

Romans 1:1 **Three Things about Paul: Capacity, Calling, and Consecration**

Book of Romans. Romans chapter 1. **Paul, a servant** (or more literally) **a slave**. There are different kinds of servants, household servants. This is the **δοῦλος** (doulos), the lowest of household of slaves. **A slave of Jesus Christ**.

Now notice the text says, **Called to be an apostle**, but notice the words *to be* are in italics. It literally reads **A called apostle**. The word *called* is an adjective that describes what kind of apostle he is: **a called apostle**. **Who has been separated for the gospel of God**, (verse 2) **which He had promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures**. And by the way that is the only place you will find that phrase exactly as it is here in this text. That is why our Bibles say the *Holy Bible*, it comes from this phrase, the Holy Scriptures. Literally the holy writings.

(Verse 3) **concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has become from out of the seed of David according to the flesh**, (verse 4) **and declared - not to be the Son - and declared the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, from out of the resurrection of the dead**; (verse 5) **through whom we received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations, for His name**, (verses 6) **among whom you also are the called**. Notice that is a title. All believers are called. They are believers because they have been called by God.

You also are the called of Jesus Christ; (verse 7) **to everyone that is in Rome, beloved of God, called saints**. Notice the words *to be* in your English translation is in italics. We have not been called to be saints. We are saints by calling. We are called saints. It describes what kind of saints we are. **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

So we are starting the book of Romans this morning. The book of Romans is the first book of the second section of the New Testament. The first section of the New Testament is called the historical section, that would be all four Gospels plus the book of Acts. It is historical in that it is an historical account of the teachings and ministry of Jesus and how the Holy Spirit moved in the early church. It is the historical section, Matthew through Acts.

The second section in the New Testament is called the teaching section or the **διδασκαλία** (didachē). And that starts with the book of Romans and goes right through to the end of the book of Revelation. This is called the teaching section. These are the letters of the teaching of the early church approximately sixty to sixty-three years of teaching that has been left for us to instruct us and minister to us. All of Paul's letters are at the beginning of this teaching section. The book of Romans was not his first letter that he wrote but it is, according to the early church fathers, the most important letter that he wrote. Some have called it The Constitution of the Christian Faith, which is exactly what it is. Others have called it The Bill of Rights of the Christian. All of the documents upon which our nation was founded, scholars take these documents and apply them to the book of Romans. The book of Romans presents to us and establishes for us every doctrine of the Christian faith.

And so some have even in the past have shared in testimony before they went on to Christ, they used to have the book of Romans read to them twice a week just to keep them established, aware, of all the great doctrines.

Someone else once said, "If all the Bible was missing and we only had the book of Romans we would have enough to understand all there is about the Christian faith and the gospel message."

So the book of Romans sits at the beginning of the teaching section and all of Paul's letters are also with it because in Galatians chapter 1 Paul says, "If anybody preaches any other gospel than that which I have preached let him be accursed." And the early church, and the early brethren, even the early apostles accepted that. Which is why the various committees for the canonization of the Scriptures put Paul's letters first. Everything must line up with Paul's writings. Either he is a liar and he is not inspired by the Holy Spirit or God has appointed him - according to Ephesians chapter 3 - as the one that God has chosen to reveal the mysteries of Christ. He had the approval of Peter, and James, and John, and all the other apostles once they got together with him and talked with him after he was instructed by Christ. Once they talked with him and Paul shared how the Holy Spirit was working, the early church accepted that as being from God.

So it is interesting Romans through Philemon is the first part of this second section, that is all of Paul's writings. But beginning with the book of Hebrews through Revelation that is called the Jewish Literature section. The book of Hebrews of course is to the Jewish people. All of the writings: James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John and Jude are all written to the Diaspora in Asia Minor, the Jews that have been dispersed along with their Gentile counterparts.

