

Sermon #1: Romans: 1:1-7
Date: September 15, 2002
Pastor Wesley G. Rowe
Calvary Bible Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Martin Luther, whose diligent study of the Book of Romans, led him out of false religion and to an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ, called the Book of Romans, "the chief book of the New Testament."

Luther then said this, "**Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purest presentation of the gospel message. A Christian man should not only learn the Book of Romans by heart, word by word, but also he should daily read it as the preparation of providing daily bread for men's souls. For the Book of Romans can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more that it is handled, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.**"

Many have undertaken to study and to write books on the famous revivals of past generations that have occurred across the world. There have been times when God worked in stronger ways than at other times, in bringing about change to certain areas of the world. And the consensus of opinion by those who have made a study of these great revivals across the world throughout the Christian era is that "**Every great spiritual revival in the Church has been connected with a deeper understanding of the Book of Romans.**" (Robert Godet) Dr. David Brown said, "**While all Scripture has stamped its impress indelibly on the Christian world throughout history, Christianity in its best periods has been more indebted to the Book of Romans than to any other book of the Bible.**"

May God choose to use the Book of Romans in each of our lives and in our church in this same way as we embark upon a study of it today.

The 17 verses that I just read to you are actually Paul's introduction to the main message of the Book of Romans. And these 17 verses that comprise the introduction are broken down into three sections and we will take the next 3 weeks to look at each section.

AN OUTLINE OF THE INTRODUCTION (VV. 1-17) TO BOOK OF ROMANS

- 1. Section 1 is the salutation (vv. 1-7).**
- 2. Section 2 (vv. 8-15) is the expression of why Paul desires to visit the Roman Christians.**
- 3. Section 3 (vv. 16-17) is the synopsis of the Gospel which is the main message of the rest of the Book of Romans.**

Take your Bibles in hand then and look with me at the Salutation or the Greeting in vv. 1-7. Much like how we write letters today, every letter of the New Testament begins with a salutation or a greeting.

I want you to notice first that Paul mentions 6 persons or groups of persons in the first 7 verses. **Paul (vs. 1), God (vs. 1), God's Son (Jesus Christ) (vs. 4), the Holy Spirit (vs. 4), the Gentiles (vs. 5) and the Christians in the church at Rome (vv. 6-7).**

Look with me then at what Paul tells us in the first 7 verses about those 6 persons or groups of persons.

I. PAUL

First Paul talks about himself in vv. 1 and 5. And notice from vs. 1 that Paul introduces himself in 3 ways.

1.) “Paul, A Servant Of Christ Jesus” (vs. 1).

The greek word for “servant” is *doulos* and it actually means “slave.” It is Paul’s favorite description of himself and he often calls himself this when he is introducing himself to others. In Philippians 1:1, Paul says of himself and Timothy, “Paul and Timothy, servants (slaves) of Christ Jesus. In Titus 1:1, Paul says, “Paul, a servant (a slave) of God.” When Paul thought of himself and his role as a Christian, first and foremost, he thought of himself as a slave. This is Paul’s favorite description of himself throughout his writings. Paul regarded himself as the purchased possession of His Lord and Master. He was the property of the Lord. Paul had no problem with the concept of slavery when it came to his relationship to Christ. He was a bondservant who owned nothing and was nothing, apart from his Master. Paul viewed his time, his strength, his possessions as altogether belonging to Another. Paul felt there was nothing more noble than belonging to Jesus Christ.

Notice also that Paul calls Jesus “our Lord” at the end of vs. 4. This is something that Muslims would never say. Jews would never say. Many ecumenical Christians would never say.

2.) A Called Apostle/Missionary

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle” (vs. 1)

Paul was conscious of his chief calling in life and that is where he focused his time and energies in service to the Lord. He was called to be an Apostle. He knew that he had a special work to do.

Are you conscious of your call in life. What have you been called to be? How have you been called to serve the Lord? Remember, every Christian has a calling and there is no insignificant calling or task.

3.) Set Apart for the Gospel of God

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” (vs. 1)

While we might not be an Apostle like Paul, all of us have been called to be separated from whatever we were pursuing in life prior to salvation and be given over exclusively to sharing the gospel of God. All Christians are called of God to concentrate on the gospel and the living and sharing of it.

4.) Paul Recognized That God’s Grace And Calling In His Life

Was Received For A Purpose (v. 5). “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

God had a goal in mind when he saved Paul and called him into service. God had the same for each of us. God saves no one without a plan for how He desires to use them in this life and it will always be in a way that is “for his name’s sake.” That is to bring glory to Jesus’ name.

For Paul, God’s grace came to him and his subsequent call to Apostleship as vs. 5 says, “to call people from among all the Gentiles to begin living a life of obedience to God that springs from faith in Christ.”

II. GENTILES

“Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

Notice then secondly, that the Gentiles are referred to. You know who that means? It means you and me. Gentiles means nations or races of people other than the Jews. When Jesus came to the earth, the Jews thought that as the Messiah He came only for them. God had the whole world in view in sending His Son to the earth and Paul was the first one called and gifted as an Apostle to take the Gospel to all the other races, all the other nations.

III. GOD

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God” (vs. 1).

Paul knew that the gospel did not originate with him. He didn't own it, it wasn't his message. It was the gospel of God. The gospel that belonged to God. The good news that belonged to God is what Paul is saying. You want to know something about God? You can know this. God has a message for you. It is called a good news message and he sent Paul to deliver it and in this Book of Romans, Paul is going to unfold that message for us. But not only did God send Paul to deliver it and not only is it found in the Book of Romans, but look at what Paul tells us that God did with this message prior to Paul. Look at vs. 2.

Paul is saying that if you will read the Holy Scriptures and what God promised in them through the prophets, we will find this message of good news. But notice that to Paul it is found in the Holy Scriptures. It is in this book that God has revealed through promises delivered to the world through prophets.

IV. JESUS CHRIST

“regarding His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (vv. 3-4).

Now this good news that Paul says is found in the Holy Scriptures concerns Jesus. It is found in the Person of the Son of God (so as to leave no room for doubt as to who Paul has in mind, at the end of vs. 4, Paul clearly says, “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Now I want you to notice for your own understanding 2 things that Paul tells us about Jesus that are very important to Paul and were very important to all the Apostles and through seeing this and learning this, you will think of Jesus aright.

- 1.) Jesus had a human nature
- 2.) Jesus had a divine nature.

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

VI. THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS

“And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints” (vv. 6-7).

1. **Called To Belong To Jesus Christ (this is our status right now. We NOW belong to Jesus Christ.**
2. **Loved By God (We are LOVED by God). This is the greatest thing that we could ever be told. We are loved by the GREATEST PERSON.**

When you lay upon your bed at night and you have had a tough day and been rejected by men, remember this, You are loved by God. Or after you have sinned

3. **Called To Be Saints (Holy Ones). “Saints” is a term used in the New Testament to tell us what we presently are. All Christians are Saints. We are not saints because we live like a Christian, but we are Saints because God has made us so by His forgiveness in our lives. His forgiveness establishes us as Saints.**