

Romans 1:1-7

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[0 : 00] So, take your Bibles. I'm so excited this morning. I get to do something that at least I feel like the Lord is leading me to do this. Something that I've never had the opportunity to do as a pastor. Something that I have longed to do, but never really had the release from it.

And as you can probably tell, my voice may crack like a 13-year-old this morning. I have all this great, wonderful stuff going on. I don't know why it is. The Lord gives me these things that make me so excited and then Satan hinders me with, I had to lose my tie and all those good things, but I'm going to preach it as long as I can this morning.

But turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 1. I've never had the release and the freedom to preach through the book of Romans. We have recently just finished the book of 1 Peter. On Wednesday nights, we are going through the Gospel of John. On Sunday nights, we are just making our way through Scripture. We started in Genesis 1-1, my very first Sunday night here as pastor.

And now we are in the book of Exodus around the 13th chapter. So a lot of things that are so exciting. And yes, I normally stick to books or different series as the Lord leads me.

[1 : 13] If you're maybe not familiar with the way that I preach. But this morning, a portion of Scripture that I have never felt the release to preach through in its entirety, I really feel like God is urging me and nudging me to go into it.

And that is exciting because it is the very book that while reading it for my own self, I came to Christ as my Lord and Savior through reading the book of Romans. It's something that I've kind of shied away from because I did not realize, I do not feel even now that I am capable of doing it justice. I do not feel like that I am fit to preach the book of Romans in its entirety. But I'm going to go through it as the Lord leads us. But we will be in Romans 1, verses 1-7 this morning.

Romans 1, verses 1-7. Romans has been called the magnum opus of Paul. It is Paul's great dispensation of faith.

It has been one of the most instrumental books throughout church history. October 31st, the day that many celebrate as the day of Halloween, is also called Reformation Day because it was the day in which Martin Luther, not Martin Luther King Jr., but Martin Luther, nailed his 99th thesis to the church door of Wittenberg.

[2 : 33] Martin Luther was a man who was in a monk, or as a monk, serving as a monk in a monastery, who went back to Scripture alone and quit listening to what the establishment of the church was teaching him and rather went to the authority of the Word of God.

And after dedicating his life to a life of celibacy and silence, in that monastery opened up a portion of God's Word that so gripped his heart and changed his life that he came to the salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior through grace and grace alone.

And it was that which prompted him to nail the 99th theses to the church door at Wittenberg, which led to what is called the Protestant Reformation, which we today can celebrate as being a return to Scripture alone and only Scripture through most Protestant evangelical churches.

The book that he opened up to read and to study was the book of Romans. Romans was the very book that led Martin Luther to Christ. It was the very book that led a failed missionary who had left the European continent and come to Savannah, Georgia with the intentions of reaching the Indian nation with the gospel, but yet somehow on his trip here, he realized that he had not yet accepted the gospel.

And while he came here to reach the Indian nation with the gospel, in the land of our own place in Savannah, he realized that he was failing and had no success and went back home defeated.

[4 : 02] But while sitting at the church at Outersgate Bridge one Sunday evening, the pastor stood up and he read Martin Luther's introduction to the book of Romans. And that individual, while sitting in that congregation, came to the understanding that you are not saved by works, you are not saved

by labor, but you are saved by grace and grace alone.

And that day at Outersgate Bridge Church, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. You know him because he started what is called the Wesleyan Revival. His name was Mr. Charles Wesley, who started, the originator and the beginning of the Methodist Church.

He is an individual who transformed his own European nation as a result of coming to faith in, or it was John Wesley's brother, Charles Wesley, was the author of all the hymns that we've seen, or many of them.

John Wesley began the Wesleyan Revival, which he would preach to congregations of some 30,000 plus in open air without the assistance of any type of microphone, without the assistance of any type of amplification, and did it for years and years and years because his heart was changed through the introduction to the book of Romans as recorded by Martin Luther.

Romans is the book, as I said, that changed my life because as I was encouraged to return to Scripture for the first time to really see what the Bible has to say about salvation, I thought that I knew exactly how one was saved, and I thought you could be good enough and do good enough, and if you did good enough, God would accept you as being well enough.