And the book of Revelation, of course, that we just studied - the book of Revelation is also understood by Old Testament teachings. Because it was written to the Jews, they understand the symbolism. Of the 404 verses, there are over 800 allusions to the Old Testament in the book of Revelation. So we need to find those statements and those symbols that are found in Revelation in the Old Testament in order to understand it properly.

So Hebrews through Revelation is the Jewish literature, still the teaching section. But Romans through Philemon are Paul's letters and it is to everyone. Again, it is not the first book written by Paul, but the most important. He wrote it to establish the church. He wrote it to establish the church, which we have entitled Constitution of the Christian Faith.

Fourthly, the people in Rome were not saved under Paul's ministry. As a matter of fact he had never been there before he wrote this letter. In Acts chapter 2 verse 10 it tells us that some of those who attended the Passover feast at that time of Pentecost were from Rome; **strangers from Rome**, it says. And so the early church fathers tell us that some people at that time were saved. Those that came from Rome to celebrate the feast, and they went back to Rome and shared the gospel with others and then different pockets of believers began to be formed. So the trail starts with Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 verse 10 and then those who came

from Rome to attend the feast went back. There are no evidences or writings that tell us that any of the apostles visited there for them to be saved.

In Acts chapter 19 verse 21 Paul told them how continuously he desired to come to that city and he was prohibited by both God and hindered by Satan from going. But he expressed his desire to come there many times.

After he wrote the book of Romans he sent the letter with Phoebe and she is mentioned in Romans chapter 16 verse 1. Phoebe is from the Corinth area and she was going to Rome on business. And so Paul gives her the letter to take to the Christians in Rome.

The letter was written in late 57 AD, that is late 57 AD, twenty-three years after Paul had been saved. It was written in the last three months of his third missionary journey, his third and last missionary journey. The letter was written in Corinth when Paul was there in his third missionary journey. And it was written approximately three years before Paul arrived there [in Rome]. Remember I had said in Acts chapter 19 that Paul expressed his desire to come and see them. Well, God made arrangements for him to go. Not exactly how he wanted to go but three years after he wrote the letter he arrived in Rome as a prisoner to answer to charges. So three years after the letter (in Acts chapter 28) he arrives in Rome.

The style of the letter is fascinating. It was written to the Roman mind. And if you were in our Gospel of Mark study - the gospel of Mark and the book of Romans were both written the same way. It was written for the Roman mind. The Roman mind-set understood things according to the legal or justice system - you had to present proof. You can say whatever you want to say, whatever your opinion is, whatever your belief is, but if it did not line up with the legal or justice system with proof, then they did not entertain it. So the book of Romans, like the Gospel of Mark, is written like a legal brief. The book of Romans is what a lawyer would hand in to say, "Here will be my case as we bring it before the court," and that is exactly what how Paul presents it.

There are three main sections in the book of Romans:

- 1) First of all, chapter 1 verses 1 through 17 is the introductory material. Chapter 1 verse 1 through 17 all of the introductory material - that comes in three sections.
- 2) Secondly chapter 1 verses 18 through to the end of chapter 11 is the doctrinal section of the book of Romans. We will study such things as the doctrine of condemnation; as it will be presented as a legal indictment against the Gentiles, against the Jews, and then the whole world. We will study about justification, that which has been imputed towards us. And by the way these are all legal terms according to the Roman justice system. *Condemnation* means the sentence passed against you. *Justification* is the same word for *righteousness* that we know, **δικαιοσύνη** (dikaiosunē). And *justification* has to do with lining up with the law. If you do not line up with the law you are a lawbreaker. But we are going to study the doctrine of justification. Also the doctrine of sanctification, the doctrine of selection, and the doctrine of restoration.

3) Then the third and final section is chapter 12 verse 1 to the end of chapter 16. And in this section we study two things: (1) transformation. We can also say with authority it should be the doctrine of transformation and (2) exhortation.

So we have at least seven things: condemnation, justification, sanctification, selection, restoration, transformation, and exhortation. And, of course, mixed in with all of these salvation that is afforded to us and regeneration - the message of salvation that is brought to us through this letter. So we are in for a great time. Again we are going to take it slowly because of the important material that is here.

