

**January 10, 2021**

**Romans 1:1-7**

**1**Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— **2**the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures **3**regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%201:1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27934a)] was a descendant of David, **4**and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%201:1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27935b)] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. **5**Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%201:1-7&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27936c)] faith for his name’s sake. **6**And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

**7**To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**COMMENTARY**

**1:1**. Paul calls himself a slave. The Greek word “doulos” is mistranslated in most Bibles as “servant” or “bond servant.” A slave was owned, was bought for a price, received no wages, and could not quit. A servant could quit, got paid, and was a free person. Jesus Himself took the form of a slave (Php 2:7), and Paul reminded Christians that “you are not your own, for you were bought at a price” (1Co 6:19b-20). Paul was an apostle by the call of God. In God’s summons of Paul from his previous way of life, He commissioned him as an apostle (Ac 9). “Gospel” is an old English word meaning God’ s good news. Paul had been assigned by God to proclaim and teach this good news about Jesus.

**1:2**. The good news is the fulfillment of the OT prophecies, and the OT is not correctly understood apart from the NT.

**1:3**. Jesus is God’s Son in a different sense than are Christians, who are called “sons” due to spiritual new birth (Jn 3) and adoption into God’s family (Rm 8:15). Jesus is God’s Son first by being the eternal Son and Second Person of the Trinity (Isa 9:6; Gal 4:4), and second by being the virgin-born incarnate Son, conceived as the Spirit came to Mary (Lk 1:35). Jesus was also the messianic Son who came in the family line of David (2Sam 7:12-16; Ps 2:6-7; 89:26-29,36). Flesh here means the real human nature of Jesus.

**1:4**. Jesus in His humiliation was despised and rejected (Isa 53:2) and had the form of a slave (Php 2:7). He spoke as the Son of the Father (Jn 5:19-23), but He was persecuted because “He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God” (Jn 5:18). At the cross, His sonship was called into question (Mt 27:39-43). But the Spirit of holiness (another title for the Holy Spirit) raised Jesus from the dead. This event set Him apart as God’s unique Son exalted over death and Satan, and invested with all power (Mt 28:18).

**1:5**. The obedience of faith (cp. 10:16; 15:18) is best understood as the faith that issues in obedience. Paul’s ministry sought to bring all the nations to obey Jesus and His Father.

**1:6**. Christians belong to Jesus by calling. This calling is not a bare invitation. It is instead a sovereign summons that results in salvation as people respond in faith to God’s summons. By this language Paul reminded the Roman believers that God took the initiative in saving them.

**1:7**. Called as saints does not mean called “to be” saints, as if this is something Christians might become in the future. Neither does it signify an honorary title or an unusually holy person. Rather, all Christians are saints by the sovereign call of God. They have been set apart just as the nation of Israel was set apart (Lv 11:44; 19:2). A Christian is a person who has the forgiveness of sins and is sanctified by faith in Jesus (Ac 26:18) and therefore is a “saint” (1Co 1:2). The Christian belongs to Jesus and is set apart from the world.

**MAIN POINT**

God has given us the great invitation through Christ to be a part of His mission.

**INTRODUCTION**

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**What’s the most memorable thing that has ever happened to you while sharing your faith?**

**In what circumstances is it easy for you to share God’s love with others? In what circumstances is it difficult?**

**Describe a time when you recall doing something specifically “for the sake of God’s name.” What was the experience like?**

To date there are more than 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups in the world that have no way to hear the gospel. This is in addition to the billions of people in evangelized countries around the world who are not believers. Reaching the world is one of the few commands that Jesus left the church, and our work is still unfinished. God has invited us to join Him in making His name known to others in and through the work of Jesus Christ. The question is, do you want to participate?

**UNDERSTANDING**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

* HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 1:1-7.

**Paul begins by describing himself as a slave of Jesus Christ.**

**What do you interpret that phrase to mean? In what ways do you identify with Paul’s description of himself?**

**If a person is truly living as a slave of Jesus Christ, what would characterize their attitude and actions?**

Paul introduced himself as a slave of Christ Jesus. Slavery was widespread in the first-century world, as it had been during the Old Testament period. It was this lifelong, freely accepted slavery that best describes Paul’s use of the imagery. The Greek word rendered “slave” refers to a bond-servant, someone owned by another and to whom the slave owed total allegiance.