[5 : 35] And I returned to the Bible probably for the first time, really, and I read through the book of Romans, and about halfway through the book of Romans, I realized it was nothing that I could do, but it was everything that he could do.

Romans is a book that Mr. Finley once said. All of Christian theology, all systematic theology, which is the understanding of God and grace and salvation, finds its roots in the book of Romans.

It has been considered the most instrumental book in church history, the most instrumental book in church thoughts, which means the way we live out our faith and the way we understand what we really believe is determined more by the book of Romans than any other book in all of Scripture. Martin Luther himself said it is the chief book of the New Testament. It deserves to be known by heart, word for word, by every Christian. It is a powerful book, and God has used it to transform the ages, and God has used it to change individuals' lives.

It is a book that helps us to move beyond just the Gospels of who Jesus Christ is, and even the book of Acts, what the church did. Now it tells us who we are, and why we are that way.

[6 : 56] The book of Romans is divided into three sections pretty easily. Romans chapter 1 through 8 deal with salvation, how a man can be saved. Romans 9 through 11 deal with the nation of Israel, what is God doing with his people.

And Romans 12 through 16 deal with practical application, now that you know you're saved, now that you know how God's behaving in history, what are you going to do about it? Romans 12 is a great chapter.

If you were to read Romans 12 and just Romans 12 alone, there is a pastor called Chip Ingram who has a ministry called R12 Ministry, and it is all solely based upon Romans chapter 12.

If you read Romans chapter 12, and we behaved as we should in Romans chapter 12, I'll tell you, the world will be transformed through the actions of the church. Romans is a magnificent book.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I want you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God in Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 7. The word of God says, Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets and the holy scriptures, concerning his son, who was born of a descendant of David, according to the flesh, who is declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ, to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints, grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[8 : 43] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you for the opportunity we have to open up the pages of your word. Lord, we thank you for every part and portion of it.

God, we are so excited about the part you've put before us this morning. We pray that you'd give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and a desire to understand and live out what it is you show us. God, we pray that you'd be glorified and honored throughout the rest of this service.

Lord, that you would be lifted on high and you alone, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. The book of Romans is a letter written by Paul to the church at Rome.

And just like every other letter written in the New Testament, the author always introduces himself and begins to speak by way of purpose in the opening verses.

And just as is very common with Paul, Paul gets a little carried away every now and then. It was Paul who preached so long one night on his way to Jerusalem that a young man whose name was Lucky, that is Eutychus in Scripture, fell out of a window and died.

[9 : 59] He was in the second floor. Paul kept on preaching. Paul went down the book of Acts tells us, scooped him up and said, Don't worry, his life is still in him. See, from all respects, when you read it, it looks like they just set him in the corner and it says, And Paul continued to preach until daylight.

And then they took Eutychus up alive. Paul would get a little excited and a little carried away. Paul, when he opens up the letter to Romans, gets a little excited and has one real long run-on sentence as he begins to describe who he is and who they are.

Paul has a tendency to do that when you read that in the original language. He doesn't really stop to breathe a whole lot. He doesn't put a lot of punctuation in things. Paul gets excited about what he's talking about and just keeps going and going and going and going.

Because the truth which he is proclaiming is the very thing that has not only gripped his mind, but has also gripped his heart and it has changed his life. And Paul here is introducing himself to believers whom he does not know personally.

Romans is so much different than many other of the letters of Paul and that he is writing to a church which he did not start. He is writing to a church which he has never been and he is writing to a church full of people that he really does not know.

[11 : 11] Many say, well, why then is he writing the letter to the book, to the church at Rome? Why is he writing this book of Romans? He is writing it probably while on his way to Jerusalem before he will be arrested.

Many believe that he is writing it in the city of Corinth. He is writing it sometime near the end of his missionary travels because he says in this letter that he is preparing to take the offering that has been collected from the churches back to Jerusalem.

Now we know through reading the book of Acts that when he takes that offering into Jerusalem, he is falsely accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple. He is arrested. He is bound. He is enchained.

He is put in prison for the last time. A plot comes against his life. They move him around and he eventually makes his way to Rome. Paul had this promise from God, you will testify to me in Rome. Paul had a great desire to be in Rome. We know that his desire was to go to the lands that had not yet been reached. This ought to be the desire of every believer. Paul said, I lay no other foundation than that which has already been laid, which is Christ Jesus our Lord.

