

A Trustworthy Source Part 1

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 September 2023

Preacher: BK Smith

- [0 : 0 0] All right, good morning, everyone. Good morning. Welcome. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 1. If you are new or visiting, welcome.
- My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving as one of the pastors here to these wondrous people. We are in a series, just actually kind of beginning, kind of slowly rolling into the book of Romans.
- Romans, before we get into the main text, I need to ask you guys some questions. I got a few questions for you. You don't really need to shut out the answers, but you can think about some of these things.
- If I was to ask you, if you can remember, and I know for some of you guys, it's a stretch. When you were back in high school, we're talking about 15, 16, 17.
- The question is, did you know what you wanted to do for a career? Can you look back and think about what your thought process was, right?
- [1 : 0 0] Remember in high school, I don't know if you guys know, but when I was in high school, nobody knew what they were doing. So they used to make us take this test, and it would kind of tell us what our interests are. Maybe that might be something that we'd want to do.
- And if so, you know, you could start planning what courses you're going to take, whether you're going to trade school, whether you're going to college, university, that type of thing. Now, if that was too hard for you, how about when you were 25, 26?
- Did you have an idea by then, 25, 26, what you were going to do as a career? Some of you guys, I know, you're 45, 15, and you're still trying to figure it out, right? God just kind of seems a plan of his own.
- But this week, I was reading this very interesting article, and it was on the number one career choice of someone from Generation Z or Generation Z, depending what side of the border you're on.
- The question that was generally asked is, in case you're like, what is this Generation Z, Z type of thing? Generation Z, Z is essentially the people who've been characterized as the generation who've never lived a day in their life without the internet.
- [2 : 1 8] They have had internet from about 1996, 1997, and onward. So it's always been a part of their lives. So there was this poll, and it asked them what their number one career goal.
- Now, if you happen to grow up in China, your career goal is to be an astronaut, right? Kind of a high-flying idea, I guess.
- But if you grew up in Canada, America, or England, the UK, the number one career goal, and I'm not lying to you, I'm a pastor, I'm not going to lie about this, is that your goal is to be a YouTube influencer.
- A YouTube influencer. I speak no lie. I speak no lie. 57% of people. Someone wondering who's going to rule the world, like 40 years is going to be China, or I don't know.
- I think the astronauts have probably got a little bit of a head start. But anyway, in fact, of these people who wanted to be that, the majority of them said they would pay to learn how to be an influencer.

- [3 : 36] So it's not like they want to be influencers, they're willing to pay to be this YouTube influencer. Now, if you're asking yourself, what in the world is a YouTube influencer?
- Well, let me tell you. It is the prestigious goal in life to influence as many people as possible.
- And you do this using YouTube. You make videos on YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok, and you give your opinion on everything.
- Like, anything you can think of, you create a channel and you teach people what are the best clothes to buy. There's even channels on crypto, stocks, appliances, makeup, real estate.
- And they're making up these little videos and they're trying to give their opinions on these things. What they do is they monetize them and people pay to see and watch these videos.
- [4 : 49] Now, here's the most surprising item of information on why they want to do these things. Because one, A, it's lucrative. But two, the article stated that 80% of their peers...
- Now, some of you guys might be going, what about Facebook? How come I don't see it on Facebook? Well, let's just say you're not their target audience, man. That is no longer hip. It's either TikTok, YouTube, or Instagram.
- But it's stated that 80% of their peers, when seeking out advice, go to these channels to receive the information that they're looking for.
- Think about that. Now, the question you should be asking yourself is what does some 17, 18, 19-year-old, most likely still in high school, know about crypto or selling stock or real estate or financial investments?
- If you're unfamiliar, you must be thinking these kids must be prodigies, brilliant people who know things that we adults haven't caught on to.
- [6 : 11] Well, they're not. They're just some kids who figured out how to use the medium of the day to put this information out.
- But here's the thing the article said. He said, one thing that this generation does not value is expertise.
- You could go on and say you're an expert and you could have all the designations possible that would be needed in your industry and they don't care.
- What is going to gain their opinion is how good your video is. But what's interesting, they said they don't value expertise.
- They value authenticity. They value authenticity. It doesn't, the question is, does it matter if the information comes from, now, the people that they're going to on YouTube and Instagram, it's not like they're saying, hey, what does my buddy Phil think about this?
- [7 : 18] Or my friend, the realtor down the street think about this? No, it is just a nameless group of society where thousands of opinions are and they just go to those videos which are liked more by everyone else.
- So essentially, they're seeking out a thousand strangers for life advice.
- The question is, what could go wrong, right? But when it is a question about real estate, we all know you don't go to YouTube, you go see a real estate lawyer.
- If you're being accused of a crime, which might be murder, you don't go see on TikTok, how do I beat the rap, right? You don't go to your car fix.
- And it's true. There's guys, I belong to this Jeep forum, and they actually put their phones next to a noise that's making the engine. They're like, hey, guys, what's going on here?