**What truths about Jesus Christ does Paul proclaim in this passage?**

In these verses, Paul describes the essential characteristics that proved Jesus is the unique Person who alone could accomplish God’s plan of salvation. First, Paul affirmed that Jesus was God’s Son. This description emphasizes Jesus’ preexistent divine nature; He is fully God. Next, Paul pointed out that Jesus was a descendant of David, indicating that He is the Promised Messiah. Finally, Paul declared that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead truly proves that this unique Person, the God-Man, the Messiah is indeed the powerful Son of God. Paul was contrasting the fleshly nature of Christ’s humanity (His physical nature, not sinfulness) with His gloriously resurrected state and His being the central focus of the gospel.

**How did Paul describe his purpose in life (v. 1)?**

**What do you see as God’s role in Paul’s fulfilling his purpose?**

**What was Paul’s role?**

In these verses, Paul explained further the nature of his mission as an apostle. He had been commissioned to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations. Of course, the work of salvation would be of God, but Paul would be the God-appointed messenger. God calls His people to participate in His redemptive work, a daunting task when we think about it. God’s purposes are always grand and majestic, not small. Jesus commissioned His followers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), and Paul took the Lord’s commission seriously.

**What is the good news about the gospel that made Paul so eager to share it?**

**Paul was bold about his faith. When have you been in a situation where as a Christian you felt like you “stuck out”? Were you bold or embarrassed?**

**What role does God’s grace play in helping Paul, and us, accept and fulfill this calling (v. 5)?**

We are among those who are called to be a part of God’s work. That is the great invitation God extends to us. The key is, how do we respond? The responses vary. Paul knew he had received grace, the unmerited favor of God, which would make possible the seemingly impossible. Rather than balk and complain over the apparent impossibility of it, the apostle viewed his commission as a gracious act of God to a vile sinner who formerly had persecuted Christ’s followers (see 1 Cor. 15:9-10). Some of Jesus’ other followers were more hesitant. This leads us to John 6.

* HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:2-14.

**What’s the difference between Jesus’ response to the crowd and the disciples’? What does each response reveal about their character?**

**What was the test that Jesus was using on Philip (v. 5)? Why then did Jesus take over and tell the disciples what to do?**

**What obvious solution to the dilemma of hunger did the disciples miss? Why should it have been obvious? What did their proposed solution show about their level of understanding of who Jesus was?**

With the attention of the disciples on the seemingly impossible challenge, Jesus showed them that He had the power to provide. As fast as the disciples lined up to receive food, Jesus doled it out. They served small group after small group. This helped them come to grips with their lack of faith that prohibited them from providing food. Jesus provided more than a snack. Everyone there had all they needed to satisfy their hunger.

**Philip responded to Jesus’ invitation by stating that the mission couldn’t be accomplished (v. 7). Andrew, on the other hand, pointed out that there wasn’t enough (v. 9). What excuse have you used recently to avoid accepting God’s great invitation?**

**What does this story reveal about Christ’s provision for those in need today?**

**What does it reveal about the means Christ will use to meet those needs?**

**NEXT STEPS**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**In what ways is our church taking seriously Jesus’ concern for others and reaching more people in His name? How can we (as individuals and as a group) join in what our church is doing? In what other areas can we serve?**

**Paul knew that at the end of his life he would stand before God and give an account of his days. Read Psalm 90:12. How does the truth in this psalm and Paul’s testimony impact how you see your personal responsibility to take the gospel to the world?**

**PRAYER**

Close in prayer, specifically praying for opportunities and resources for our group to be involved in missions this year. Ask God to encourage you to spread His message this week and in your daily lives at home. Praise God for sending His Son to die for us and that we now have a message of hope to share with the world. Thank God for His Spirit that empowers us to reach others. Ask for the Spirit to be active in your group members this week.