

Grace to You, and Peace!
Romans 1:1-7
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote Romans around 55 AD during his trip Jerusalem. Paul had never been to Rome, but he knew several Christians from the church there and wanted to introduce himself. Paul hoped that he would be able to visit the church at Rome if he survived his ministry in Jerusalem. Romans is a dangerous book. This letter may be the greatest work of Christian theology, and the purest presentation of the Gospel anywhere. This book has a way of changing people.

Paul personally knew something about a changed life and an abrupt calling from God. In these opening verses of Romans Paul shares God's calling on his life. And through this the Holy Spirit shows us God's calling on our life.

There are some who say that life does not matter much, that we just do our thing and die. But the Bible teaches that our lives do matter. And contrary popular opinions, your life is extremely important but not because of you! Our lives are important because of God's call upon our lives.

Answer God's call on your life by the obedience of the faith, because He gives grace and peace!

Romans 1:1 Paul's Call

Notice the way that Paul introduces himself. Paul could say a lot about himself and his credentials in Judaism (Phil 3:5-6), Christianity (2 Cor 11:22-28), or as a Citizen of the Empire (Acts 22:25-30). But Paul's introduction is not really about Paul, it is about God.

He does not introduce Himself as: "Paul, Man of God, Apostle, and Saint." Paul is a servant of Jesus, called (by God), and separated (by God). Paul manages to talk about himself without making it about himself!

Servant – this is a slave and we ought not to soften that fact. As offensive as slavery might be to our sensibilities, Paul had no problem telling the world that he was Jesus' slave. But this title of humility is also one of strength: "the Servant of the Lord" is a title given to Moses (Josh 1:1), Joshua (Josh 24:29), and David (Psl 18:1) in the Old Testament.

Apostle – this word means "someone that is sent." All of those called "apostles" spoke with Jesus and were personally sent by Him on a mission. Jesus gave Paul the mission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (1 Tim 2:7). The closest Old Testament office to the apostleship would be the Prophet.

Separated – As a Pharisee in Judaism, Paul had separated himself to the Law. But Paul was separated by God for the Gospel.

God has bound Paul, called Paul, and separated Paul to Gospel service. Paul is defined by God's call in his life, and so that is how he wants to be known.

You must answer God's call in your life because your life is not about you. To answer God's call in your life you allow His call to define your life.

Jesus said... “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (Luke 9:24).”

The Lord separated Paul unto the Gospel of God and this Gospel is central to Paul's life and calling.

Romans 1:2-4 The Gospel of God

The Gospel call that defines Paul's identity is not some fad, not some new idea, or great achievement of progress. It is an ancient promise, an expression of the deepest hopes of man, and the declaration of the power of God. Consider God's work in these verses: God promised (2), God provided (3), God declared(4), and God resurrected (4).

Vs 2 Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Covenant, He is *the* Son of God and a son of man, and His resurrection from the dead declares His power to all creation.

Vs 3 and 4 Notice “**according**” in both verses. Jesus is the son David physically speaking and the Son of God spiritually speaking; Jesus is human and divine.

Vs 4 Jesus was the son of God from before the beginning of time, but he was declared as such to the world by the power of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection. Jesus resurrection from the dead is the decisive declaration that he is who he claims to be!

All the promises of God fail along with all hope and love if there is no resurrection. But Christ is risen! And the resurrection of Christ is the same resurrection that we look forward to in Him.

To answer God's call in your life you must start by trusting the Gospel of Jesus!

Jesus said... “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matt 11:28-30)”

Romans 1:5-7 The Christian's Call

Paul is speaking specifically to the Romans here. But just as the Gospel is for all nations, God's calling, as well as grace and peace are for all people!

Vs 5 Through Jesus, God has given grace and the apostleship (literately “the sending”) for a specific reason: “obedience to the faith among all nations for His name” This is God's calling in your life!

Vs 5-6 This phrase “**obedience to the faith**” is crucial for understanding Romans; Paul both begins and ends the book with this idea (1:5 and 16:25-26). God has revealed Jesus for this reason: *your obedience to the faith for His glory.*

“**Faith**” in the Christian context is informed trust in Jesus. Believing that Jesus is who claims to be: God manifest in the flesh, who died for your sins and was resurrected in power, able to forgive you and promising to freely give eternal life to those that trust Him.

The “**obedience to the faith**” is faith maturing into action. It is a belief that is so real and living to produce a life that glorifies God.

This is why the gospel is preached, this is why sinners are saved, this is why the church exists: to grow in people a living, working faith to the glory of God. Even as Paul is defined by God's call in his life, you people should be defined by the same call!

“Among all nations” in times past only the Hebrew people could have the obedience of the faith. The Old Covenant was, and still is, specifically to them. But now the New Covenant is for all nations. God calls every living soul, of every nation, language, and culture, across the entire world to the obedience of the faith.

“For His name” God calls all people to this new and living way of Jesus for the praise of His glory and grace. This is your calling, your reason for being: to know God with every part of your life and enjoy His glory forever.

The **“obedience to the faith”** starts with public confession of your hope in Christ through Baptism and continues through the life of living faith. This changing life, not yet perfect or sinless, but moving in that direction is what Paul means in the next verse when he says...

Vs 7 “Called to be saints” we are also called to grace and peace. Our calling to be saints is a high and sometimes fearful calling, but never forget that we are also called to **“grace and peace”**.

By trusting Christ you are given **“grace”** the free, unearned favor of God and called to **peace** with God.

To answer God's call in your life you must believe on Him and walk in the obedience of the faith!

CONCLUSION

Jesus, born of the line of Kings of men, and declared to be the Son of God by overcoming death has a call on your life! This call is to the obedience of the faith in grace and peace; an informed trust that produces practical holiness. Your life is full of meaning and eternal purpose, this meaningful life starts with Jesus and is fulfilled through the obedience of faith in Jesus.

Jesus has a call on your life, but there are so many competing calls: money, career, religion, vanity and popularity, alcohol and other drugs, physical pleasure.

Have you found lasting grace and peace by following after those things? You have not and you will not; your heart will find no rest outside of Jesus' call.

Answer God's call on your life by the obedience of the faith, because He gives grace and peace!