

## THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE

Romans 1:1-7

Key Verse 1:5

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

The book of Romans is the most systematic exposition of Christian faith. The Apostle Paul wrote this book probably in 58 A.D in Corinth. After having spread the gospel in Asia and Europe, he wanted to visit Rome (Rm 15:23), but, first he wanted to take all the offerings of the Gentile churches to the Jerusalem church (Rm 15:25-28). But the Holy Spirit testified that chain and suffering were waiting for him in Jerusalem. He was not sure if he would live or die in Jerusalem. So Paul wrote this book for the Christians in Rome to show the essence of the gospel of Jesus, in case he would die in Jerusalem. So this book is Paul's Testamentary Epistle to the saints in Rome. Through this passage, we can see who we are, and what we are to do and how we must live our life as Christians.

**First, "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus" (1).** Look at verse 1. Paul introduces himself saying, "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God--" He calls himself a servant of Christ Jesus. In those days, "servant" belonged to the slave class. Being a slave was not pleasant at all for anyone – no freedom, no right, no self-esteem, no nothing. But slaves belonging to prominent families regarded their enslavement to their master great honor. In the movie, "Ben Hur," the servant of Hur family, regarded his position great honor and privilege. To Paul, being a servant of Jesus Christ was immeasurably great honor and privilege to be proud of. So, this is his first title as he introduces himself to others. He was happy to be known as a servant of Jesus.

Being a servant to anyone means to live according to the commands of the master being restricted in freedom, will, desire and right. Actually, when we think about this carefully, we can see that no one is truly free; instead, all people are serving someone, or something. Some people are slaves to sin, doing what their sinful desire wants them to do, even at the cost of ruining their future, their family and their life. Some people are serving their own dreams and desires for success in the world, pouring out everything they have for them. Some people are serving their fear - the fear of security - doggedly struggling to pay the bills and to build their career. The Bible suggests that eventually, people live as slaves either to God or to sin and Satan. Whom do you want to serve? Living as slaves to our sinful nature, or our worldly desires or pride is disgusting! Surely, being a servant of Jesus Christ is a glorious and honorable thing.

Paul says, "Called to be an apostle." To Jesus, he was a servant, but to God's flock, he was an apostle. "Apostle" means "the one who is sent." This was an official term for the Roman ambassadors. This title showed that there was someone who sent him, and also there was a clear purpose in sending him. Calling himself as an apostle showed that he never forgot who he was and why he was living – he never forgot His owner, Jesus Christ who sent him, and why Jesus sent him to the world. He knew who he was, why he was there, and what he should do very clearly. The phrase, "Called to be an apostle" indicates that being an apostle of God to God's flock was not from Paul's own decision or merit, but from God's irresistible calling. His apostleship did not come from his own struggle or decision, but from God. Actually, he had not been with Jesus; he was not one of the Twelve apostles; he had no certificate to show people about his apostleship. Yet, he still had confidence that Jesus had called him and sent him to the world for his mission. So no matter what people said about his apostleship, he did not care. He had confidence of what he was doing as an apostle of God for the Gentiles, because Jesus called him to be an apostle.

Paul says, "Set apart for the gospel of God." The words, "Set apart" is "separated" in KJV. The same words we can use for this expression is "holy," "consecrated," or "sanctified." There were so many believers, but among all of them, Jesus set apart Paul for a special task. Paul knew for what specific mission he was assigned to do. Some other people maybe to the ministering for the poor, or for the music ministry, and so on. But Paul knew that he was specifically separated from all other believers to serve the gospel of God. Jesus entrusted the gospel, the word of God, to Paul for the Gentiles. Because he knew this, in his mission life, he did not struggle to do all kinds of good and important things such as taking care of homeless people or going to the hospital for patients there, or visiting the prisons. Instead, he focused on visiting cities in the world and preaching the gospel to them; he focused on teaching and preaching the gospel to all the Gentiles.

