

“Called and Separated”  
Romans 1:1  
(Preached at Trinity, October 8, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve been looking at Paul’s salutation to the Book of Romans. As we’ve seen Paul’s words were always chosen carefully. And, of course, as the Word of God every word is important. Not a single word is there by accident. We shouldn’t pass over these opening verses just because they seem so similar to the opening verses of Paul’s other letters. These verses are important.
2. In these opening verses Paul gives us a lengthy description of himself and his calling.
  - A. First he identifies himself by name. This letter is from Paul.
  - B. Then he gives what he considered his chief characteristic.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ” - The word for servant is **δοῦλος** – a slave or bond servant.

    1. This was Paul’s badge of honor. Paul saw himself as one who had been purchased by Christ. He had been conquered and captivated by Christ.
    2. In essence, Paul is describing himself as a Christian. Every Christian is a servant of Christ. Every Christian has been captivated by Christ. We throw ourselves at the feet of our Master. Paul saw this as his identity.
  - C. Paul’s next words describe his office and calling -

**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,

    1. Paul wants his readers to be absolutely clear as to his apostolic calling. Many questioned the validity of Paul’s calling because he was not one of the twelve. He had not accompanied Christ during His earthly ministry.
    2. It was important that Paul affirm and validate His apostolic office because of the nature of the office. As I stated last week, the apostles were used of Christ as His mouthpiece. They spoke with authority. They had the authority to set forth doctrine.
    3. Writing as an apostle meant Paul was writing with the authority of Christ. This is not a mere human book. We know at the very beginning that this is the Word of God. It is a message from God to our hearts. We have to understand this from the very beginning. This Book carries, “Thus saith the Lord” from start to finish.
3. Paul then states the origin of his ministry.

**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
4. This morning I want to set before you this high theme of being called and set apart.
5. Let’s begin by examining the words more carefully
  - A. The first word Paul uses is **κλητός** – Called  
This word is used in several different ways:
    1. It can describe the general invitation by God in the proclamation of the Gospel. God’s free offer of grace.

- a. Jesus used it in this sense in **Matthew 22:9-14** where after describing the wedding feast where many had been invited but one was cast out He concludes by saying, “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”
  - b. Multitudes are being called by the Gospel of Christ – it is open to all. To every man Jesus says, “Come.”  
**John 6:44** – “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”
2. Sometimes it points to our Divine election – the work of God decreed before the world began  
**1 Corinthians 1:26** – “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.”
- B. Second, Paul uses the word “separated” which means to set boundaries around
1. Paul may be using a play on words here.
    - a. He had formerly been a Pharisee. The word Pharisee in the Hebrew literally means “separated one” or set apart. The Pharisees saw themselves as separated to the study of the law. They saw themselves set apart from everybody else.
    - b. Now Paul saw his life as being ruled by a different separation. He had been separated by God to this great work.
  2. You have to read all of Paul’s epistles to get the full meaning of his words In his letter to the Galatians he further clarifies the meaning  
**Galatians 1:15-16** – “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;. . .”
- C. This is Paul’s meaning here.
1. Yes Paul was called and separated unto salvation.  
“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace”
  2. We will address our Christian calling in **Verses 6-7** but this isn’t what Paul is talking about here. Here Paul is speaking specifically of his vocational calling.  
**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God”
  3. Paul is using the word “called” here to describe a calling to discharge a particular office or a particular work.  
In Acts 13:2 it describes God’s calling of Paul & Barnabas to the mission field.  
**Acts 13:2** – “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”
6. This morning I want to examine the subject of our Christian calling or vocation. The word vocation is from the Latin word *vocatio* which refers to a calling or way of life

- I. God's call to service
- A. God separates His people for service long before they are born
1. Long before he was called to be an Apostle God separated him for this work – he was foreordained to this office.
  2. Jeremiah said he was separated for the office of Prophet from his mother's womb
- B. God's calling upon our lives is according to grace - according to God's good pleasure
1. Paul was an unlikely candidate – he was an outsider
    - He was not one of the twelve
    - He had not accompanied Jesus in His ministry, had not heard His teachings
    - He was not with His disciples at the crucifixion, had not seen the resurrection
    - Paul was an outsider in every way
  2. Paul had been a blasphemer, a persecutor of the church – He hated all that pertained to Christ.  
**1 Corinthians 15:9** – “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”
  3. Each of us are unlikely candidates to be used of God
    - a. We all have been corrupted by sin
    - b. We all are plagued by human weakness
      - (1) If you do not recognized your human weakness it is because you are corrupted by pride
      - (2) God humbles us and brings us to the end of ourselves and then uses us
- C. God does all of the necessary preparation
1. We've seen this true with Moses. He was raised in Pharaoh's house, schooled with the education of the Egyptians. He spent 40 years in Midian under the instruction of Providence. God created His deliverer.  
**Exodus 4:11-12** – “And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? <sup>12</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”
  2. Paul was raised as an Israelite who was a Roman citizen. He was educated under Gamaliel. He was elevated to the status of Pharisee. Not only this, every brain cell was created by God.  
**1 Corinthians 15:10** – “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
  3. God's timing is always according to His design
    - a. Moses was 80 years old when God called him – Why didn't God raise him up 40 years before when he killed the Egyptian?
    - b. Paul was in his 30's – Why did God allow him to blaspheme Christ and persecute the church.

