

## **SERVANTS & SAINTS**

Tuesday, May 9

Reading: Romans 1:1-7

**Romans 1:1** *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—*

The book of Romans was written by the Apostle Paul to a church he had never visited. We don't know exactly how the church in Rome was founded but it may have been started by Jews who were saved on the day of Pentecost and brought their new faith home with them (see Acts 2:5-11; notice "visitors from Rome" in verse 10). Since Paul had never taught there and he planned to make a visit shortly (Romans 15:23-29) he writes this letter to explain the gospel to them. The book of Romans is the most organized and detailed presentation of the gospel in the New Testament.

Paul begins by introducing himself. He identifies himself first as a servant of Christ and then as an apostle set apart and called to deliver the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul wants his readers to know that this gospel is not new but was promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. At the center of the gospel is Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes both Christ's humanity ("descendant of David") and His deity ("Son of God in power") and focuses on His resurrection which proved His claim to be God. Finally, the gospel requires a response – obedience and faith.

Paul recognizes that these believers in Rome are among those to whom God has called him to minister. They have been called to belong to Christ and be His holy people because God loves them. Paul pronounces his standard blessing on them – the grace and peace of God.

### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

1. "A Servant of Christ Jesus." Paul does not try to impress them with big credentials. In fact, he begins by calling himself a servant (literally 'slave') of Christ Jesus. The first duty of a slave is to please his master and do his master's will. Though he bore authority as God's apostle he recognized that he was a servant first – bound to obey and follow his Master. Later in Romans, Paul will warn "do not think of yourself more highly than you ought" (12:3). It is easy to get caught up in our credentials and abilities. To think we are most important. But Paul's salutation reminds us that Christ is the most important One. That we are all merely slaves, each of us with a task to perform for our Master whom we obey because of the grace and love He has bestowed on us. Read Philippians 2:1-18. What characteristics of a servant do you see in this passage? How does Christ's example help us in our quest to be servants of God? What characteristics do you need the most work on?
2. "Called to be His Holy People." Literally this verse says believers are "called to be saints." A saint is not some "Super Christian." It is not someone who has been canonized by a church body because they were better than everyone else. In the New Testament, all believers are called saints. Because of the blood of Christ, God sees us as perfect, holy, sanctified. All true Christians are saints. That is a big name to live up to! When people look at you, do they see a saint? Though we all stumble and fall from time to time, is your life's goal to become more and more like Jesus every day?