First of all, let us begin with Romans chapter 1, the first of three parts of the introduction. He says, **Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, who has been separated for the gospel of God.** Those of you following, if you are able to follow with the outline of the Greek text, you will appreciate how good the document is and how well it is written. You will find in the first seven verses seven main clauses. And each one of them have various prepositional phrases that describe and go with the main clause.

The first one is **Paul**. He presents himself as **Παῦλος** (Paulos) and that is his Roman name. *Paul* means *little* or *small*. So apparently he was a small guy. There are other writings outside of Scripture that tell us that he was small and he was bowlegged. And after a while, after his beatings, was not good to look at. If Paul were with us today after he went through all the sufferings we would have to have the pews facing to the back while he is up here talking. He had infection running out of his eyes, and various scars from the stonings and beatings that he received. So he was small and he was named Paul.

But Saul was his Jewish name. Saul of Tarsus. He was born a Sicilian in Tarsus. He was Jewish by pedigree but he was raised Gentile or Greek. He came to Jerusalem, studied under the great teacher Rabbi Gamaliel, he was the top of his class, he was the best Jewish student in Jerusalem when God interrupted his life and intervened on the Damascus Road.

Paul, he says. The first thing is his capacity. What capacity did he function in in the body of Christ? And he uses this word **δούλος** (doulos). We have studied this word before, but I think it is important to understand that **δούλος** (doulos) is the lowest household slave. It is the name of the function of the lowest household slave.

The **διακονία** (diakonia) where we get our word *deacon*. That is the one that serves the tables and that type of slave is more closer to the family. The **δούλος** (doulos) is the one that washes people's feet as they come in. The **δούλος** (doulos) is the one that takes care of all the dirty jobs that nobody else wants to do. And it is interesting that many times Paul and the other writers of the New Testament they called themselves the **δούλος** (doulos).

This is taken from the Old Testament. The book of Exodus chapter 21 verses 2 through 6 tells us about the **δούλος** (doulos). The **δούλος** (doulos) - according to Exodus 21:2-6 - the **δούλος** (doulos) was a slave who was given his freedom, time for him to be released. Maybe he was a slave because he was paying a debt and he would work as a slave for five years or ten years to pay off his debt. But once he is released, if he voluntarily wants to come back and be a

δούλος (doulos) for life in that family, he would come back to the head of the household and voluntarily say, "I want to remain with this household for the remainder of my life as a **δούλος** (doulos)." They would then take him to the front of the house, and to the doorpost of the house, and with an awl they would take the lobe of his ear and hammer a nail through the lobe of his ear and attach it to the doorpost of the house. They would then pull the nail out. There is now a hole in his ear. They would then put a ring in his ear and that is a sign to everyone that this person is a **δούλος** (doulos), a voluntary slave. They have laid down their life and said, "I want to be a **δούλος** (doulos) forever." That is where the word **δούλος** (doulos) came from in its background. Exodus chapter 21, the requirements for the **δούλος** (doulos).

But it is interesting that even Jesus, in Matthew chapter 20 verses 25 to 28, when the disciples were wrestling with one another about who would be the greatest and who would be the leaders, Jesus said (Matthew 20:25-28), **You know that the rulers of the Gentiles exercised dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be among you: but whoever shall be great amongst you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.**

If anyone deserved to be ministered to it would be Jesus Christ. But He did not come for that reason, He came to minister. Even before He died, recorded in John chapter 13, He took the servant's towel and He washed the disciples' feet, doing one of the tasks of the **δούλος** (doulos). And then He says to them, "As I have done do you, you do for one another." He was not talking about washing feet. He did not say *what* I have done you do, but *as* I have done. Take the role of the servant. Be serving one another. Which is a little different than showing up somewhere to a Christian Fellowship and as soon as you walk in you start looking for, "What you going to do for me?" Even Jesus did not even approach things that way. Jesus served. Paul says, "I am a **δούλος** (doulos)." I am a slave of Jesus Christ, not of a church, or a denomination, or a group of people, but he belonged to Jesus Christ.