[8 : 23] And they don't know who's giving the answers. The answer is, take it to a mechanic. Take it to someone who actually knows about your car engine. Anybody can give advice. Now, let's be honest.

We all seek advice. We all have trusted people, right? There's people that we know that offer good advice.

Sometimes they're professional. Sometimes they're just a trusted uncle. But there's someone that you know has some level of expertise.

They're educated. They're educated. They are trained. See, what's odd in this world that is so opposed to truth, it's authenticity that really matters.

And if you really start thinking about it, it's they're really attracted to people who are authentically wrong.

[9 : 26] And that's what is driving our society. Is it simply really good enough to simply seek out someone who is simply authentic?

What happens is a life-changing advice. You talk to any doctor, they're going to tell you that WebMD is probably one of the worst websites out there because people start self-diagnosing.

And often they're wrong. They don't understand the history, the dynamics. Another thing that is a real dumpster dive that I see often is people seeking theological advice over Twitter.

I'm going to tell you, if you want to see a mess, someone puts out a very genuine, honest question. And everybody from around the world is going to give their opinion.

And some of those things are absolutely devastating if people were to follow that advice. In fact, one lady I remember, I think it was last year, she posted a question and the answers were appalling and she was asking a very significant question.

[10 : 43] And I happened to know the city that she lived in and I sent her a text message. You're able to do that in the system. And I say, please go see this pastor. And I put his website in there.

He lives in your community and he would love to help you answer this question. Don't trust me. Don't trust this anonymous horde, but go to someone that you know is at a respectable, trustworthy church.

So when it comes to understanding God's word, God's gospel, questions of eternal significance, our role is to seek this knowledge from trusted, reliable sources.

We're not seeking the quote unquote know it all who may know some of it, but we're seeking the trusted, reliable source. When it comes to the book of Romans, this is what the introduction to this letter is all about.

This introduction written by Paul is letting people know that what he is about to teach them that is so crucial on the gospel doesn't come out of an expertise, but it truly comes from God himself.

[12 : 01] And in that text, these first 17 verses, we're only going to look at probably one verse today. But I want you to get to understand how important this introduction is.

Not only does he introduce himself, but he introduces God's gospel. God's gospel speaks to their eternal soul.

God's gospel speaks to their eternal soul.

God's gospel speaks to their eternal soul.

It's kind of surprising in how he does it. The next thing that an expert knows is he knows the information. He knows what he's talking about. He knows the ins and outs. You talk to a mechanic.

[13 : 35] You ask him, how does the car work? Well, you put gas, turn on the engine, and it goes. Right? It's much more important than just that. But what's crucial and what I really want to focus in this morning is a true expert when he's speaking to someone about life and death issues, knows and understands the people that he's talking to.

He knows his audience. So before we go any further, let us just pray and ask for God's wisdom and insight into his word that it would speak to our souls and bring the loving, the living life that it's meant to.

Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we're all different stories here. God, we're all different backgrounds, different countries. Some of us, our language isn't even English as a first language, which we come from so many different experiences.

But we have this Bible, which was written 2,000 years ago, which is meant to speak to every single one of us. We all have the same plight in life.

And that is to know our maker, to know what our purpose is. To ask the question, God, what have you created us for?

[14 : 54] Right now, we're looking into a group of people who heard the gospel in Jerusalem and traveled to Rome and shared it. And the church began to grow. It was all over this city, this majestic city, which was the capital of the Roman Empire.

And about 20 years after Jesus, you had risen, Paul pens this letter to these saints, these believers.

Father, I pray that you will give us open ears and hearts to understand these truths.

Some of these truths are going to be informative. Some of these truths are going to stand in opposition to what we've been led to believe. Or what we think we believe.

Father, I pray that people here might not be what they believe. May you give them an ability to be impartial and to look at the source upon which we are receiving this information from.

[16 : 03] I ask that we just hear me out as we look at the grand structure of this incredible book. God, you are gracious, you are good and you are kind.

