

***Romans***  
***Message Nine***  
***Called, Loved, Holy***  
***Rom 1:1-7***

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,  
2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)  
3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to  
the flesh;  
4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the  
resurrection from the dead:  
5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all  
nations, for his name:  
6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:  
7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God  
our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. KJV

**Introduction:**

We have been slowly working our way through this introduction to the letter of Paul to the Romans, looking carefully at the terms and words as well as the phrases which Paul used to both introduce himself as well as his topic or theme for the letter.

Today we want to look at his description of the Roman Christians, some of whom, as we have seen, he has known from other places, some of whom are relatives of his, and some whom he has never met nor seen. But he was confident that they were all believers, children of God, sincere and godly Christians.

He described them in three phrases as we see them in the KJV: called of Jesus Christ, Beloved of God, called to be saints and those ideas that Paul was communicating are what we want to look at today. In order to do that we are going to need to get 'into the weeds' a bit as far as the grammar that Paul was using. Don't be afraid of the word 'grammar' because it merely is the way by which we determine what relationships words have with one another in language. It is the way we make sense of what is said and what is written.

The short version of the story, which we shall visit again before we are done is that, spiritually speaking, these people have won the most incredible of all lotteries. These three phrases express the most blessed condition that a human could ever find himself or any group of humans might find themselves.

I think that we who read and study the Word of God and have heard many things said about it come to the place to become insensitive to the wonder of it all. We have all visited places that we consider beautiful and majestic, places that take our breath away with their grandeur, places that we think we would love to live so that we could enjoy them every day. But those who do live their dream and are able to purchase a home at their very favorite place find that they soon become accustomed to it and that which was once marvelous to them becomes mundane and

ordinary. They visit other places and think they would like to live there.

Wealthy people become bored with their wealth and it no longer satisfies them as they once thought it would. We as God's people are very often guilty of the same sort of thing. And that, my friends, just should not be.

Jesus Himself called upon us, taught us, commanded us if you will, to begin each day by bringing ourselves to gaze upon the wonder that has happened to us, that we have been drawn into a relationship with Eternal and Infinite Deity in which we are allowed to gaze upon a marvelous revelation of His Glory, His Love for us and His Work in our souls.

We couldn't imagine being a billionaire and being bored but we ourselves grow complacent and disinterested in the possession of riches that make all of the wealth of the world look like the dust that we sweep out of our houses.

Let us see if we can recapture (or capture) the wonder that lies just beyond our bored eyes.

### **Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ**

This is the approximate meaning of three words which stand in relationship with each other here, "called" and "Jesus Christ." There are no connecting words or prepositions written down on the parchment. The only thing we notice is that "Jesus Christ" is written in the possessive, which some of the translators attempt to capture.

"You too as called ones belong to Jesus Christ..." Williams

"Who also belong to Jesus Christ by calling..." Holman

Rom 1:6

6 And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (from New International Version)

Rom 1:6

6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; RSV

Rom 1:6

among whom are ye also called (to be) Jesus Christ's ASV

It is difficult to determine if Paul is saying that they are called because they belong to Jesus Christ or that they belong to Jesus Christ because they have been called to him. It just isn't clear. We will need to ask him when we see him what exactly he meant.

But two things are clear, we are called and we belong to Him. Some of the modern translators have butchered the text to make it say something it never said but we are sure of those two realities.

For example:

Rom 1:6

6 And you, dear friends in Rome, are among those he dearly loves; you, too, are invited by Jesus Christ to be God's very own- TLB

This is disgustingly unfaithful to what Paul wrote.

But, let us examine these two ideas that Paul affirmed to the Roman Christians and which could be affirmed concerning all true Christians no matter where we find them.

The word here rendered 'called' is the noun form of the word from which we literally derive our own word "called." It is 'Kaleo' and it means the very same as our word though the religious connotations of it are somewhat different as it is used in the New Testament.

In Matt 20:16 and 22:14 both we find the phrase, "many are called but few are chosen," and it refers to the idea of God's general call to humanity which we find expressed in various ways.

Matt 11:28-30

- 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. KJV

All who perceive in themselves spiritual need in a real sense are invited to come to Christ and have Him meet their need.

Israel had a standing invitation from the Lord for a long time.

Matt 23:37

- 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! KJV

And Paul expressed it at Athens as he spoke to the interested and curious religious people there.

Acts 17:30

- 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: KJV

So, there is a general call to all men to repent and believe on Jesus. But Paul was obviously meaning something different than that here in our text. In this sense of a general call everyone could be designated as "Called," but Paul obviously had something more specific in mind.

