for a long time, but are still carnal and immature as the day they were born-again. That is sad, very sad.

4) The Gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures

The words "God," "the Lord," and "Christ" occur 244 times in this book. That is more frequently than in any other New Testament book. This book is not about faith even though it is extremely important, nor it is about sin, nor it is about law. It is about God.

The Gospel is not a new message. It was promised in the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.

The Prophet Isaiah certainly preached the Gospel in passages such as Isaiah 1:18, and chapters 53 and 55.

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

These three references are not the only places we can find about salvation in Christ and the promises of a coming Messiah in the OT. The images like sacrifices and the temple give clear impressions in our heart. They all point to Jesus' atoning sacrifice.

The salvation we enjoy today was promised by the prophets, though they did not fully understand all that they were preaching and writing. In other words, salvation through Jesus Christ was not God's "oops," rather it was planned by God's sovereign will before time began.

B. THE BIRTH, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Romans 1:3-6 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the

dead. 5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

These two verses are packed with several important theologies. They're not only a summary statement of the Gospel, they're an affirmation of Christ's unique nature.

Here we see the humanity of Jesus Christ through being a descendant of king David which also fulfilled OT prophecy that the Messiah would come from that king's line. At the same time we see the affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ through His resurrection. Does it mean that anyone who gets resurrected would be a god? Absolutely not. But the One who raised Himself from the dead is God.

John 2:19-20 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

The center of Christianity is not a teaching or a moral system, it is a Person: Jesus Christ.

When it comes to declaring the message of Jesus Christ, many believers shy away from it like it is a scary thing. They have many excuses why they would not, could not and should not do witnessing. The real bottom line is they don't want to be embarrassed if the nonbeliever says, "No."

Here are a couple of tips for you:

- 1) Talk about what Jesus has done in your life in about a five to ten minute testimony
- 2) If they ask you questions that you cannot answer, say, "I don't know." Then ask me or Pastor Jack, our elders, the best of all, ask the Lord through the Bible.

I find at least 11 Christian core doctrines mentioned between v1-6. If you have not heard me saying that this Book of Romans is a rich and deep book, you heard it now.

C. TO YOU ROMANS

Romans 1:7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul had never been to Rome, and did not found the Roman church. This makes the Book of Romans different because most of Paul's letters were to churches he founded. It seems the church in Rome began somewhat spontaneously as Christians came to the great city of the Empire and settled there.

There is no Biblical or historical evidence that the apostle Peter founded the church in Rome. Also there is no biblical proof that Peter was the first pope of the Roman Catholic church.

You notice that the words 'to be' in italic which means that they were put in by the translators. But though they are supplied, they are not really necessary to make sense. These believers in Rome were 'called saints.' They were not called because they were saints, but they became saints through that calling of Jesus Christ as His followers.

The Roman Catholic insists that the saint title should be given to only a few selected dead people who cause miracles to happen by average people praying to them.

First of all, no human or dead person can make miracles, only God, no one else. Second, according to the Bible, we pray to God only, not to some dead people. I even have heard that to sell your home quickly at the price you want, you have to bury Saint Joseph's statue upside down in front of your house. That is a silly fable. Stop!

We who are born-again Christians are saints. You can call me "Saint Joonho." It has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

Paul formally addresses his readers with his familiar greeting, combining the Greek greeting of 'grace' with the Jewish greeting of 'peace'. The Greek word for 'grace' is "charis" where we get English word 'charity'. Of course the Jewish greeting of 'peace' is 'Shalom'. This grace and peace is not the kind wish of a man. They are gifts, coming from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. QUESTIONS

Ask yourself these:

1) Am I called to serve the Lord Jesus as a pastor, Bible teacher, elder or deacon?

If so, am I obedient?

If not, am I obedient to do whatever He calls me to do?

2) Do I witness the Good News of Jesus to those who are around me?

If not, why?

How can I change it and be obedient to His command?

3) Am I a saint of God who lives the life that glorifies Him?

If not, what can I do to make it happen?