And we know that you will answer these things. And all of God's people said, Amen. All right, so if you haven't been with me, I said a couple of weeks ago, we're going to structure this sermon series a little bit different than a normal sermon series.

There's almost two parts. There's one, there's the textual part that I want to show you how to study God's word on your own. That you can dig into God's word and learn some truths, ask some relevant questions that you can pretty much use in any book of the Bible.

So there's that section to the sermons and then there's the preaching section. So I'm kind of figuring out how this is all going to work together and whether it's going to be good or not.

And as long as you're here, I'm going to try. All right. So last week you were with me and a lot of people said I downloaded a lot of information on you. And I did. Yeah.

[17 : 12] Get used to it. Anyway. But the core of the information was I was breaking up Romans into four sections. There's an introduction and a conclusion, so that makes up two.

But the first section from chapter 3 to chapter 11 essentially teaches the theological aspects and it asks some of the most important questions of the Christian life.

So those questions are all contained like, how do I know I'm a sinner? How do I know how to be saved? Hey, I'm saved. I still struggle with sin. Why is this still a part of me?

All these questions Paul is answering. Then from chapter 12 to chapter 15, Paul starts explaining what does this mean?

Now that you have all this information of the Christian faith in your head, what does it look like in real life? And he speaks not just about how to live with your spouse or your kids or your employer, but he starts, how do you respond to your government?

[18 : 17] And he starts giving some great advice on how do we exist in society? So essentially is what a Christian is and how a Christian acts. That's basically how Romans is divided.

So if you remember last week, I gave you an outline. And did you guys bring it? Who brought it here? All right, hands up. Glorious.

All right. This is essentially what you got. And this is what's called block diagramming. And I want you to see how I study the book. So this will help you.

And then you're going to see how it works when it comes to the preaching. So when you look at the first seven verses of the book, what I do is I start with the word Paul, right?

Paul. And then what I do, and I use my computer, obviously. This word slave of Jesus Christ, you know those all fall. Those are descriptive words, could be adjectives, or any type of word that the writer is giving us.

[19 : 23] Christina, can you read those? Or are you going to have to trust my word on this, that I'm saying the word Paul? Is it good? All right. So basically, when you look at this text, there's three main sections. You got Paul, to all who are in Rome, grace to you and peace.

So when we read that, it's just a general outline of a letter, right? Make simple. Well, the reason I do this is it's really easy for me to get lost in details.

Anybody else like that? We get lost in the details. What does this mean? So when I start looking at the text, I look at Paul. And then what I do is I push over this word because it's a descriptive word of Paul.

Paul, who's a slave? Who is he a slave of? He's of Jesus Christ. Then I notice Paul, there's another word. So he's a slave. He's called to be an apostle.

And he's set apart. But notice, it's not just he's called. He's called to do something specific. Then he's set apart for the gospel of God. That if you notice this next indentation, and I know you're like, do I have to memorize this?

[20 : 28] Yes, you do. But hopefully, Lord willing, as we go through these 16 chapters, you're going to see the benefits of this being worked out in the text.

And it's going to make more sense, more sense, more sense to you. So then I said, set apart for the gospel. Then there's this word I put, which he, that's God, promised beforehand.

So this is a characteristic of the word gospel. Then it answers the question, which he promised beforehand. Well, how did God promise the gospel beforehand?

Through his prophets in the holy scriptures. Do you understand what I'm going there? There's a flow of thought. And I develop that thought out. Then I know it's set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand.

Oh, concerning his son. Then Paul gives us all this information, which is important, that defines the son.

[21 : 27] You with me on this? And it's going to make sense more next week when I preach these information. So I always look at what's the outline of the text that I'm looking at.

And then I just start asking these, I do this work. Then I start asking questions. So what we're looking at right here is essentially a first century letter.

And this is how they wrote letters. They identified who sent that. You know, today we would write, dear Rome, how are things going? Love, Paul.

Right? That's essentially how it would be. But for them, they wrote it differently. Paul started with himself. And he's giving identification of himself.

And we're going to learn more about that this last next week. And then he gives us what his true gospel message is, what we're going to talk about, which kind of sums up what we're going to learn in the book of Romans.

[22 : 26] But where I want to be this morning is I want to kind of bring this letter into our century, which means we're going to look at who is this letter written to.

So we're going to be looking at who are the recipients. With me? So I'm going to preach a sermon. And you're going to see how this fits in to the sermon that I'm preaching.