[12 : 19] But he also said that he desired to preach the gospel and not build on another man's foundation. He wanted to be somewhere where an apostle had not been. He wanted to take the gospel somewhere that it had not yet been taken.

God had given him a zeal and an excitement. Paul tells us in Romans 1 that he hopes to come to be an encouragement to them and so that they too may encourage him.

We have not read that yet. We will read that probably next week. I just kind of give you a heads up. Isn't it amazing that Paul could encourage the church, but that the church could also encourage Paul?

I mean, this is the man Paul. But he also tells us in Romans 15, this great vision, though Paul knew on his way to Jerusalem for that last time, he said, I am bound by the spirits.

Paul never lost his vision for the things of God because Romans 15 tells us, Paul says, I hope to come to you to spend some time with you that I may be encouraged by you on my way to Spain.

[13 : 20] And he wanted to get beyond Rome and go to Spain where the gospel had not yet been preached. He was moving his hub of direction from Antioch to Rome because he knew that Rome was the door to the world.

Now we know that Paul never made it that way. When you read the book of Acts, he made it to Rome, but he did not make it to Spain. But he did not lose that vision to be used by God in different places and different ways.

Paul wanted to go to Rome because Rome was the most influential city in the world. And to the most influential city in the world, Paul wrote what is probably, and most biblical scholars agree, one

of the greatest writings in all of Scripture.

about grace. He wanted them to understand what they believe and why they believed it. And this is important because this lays the foundation for everything we would do.

Romans is one of the few letters that Paul writes that he does not address a problem within the church. When writing to the church, to the church at Corinth in the book of 1 Corinthians, he addresses very specific problems.

[14:36] 2 Corinthians, very specific problems. Galatians, very specific problems. The book of Ephesians, very specific problems. Paul had a way of writing letters that would step on your toes. And Paul had a way of calling it what it was.

And he didn't shy away from that. But in the book of Romans, we don't find any problems addressed. We just find the truth and the theology proclaimed. Because in Rome, there was not just one church, but rather there were a multitude of local churches.

And Paul was writing to those believers, realizing that those believers were true followers of Christ, but had not yet had the teaching of an apostle, either Peter or Paul or James or John or any of those.

And they needed to know what the truth was because it was such an influential city. Rome was the most influential city in the world. And from Rome, the world would hear the gospel.

And this is exactly what history teaches us. What we have in the first seven verses of the book of Romans is Paul's introduction of himself to the family of God.

[15:47] This is being introduced to family. Many of us have been places. Many of us have been to family reunions or even gatherings where we are filled with people that we know are family, but we don't know any of them.

I remember there are two very distinct events in my own family's life. When I was growing up, we used to have family reunions every year up in Indiana. The Calverts started in Maryland.

A little known, well, many of you know it, but the Calverts founded Maryland. They bought the land called Maryland from King James of England. I don't know why. They just bought it.

They came over here and they named it Maryland after Queen Mary. Baltimore, Maryland is named after Baltimore Calvert and it is in Calvert County, Maryland. The Maryland state flag is my family crest. Don't have any of the money, don't have any of the prestige, but it's pretty cool, right?

When the University of Maryland plays, it's pretty cool. They put my family crest all over their helmets. That's just pretty cool. That's all there is to it. But the Calverts went from there down to Indiana and then from Indiana, my dad moved from Indiana down to here and things of that nature.

[16:55] So we would go up. I remember in particular several years ago, my dad wanted to go back for a family reunion up around Greenville, Indiana where my dad is from. And my family said we would go with him.

So we went up there with my dad and my uncle and we were sitting around and we were in his house and Carrie elbowed me. And I said, what? She looked around and she elbowed me and it was a room full of all of the Calvert men.

And I looked and every one of us were standing the same. We were sitting the same and I could just see myself. I had my sons beside me. It was like my sons, me, then my uncle, then my dad. And as I went down the line, every man kept getting older and older and older.

And I looked at her and I said, you want to know what I'm going to look like in a few years? Here you go. Here's the progression of the Calverts, okay? I didn't know any of them but I definitely was one of them. We were all the same.

