

# **Hi, My Name is Paul**

## **“The Right Road”**

**Romans 1:1, 7**

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008**

When I receive personal mail, one of the first things I do is to open the envelope and look at the first line to make sure it is addressed to me. Normally, I do not begin to read what is written, but go to the very end of the page to see who it is from. The reason is because, depending upon the relationship I have with the person writing me, it will affect how I read what is written to me. If you forget to sign your name, I am probably not going to listen to what you have just written to me because I have no idea of the relationship we have with each other. When the letter is signed from a friend, or my wife, I will read that writing in light of my relationship with the writer.

I really do not like the way we write letters though. I really like the way they wrote letters in the biblical world. When you open the book of Romans, you do not have to turn to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter to find out who wrote this letter. It is right there in the first verse...Paul. From the very beginning, you know who is writing, and who it is being written to. We are going to examine Paul's introduction of himself to the saints in Rome. We will only cover verse one, but we will read verse seven as well. The first 15 verses that Paul writes will serve as the introduction to his thoughts. He will tell the saints his main thought, or thesis, in verses 16 and 17. Then, in verse 18 through 15:13, Paul will tell us what he wants

the saints to know. In verse 14 until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter, he will close out his remarks.

## **Scripture**

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

*“To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Romans 1:7

We are leaving out verses two through six because in Paul’s introduction, he did not use his normal pattern of writing. In the ancient world, and in most of Paul’s writings, a letter began with a certain format.

- **A-addressor**
- **B-addressee**
- **C-greeting**

In this format, *Paul* is A, *those in Rome* are B, and *grace and peace* is C. These first seven verses actually translate one long Greek sentence, and there is a lot of information between A, B, and C. Paul begins his introduction, and he gets so caught up that he immediately introduces us to the gospel of God. Then, he has to remind himself to write down who he is writing to, and then give his greetings. Why did Paul break from his normal style of writing? Paul did not establish the Church in Rome, and had never been to Rome. I believe he took the extra time to introduce himself because he did not have a relationship with the people in these house churches. In the introduction to the letter, we will see three things about Paul.

- **His identity**
- **His inspiration**

- **His intention**

In this lesson we will concentrate on Paul's identity. In verse one, Paul identified himself with three statements so the saints in Rome would fully understand who he was, and he wanted them to take this letter to heart.

1. A servant of Christ Jesus
2. A called apostle
3. One set apart for the gospel of God

It came to my mind that Paul was declaring he was: **a chained man, a called man, and a consecrated man.**

### **A Chained Man**-"a servant of Christ"

The first thing he tells us is that he *"is a servant of Christ Jesus."* At the time Paul was writing to the Church at Rome, there were at least six different Greek words available to him to describe himself as a servant. He chose the word that was a term of slavery, which was the strongest word available. The reason Paul chose this word to describe his relationship with Christ was because there were literally over six million people serving as personal slaves to the wealthy of the Roman Empire. Paul did not always use this same word in his writings when referring to a servant.

Let me give you some examples. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth and addressed some divisions in the Church. Some were pledging allegiance to Apollos, and some to Paul, and he questioned where the divisions were coming from. When Paul pointed out they had been misled, he asked, *"What then is Apollos? What is Paul?"* Paul answered, *"We are servants of Christ."* The word that is used here for **servant** is the Greek word that literally means "to wait tables." We get our English word **deacon** from that Greek word. It means "to have dirty feet." When Paul

concluded his thought, he then questioned them on how they should regard him or Apollos, but he switched the word for servant in 1 Corinthians 4:1. Here, the word ***servant*** does not mean one who waits tables. It means a person who was a slave. It is the picture of a slave who was put in the belly of a cargo ship. These ancient ships had oars coming out of the right and left sides of the boat. The slaves were chained to their seats and were forced to row. This word literally meant to be "an under-rower." The lowest word used in the Greek language. Paul is saying, don't just regard us as people who wait on tables, regard us as the men who are in the belly of the boat making things happen, and you do not even know we are there!