Any questions? I know it's clear as mud. But honestly, it's going to make sense. And I've preached on this and I've taught people how to do this. And I remember I used to have a several-week course and following on the last day, one of the guys said, aha, out loud, finally got it.

So I know some of you will get there. So the first point that I want you to understand or I want you to see when we look at an expert is an expert knows his audience. So let's take a look at verse 7.

You can look at your Bibles. You don't have to look here because I want you to see this is the exact same thing. But notice who the letter is written to. Notice it says, to all who are in Rome.

[23 : 38] What I want you to pay attention to is that Paul makes absolutely no distinctions between who the Romans are. It's not written to Jew, Romans, or Gentile Romans.

It just says to all who are in Rome. This is important because this is going to be a major distinction of this letter. Now, you guys heard it a little bit last week.

I'm going to give you a little bit of history. The way the Church of Rome started was in Acts 10, Acts 1. Remember, Jesus Christ ministered for 40 days after he resurrected.

He taught and then he ascends into heaven. And then there's this group of saints that are in Jerusalem. And the Holy Spirit comes day, which we call today kind of the day of Pentecost.

This is the formation of the Church. Remember, Jesus had promised in John chapter 14, Hey, after I go, hey, you want me to go because someone's going to come after me and is going to be a part of your lives.

[24 : 47] He's going to help you with these things. And every single one of you, and this is the power of the Holy Spirit that comes upon believers. So then Peter started preaching this gospel to all these Jews that were around in Jerusalem.

And this is the first instance we hear about tongues. And the text says that people heard the gospel in their own language. So all these people are getting saved.

And it's a great number of them, around 3,000 people, get saved after Jesus had risen and the power of the Holy Spirit had come upon them. Acts 2.20 says specifically, And there were some from Rome who were there.

They become believers. We believe they're merchants, traders. Remember, people had come for the Passover feast. They were being obedient, Jews coming back. And guess what?

They go back to Rome. And when they go back to Rome, they go to the synagogues. Now they had heard Peter teach them everything that Peter had said, that how Jesus fulfilled the law of the prophets.

[25 : 58] So they would sit there in the synagogues teaching, and other people would be saved. So that's essentially how the first missionaries worked. They were Jewish Christians. They'd go to all the different synagogues.

And remember I told you last week, it is estimated that Rome had about 10% of Rome was made up of Jews. It could have been greater. So it's a significant amount of Jews in Rome.

So that's how these people see it, have all these Jews. However, in about 80, 43, or 40, now I'm lacking the number, the emperor got mad at the Jews, and he kicks them all out of Rome.

Get out of here. So that's why we read in Acts 18, Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, right? They become very well-known missionaries.

So they were Jewish people living in Rome, and they leave. And now the church is just, the Gentiles are left. So they're carrying on this new Christian faith, born out of the synagogues, and they're growing in the faith.

[27 : 02] So one of the major questions that always pervades this text is, how Jewish do you have to be to be Christian?

That's one of the questions that gets asked, even in Acts 15. The apostles were struggling this because Christianity was born out of Jesus Christ, who came to the Jewish people.

So what I'm saying, when we look at the text to all who are in Rome, he's not making a differentiation. You with me on that? It's not specifically to Jews.

It's not specifically to Gentiles. It's to the church. And how does he define the church? Look what he says. To all who are in Rome, dearly loved by God.

Look at that word, dearly loved. Some of the translations that you have, it says, beloved. Notice it doesn't say, loved by God.

[28 : 08] It says, dearly loved by God. Beloved by God. Another way to say that, tenderly loved by God.

What this love is speaking about is an intimate, tender, knowledgeable love. That the God who is addressing them, Paul, is letting them know that they are tenderly, they are intimately loved by God.

You know who tenderly loves someone or intimately loves someone? Someone who knows them. Someone who knows them. So even in this small section of the verse, Paul is communicating to them in this wonderful statement that they are loved by God.

And notice, there is no differentiation. It's not, I love the Jews and I kind of love the Gentiles. That's not even in here.

It is all those are loved, tenderly loved. And what do they do? They're called to be saints. They're called to be saints.

[29 : 25] Now, you and I, well, I say you and I. I grew up Catholic. A lot of you guys grew up Catholic. When we hear that word saint, right, we think Mother Teresa.

Someone who was kind of a cut above everybody else. Some would argue that maybe they lived perfect lives. I think Jewish or Catholic doctrine is they had to do some amazing things.