We all had the same characteristics. We all had the same mannerisms, just the way we carried ourselves and things like that. Well, a few years after that, we went up to Baltimore, Maryland because the Southern Baptist Convention was up there.

[17:54] And my dad's got a cousin named Jeff who lives up there. I met Jeff many years ago. And I thought, well, this will be neat. I'll call my cousin Jeff or my dad's cousin and just say, hey, Jeff, we're going to be in town like, you know, to introduce my family to you.

And he said, yeah, come on out. He said, well, hey, after church, come out, we're having a cookout. So I thought this would be not a big deal. It would be kind of neat to go. It's amazing. We pull up and I get out of my vehicle and I smell it.

I said, he is cooking what we call Calvert chicken on the grill. My dad cooks it. My dad gave me the recipe. I said, I know what that is. And I walked up. He said, yeah, absolutely. That's exactly what it

is. Same food all the way up in Maryland.

Well, it ended up being his daughter's graduation party. And I felt so bad because we crashed her graduation party. It's almost like they forgot that it was a graduation party because they have family from Tennessee in.

And we had all these people around us who were all family but we didn't know them. But they wanted to talk to us. They wanted to know us. They wanted to talk to me about my dad, about my grandfather whom I never met.

[18 : 54] They wanted to get to know one another because we were family. And we had a great time that day of hanging out with family. Did you know the church of God is a lot like that?

It's a family. And we might not know everybody. We might not have personally met everyone. But we're still a part of the family. It is the family of God.

I know churches that the last song they sing every Sunday before they dismiss is I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God. to remind one another that we are a part of the family. We may not have been and we have not been introduced to everyone in that family but it does not remove that familial bond.

It does not remove that connection because at first introduction all of a sudden we are at home. And what a joy it is to be a part of the family.

When Paul writes these seven verses he's introducing himself to a family that doesn't know him.

And he says I'm part of the family too and I'm so glad you are as well.

[19 : 58] And he gives us three things in this introduction into the I want you to take away from this introduction. Number one Paul was a man of calling.

Paul was a man of calling and the body and the family of God is full of people of calling. Look at what it says. It says Paul a bond servant of Christ Jesus.

Just stop right there. The very first way he introduces himself to churches full of people who don't know him to numerous churches scattered through the city of Rome.

The very first way he introduces himself is I'm Paul. I am the doulouos literally the literal translation means slave. I am the slave of Jesus Christ.

That's how he introduces himself. He does not say I am Paul also known as Saul of Tarsus. He does not say I am Paul a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He does not say I am Paul a Roman citizen by birth with all of the rights that come along with it.

[21 : 01] He does not say I am Paul schooled in the greatest school of Gamaliel. All those things are true about him by the way but he does not introduce himself as that. He says I'm Paul I'm the slave of Jesus Christ.

Now the word slave there would be full of meaning and would be full of understanding to the Roman society. It has been estimated that the Roman society and the Roman empire was filled with some 60 million slaves.

40% of the population of the city of Rome were slaves. Many of the people who read the book of Romans in its first reading were more than likely slaves.

Many people throughout the Roman empire would sell themselves into slavery because quite often life was easier as a slave than it was as a free man. There would be educators, doctors, all these different professionals who were all considered slaves of someone because they would hire themselves out and by being a slave of someone that meant that someone else was dependent to take care of you.

That meant that you were guaranteed to be provided for. You were guaranteed to have all of your needs met. You may be the private teacher for this family but that family is going to take care of you.

[22 : 13] You may be the personal physician for this group of people but that group of people were going to take care of you and you didn't have to worry about providing for yourself. Forty percent of the city of Rome were slaves and the estimated population of the city of Rome at this time was somewhere around three million.

There were a lot of slaves in the Roman empire and Paul said you know what I'm just like you I'm a slave too but my master he's Jesus Christ.

My master my ruler even the word he uses for slavery comes in he says I am a bondservant of Christ Jesus and the word he uses for Lord later on is the word full of meaning which means someone who has absolute complete total control of someone else.

He says I'm just a slave I don't even have control of where I go I don't have control of what I do I don't have the right to dictate how I'm going to do it I'm just a slave.

Friend let me stop right here and tell you something God has called us all to be the slaves of Jesus Christ. The first calling upon any believer's life is to give yourself as a slave to Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior.