But that is not the word Paul is using in Romans 1. It is the Greek word **Doulos**, which means "a bondservant", or literally "a slave." In the ancient world, it was mostly used to describe someone on a slave block that would be auctioned off. The person that was bought no longer had personal rights, but existed to serve his master. He left the slave block that day as a bondservant, or a slave. This is the word that Paul used to describe his identity to the saints in Rome.

- **A Bondservant of Christ**

This concept of being a slave of God, which Paul attributes to Jesus Christ, was a term that was applied many times to the Old Testament prophets. According to Moses in Exodus 21, a slave only had to serve his master for six years. At the end of six years, he was to be set free, and remain free for the rest of his life. If the servant was treated well and wanted to remain with his master for the rest of his life, he had to be pierced to show he was a free bondservant, and was not breaking the Law. He was stood against the doorpost of the house, and an awl was driven into his earlobe to make a hole. In modern terminology, you pierced their ear.

When I was raising my son Kory, I decided he would never have a pierced ear. I also had decided that my daughter would never date a guy who had a pierced ear. I was just that kind of guy. Well, my son came to me one

day and said, "Dad, I am going to get my ear pierced." I said, "Son, no way! You are not getting an ear pierced." He said, "Dad, I really want to get my ear pierced." Without Kory knowing it, a few years before I had been softened a little bit because as the pastor of HBC, I noticed a lot of college aged guys in my congregation that had pierced ears. So my image of a pierced ear began to change a little bit. I now believed you could be halfway moral and intelligent with a pierced ear. But when Kory came to me, I just held my ground. He then flipped to Exodus chapter 21 and said, "Dad, God says it is okay to have a pierced ear." I said, "Son, do you understand the context?" He said, "Yes Dad. If you let me get my ear pierced, I am going to pledge to be a bondservant of the Lord forever." I knew he was lying to me...so to make him understand the seriousness of what he wanted to do, I said, "Son, okay, there will never be a tattoo, but I will let you pierce your ear. But when you do, you remember that whatever that earring looks like is a symbol that you are a bondservant of the Lord. I just want you to know that I am going to be the person who examines whether or not you are keeping your vow to the Lord that you are making. If I ever catch you breaking that vow, I want you to know that I am going to take the earring out. But I am not going to take it out the way Mama would want me to. I am going to stick you up against the door of the house, hold your head against the door, and grab your ear by the earring and yank it out! That tear in the bottom of your earlobe will say to the world that you were not a very good bondservant of the Lord! Now, he voluntarily took it out later...

You have a sign that tells the world you were paid for with the blood of Christ. That is what is pledged in baptism. Baptism says that you are no longer a person of sin, but a righteous person of God, through faith in Jesus. You no longer pursue your own agenda, but the agenda of God. Your relationship with God is based upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You went to Him chained in sin, self-centered, and doing your own thing, when all of a sudden He bought you. He took

off the chains of sin and put chains of righteousness on you, and you are now a free bondservant of Christ. Paul's sign was his name.

Remember that *Paul* was not his Jewish name. That was not the name his parents gave him; they named him Saul. There was good evidence that his dad was a Pharisee. We know he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and we know he was of the tribe of Benjamin. We know he was a pure Israelite, and that he was circumcised on the eighth day. We think he could have possibly been named after King Saul. He was a moral man, yet in his morality, he did his own thing. We first meet him in Acts 7 when they lay the clothes of Stephen at his feet after he has authorized his execution. Then we see him in Acts 8 when he is causing the early Church to be persecuted. He is going from house to house ravaging the Church, so it scatters. Then in Acts 9, we see him traveling to the synagogue on the road to Damascus with letters from the high priest giving him authority to imprison or kill followers of Jesus, or The Way. On the road to Damascus, he saw the light. The light of God opened his eyes to see who Jesus was. In his blindness, he waited on instructions from God. Saul, the persecutor of the Church, a man who served God his own way, suddenly and totally surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. There was such a change in his life that he began to minister the gospel. He begins to use his Roman name Paul on his first missionary journey in Acts 13, and he writes here to declare himself a free slave.

