

I Know you are, but What am I?

Romans Part 1

Sermon 1

4.14.24

4.21.24

Opening:

A. The Apostle Paul could have opened this letter with all sorts of accolades: Philosopher, Pharisee, Author, Political Prisoner, Reformer, international influencer, preacher, friend, spiritual father and director,....

1. Instead, he opens with the following: Servant, called as apostle, set apart.
2. He was nothing apart from Jesus, and other labels didn't matter.
3. The labels were subsumed under his relationship to Jesus.
4. Who was Paul presenting himself to be to Rome? Christ's slave and herald.

Introduction: Romans is an intimidating book.

A. Romans is, arguably, the most important book in the Bible.

1. The Reformation started with Martin Luther reading Romans.
2. Romans changed John Wesley's life and before him, a guy named Augustine read Romans and was changed.
3. The same goes for John Calvin.
4. Most great reformations and revivals began with people reading and seeking to understand this letter Paul wrote to Rome.

B. Romans is also very confusing.

1. All major Church traditions point to Romans to defend their view of something.
2. Catholics, Calvinists, Pentecostals, Methodists, and everyone else look to Romans for proof.

C. Part of my hope is that we will use this time to seriously read and listen to what God is saying to us through this book.

1. One way I hope to help you is by providing these Romans notebooks.
2. My sermon notes are always online for you to use.
3. Get a Bible and mark it, interact, underline.
4. Take notes in the Bible app.
5. Reading and understanding Romans has the potential to change our lives.

Scripture

Romans 1:1–7 (CSB)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle¹ and set apart for the gospel of God—² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures—³ concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David,⁴ according to the flesh⁴ and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.⁵ Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles,⁶ including you who are also called by Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Church in Rome hadn't met Paul yet.

A. They surely knew of him, but only a handful had met him in person.

1. The Apostle desires to visit and share the Gospel in the greatest city of the world.

2. So, Paul sends this letter sometime around A.D 56-57 in preparation for a future visit.

B. Paul knows that the future for the Romans was both glorious and difficult.

1. There would come a day of great persecution.

2. But there is also glory in the witness of the Gospel.

3. God's glory is going to play a significant role in the book of Romans.

C. They needed to know where God had placed them, how God would sustain them, and how God would use them.

1. To those in Rome, Loved by God, Called as Saints.

2. God placed them.

3. God's love through the Spirit would sustain them.

4. God would use them to walk as saints in an unsaintly city.

D. This morning, let's look at what Paul said about Jesus and about himself in this opening.

2. Called by Jesus Christ

A. The Apostle ensures that the opening of the letter is about Jesus.

1. Jesus is their hope, their purpose, their source, and their reason.

2. But who is Jesus?

3. The Apostle packs in a lot in a few words:

Romans 1:1-7 (CSB)

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descendant of David, according to the flesh ⁴ and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. ⁵ Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, ⁶ including you who are also called by Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Jesus is the promise of the Holy Scriptures.

1. Even the Gentiles in Rome would have heard about the promises of Jesus in the Old Testament.

a. How Jesus was the promised suffering servant and victorious King of Isaiah.

b. That Jesus fulfilled Psalm 22 perfectly through His crucifixion.

2. The Apostle Paul knew that **Jesus was no accident of history but had been promised long before.**

a. Jesus is not like any other ruler, king, or influencer.

1. Jesus was not a manipulator who took advantage of a situation.

2. Jesus did not play on the fears of the masses to raise up a following.

3. Jesus did not equip an army to overthrow thrones and topple kingdoms.

4. Jesus was the Promised Messiah:

a. He was treated like a servant but has ascended to be King.

b. Jesus' appearance, Jesus' death, and Jesus' resurrection were all part of a predetermined plan by God.

C. Jesus is the topic of the Old Prophets.

1. The Apostle knew that the future Messiah was a favorite topic of the prophets.
2. The prophets saw glimpses and shared the hope.
 - a. Isaiah saw a suffering servant who carried governments on his shoulders.
 - b. But He also saw God in the glorious splendor of Isaiah 6, where the Lord is seated on a high and lofty throne with the hem of his robe filling the temple:
 - c. Images of inexplicable elegance and grandeur.
3. But what they saw didn't compare to what was happening in the day of Romans:

Matthew 13:17 (CSB)

¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but didn't see them, to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them.

4. **Even though the days they were living in were hard, they were blessed.**
 - a. My friends, I can't help but think that the Apostle Paul would say the same about our day.
 - b. Yes, the days we are living in are hard, but they are blessed.
 - c. Don't forget that God did not make a mistake for you to live in the days we are living in.

Paul goes on...

D. Jesus is the descendent of King David

1. Jesus' earthly throne went back a thousand years.
2. His Heavenly throne knows no beginning or end.
3. The Caesars could claim whatever they wanted, but their claim never matched that of Jesus.

E. He is the powerful Son of God, confirmed by the Spirit of holiness and the resurrection.

1. Many ancient rulers believed they would live forever, and established pyramids, rituals, and religions around this idea.

2. But none of them were ever resurrected.

3. Jesus was Confirmed King by the resurrection.

a. This event is what demonstrates to us that Jesus is King, and Lord, and Savior, and Healer, and Provider.

b. All other rulers delayed death as long as possible because their deaths were permanent.

c. Jesus accepted death because He knew it was temporary.

d. This is what allowed Paul, Peter, and all of the martyrs to accept death so easily:

1. Yes, it was painful, but death was temporary.

2. Jesus went before us in death so that He would also go before us in Resurrection.

4. We must never separate the Cross of Jesus from the Empty Tomb of Jesus.

a. If it can be said, the Cross shows us the cost, then the Empty Tomb shows us the Assurance.

b. The Romans were well equipped to fill crosses, but they did not know how to empty Tombs.

c. Paul reminds the readers in Rome that Jesus is the powerful Son of God by the resurrection of the dead.