[23 : 29] See that it is absolutely necessary that we understand that he is not just Savior. The Bible tells us in the book of Acts and it reiterates over and over again throughout the pages of the New Testament that he whom Jesus he whom you have crucified God has raised him up and what and made him both Lord and Savior.

Which means he went to the depths of hell to purchase the right to be your master. And Paul says I'm a slave. The way we ought to introduce ourselves to new family members should not be with our personal credentials but with our personal position.

We ought to be those who say my name is Billy Joe. I'm a slave of Jesus Christ. I am just like you. I am bound to another master. My life is determined by someone else's choices.

My life is completely motivated and moved by the free will of the one who owns me. I am a slave of Jesus Christ. Now to many of us that seems appalling.

To many of us that seems hard. But friend it is one of the most freeing things we could ever do is to give ourselves to be the doulos or the slave of Jesus Christ because someone is ruling your life.

[24 : 40] No one rules their own life. No one is the master of their own destination. No one is the captain of their own ship. Someone is leading it. But look at what it says. Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

Here we have Paul saying that he is a man of calling. I am a slave of Christ. I have been called to be an apostle. You remember the qualifications for being an apostle.

Someone who had personally seen the things of Jesus Christ. Who had spent time with Christ. Who had hung out with Christ. Paul takes his three years of hanging out with Christ to match the three years of all the other ones who hung out with Christ.

But Paul does his in the wilderness of Arabia in the Arabian desert where Jesus ministers to him and teaches to him. We gather that from his other writings. He had seen the risen Savior on the road to Damascus.

He had spent time with the risen Savior for three years in the desert of Arabia. He had spent all of these days with him. He said, He called me to be an apostle that is one who is sent out and he has called me to be set apart for the gospel of God.

[25 : 46] Here is the calling of Paul. I'm called to be his slave. I'm called to be sent out by him. And I have been called to be set apart by the gospel. My friends, listen to me.

The family of God is full of called individuals. As a matter of fact, the family of God is nothing but called individuals.

It's just a matter of whether or not we're living out our calling. We are all called to be the slaves of Christ. We are all called to be sent out by Christ into varying mission fields, different places, different times.

and we have all been called to be set apart for the gospel. God didn't call us to fit in. God didn't call us to blend in. God didn't call us to continue doing what we've been doing.

God called us to set us apart and I am so glad he sets us apart. You know, we are set apart for the gospel of God. We are set apart from who we used to be.

[26 : 49] We are set apart from the ways of the world. We are set apart from the sin that used to hold us captive. But we are set apart to something that is the gospel. Look at what Paul says as he closes this.

I'm not done. Don't get it. I said he closes it, not me. Okay. Look at what it says. He says, I have been set apart for the gospel of God. And he goes on down in verse five.

So that, well, let me go. I'm sorry. I said I'm not done, but I'm trying. He said, I've been set apart for the gospel of God.

In verse five, he talks about his grace. I'll get to that in just a minute to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake. Why was he set apart?

To bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles. Get this. God did not set apart Paul just to set him apart. He set him apart for a reason. He set Paul apart to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles.

[27 : 53] Which means, family, that God didn't just set you apart to set you out and set you apart. He set you apart for a purpose.

You know, one of the most glorious truths we find in scripture is that when God calls you to himself, he redeems you, he forgives you, he takes over the lordship of your life, he assumes you as his slave, and then he sets you apart.

Here's one of the most glorious truths in all of scripture. He has set you apart from your mother's womb for a purpose which he already has in store for you. Paul would say later in one of his writings that before he was formed in his mother's womb, God had already predestined these plans for him to do this work.

Now, does that mean that you have to do it? No. It means it was chosen. God has a work chosen for you to do. Not predetermined. It doesn't mean that he's going to determine you to do it, and he's going to make you do it, but God has a work for you to do.

He called you and set you apart for a work which he already has in store. See, God doesn't call you to himself, save you, redeem you, and then go, now what am I going to do with Billy Joe?

[29 : 02] He doesn't do that. Now what am I going to do with this person? Now that I have him on my team, what am I going to do with him? God's not like that. God has a work, and he sets you apart to do it.

The only question is, are you going to do it? The only question is, are we going to live out our calling? Are we going to be too concerned about our personal well-being?