Here, we see Paul's clear sense of identity as a servant of God. In his business card, he introduced himself this way: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. He knew who he was, why he was living and what he must do. As a God worshiper, he did not struggle to do all kinds of good things; he didn't pay attention to all good Christian ministries either. When people from other ministries talked to him about what they were doing and how they were serving God, he appreciated what they were doing and encouraged them, saying, "Good job!! Do it all the more!" And then, he focused on his own ministry - the ministry of serving the gospel of God, preaching the gospel in every city he visited - because that's what God wanted him to do, and that's what he was living for. For what did Jesus set us apart? To teach the word of God to college students in America and in the world! For this purpose, he entrusted his words to us. Let's put our name here, instead of "Paul," and "a shepherd and Bible teacher for college

students" instead of "an apostle." "John Baik, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be a shepherd and Bible teacher for college students, set apart for the gospel of God." When we have this keen sense of God's calling and mission, we see everything clearly - who we are, what we are to do, and how we must live our life; at that time, our Christian life is no longer about doing all kinds of Christian things, or of trying to do some good things here and there; instead, it is about obeying God's will upon our life, dedicating ourselves to God's mission completely, and striving to fulfill it. Such people are not in darkness or confusion, but in the bright light.

**Second, "The gospel regarding his son" (2-4).** Look at verses 2 through 4. Let's read these verses together:

2the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now here in verses 2 through 4, Paul talks about the gospel, which he was called for, and which he was living for. In verse 1, he described the gospel as "the gospel of God," showing that God was the cause, initiator, author and owner of the gospel; God planned the gospel, pursued it and completed it. So, the gospel is God's gospel. Paul says, "the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures..." showing that the foundation of the gospel is God's promises in the Holy Scriptures - the Old Testament. The gospel did not pop up out of nowhere like Quran or Mormon Bible. It is not a clever, man-made story either. Rather, the contents of the gospel had been prophesied in the Old Testament for a long period of time about four thousand years, and the gospel was finally made as all the prophecies were fulfilled in and through Jesus. The gospel came to exist through the fulfillment of all the promises of God found in the Old Testament in and through Jesus - this is the authenticity and trustworthiness of the gospel.

In verse 3, Paul says, "regarding his Son," showing that the content of the gospel is his Son - who he was, how he was born into the world, what he did and said, his suffering, death, and resurrection. In verses 3 and 4, Paul talks about the humanity and deity of the Christ. As to his human nature, the Christ was a descendant of David. But he was more than a human, because he was the Son of God - he was God. How can you say that he was God? Paul says that the Christ was declared with the power to be the Son of God through his resurrection from the dead.

Death had been the king over all mankind throughout human history. All men knelt down and gave into death. When death commanded, people had to stop everything they had been doing, leave everything behind - their family,

their wealth, their plan, their desire, their knowledge, their fame, and their love – and follow the command of death. No one could resist against death. But Jesus rose from the dead. When you die, as your heart stops, the body rapidly cools down until it reaches room temperature. Then, without heart pumping, blood coagulates in veins, arteries, and capillaries, causing the entire body to stiffen. Then, in 24-72 hours, the internal organs decompose. When we think about this natural process of dead body turning to the earth, we can see that once a person dies, and when 1 or 2 days pass, it is impossible for anyone to come back to life. But Jesus was dead for two days, and on the third day, he rose again from the dead, completely refreshed, yet still with marks on his wrists and ankles and on his side. With such marks, he visited his disciples and talked with them and ate with them, encouraging them to have faith in God and giving them a clear direction of what they should do. To him, death was like a short time of sound sleep. Once he rose again from the dead, death had no hold on him any longer; he was above and beyond the power of death. Since then, he lives forever. What kind of person is he, the one who is more powerful than death and lives forever? He is God. Through his resurrection, he was declared to be the Son of God. This is the good news - Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son of God, rose again from the dead, defeating the power of death, declaring the victory over death for all mankind. Now in him, we have hope to live beyond death; in him we have hope for real life without death - the hope of eternal life. This is the good news the gospel of God talks about. This is what we preach day and night. The gospel we preach brings people victory over the power of death. All people need to hear and believe the good news.

The gospel is about the promised Savior who came as our King in the line of David according to God's promises in the Bible. And the gospel is about the Son of God who came into the world in the form of a human being to help mankind - that's good news. Such an event was a universal event – the appearing of God in the form of a human is a universal event; what he has to say, and what he does are universal – everything about him is the good news to human beings. Everything about him is the most important news. Paul was a servant of this person, Jesus Christ, God's promised king, and the Son of God. He was proud to be a servant of the Son of David and the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

We are servants of this Person, Jesus Christ, our Lord - the Savior of the world and the Son of God. While all peoples on earth live as slaves to sin, while they pursue worthless things in this world, we live as servants of Jesus Christ, and we pursue His will and purpose. This is our pride. In the year 2018 and beyond, let's serve him with our true loyalty and faithfulness. We all may be found as good and faithful servants to Jesus.