I think they had to do three miracles that were verifiable by X amount of people and that they could have, they could have that word saint put on their words as a designation.

That is actually not what the Bible teaches. For us, we say saint. A lot of you guys think, well, grandma, right? Grandma must have been a saint or, you know, grandma was perfect.

Grandma never did anything else. And then when you say that out loud, when you're a little bit older, you know, grandma's passed away. And you're talking about, you know, grandma was perfect and she was a saint.

[30 : 29] You can see your parents kind of grimacing at that, right? Because they know different. But in the heart of a kid, their grandma's usually always a saint. Now, if you notice that some of your translations will say holy ones.

Called to be saints or called to be holy ones. Now, this goes along with this idea of perfection. When we see there's this word called holy ones, we believe that God or God is calling them to be perfect.

That's why we have this saying in our society. When we're talking about someone who's a little bit on the judgmental side, you know, holier than thou. You guys have heard that term. You know, they're the ones that have no sin.

They're kind of perfect. Let me tell you right now, if that's your belief that God has called you to be perfect like Jesus. Let me tell you right here, right now, that is not the message of the Bible.

You are actually not called to be perfect. You're called to be holy. Now, what's the difference? The difference is the word holy means to be set apart.

[31 : 42] It means to be someone who's set apart, who's to be used by God. It's to be someone, not do something.

You with me on that one? It's to be someone, not do something. Israel were a holy people.

When we read our Old Testament, we know they were not perfect. In fact, God had to bring judgment upon judgment upon judgment over and over to right his people.

The truth of the matter is God did not choose the Jews because they were the best. They were the greatest. They were the smartest. They had the greatest army. They were more perfect than anyone else.

In fact, when God called Abraham the father of the Jewish people, he was living in Babylon. Which is modern day Iraq. He was just a farmer with many families and all that type of stuff.

[32 : 46] And God appeared to him and said, come to Canaan and begin to be my people. And he obeyed. And in that text, it says that the people will be great.

Now, what's interesting is he says, I'm not going to make your people great because of you. The Jewish nation won't be great because of Abraham, but they will be great because of me.

And by great, what God means is my glory, my power, my awesomeness will be displayed to the world through you.

That same message exists today. But it's not to the Jews specifically.

It's to those who are one in Christ. Paul, when he's writing the church of Corinth in 2 Corinthians 4, 7, simply states, we have this treasure.

[33 : 53] As believers in Christ, we have this treasure. We have this pearl of great price. We have something that is of immeasurable value.

And you know where it says this treasure is held, this God's treasure. It says this treasure in jars of clay. To show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

That treasure is the gospel. That treasure is what this book of Romans is all about. It is the good news that Jesus Christ came.

He died on the cross. God's wrath poured out on him. He rose three days victorious so that you and I can be saved. It's not all the gospel.

That's kind of a quick 10-second version. But this treasure is life-saving. And guess where he keeps this? In clay pots. You know what clay pots are?

- [34 : 52] You guys all guess what a clay pot is. Do you know what clay pots were used for? All right, I want you to think. First century. What kind of plumbing do you think they had? They didn't. They had a room with a clay pot. And they'd take that clay pot and empty it. It could break. It could shatter.
- But that's what we are. Why? Why? So that power doesn't belong to us but to God. So this word saint, holy one, is a term that is only reserved for believers in Christ.
- And I want you to understand this. And some people still struggle to this at this point. At no point in scripture are those who are believers in Christ, are Christians, who have repented and trusted God for their salvation, are never called sinners.
- Never. Never. Do you know that? At no place in scripture does it say that a believer in Christ is a sinner.
- [36 : 15] It says we are a saint. That we have been set apart by God. Don't get me wrong.
- Remember, like I said, saint doesn't mean you're perfect, right? We are saints who sin. But the fact of the matter is we can act like it.
- We can act like sinners. But that is not the identity of those who are known as children of God. When people ask me, how do I know if I'm saved?
- I do not point to the moment of their conversion. I don't give them a, I don't ask them a theological test. I simply ask, who are you? What are the fruits of your life?
- Are they the fruits of the spirit or are they the fruits of the flesh? What characterizes who you are? Do you desire worldly things or do you desire spiritually things?
- [37 : 18] And what's interesting is all these things are determined by your personhood, who you are. Are you a saint? Because if you are, you are beloved by God.
- You are tenderly loved by God. And you are called to God. Why do I, why am I making this emphasis?
- Well, what happens is when Christians believe the lie that they are sinners, what they try to do is they try to fix it.
- They try to prove that they are not sinners. They try to make themselves right with God. They try to prove their worth.
- They try to put on these extra works that God hasn't called them to. We call this legalism. And some of these things are really good and wonderful things in the right place.
- [38 : 20] But if we think that if we do these actions to earn some sort of merit or acceptance by God, we're being fooled.
- Because what happens is we start to rely on ourself rather than rely on God. You with me on this? This is a very big distinguishing quality.
- They try too hard. They're that person that says, man, I forgot to hit my sixth Bible study this week. And it's only Tuesday. Right?
- They just feel they've just got to make everything about God to this point where they've added all these rules and all these actions that somehow this is going to make them somehow better.
- And they don't always think better. They're using the word acceptable. They think if I do these things, God's going to accept me more.
- [39 : 22] Can I share something really simple with you? You know how you fix your relationship with God when you're a saint? You confess and repent. That's all it is.
- Father, forgive me. Please give me strength to avoid what needs to be avoided. Forgive me for my temper. Forgive me for my gossip. Forgive me for longing for things that are not my own.