Secondly - that was his *capacity*. You know, "What capacity do you serve in the body of Christ?"

"I'm a **δούλος** (doulos)."

That is not very flattering. Secondly, his *calling*. He said he is an apostle, but he is a *called apostle*, that is, an apostle by calling.

Now the *apostle* - the word *apostle* means *to send out with a commission*. It is actually a military term. If you were on leave on base as a military person and you went out, you are not sent out with a commission. But if you go to the commander and he gives you orders and commissions you to go, that would be **ἀπόστολος** (apostolos) in a military term. An *apostle* is somebody who is sent out with a commission from God. We see in the book of Acts that this function is to be an evangelist: to preach the gospel; to be a pastor: once people are saved to round them all up and teach them, and pastor them, and train people to be in charge of the church; and then to be the overseer of the church: and keep track of the people that are in the

church. So the apostle functions in all of the abilities and ministries that are in the church. All the way from evangelism to oversight of the entire church or churches or group of churches.

Paul said even himself in I Corinthians chapter 15 verse 5 that he was not one of the twelve apostles. We will get more into that in the book of Acts on Thursday nights when we get through with John. But he says, **Jesus appeared to the twelve and then He appeared to me.** So he is not one of the twelve in I Corinthians 15:5.

There were many other apostles besides the twelve. Acts chapter 13 verse 1 tells us that Barnabas also was an apostle. When God called Barnabas and Paul out to travel on the first missionary journey. So, **a called apostle.** It is the kind of apostle he is. It is like coming up to him and saying, "How did you become an apostle?" He says, "God called me to be an apostle."

If you have your Bibles, please turn to the right to the book of Galatians. We have Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians. Chapter 1. Paul tells this group of churches in the area of Galatia, he says, **Paul, an apostle, not of (or literally *from*) men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.** So he says, "I am an apostle. Not from men. Men did not appoint me as an apostle." **Neither through man.** See, one is plural, one is singular. One is committee, one is singular: man in general. **But through Jesus Christ.** He says, "Jesus Christ has called me and appointed me to be an apostle. Men did not recognize it. Men did not appoint it. I became an apostle through and by Jesus Christ."

He says down in verse 9 of chapter 1, **As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received from us, let him be accursed.** He says, **For do I now persuade men, or God?** I mean making that kind of presentation, who are you trying to persuade? **Or do I seek to please men?** Obviously not. I would not be seeking to please you if I stood up here and said, "Everything I teach is the truth of God and if you do not do it, you are going to get in trouble." That is no way to compromise and try to please people. So he says, by making the statements, **Am I seeking to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant, that is δούλος (doulos), of Christ.** So he says, "I cannot please men and be a slave of Christ. I only belong to one," and that is Jesus Christ, his calling.

Thirdly his *consecration*. We have studied his capacity: he is a δούλος (doulos); his calling: he is a called apostle or an apostle by calling; and thirdly, his consecration. **Somebody who has been separated under the gospel of God.** Notice that is an aorist participle. It is something that has been done in the past and something that stands in condition today. He has been separated unto the gospel of God. The root word for this word for separated, **ἀφωρισμένος** (aphōrismenos) is the word **ὀρίζω** (horizō), where we get our word *horizon* from. And it literally means *to set boundaries around*. When it applies to men it is taking people and setting boundaries. You can only function within certain boundaries or a certain area. There are limitations. So basically he says that he is one who has been separated by God for the gospel. Period. And not for anything else.

Again we see in Galatians chapter 1, beginning at verse 11, **But I certify to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation (that is, my lifestyle) in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.** Notice verse 15, **But when it pleased God** - again, this is why a person is *called* to come to Christ, it is when God was pleased. **But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb.** The word separated is the same word **ὀρίζω** (horizō) as we find here in Romans 1:1. It is interesting that as soon as he was born he looks back and says, "God separated me for this purpose."