**Third, "Through him and for his name's sake..." (5-7).** Look at verse 5. Let's read this verse together:

<sup>5</sup>Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

In verses 1 through 4, Paul talked about himself and the gospel. Now, in verses 5 and 6, he talks about great things that happened to us because of the Son, the Savior of the world. Great things happened to us who believed. Great changes occurred to us. The expression, "Through him," shows that all blessings of God become available for us through Jesus Christ - all great changes that have happened in our life (from sinners to saints, from slaves of sin to slaves of God) were done through him. Paul used to be an enemy of God, destroying young believers, but through Jesus, he became a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus. Through Jesus, we have received all blessings one after another and have become what we are. The cause and origin of all our changed life is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him, we are here today as new people.

The phrase, "for his name's sake" shows the purpose of all these blessings that have been given to us, and all changes that have happened in our life; it is for Jesus' name's sake. The purpose of this new life we have in Jesus is for his name's sake. Before, we lived for ourselves - for our own pleasures, purposes and fulfillment; we pursued our own happiness, striving to fulfill our dreams and desires. At that time, how was our life? It was terrible. We were sinful, violent and harmful. We were a source of headache and trouble to our parents, our siblings, our classmates, our friends and to our society. We bore the fruit of death such as loneliness, depression, insomnia, deep sense of emptiness, and we were suicidal - it was horrible. Now by God's marvelous grace in Jesus Christ, we have this new life; we are given a new chance to live our life. In this new life, should we live in the way we used to live? No way! We know how it will go and what will eventually happen - that horrible life we don't want to even think about. So, we must not live for ourselves any longer. Instead, we must live this new life "for his name's sake." What does it mean to live for his name's sake? It means that through us, through our struggles and obedience, Jesus' name may be honored, respected and revered; his name be glorified. Before, we were concerned about our image and pride that when someone ignored us, or despised us, we were sad and angry. But now we should not be angry for our name's sake. Who are we? Nobody! Just servants! Slaves who have even no human rights! How we are treated, whether respected or despised, what big deal is it? Nothing! Instead, we must be sad and angry when the name of our Lord Jesus is not honored, when people do not revere him, when people ignore him and disobey him. For his name's sake, today we live. This is our life purpose in Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God's creation purpose is restored in our life.

Paul says, "we received grace and apostleship." Through him and for his name's sake, we received many blessings; great changes have occurred in our life. But Paul sums up all the blessings we received through Jesus, saying, "we

received grace and apostleship," because these two - grace and apostleship - make all the differences compared to our old life. What is the difference between our old life and our new life in Jesus? In our new life, we have grace and apostleship, which we received through Jesus. Here, "grace" refers to God's grace of forgiveness given to you in Jesus. Only because of your acceptance of Jesus, only because of your faith in him, God did great thing for you that He blot out all the records of your sins and does not remember them any longer; your record of sin is deleted by God. You are innocent in God's eyes in Jesus Christ. This was such great blessing we found in Jesus Christ. Thus, we could start all over again, without being bothered by our record of sins. We started our life newly in Jesus Christ, our Savior. In this new life, now we must not live our life however way we like, because we know that there are many dangers, and we need to walk on the right path very carefully. Thus, in Jesus Christ, all believers become very sincere and careful as we strive to live in the right way. Paul later says in chapter 8 that we have now this obligation to put our sinful nature under our full control by living according to the desire of the Holy Spirit; if we do so, we will have life and glory; but if we live according to our sinful nature even after experiencing God's grace, we will die. (Rm 8) Thus, in Jesus, now we Christians know how we must live our life - not according to our sinful nature, but according to the desire of the Holy Spirit. When you live according to the desire of the Holy Spirit, you come to have a chance to meet Him and experience Him and know Him more and more, and as you have life together with God that way, your person will be like Him. God's grace that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord leads us to the life together with God. This is such a great blessing.