It is interesting that Paul uses the terms *Christ Jesus*, and *Jesus Christ* interchangeably. But notice, when he puts these two words together, he usually says *Christ Jesus*. As a matter of fact, he says it 48 times, and he only says *Jesus Christ* 18 times. The reason is because he came to know Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, and the Anointed One of God. Jesus, who had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures, had now come to bring the kingdom of God to man. Paul knew that His human name, Jesus, meant Savior. So when he used the term *Christ Jesus*, he was talking about the Anointed Savior.

Sometimes he would use *Lord Jesus Christ*. You see, when Paul was born, he was given three names, as was every Roman citizen. These titles were called: the **praenomen**, the **nomen**, and the **cognomen**. Therefore, on many times Paul referred to Jesus by three titles. On most occasions he said *Lord Jesus Christ*. He only referred to him eight times as *Lord Christ Jesus*. He is saying, I am a slave of God and Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus, and He is God!

### **A Called Man**-“called to be an apostle”

Paul also identifies himself as a called apostle. In many of our English versions of the Bible, the words “*to be*” are in italics. That means they have been added to the translation. They are not in the original Greek. The 1611 translators made a decision to add those words in order to make it flow smoothly. Since then, all English translations have primarily been translating it this way, but the gist of what Paul is saying is that he is a called apostle. You would expect him to write about his apostleship first and show his authority before he talked about being a slave. But Paul started out with pure humility by saying he was a free servant of Christ, and then he said that he was an apostle. An apostle means, “One sent out with authority, or an anointed or appointed messenger on behalf of another.”

- **Paul’s Call to Apostleship**

In order to be an apostle, you had to be personally taught by Jesus during His earthly ministry, and you had to have witnessed the resurrection (Acts 1). In Luke 6, Jesus had been praying on a mountain all night. The next morning He chose 12 of His disciples and named them apostles, and then gave them authority. After Judas betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, they replaced him.

Now, if you remember, throughout Paul’s ministry, he had to defend his apostleship. He said he did not receive his appointment from man, but

from God. He went into the desert for three years before he started his ministry to get his theology straight, and to develop his relationship with God. In order to be an apostle, Paul was with God on the backside of nowhere! Sometimes we rush too quickly into the pulpit, or ministry. I am afraid there have been some churches and lives that have never been changed or touched because those in leadership just teach about God, but do not know Him. Then, Paul claimed to have seen the Lord after His resurrection on the road to Damascus. Paul says he is a “called” apostle.

- **Call of God**

This word ***called***, as used by Paul in his writing, is used in context to imply that the reason he is doing what he is doing is not because this is what he wanted to do, but because God wanted him to do it. He is not saying he grew up wanting to be an apostle so he asked God to make him one, and God said yes. The word used here takes man out of the occasion and puts the initiative in God, so he is responding to the call of God. He was only doing this because God wanted him to do it. This word is not being used as an invitation; it conveys the sense of a summons, or a command.

God takes the initiative in the call, and this runs true throughout the Bible. For example, Moses did not want to do what God called him to do. As a matter of fact, God set a bush on fire that did not burn up in order to get his attention! God told him what His will was for his life, and Moses tried every way in the world to get out of it. Moses told God that he did not want to do it, and God kind of got angry with him, but Moses finally did what God called him to do!