This calling to which he was referencing was related to being owned by Jesus Christ, belonging to Him, and, of course, the majority do not belong to Him in the way Paul was referencing here.

There is a sense, we know, in which all things and all people belong to Him because He made them all but there are some people who belong to Him in a special and unique way.

1 Cor 6:19-20

- 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

- 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. KJV

Some are specially owned and, thus, specially called. We also find that call in scripture.

Rom 8:28-30

- 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.  
29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.  
30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. KJV

There are those who are “the called according to his purpose,” and toward them God extends a mighty work of His mercy. He foreknows, predestinates, calls, justifies and glorifies them, things that are done only for a relatively few, a small percentage of the human population.

These are the people called “the elect,” those who have been singled out for the greatest imaginable blessing, in fact, a blessing which goes beyond imagination, a blessing which begins not in time and extends forward into eternity with no end... ever.

The words even which the Lord Himself has used to describe this blessing to us fail to paint the picture of what will one day be our reality.

Matt 25:31-34

- 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:  
32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:  
33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.  
34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: KJV

Rev 7:9-10

- 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;  
10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. KJV

These *called ones who belong to Jesus Christ* have been ultimately called to this great and eternal blessing. It is, as I said at the beginning, the Spiritual Lottery but that which has been ‘won’ as it were is far beyond the value of this entire world, in fact this entire universe. They will stand approved in the Presence of God and inherit His Kingdom forever and ever.

But there is another element to this equation, they are “*Beloved of God.*” This takes the love of God to a superlative. We all love many people and some of them we love very deeply but in each one of our lives there is a very small circle of people that we would look at and think of them as our “beloved.”

For some, their “beloved” is no longer with them. He or she has passed away and gone on. But they are still beloved and nothing will ever change that.

It is the word which God the Father used of God the Son when Jesus began to be revealed to the world at His baptism.

Matt 3:16-17

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. KJV

How would we calculate that love? With what would we measure it? What words would we put in a book to explain the Love of the Father for the Son? We recognize that we could sooner measure the Universe and explain it all than we could explain this profound affection.

It is a phrase that was revealed to Isaiah in 42:1 and quotes by Jesus in Matt 12:18 to refer to Christ. It is an eternal and infinite love which can never fade nor die, never decrease in intensity in any way. It can never increase because it is as large as the heart of God Himself.

It was an affirmation repeated by the Father when the Son was revealed in His Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, Luke 9:35, “this is My Beloved Son...”

Now here is the unimaginable reality, to be Beloved of God is to be loved with the same love which the Father has for the Son, the incredible and all consuming love of Deity.

And the reason for this love of God being directed toward the saints in such an incredible way is that they belong to Jesus Christ in a most unusual and special way.

Let me read a few verses to make a point.

2 Cor 5:20-21

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. KJV

Eph 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with

all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:  
4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: KJV

Col 2:9-10

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.  
10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: KJV

Col 2:9-10

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. KJV

1 John 5:20

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. KJV

How can that be? You may ask and I confess that I do not comprehend it in any measure of completeness, surely not as completely as I would like to know it. But I do know this. Every child of God, every one who belongs to Jesus Christ, is loved by God with the Love that is share among the members of the Deity.

Now, if that is not winning the Lottery of Heaven I don't know what would be. ***Beloved of God!***

But, this Lottery has some special conditions.

***“called to be saints”***

We notice here that Paul is using the word ‘called’ again in very close proximity to the previous usage. This is not considered good writing style by those who consider such things but there is really no other word to use.

Now, again, in the text that Paul wrote the words ‘to be’ are not present, merely the word “called” and the word “holy ones,” and that in a special case.

And, again, the translators are not in agreement as to how to handle the construction.

“Called as saints” Holman

“Called to be saints and designated for a consecrated life” Amplified

“Called to be His people” Williams

“Called to belong to Jesus Christ” NIV

It obviously means far more than just a special name assigned to them, “called ‘saints.’” And the meaning of the phrase is tied up in two things; “who called them?” and “what is a saint?”

The answer to the first question is easy. The context will not allow us to consider that anyone

other than God Himself was doing the calling and that 'call' is of the same nature as the first one, a specific call related to the Eternal Purpose of God.

But, what is a *saint*?

The word 'saint' has such a convoluted meaning in our day because of the twisting of it that has occurred since New Testament days. It means, literally, 'a holy one,' 'a person who behaves in a holy fashion,' 'one who is obedient to the commands of God.'

***NT:40 physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated***  
(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

This is not a special category of believer as many would have it. Every saint has been called to be this. It is not optional. You have won the Lottery of Heaven but you can only spend what you have won in a single store. All of your winnings are to be used to give honor and glory to God.