But we did not receive grace alone in and through Jesus; we received one more blessing, that is, "apostleship." This apostleship means "mission assignment" or "calling." Paul was an apostle. So, if he said, "Through him and for his name's sake, I received grace and apostleship," we say, "Of course. We know that well." But Paul does not say that way. Instead, he says, "we" referring to not only himself, but also all the saints in Rome, and not only them, but also all Christians including you and me. Wait a minute! I know I received God's grace of forgiveness in Jesus. I am really thankful for that. But do you mean that I received God's special and personal mission assignment so that I can go and do his work as his ambassador, representing his kingdom? Paul says, "Yes, you did!" And God confirms, "Yes, you did." We all Christians received apostleship - mission assignment to go and do his work as his ambassadors, representing God's kingdom here on earth. This is all believers' true position and title. This indicates us what kind of life we are to live as Christians. Simply, this apostleship is God's personal mission assignment for us. Now we live as Jesus' apostles, God's ambassadors, striving to do what God assigned us to do just in the same way the apostle Paul focused on serving God's calling for him. That's what Christian life is about - not the life of doing Christian things endlessly, not the life of being nice to others, but the life of serving and fulfilling God's mission upon our life.

This apostleship is great blessing. Because of this apostleship, we know what to do and where to go with our new life in Jesus very clearly. Because of this apostleship given through Jesus, we no longer live in confusion or darkness, but we can see everything clearly. In Christ Jesus, now I know what to do with my life. Through this apostleship, our life finds direction, meaning and purpose. Because of this apostleship, we have a chance to do something truly meaningful and bear good and lasting fruit in our life. Because of this apostleship, we have a chance to serve the Creator God. As we strive to serve God's mission, our Christian life is not boring at all; instead, it is very dynamic, passionate and powerful; we truly enjoy our life in Jesus, and as we serve such an important mission of saving souls, as our life is so meaningful and precious, as our life bears great fruit, we are truly happy and satisfied. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship! Hallelujah!

Then, Paul gives us more description about apostleship, saying, "to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith." This is the summary of all the tasks given to all the believers in Jesus Christ – calling all God's people from among all unbelievers in the whole world to the obedience through the believers fulfilling their mission assignments. This is Jesus' world mission vision when he says, **"<sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** (Matt 28:19-20)

The expression, "All the Gentiles" means all unbelievers. Among all unbelievers, there are people who have been looking for the truth, and when we teach them the Bible, they respond to the truth and come out. We support them, strengthen them and help them so that they may live their life in obedience to God's will and purpose. The scope is "all the Gentiles." All the believers, therefore, are obligated to bring the gospel of Jesus to all the unbelievers. All the believers are debtors to the world because they are entrusted with the good news of salvation for the whole world.

And the expression, "to the obedience that comes from faith" shows the ultimate goal of all believers' mission. There are so many different churches and ministries God operates - homeless ministries, hospice ministries, prison ministries, campus ministries, churches in America, churches in Africa, churches in China, Korea and Middle East. God's calling for each church, for each believer may be different, so their styles and targets and methods may be different. But eventually, the ultimate goal of all these churches and ministries worldwide is the same, that is, to call their targeted people - either prisoners or college students or homeless people, whoever, to the obedience that through their service and challenge, through their teaching and encouragement, all these new believers live their life in obedience to God's will and purpose.

How can people live in obedience to God's will and purpose, even willing to deny themselves and entrusting their life in God's hands? Paul says, "to the obedience that comes from faith." Such obedience to God's will and purpose comes from having faith in God - those who believe in God can do so. Those who do not have real faith in God are scared that their life will be ruined, if they do not struggle to secure their life by themselves; so, instead of putting their trust in God who will take care of them and bless them, they strive to secure their life on their own, even rejecting God's will and purpose upon their life. Obedience to God's will and purpose is the expression of one's real faith.

When we think about this ultimate goal of our mission life, we can see that serving God's work is different than a volunteer service. We cannot be content with the fact that we spent our time and money for some good cause in doing God's work. Instead, we must aim on this ultimate goal that through our service and shepherding, all our sheep may be brought to the obedience that comes from faith.

At the same time, this ultimate goal shows us what kind of struggle we must have as Christians - we must grow up as men and women of obedience. When Abraham's obedience was complete to God, God's training was over; God's mission was over in his life. When Jesus' obedience to God was complete, he achieved what God had desired. How far or close am I to this ultimate goal? God's purpose upon each of us is to bring us to the obedience that comes from faith.

Look at verse 6. So far, Paul introduced the gospel, and he shared his pride of being a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, the substance of the gospel. It is such glory that we have any part with this glorious occasion. Now, Paul says, "You also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus." We have partaken in the most important news in the entire human history. We belong to Jesus Christ, the substance of the gospel of God. This is our pride. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

One Word: Through Him And For His Name's Sake, We Received Grace and Apostleship