Paul says, I am a called man. Number two, not only is he a man of calling, he is also a man of confidence. To live out this type of calling, to live out what some would call this reckless abandonment.

A man must have, or a lady must have, great confidence in what they're doing. They must not have confidence in the work they are doing. If there is anyone who has a right to get discouraged at the work in which he does, it would have been Paul.

Paul said, many times I have been mistreated, many times I have been beaten, once I was stoned and left for dead, remember that? I have been shipwrecked, I have been tossed at sea, I have been imprisoned, I have been hungry, all these things, I have been thrown to the wild beast, but in all these things Jesus Christ is greater.

[30 : 21] Paul's confidence did not rest in the work he was doing. This is important because the work can be trying, the work can be difficult, the work does not always look fruitful, the work can be forsaken, the work can be rejected, the work can be hard, Paul says, who is fit to do this work, who can carry these burdens, not me.

Paul's confidence did not rest in the work he was doing, Paul's confidence rests in the master he was obeying. And that is a big difference my friends, because sometimes when we are answering our calling, the work is difficult, sometimes when we are answering our calling, the work doesn't seem to be paying back, sometimes when we are answering our calling, things do not always go that good, but the master is always trustworthy.

He was a man of great confidence, look at what it says here, he says, I have been called as an apostle set apart for the gospel of God, verse 2, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scripture, number one, Paul's confidence rests in the certainty of the word of God, his confidence rests in the certainty of the word of God, he said the things that I believe are things that God told us a long time ago, the things that I am putting my faith and hope in are the very things God has already prophesied about through his prophets, I've seen these things come about, I know why these things are there, Paul says, God said it would be, it has been, and I believe him for what's going to be, Paul says the word of God has not failed me yet, and I don't think it will, so I'm going to do what God's calling me to do, friend, listen, his confidence rests in the certainty of scripture, do you know how many believers open up the word of God, and they read the word of God, and God begins to prompt them through the word of God,

God begins to stir in their hearts something to do for God, and they begin to understand the calling of God, and then they close the word of God, and then they go live their life for the person of self, and they live for their own glory, for their own benefit, the whole time saying, I don't believe the word of God was true, because if we really believed it, once we read it, we would say, I gotta do it, because he said I need to do it, Paul says, the reason I do what I do is because God's word does not fail, you say, oh, but there's some hard things in there, it's difficult, pastor, you don't know how much it's gonna cost me, pastor, you don't know what I'll have to give up, no, but I know who you

have to give it up to go to, and I know who it is who says, he has everything under control, and what I have found, my friend, listen to me, if you open up the word of God with childlike faith, and you read the word of God, and you say, you know what,

I'm just gonna take it literally, God has just enough compassion, that when we take it literally, it may not always be easy, but he does not fail, the word of God does not fail, Paul says, I have confidence because he promised beforehand through his prophets and the holy scriptures, look at verse 3, concerning his son, who was born of the descendant of David, according to the flesh, now he says, not only is my confidence found in the word of God, my confidence is found in the person of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is the right person at the right time, he was born of the descendants of David, according to the flesh, he is who God said he would be, he is doing what God said he would do, this is the person of Jesus Christ, and he goes on, who was declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, he said, not only am I trusting in the word of God, not only am I trusting in the person of Jesus Christ, I am trusting that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, he is the very son of God because he proved it by his resurrection,

[34 : 26] I have recently been going through a lot of apologetic reading for some reason, I have been reading Josh McDowell's book Evidence That Demands a Verdict, I have watched some videos through a cold case detective who does one called Forensic Faith, I have been going through a lot of different things like that and this cold case detective was speaking and he made this comment, he said every time I go to a church, he said I will tell the pastors, I am going to ask this question, even before I ask the question I will tell the pastors, I will get one of three responses, he said and I will tell the pastor, these are the three responses I will get, he said here is my question, I will ask them why do you believe what you believe?

