

Message: Romans 1:1-7

Message Date: August 3, 2025

Summary of the Sermon:

This exploration of Romans chapter one invites us into one of the most theologically rich books of the New Testament, centering entirely on the gospel of Jesus Christ. We discover that Paul's self-description as a 'bond servant' isn't just ancient terminology—it's a radical invitation for us to embrace our identity as willing slaves of Christ. The word 'doulos' speaks of someone so devoted to their master that they choose permanent servitude out of love. This challenges our modern sensibilities but reveals a profound truth: true freedom comes through complete surrender to Jesus. We're reminded that the gospel isn't something we invented or earned—it was promised through the prophets, concerns Jesus exclusively, and demonstrates both His humanity as a descendant of David and His divinity proven through the resurrection. The message emphasizes that every person has been 'called'—divinely summoned—into relationship with God. He placed a conscience within us, put eternity in our hearts, and actively draws us through His Holy Spirit's conviction and witness. This isn't passive invitation; it's God pursuing us relentlessly because He loves us and desires none to perish. For those of us already believers, we're challenged to see ourselves as ambassadors and messengers, separated to share this gospel with a world God is already working on.

Title: Called, Separated, and Sent: Understanding Paul's Gospel in Romans

Sermon Summary:

This sermon introduces the book of Romans by examining Paul's opening verses, emphasizing that Romans is the most densely theological book in the New Testament focused on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The pastor explores Paul's three self-descriptions—bond servant, called apostle, and separated to the gospel—as models for all believers. The message emphasizes that the gospel was promised through prophets, concerns Jesus Christ who came both as man (descendant of David) and God (demonstrated through resurrection), and is offered through God's grace to all people. The sermon concludes with a powerful reminder that God calls all people to salvation through conscience, conviction, testimony, and drawing, demonstrating His love and desire that none should perish. Every believer is called to embrace their identity as a bond slave of Christ, a messenger/ambassador, and one separated to share the gospel.

Key Points:

- Paul identifies himself with three descriptions that apply to all believers: bond servant (doulos/slave) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle (messenger/ambassador), and separated to the gospel
- The gospel was promised beforehand through Old Testament prophets with over 300 prophecies fulfilled by Jesus
- Jesus came as both fully man (seed of David according to the flesh) and fully God (declared Son of God with power through resurrection)
- Salvation comes through grace alone, not works, and grace must always precede peace
- Paul's greeting includes both Gentile (grace/charis) and Jewish (peace/shalom) greetings, showing the gospel is for everyone
- God calls all people to salvation because He loves them and desires none to perish
- Humans don't naturally seek God (Romans 3), so God pursues us through conscience, conviction, testimony, and drawing
- The phrase "many are called but few are chosen" reveals the tragedy that more reject God's offer than accept it
- All believers are saints immediately upon salvation, not after death or performing miracles

- Christians should view themselves as willing slaves privileged to serve Christ and as ambassadors representing God's kingdom

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 1:1-7 (primary focus)
- Supporting passages: 1 Corinthians 15 (gospel definition), Ephesians 2:8-9 (salvation by grace), Romans 3 (none seek God), 2 Peter 3:9 (God's desire for all to be saved), John 6 and John 12 (Father and Son drawing all people), Matthew 13, 20, 22 (parables about calling), Isaiah 7, 9, 52-53 (Messianic prophecies), Acts 2:10 (visitors from Rome at Pentecost), Deuteronomy 15 (bond servant imagery)

Stories:

- Paul's name change from Saul (meaning "desired") to Paulos (meaning "small"), illustrating the need for humility in coming to Christ
- The Old Testament practice of bond servants choosing to permanently serve a master they loved by having their ear pierced with an awl (Deuteronomy 15)
- Paul writing Romans from Corinth around 57-58 AD while staying with Gaius, evidenced by references in Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 1
- Personal testimony of a neighbor who brought three pages of verses showing Jesus as lesser than the Father but refused to accept three pages showing Jesus as equal with the Father
- Illustration of looking at group photos—we always look for ourselves first, demonstrating our inherent selfishness and need for God to pursue us
- The parable imagery from Matthew 13 of fishermen drawing in nets with both good and bad fish, showing God draws even those who will reject Him

Discussion Questions:

Paul describes himself as a bond servant, or slave, of Jesus Christ. What does it mean practically for you to view yourself as permanently bound in servitude to Christ, and how does this perspective change the way you live daily?

The sermon emphasizes that Paul's name changed from Saul (meaning desired) to Paul (meaning small). How does the concept of becoming small in our own eyes relate to being effective in God's kingdom work?

Paul identifies three descriptions of himself: bond servant, called apostle, and separated to the gospel. Which of these three resonates most with where you are in your spiritual journey, and why?

The pastor explains that over 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus, giving us intellectual reasons to believe the gospel. How does the prophetic nature of Scripture strengthen your faith, and how might you use this in conversations with skeptics?

Romans emphasizes that the gospel concerns Jesus as both fully man and fully God. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be both human and divine to accomplish our salvation?

The sermon states that none of us naturally seek God according to Romans 3, yet God pursues us through conscience, conviction, testimony, and drawing. Can you identify specific ways God pursued you before you came to faith?

Paul consistently uses grace before peace in his greetings because grace leads to salvation, and peace is a fruit that follows. How have you experienced this sequence in your own spiritual life?

The pastor challenges us to see ourselves as ambassadors and messengers, not citizens of this world. In what practical ways can you live more fully as an ambassador of Christ's kingdom in your workplace, neighborhood, or family?

Jesus said many are called but few are chosen, suggesting more people reject God's offer than accept it. What does this reality stir in your heart regarding evangelism and sharing the gospel with those around you?

The sermon describes how God uses multiple methods to call all people to Himself, including putting eternity in our hearts and a conscience within us. How does understanding God's relentless pursuit of humanity affect the way you pray for and approach unbelievers?