F. Therefore, He is Lord Jesus Christ (KING KING Jesus)

1. Christ is not a name, it's a title.

a. 4 times in these verse 7 verses and 5 times in the first 8, Paul applies Christ to Jesus' name.

b. Before we go further, I want to address a troubling line of teaching today:

1. It is the teaching that Jesus wasn't his name and that we should call him Yeshua.

2. This goes back to a misunderstanding that to be Jewish or Hebrew is to be closer to God than to be a Gentile (a theme Paul TEARS apart in Romans).

a. Many today say you must worship God on the Sabbath.

b. They may insist on you keeping certain feasts, like the Festival of Booths.

c. Then they insist you pray wearing a Talit and that Hebrew prayers are more heard than English prayers.

d. Lastly, that the Son only responds to the name YESHUA and not Jesus.

3. My friends, this is an old religious trap.

a. Paul dealt with these Judaizers in all the churches he started, especially at Galatia.

b. Learning Hebrew, worshipping on Friday night at 6pm till Saturday at 6pm, and calling Jesus YESHUA are forms of religious manipulation.

2. The Apostle, writing to those under the shadows of King Caesar, reminds them that Jesus is King.

a. King Jesus King

b. Lord Jesus Christ

c. This is what matters the most.

3. This statement was blasphemous to the Jews and treason to the Romans.

- a. But this statement is salvation to those who believe.
- b. It isn't enough to proclaim that there is a God or that Jesus is God.
- c. What we are to proclaim is that Jesus is King of the universe, and we serve Him.
- d. At the end of the age, "every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord."
- e. What are they professing: That Jesus is indeed King and has conquered all other kingdoms.

4. And even though those in Rome, and Paul himself, would be mistreated, persecuted, and martyred by the leaders of the Roman Kingdom, they knew that the real, true King was King Jesus.

- a. In Revelation, we see Jesus returning to (do what?) establish His throne and Kingdom.
- b. As Paul writes to Rome, he is reminding them:
- c. There is a King, and Caesar is not him.
- d. There is a throne, but its not in Rome and Caesar does not sit on it.
- e. There is a Gospel, but that Good News is about Jesus, not anyone else.

3. Who was Paul?

A. Servant/Slave of Christ Jesus

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.

- 1. Paul gives the least amount of attention to his identity.
- 2. And he begins with I am a slave of King (Christ) Jesus.

a. The phrase connotes total devotion, suggesting that the servant is completely at the disposal of his or her Lord¹

b. And in a city with hundreds of thousands of people in slavery, Paul understood what it meant to give His life completely to a master.

3. This is a lesson we need to learn and practice.

a. To be so devoted to Jesus that we go where he says, and we do what he commands and gives what he asks.

b. To identify with Jesus to the point that all other titles disappear under Jesus' Lordship.

c. That all the other titles merely describe what we do, not who we are.

B. Paul was An Apostle (messenger, witness) of Jesus.

1. Paul used this in every letter he wrote.

a. To be an apostle was to declare that he had seen Jesus and that he was an official messenger of Jesus.

b. Apostle was Paul's office, like mine is pastor, and like others may be a prophet or evangelist.

2. But Paul's message was plain:

a. He was called to tell about Jesus.

b. If Caesar had his official messengers, and they would go throughout the Roman world proclaiming Caesar's demands and even declaring Caesar's gospel, Jesus had His messengers who were empowered to perform signs and wonders to convince and display to the world that Jesus is King.

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 41.

C. Paul, set apart for Jesus.

1. In the Old Testament, the Levites were set apart from the rest of Israel to minister only for the Lord.

a. Here, Paul picks up this thread and says he was set apart for the Gospel of King Jesus.

b. Paul, viewed as a servant, was set aside for this cause and purpose only.

2. To an extent, I understand this.

a. Sometimes, I need reminding that I'm in Licking, MO, for one purpose: because Jesus sent me here.

b. My activities in Licking all originate from the calling of God to be here:

1. I didn't come here with a vision.

2. I didn't come here to build buildings.

3. I didn't come here to provide for my family.

4. I'm here because Julie and I felt we were set apart to share Jesus in Licking, MO.

d. And as the Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:11, "we long to impart some spiritual gift" among the people of our calling.

Apply. For this congregation, the question remains: Are you being obedient?

A. Are you walking in faith and obedience to your purpose?

1. There are many reasons why we struggle with this:

2. We struggle when:

a. Our picture of who Jesus is and who we are is not in focus or perspective.

1. Jesus can never be too big, but I can.

2. Jesus can be out of focus, and that happens when the lens is on me instead of Him.

b. I struggle when I forget my master, my office, and my purpose.

1. This is easy to do.

a. The demands of work.

b. The requirements of a family.

c. The stress and toil of life.

2. First and foremost, you belong to Christ.

a. Not to your kids, not to your spouse, not to your job.

b. Responsibilities are part of our calling, but not the calling.

c. We struggle when we forget how loved we are.

1. To those in Rome...loved by God.

2. You may find yourself in a wicked situation.

a. Your present arena may feel like you are surrounded by enemies that want to tear you apart.

b. And the reality is, they may do just that.

c. But when I remember that I am loved by no one less than the King of the Universe, all of the problems and sufferings take on a different perspective.

2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (CSB)

¹⁷ For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. ¹⁸ So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For

what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Prayer

A. The worship team is going to lead us in one more song.

1. I encourage you to take this time together to:
2. Be reminded of God's love for you.
3. Clarify God's calling and purpose for your life.
4. Repent of areas that have taken on too much importance.
5. Dedicate our lives fully to Jesus.

B. Prayer