And it's to set my mind on Christ. That's it. That's all you need to do. That's why it's called grace. It's unmerited favor. So that's what the first, that's the first action that someone who thinks he's a sinner when he's truly a child of God.

The other thing that happens is that when you see yourself, and you might be struggling with your sin, and Romans is going to speak to this because some of us have besetting sins.

They're always there. We're always fighting. And guess what? We live in a fallen world. You know that? We do. There's always everything. And I'm going to tell you right now.

[40 : 32] I'm going to tell you the most, you know who the most unholy people are in the world? People who live in L.A. I'll tell you right now. Have you been in the traffic jams in L.A.? Like, that's enough to test anybody's sanctification, right?

Takes you three hours to drive three miles, right? Like, it's all back and forth. Someone cuts in, right? The world throws everything at us to get us to rely on ourselves and to forget God.

See, when you start to identify as a sinner and you know you sin, you start to moan, to groan. Despair sets in. Woe is me.

Heck, anybody who talks to you, you're going to say, oh, man, I'm a sinner. And you kind of mask it by, I'm super humble. Man, I'm a sinner. Man, my struggles, you know what I'm talking about.

We're just a mess, right? The question is, you're not perfect. Guess what? You're not meant to be. You see, if you were perfect or you could be perfect, Jesus would not have needed to die.

[41 : 45] If you could get there on your own, you would not have needed Jesus Christ. This whole exercise of the cross, what a waste of a life. See, the thing is, when you begin to see yourself as a sinner, you start to realize that a sinner is an enemy of God.

And then you start yourself to see yourself as an enemy of God. And then you begin to lose hope because you can't fight God. Right? Sin seems to win all the time.

Discouragement sets in. Next thing you know, you don't feel worthy to come to church. You don't feel worthy to pray. You feel almost as if you go to your Bible, somehow God's going to curse you.

And if I can share something with you, Satan loves that. See, Satan loves nothing more than a discouraged, defeated Christian.

Someone who doesn't ask for help, who tries to do it on their own and continues to fall and fall. Because if Satan can get you to a point where you no longer identify yourself as a saint, guess who won?

[43 : 02] He doesn't have to worry about you anymore. You're just going to follow the identity of a sinner. Now, if I could add a second warning, just add a side note.

Parents who parent your children need to use an amount of wisdom when it comes to parenting kids. Because sometimes I've known some parents to essentially parent their children with the fear of God to the point that they always think God is mad at them.

Because sometimes a child is young. He might not know Christ. He might not even understand these things. He just knows how to obey you. And those obeying you, just because you might teach, obey God the Father, some of those extra rules that you might put in may not be of God.

But your child is going to believe they are of God. And then you're going to basically raise a very, how do I say it?

They almost become extra sensitive to every single sin in their life. And even though they might profess they love Jesus and they may do really good things, they still live under a cloud of guilt and defeat because they never feel they're going to be good enough.

[44 : 23] So instead of doing that to God, they do it to you. I'm never good enough for my dad. I'm not good enough for my mom. So as parents, we need to make sure that we teach our children God's commands.

We need to teach them that God is love, but yet we are to fear God. But one of the best things to do as a parent is to demonstrate what you do when you sin, that you are not perfect.

And there's going to be times you're going to sin against your children. And it's powerful to go to your child and say, I need you to forgive me. Daddy lost his temper today.