In Amos 7:10-14, Amos is preaching a message of judgment against King Jeroboam and Amaziah, who is the pastor of the king’s church. Because the king attended his church, Amaziah always tailored his message to the king’s ear. He constantly preached about how good God was, and how great everything was in the kingdom. Now there is this yayhoo out in the country preaching that it is not good or right! So Amaziah took it upon himself to go talk to the Prophet Amos. Amos told him he was no prophet,



or the son of a prophet. As a matter of fact, he said he was minding his own business, following the flock and pinching sycamore fruit, but God took him and told him to go preach. Now, the word for **took** is the Hebrew word *laqach*, which means “with the grip of death.” In other words, Amos was saying, I am not preaching because I want to be here. As a matter of fact, I would still be following the flock and be a pincher of sycamore fruit, but God put His hand on me and told me to come up here and preach. That does not sound like an invitation. God did not invite Amos to preach, and then give him time to think and pray about it. The sovereign God of the universe stepped into his life and said, pack your bags, you are going north! God called him to be there, and that enabled him to stand up against Amaziah.

Another guy named Jonah was also not invited to the missionary effort to take the gospel to the Ninevites. God broke into Jonah’s life and told him to go preach to them. Jonah decided he did not want to do it, so God let him run. But God changed the circumstances of his life, and he went to Nineveh and preached the gospel! His heart was not right, but he did what God called him to do.

### **A Consecrated Man**—“set apart for the gospel of God”

Do you remember Jeremiah? God breaks into Jeremiah’s life and reveals His will. He tells Jeremiah that before he formed him in his mother’s womb, He knew him. The Hebrew word for **know** is used to talk about a personal, intimate relationship. God had already established a covenant relationship with Jeremiah before He even knitted him together! Before he was born, God set him apart. God is not asking Jeremiah what he thinks about it, He had made a sovereign decision before he was even born.

This was the same sense of call that Paul had. Scripture teaches that God has the sovereign right to step into the lives of His saints, and call them to whatever He wants to call them to! In Galatians 1:15-16, Paul said that he felt like he had been set apart from his mother’s womb. When he talked about his call, he said he was called by God’s grace, which is unmerited

favor. In other words, there was not anything in Saul, when he was in his mother's womb, which caused God to set him apart and call him to be an apostle and to preach the gospel. God made a sovereign choice of Paul.

- **Effectual Call**

This means you had better be careful. Most of the time we think God has just thrown out an invitation for us to join Him. If God is that kind of God, then you can reject that invitation without consequence because you are not being disobedient to God. When you get an invitation, you can turn it down. But when you get a summons or command from a higher authority than you, you do not turn it down. You can turn it down, but when you do, you are living in total disobedience. There is a power, and an anointing with a member of a body of Christ who knows that what they are doing is only because of God's supernatural call of their life, and not because they want to do it! I submit that when Paul uses the word ***call***, he is not referring to the general call of the gospel, but the effectual call of the gospel. The effectual call means that the call determines the response, or the outcome. God is the *caller*, and the one He is calling is the *called*. It is not that we call out to God, God sees it, and then He calls us. The initiative starts with God, who is sovereign over His creation. He issues an effectual call that someone hears and responds to. It is the call that affects the result. The *calling* is to whatever God is calling someone to, and in this particular case, it is service. God has the right to call us to whatever He wants to call us to. If you grab hold of that, it will change your life. You will live your life obediently to God's call, which reveals His will to you, and it changes the way you live. It changes the way you approach ministry. Therefore, you can stand in times of frustration and discouragement because you know this is not on you. You did not get yourself into this in the first place; you are only in this because of God.

We used to preach in our churches that in order to preach, you had to have a direct call from God. Before I was ordained me, I was drilled on my

call from God. I can stand here and tell you without hesitation, I am not Church called, or self-called; I have a call from my God. When a man is called of God, the church he pastors will be a place where the Word of God is taught and preached. The decisions will not be made on what pleases the congregation, but on what pleases God! Now, called people make mistakes, but it changes your ministry and your mindset. It changes everything about you when you know you only have to please the one who called you!

Do you believe you are called of God? What is your calling? Are you being obedient or disobedient? Are you being faithful or unfaithful? Are you doing what you want to do, or what He wants you to do? Obey the call to service, and obey the effectual call to salvation and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Knowing you are chained to righteousness because of Jesus Christ and that you are called of God will aid you in standing against the attack of Satan on your life.