- c. Joseph was in his 20's when God raised him up as deliverer – Why did God allow him to suffer in the dungeon?
  - d. Why? Why does God do these things? Why does God allow us to fall into such sin? Why does God create us in such weakness. He does all things for His own glory. He does all things that His name might appear all the more great upon the earth.  
**Romans 9:17** – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”
4. It often appears that there is no design or purpose to our lives but God has set us apart for His own use for His own glory.

II. Let's talk more specifically about your vocation

- A. Do you see a Divine appointment in your life? Do you see your life as your vocation?
  - 1. Many place a great emphasis upon the pastoral calling while forgetting their own call of God
  - 2. Do you see your own life as a divine appointment? Your Christian vocation?
  - 3. For the Christian our vocation is more than just how we make our living
    - a. Although this is important. We should seek God carefully in our life's work
    - b. We should help our Children to recognize their gifts and abilities that God has granted them and help them to prepare for their life's work.
    - c. But vocation goes beyond this
- B. The Christian must see his or her life as bound up in God
  - 1. The Christian life is first of all to a call to a life in Christ – to love Him and trust Him.
  - 2. The Christian sees everything in his life as done by Him through Him for Him  
**Romans 11:36** – “For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”
  - 3. The Christian sees his life as a means of magnifying God
  - 4. Martin Luther wrote a book called, *On Vocation*. Luther saw vocation as not so much a matter of what *we do* but a matter of what God does in and through us.
    - a. In other words, your labors are used by God in His work on the earth. We pray for our daily bread but how does God send it?
    - b. We are here for Him – for His use, for His glory
  - 5. Gene Edward Veith said in his book, *God at Work*, “The Protestant Work ethic emerged out of an understanding of the meaning of work and the satisfaction and fulfillment that comes from ordinary human labor when seen through the light of the doctrine of vocation.”
  - 6. Your life is a small part of God doing His great work
    - a. The man goes off to work where His actions and labors magnify God. His labors are used of God. He produces an excellent product or does an excellent service.

- b. The woman maintains an excellent home for the strength of the family. She prepares her children as instruments of God for the next generation.
  - c. Everything we do is done with excellence to the glory of God.  
**1 Corinthians 10:31** – “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
- C. Do you practice excellence in your calling?
- 1. I set this before you often. I set before you a high standard – but this is not just my standard. This is God’s standard for us.  
God is a God of order and excellence. Look at His creation.  
**Matthew 5:48** – “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
  - 2. God is interested in what you do  
Do you strive to be the very best mother, housekeeper?  
If you produce a product do you strive to make it the best?  
If you are in management do you take your responsibilities seriously?  
If you are in a professional field do you strive to be the very best you can be?
- D. The problem in our generation is that most people do not see a direction or purpose in their lives.
- 1. No one sees their life as a Divine appointment  
This was the problem of the faithless widow  
**Timothy 5:13** – “And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”
  - 2. Why are you here? You are here for God. For His glory.  
Do you see everything as being for Him?
  - 3. Those who see their life as a Divine appointment will not find time to be idle - The virtuous woman  
**Proverbs 31:27** – “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.  
**Proverbs 31:15** – “She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.”  
**Proverbs 31:18** – “. . . her candle goeth not out by night.’

#### Conclusion:

- 1. Paul saw his life as a divine calling.  
**Romans 1:1** – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God”
  - a. Paul was driven in this work.
  - b. He saw his life as a divine appointment  
**2 Timothy 4:7** – “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith.”
- 2. How about you. Do you see today as important? Do you see what you do as being important? Do you see purpose in your life as you labor unto the Lord? Do you strive for excellence in everything you do because you are doing it as unto the Lord?