And it could be for a variety of reasons. You might have just gotten from L.A. driving on the freeway, right? You don't know. It could have been a bad day at work. You're angry. You're short. Maybe you didn't eat enough.

But it's okay to say to your child, please forgive me. I was wrong. There's power in that because you're reflecting the heart of the father that the father of God has for us.

[45 : 43] You want children that fear the righteousness of God, not children who are terrified of God. Does that make sense?

Now, I want you to take special note of the word called. It says called to be saints. This word calling means to be summoned. It is a purposeful calling.

It's not like he's ringing the world. He specifically called them. These people did not stumble into God. They did not seek God. They did not seek to be saints. But God summoned them.

The key question is, how did God summon them? You know how God calls people? How does God summon people? God does this.

God issues this call through the preaching of the gospel. That is why God has called us to preach the gospel. Us, clay pots, of very little value.

[46 : 49] Those clay pots trying to resell them on the market, you didn't really get a lot. But were they value in the home? You'd better believe it. Because they had a function.

It's the same thing with us. It's the function that we are called to here. That he uses us saints to share the good news of the gospel with others.

What's so amazing about the Church of Rome who's receiving this letter is, there's no evidence that it was an apostle who planted the church. It was just some guys and girls in Jerusalem doing business, heard Peter preach a sermon like they had ever preached.

They believed. Eyes are open. I've got to tell other people. So much so, they go back home and they share and it grows and it grows.

And eventually Paul writes them a letter. And he also tells them, I can't wait to be with you. I can't wait to be with you.

[47 : 59] You see, this calling is all done according to the purpose and grace of God. Now, I want you to think about this for a minute. Remember, at the beginning of the sermon, we recognize that this letter is written to Jews and Gentiles.

And as I stated, one of the biggest struggles in the early Christian church was, how Jewish does one have to become to be a Christian? One of the questions they were asking is, when a man becomes a Christian, does he need to be circumcised or not?

Does he need the sign of the covenant on him? Praise the Lord for baptism, right? So anyway, you had this situation. They started bringing these situations.

So this word calling here is also a specific calling. And the power in this short introduction is that this calling is to a group of people who are being loved by God, dare I say, dearly loved by God, called by God.

And the way that Paul is doing this is the same way that God called the Old Testament Jewish saints. This type of verbiage that he's using, these same words he's using to this Roman church.

[49 : 21] Now, I want you to think about this. If you were a Roman citizen, a Gentile, and Paul is now using the same terminology God used in the Old Testament to welcome you a part of the family, how does that make you feel?

I'm one of you. Like there's no distinction here. Now, remember who they were.

They were pagans. They didn't worship the God of the Old Testament. They chased after idols. They chased after idols. Some of their people, I'm sure, were wanting to be murderers of Jews.

They hated them. They would have been counted as enemies. They were barbarians. And Paul simply drops it.

Oh, yeah. You're beloved by God now. You've been called by a saint. Guess what? God called you to him.

[50 : 26] You're not second rate. You're not second class. You are dearly loved.

Not only have you been called, but you've been summoned to be a saint. You've been summoned to be holy. You have been summoned to be set apart. You have been summoned to do the same work that my Jewish children are.

So are you. The same work that God did to redeem the Jews, God used the same work to redeem the Gentiles.

It's like I said, Abraham did not make the Jews great. God was the one who said he will make them great. You know who relates to this?

I do. If you were at any point grew outside of the church, perhaps you did not have a Christian family.

[51 : 34] Think about the first time you came into a Christian church. Did you ever feel awkward? I did. Heck, I was the first family at my church and my mom was divorced.

Divorced family. Church didn't know what to do with me. I was a true outsider. They didn't know whether the, you know, I remember one guy was this principal and he had the statistics that X amount, the greatest percentage of children who come from divorced families go to prison.

Right? That was their experience at the time. And that was their fear for my mom and me. Right? We got to do, we got to do all this stuff. We got to make sure. But I remember feeling weird at church.

I felt unaware. I didn't know the customs. I didn't understand the rules of how they did things.

And I kind of grew up in a church which had kind of rules where you sat, how you sat, and all this kind of stuff. And I felt like an outsider my whole life until I actually went to another church.

[52 : 42] And I'm like, bing! Wow! It's different. But I'm accepted. You know, and you guys have heard me talk about just having the pleasure to worship all over the world in different continents.