Now is interesting because Paul is around thirty-two, thirty-three years old at the point that he was saved. And he can look back at the last thirty-two years and say, "God separated me for the preaching of the gospel even though the first thirty-two years of my life was in rebellion." He gives us glimpses, not only here but elsewhere, that all of those thirty-two years of rebellion, and not submitting to God's will, not even understanding God's will, was all part of the salvation process.

Many of us look back and we have shared before, how we look back and we share what age we are - and even though I am only thirty-nine - you look back and say, "Wasted years. If I had known what I know today. If I had studied and learned. If I was doing twenty or thirty years ago what I am doing today in my walk with the Lord, then those years would not have been wasted." But we do not understand in order to get to where we are today you have to go through all of that for the last thirty years, or twenty years, or however long it is. They are not wasted years. That is how difficult the human heart and man's condition of sin is. The things that God must do to bring us to that place where our hearts are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It takes a long time. God works with us.

And so he says in verse 15, **God separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace.** Again there is a calling. **To reveal His Son in me.** Verse 16 tells us that the purpose for which God separated him is that God would say, "I want to use you to reveal My Son in you." That is the purpose for every believer.

Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

You have been purchased with a price, you are not your own.

The whole purpose for God saving me and living inside of me is that He might reveal himself in my life to others. Others might see Christ in me. So Paul says, "I have been separated under the gospel of Christ."

Interesting at his salvation recorded in Acts chapter 9 verses 15 and 16. The Lord told Ananias in the city that He wanted him to go that one Saul of Tarsus is in someone's house in the city and He wants him to go and pray for him. And Ananias, like what we would do - I think a lot of things in the Bible are pretty funny - but Ananias began to tell the Lord, "Lord, I don't

think You understand, this guy is a bad guy. He's got a bad reputation." As if the Lord will say, "Oh, I didn't know that. Well, let's forget that." But Ananias said, "Lord, this guy has got a bad reputation. He rounds up and captures Christians and he puts them to death and throws them in prison." And God says, "You go because he is a chosen vessel of Mine."

So he says in Acts 9:15 to Ananias, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and the kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.** He is a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name, to suffer the sufferings of Christ, so that Christ might be manifest in him.

Quite a testimony. The three things about Paul. And next week will get into The Promises. Paul was a slave. The highest form of service and ministry in the body of Christ is a **δοῦλος** (doulos). Highest. You are either a **δοῦλος** (doulos) or you are not serving at all. There are no great ones. There are no chiefs. There are leaders but we are the **δοῦλος** (doulos) of Jesus Christ not of a church. Paul says he is a called apostle. We will find out in verse 5 he is going to tell the people in Rome, **You also are the called of Jesus Christ.** All believers are called believers. Believers by calling. We belong to Christ because He called. We belong to Christ because He drew us to himself. We were not the initiators, we were the responders.

That is why as often as the Lord reminds me I like to tell people who are not saved. They say, "What do I have to do to be saved?" I say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and all you can do is call upon Him and ask for mercy upon you. But it is up to Him, if and when He saves you." Is He calling you? Is He drawing you? Do you have that sense that the Lord is convicting you and drawing you to Him so that He can save you? Because if He is not calling you and if He is not drawing you, you cannot do anything about it. But you can call out to Him.

There a few people we know that are not believers and they have said, "I'm studying the word, I'm listening to the messages, but I can tell you that I'm not saved. I just hope that someday God saves me." They have the understanding, they have the realization that they need God to save them. Now that does not mean that a person cannot come forward or pray and get saved. That is not guaranteed in the Scripture. God might lead somebody to do that. That might be the drawing that He might draw but you will not find that in Scripture.

But you do see [in] the Bible - first of all, to be saved the Lord must call. If somebody were to question me and say, "What did you do to get saved?" I responded to the call. If you do not have the call, I do not know what to tell you. I responded to the call, the invitation. I received Christ.