A saint is one who actually is holy, having been made so by God.

He is one who practices holiness as a manner and pattern of life.

And, he is one who is known for his holiness by those who know him/her.

In our world, God's Saving of a Sinner has been reduced to nothing more than keeping him out of Hell. It is a lost reality to the majority of the Christian World that God's purpose in saving sinners is to make them holy with the ultimate goal of having them in Communion with Himself for all of eternity.

Consider the Prayer of Jesus to His Father concerning the Church that He was leaving behind as He finished His Work here on earth.

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. KJV

The obvious meaning is that the Father would, through the Truth that He has revealed, bring the disciples of Jesus Christ into a faithful conformity to His Revealed Will. Will the Son pray and the Father ignore His prayers? How could that happen?

Hear Paul's words to the Corinthians who, of all the churches, was struggling with being holy in their behavior.

1 Cor 1:28-31

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

- 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:  
31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. KJV

Here the word for 'holy' which is translated as 'saints' is rendered 'sanctification' which is the process of growing more and more faithful in obedience to Christ. And, again, it is shown to be fundamental to the work of Redemption.

But the Great Question of the Ages is and has always been, "***What does it mean to be Holy? What does God really want from me?***" And the answers have been as varied as the different religions and then as different as the divisions within them all. There are literally thousands, maybe tens of thousands, of answers to that question. Then, we come to our day when people think they can simply make up the answer for themselves and their answer is as valid as any of the others.

Listen to what Paul said again, "***...the called of Jesus Christ... beloved of God... called to be saints.***"

If you have taken on the identity of a child of God, a believer in Jesus Christ, a Christian, then you are in this number. If you see yourself as outside this group described by Paul, especially the description, "called to be holy," then you are in need of Christian conversion, the New Birth, Repentance and Faith, and you have no hope unless that happens.

But what does it mean to be holy and what does God really want from you? There was actually a person who asked Jesus just that question though he phrased it in a different way.

Matt 22:34-40

- 34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.  
35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,  
36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?  
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.  
38 This is the first and great commandment.  
39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.  
40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. KJV

What the man was asking was "what is the greatest commandment, the most important one, the one without which no person can be pleasing to God?" And, Jesus heard him in just that way.

I know that you have heard this piece of scripture often. I often reference it myself. But this is one of those places where "familiarity breeds contempt." We hear it and have heard it so often that we have lost the ability to be impacted by it.

But if Jesus is dealing with the principle upon which all that God has revealed so far as His Law



concerns, then it behooves us to profoundly consider what He has said. We must strive always to hear at least this passage with fresh ears and a fresh mind. We must apply these principles to ourselves and ask ourselves whether this is true of us or not and what that question reveals concerning us in complete honesty.

We often dismiss the question with “of course I love God,” but that is not really the question is it? The question is whether we love God  
will all of our heart  
with all of our soul  
and with all of our mind?

Can you imagine a holy person in whom this would not be a real principle?

Then, we would ask, “can anyone be a ‘holy one,’ a saint, in whom this is not true?”

Then, we ask, “is it true of me?”

This thing of loving God in this way means that we love Him more than our mate, our children, our grandchildren, our home, our career, and even more than our love for all other things put together.

And, this love has practical meaning. It means that we will choose Him and serving Him above all other things and we will do that all of the time.

That being said, let me ask you some questions and you answer them in your own conscience to yourself.

If a person loves God with all of his heart, mind, soul and strength, what kind of prayer life will he/she have?

How much will that person read and study the Bible?

What will their church attendance look like?

What will their worship look like when they are at church? What will it look like at home?

How will they treat their family, neighbors, co-workers, friends..... and enemies?

You know, this is not a game, this is eternity swinging in the balance with people attempting to deceive you about what is real and what is not.

You and I are called to be holy people.... holy people by God’s standard.... holy people as described in scripture.... holy.... saints....

Personally, when I am fully honest before God, I dislike the answer to the question about how much I love God.

I say that I want to love Him as Jesus said.... and then I doubt if I am telling the truth about that.

I ask Him to change me so that I will love Him properly... and then I wonder if I really want that.

Here is the thing, I really do not want to come to the Last Day and find out that I have deceived myself all of my life and have failed to, in the end, answer God's call to holiness.

It is far better to wrestle with the principle now in hope of having God help me than to take things for granted and find ourselves in the condition of some who will stand before His Throne thinking they have loved Him and having it not be true.

Matt 7:22-24

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: KJV

Grace is marvelous but it is no license to the careless about our souls.