And when it's a true, life-giving gospel church, you always feel at home. Amen? And I really believe just as we as the saints in Squamish who meet here at this church, that's one of the things I want to, we don't want those kind of customs.

Like certain things we need to explain. There's certain things how we worship and that sort of thing. But we want to be able to, people to come here and feel welcomed. Not like they're outsiders.

Because Christ invited the outsiders into dinner, right? Because we believe that we have a life-giving message that God has called us to as saints.

I remember when I finally decided to leave my church background was when a friend of mine got saved at camp and I brought him to church and he said he never wanted to go to that building again.

[53 : 54] And then I realized there was a culture there that was counter the gospel rather than being pro-gospel.

What's really interesting is God doesn't always call families to Christ, but he calls us to be a part of the family of God. So the assurance, if this is your first church, you just became a Christian, you didn't grow up in a Christian family.

Listen, praise God that you did, but it's okay that you're not. The same blessings are here available to you as if you came from four generations of saints.

There's no fourth-gen saint and first-gen saint. We're all saints, children of God. Amen? Amen? So here, as we get into this text of Romans, I really want you to understand that Paul, reflecting God, knows his people, and this is why he addresses this letter to him.

That even in a short amount of words, he's able to convey such incredible, heartfelt truths. When God calls us, he knows us.

[55 : 16] When God calls us, he loves us. He does not call us to his family because we are good. In fact, he calls us because he knows how bad we've been.

Are you a saint? Well, if you are, this letter is for you. Do you still struggle with your sin? Get in line. This letter is meant for you.

Do you have questions? Am I truly saved? Great. This is the letter for you. Because these questions, Paul, who's the ultimate outsider, who purposely killed people in the Christian church, is now addressing the saints.

So next week, we're going to look at Paul's unique identity and the incredible message that he outlines to preach to this church in Rome, which will be, like we said, the most important letter probably in all of church history, with the amount of change that it has brought out.

And the first thing we need to understand more than anything is that if you are a saint of God, it means that you are a Christian. You are one in him, and that's who you are bound to for life.

[56 : 31] Let's pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, just as we see just such tender words at this very beginning of this letter, kind of ramps up the amount we want to dig into this to know that God certainly has a word for me through Paul through this letter.

Father, I just pray for those who feel like outsiders, who feel that they're not worthy to sit at the banquet table of God. They recognize that sin and they feel, you know what, I'm just going to sit at the kiddie table.

I don't really deserve to sit with the grown-ups. Sometimes it's because I'm new, or sometimes it's because I've got a bad family, or sometimes I'm still struggling with sin.

Father, I pray that you would impart upon these souls that they have every right to sit at that banquet table with all of us, that there's no second right, doesn't matter what nation they come from, or what language they speak, or background they have, but because they are saints, they just simply need, if there's sin in their life, to confess and repent.

In that relationship, that sin is remembered no more. That's why there's so many verses in Scripture that tell us that once we've repented of those sins, you count it no more against us.

[57 : 59] You welcome us in. We are beloved. We are tentatively loved. We are intimately loved. Father, I pray for those here who have lived a Christian life but have not felt a personal connection to you, oh Father, that it's more of a soldier and his commander rather than a father and son or father and daughter.

I pray that you will teach them that that is not true, that they are indeed beloved. They're not outsiders. They're insiders.

They bear the name of Christ. Their name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It's essentially the book that says these are my children written by God.

It has all the privileges, all the inheritances, all the rights of every other saint written in that book. Father, I pray that we put in, that you'd put in us an excitement for your word, an excitement for what you have to teach us when people sometimes cry out, I wish I had a word from God.

Let this letter be that word from you, oh God. Father, I just pray that just even in my studies that you would call to mind to bear on the areas that need to be hit on, extrapolated, and instructed on.

[59 : 28] Father, I pray for the parents here that they would certainly continue in raising their children in a godly way, that they would never be too proud to say, I'm sorry and ask for forgiveness.

We thank you for the love that these children receive from our parents that are cared for. I give you thanks for just even our youth ministry where we know that there's some children there from outside of the church who do not know the love of their own parents.

But I just pray that through the leaders that they will get a glimpse that they are indeed loved and that you would instill them that they are indeed loved by the Father. Father, there's no one outside the gospel.

There's no one too sinful. May you bring them close and I pray that you do a special work in their lives. I thank you all for all the servants here, these clay pots who contain this great and glorious treasure.

May you unseal our lips and give powers to our lives. May we rejoice that you are our God.

[60 : 49] In your name we pray. Amen.