And he says I always have the same responses, one it was well because my family has always believed this so I decided to believe this too, it is a family or traditional faith, number two is well I was going down a bad path and God interrupted my life and everything changed and everything got better so I believe it is true, that is a good one, or it was third, that there is this great tragedy that happened in my life and this great tragedy and God saw me through it and so everything is good, he said so there you go, you got traditional faith, you got life change faith, or you got help in the tragedy faith, he said that's the three responses I always get, he said here's the problem, now listen to me, this blew me away, he said I can go to any other faith in the world and get the same three responses, why does someone believe in Islam, one of the same three responses, why does someone believe in Hinduism, one of the same three responses, he said I can get the same three responses, he said Christianity is the only faith which we can know to be true, there is historical evidence, there are testimonies, there is reason to believe,

Paul here is pointing to three, he's pointing to three things that testify to his faith, Paul says you know what my confidence is, God's word said it would happen and it has happened, that's one, Jesus Christ is the right person, he was born of the descendants of David, that's two, the lineage of Christ and number three, he was raised from the dead, so he has to be the son of God, the resurrection, do you know there is more evidence for the resurrection of Christ than just about any other thing you will ever study in history?

Friend, listen to me, we are called to live by faith and not by sight, but that faith is not blind and ignorant faith, it is faith that rests on the sure foundation of God's word and it is faith that can be tested, it is faith that can be tried and it is faith that can be understood, we are putting faith in things which we did not see, but that does not mean that we cannot know they are true, understand, one of my favorite things is to know what you believe, believe what you know, and know why you believe it, because if you don't, someone else can come along and give you experiences that may challenge what you believe, someone else can come along and give you something, Paul says, I have confidence, do you want to know why Paul could cast all of his life upon this calling of God, is because he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that these things were true, and if he knew they were true, it didn't matter what the rest of the world said, these things were true, do you want to know why I really believe you can go to scripture, and you can live according to scripture, you can cast your entire life upon scripture, though it may cost you, do you want to know why I can counsel you to do that, because I know beyond a shadow of a doubt, these things are true, and if they are true, they all matter, and they all matter in light of eternity, and we need to take our eyes off of temporary existence, the church is full of people of calling, and the church is a family of

confidence, a confident church who is grounded in their faith, does amazing works, in the world in which it exists, number three, and this one's quick, I promise, Paul was a man of calling, Paul was a man of confidence, number three, Paul was a man of common bond, the way I introduced this, they were family who had not yet met, one of the great wonders of the church at Rome, is that the most instrumental book in all of Christian thoughts, the thing that has shaped

[38 : 46] Christianity more than any other thing throughout history, the book of Romans, was written to a church that was not founded by Paul, it was not founded by Peter, as a matter of fact, we had no idea who started the church in Rome, nobody has an idea who started the church in Rome, many people hypothesize that during the Peter's Pentecostal message, not Pentecostal like waving her head around, bobby pins flying everywhere, okay, like the message at Pentecost, some of you will get that later, if you've ever been in a Pentecostal church, there's literally, in a Pentecostal church, which is great, hey, I'm all about some movement and stuff like that, but one of the first jobs you can get in a Pentecostal church is to be the young man who walks around and picks up the bobby pins from all the ladies hair that flies out during the service, so I've met some of those guys, nothing wrong with that, but you know, they get a little spirit filled, but anyway, the Peter message at Pentecost, because they were believers from all over the Roman Empire, or Jews from all over the Roman

Empire, many hypothesize that somebody had to hear the message in Jerusalem that Peter preached, take that truth back to Rome and start the church, but the reality is, we don't know who started the church in Rome, some lay person, some non-professional, some ordinary individual, started the church in the most magnificent city in the world, so what does that tell you?

It's not about professionals, it's not even about full-time ministers, it's about the people God uses to do work that he can do, and Peter and Paul could not point to it and say, yes, that's something I did, it's something God did, but we say here, Paul is sharing with these believers, he has not met this common bond he has with them, look at what it says, verses 6 and 7, he says, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ, was Paul saying, he says, we got this thing in common family, God called me through Jesus Christ and he called you through Jesus Christ, just like I've been called to be a bond servant of Christ, you've been called to be a bond servant of Christ, we have the common bond of our calling, we've all been called of Jesus Christ, we're all called of God, he goes down to verse 7, to all who are beloved of God in Rome, here you go, he says, we have this in common too, God loves me, but God loves you, and those whom God loves, I love, those who are beloved of the Father, are beloved by me, we have this bond, I'm beloved of God, it's amazing, God loves me, blows my mind, I don't understand it, but guess what, God loves you, and you're beloved of the Father, and since you're beloved of the Father, we belong together, we have what he calls in Romans 8, the spirit of adoption, because God loves us enough to call us and his family, how great it is to have that thing in common, what do we have in common, we don't eat the same thing he says, we don't behave the same way, you're in Rome, I'm from Jerusalem, we don't act the same way, we don't have the same accent, but what we do have, God loves us, God loves us, oh, one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen, and I promise,