Secondly after being saved, the service that we render to Christ, the capacity that we serve in in the body of Christ also comes by calling. It is kind of interesting the same apostle Paul, three callings for him:

- (1) Galatians chapter 1 verse 15, he was separated from his mother's womb as a chosen vessel.
- (2) Secondly, Acts chapter 9 on the Damascus road, God called him.

(3) And thirdly, God gave him a calling as an apostle. Acts chapter 13 verse 1 Paul was busy in the church in Antioch, a Gentile church that was now the center of Christian activity north of Jerusalem and Israel. And while he and Barnabas were serving in the church the Lord told the church, "Separate unto me Paul and Barnabas for the work that I have for them." It is a calling.

That is why I have shared with you many times over the years that if God has a calling on your life, the calling might be true, the timing might not be. But whatever it is it will be confirmed by the body of Christ. Because Acts chapter 13 verse 1, not only did God tell Barnabas and Paul but He told the whole church. And they got them together, and prayed for them, and sent them out as apostles. God called him and it was evident to everyone.

We have had people pass through this church that have basically come up and told me what their calling is. And I said, "Well, stick around, you know, be part of body Christ and we will see what the Lord is doing in your life." They would not accept it. "If I came here will you let me have evangelistic crusades?" Well, how do I know your evangelist? I mean, if that is what God does through you, that is what He will do, so no problem. Come and function as a family with the rest the family and we will see the evidences as they are revealed. But we have a tendency, especially the men, have a tendency to hear the calling of greatness. "God's called me to be a great preacher! That's what my calling is. Not just a preacher, but a great one." We have we have a tendency to tell others, "If you do not see it, it is because you are blind." But it is also true that I am the only one that can see it. But it will be evident to all. You do not have to say word.

When we first started attending this church - I did not serve in any capacity other than the gardener in this church for four to five years. They would ask me, "Would you teach Sunday school?" I said, "No." And the only reason I started doing something is because we lost our pianist - you were not here at that time. We lost the only person we had to play the piano and the pastor at that time could not sing. And he said, "Anybody want to lead singing? Anybody wanted play the piano? If not, we will eliminate worship and singing." So I said, "Okay, I'll do it." And I did not know how to play anything. Went down and bought a keyboard and memorized a song. And we did then just like we do now. We sang three hymns, had the message, and the doxology.

So I went out, got a keyboard, memorized some melody and some notes the sound close to it on the other side. And I had to memorize it because I had to look down at the playing so I had to memorize the words too. So we got through with the first song and everybody was pretty pleased. "Well, that'll do, that's great. Now, for our second hymn." Same one over again. We sang the same hymn three times, until I learned a new one. And then the next Sunday it was the same one, new one, and the same one, so we kind of got things shuffled around. But just to get by, you know, just to have worship. Nobody knew how to play the guitar. Nobody wanted to sing. And the people that had some kind of music ability they did not want anything to do with it. So after four years or so I was forced into the service just to preserve our singing worship time.

And then the pastor resigned. And everybody looked at me at the end of the table, they said, "Well, you're it." And I said, "Well, I will interim. I will pastor on a temporary basis until you find a pastor." And twenty years later, we are still looking. But one thing I did not want to

do is come to Santa Maria and say, "Here's who I am, so you know can I serve God here in that capacity?" I was content just to be the gardener. I had a business to run. I know the difficulties and frustrations and the discouragements that come with ministry. Why the younger people have ambitions to preach the gospel I will never know. Other than the fact it is just youthful ambition because once you get into it you get hammered by God's people, the ones who are supposed to be supporting, and working together, and praying together. God's people. And you wonder why in the world does anybody out of ambition want to do this? It would have to be the calling of God because it is not a favorable thing.

The apostle Paul lays down for us some very great principles as he introduces himself to the court. This is a legal brief presented to the Roman mind.

Let's close with prayer.