I'm trying to get through, at one of the Southern Baptist conventions, we are at a pastor's conference, and I'll never hear it, and there were these tribes of Africa who came in, and these children from the tribes of Africa stood on that stage, and they sang something I didn't understand a single word of, I couldn't understand anything, but I'll never forget, because they were singing about how much God loved them, and I knew that God loved them, and God loved me, and we're family, there's something that they have, the same thing that I have, we're the same type of people, they dress different than me, they speak different than me, and they look different than me, but they're loved just as much as I am, what a joy to have that common body, God called me, God called them, God loves me, God loves them, and he goes on, he said, those who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints, the wording there really, you need to get rid of the word as, called saints, called saints, is how you read it, this is important,

[43 : 20] I need you to understand this, listen to me, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you have given him complete and total control of your life, if you no longer master your life, but you allow him to master, if you have accepted the price he paid on the cross of Calvary, you have been washed in the blood, you have been purchased, you have been redeemed, friend listen to me, I want you to hear this, because Satan may be whispering something in your

ear, you are a saint, not that you may be a saint, not that you can be a saint, he didn't call you when you were a saint, it says while you were in your sins, Christ Jesus died for you, and he has called you a saint, the letter to the church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians is one of the most wicked churches you'll ever find, the church at Corinth was messed up beyond all degrees, I have never in all of history seen a church as messed up as the church at Corinth, some of you're going, well, you don't know this church, now friend, listen to me, I'm talking about sons taking their fathers wives, right, I mean, it's one problem after another, after another, after another, but do you know how

Paul refers to them, to the saints that are at Corinth, what, your sainthood is not dependent upon your deeds, just like your salvation is not dependent upon your deeds, you are a saint because he's called you a saint, it's one of the glorious truths of the gospel, if you know Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior, you can look at the person beside you and say, I'm a saint, and you can mean it, and you can walk in it, you say, oh, I'm not a saint, I'm just a sinner saved by grace, that's a lie, the pits of hell, you are sinners saved by grace, and since you're a sinner saved are a saint, we ought to live out our identity, do we deserve it?

No, have we earned it? Absolutely not, but one thing we have in common with everybody else, no one else is a saint because they're better than us, they're a saint because the God who calls us a saint is the God who calls them a saint, and that is a hereditary mark of the family, the family of God is full of saints.

Are we all sinners saved by grace? Yes, that's what makes us a saint. It's not because this person did more, that person did less, or this person lived a better life, or that, no, it's because God called them saints.

The common bond of the church called us saints, grace to you, and peace from God, what is it? Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[46 : 07] What a joy to introduce yourself to the family. What a joy to say, you know what? My Father is your Father.

That's our introduction to the book of Romans. I don't know where you're at today. I don't know what God has in store as we go through this book. I don't know what he has said to your heart.

I know there have been some things that I've said today that may be unsettling to some, may be difficult to others, but I do know this. He whom Paul cast his whole life upon is the same one we can cast our whole life upon as well.

He who upheld Paul is the same one who will uphold us because he who loves God or he whom God has loved in Paul is whom he loves in us.

we are loved of the father saints by calling forgiven by his work and by his deeds. What a joy to know that we are a part of the family of God.

[47 : 06] Let's pray. Lord we thank you so much. Thank you for this day. Thank you for your word. Pray Lord even as we leave here that it will begin to take deeper and deeper roots in our lives.

That it would show us more and more of who you are not who we are. Lord we all fall. We all come short. None of us are worthy as it will say later in the book of Romans.

None of us are worthy. Lord Jesus Christ the price you paid is more than enough. We thank you for the forgiveness and the freedom we find in Christ.

We thank you that you are our Lord and Savior and pray that you help us to live it out in faithful being as to you. We ask it all in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[49 : 21] Amen. Amen.

Amen.