

“Beloved of God”
Romans 1:7
(Preached at Trinity, November 19, 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. Last week we focused primarily upon God’s call unto salvation
Romans 1:6 – “Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:”
Romans 1:7 – “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”
 - A. Before Paul could be called as an apostle he had to first be called as a Christian “called to be saints”
 1. The word for saint is **ἅγιος** – It is the same word translated “holy” – 161 times in the NT.
 2. This refers to all Christians – all of us are called to be holy.
We are set apart unto God. We are consecrated unto His use.
We are separated from the world to a life of righteousness.
2 Corinthians 6:17-18 – “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
 - B. God’s call to salvation is a powerful call.
 1. Our hearts are cold, hard, and dead. By nature we despise that which is holy. We hate God’s dominion and fight hard to maintain our independence. In addition, Satan aids in keeping the blinders over our eyes.
 2. God resurrects our dead hearts.
2 Corinthians 4:6 – “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
 3. It is as glorious as being recreated.
2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
2. This morning I want to examine the second part of this glorious call of God upon our lives – How we came to be called to salvation in the first place. The call of God upon your life came as the result of His love for you in particular. It is based upon God’s covenantal love. I want us to look at the small phrase in **Verse 7** – “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God”
3. The great tragedy of modern Christianity is that most Christians are completely ignorant of God’s covenant love. The only way they can conceive of God’s love is the same love that He has for everybody.
 - A. They say, God loves the world and I am in the world and so God loves me. If that’s their only understanding of God’s love what possible comfort do they have in their relationship with God? If they only know of the love of God in the way He loves all men you they know nothing of His covenant love.

- B. Do you know of God's love for you in particular? Is this the great comfort of your heart? This morning I hope to sweeten your knowledge of the covenant love of God. This love exceeds all other loves including God's general love to all men.
- I. God does have a general love for all men
- A. The Bible teaches that in spite of humanity being under the judgment of God, He still demonstrates great compassion upon lost humanity as their Creator
Matthew 5:43-44 – "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
1. How do we know that God loves all men – because the sun rose this morning.
 2. As we look across Baton Rouge we see thousands and thousands – hundreds of thousands of God hating rebels.
 - a. We should have awakened this morning to a plague - uncontrolled viruses consuming our flesh until we die in agony. Flames should have engulfed our city today
 - b. Instead God sends life giving rain. Crops grow bountifully. Beauty fills the earth.
- B. I disagree with some Calvinists that seem to glory in the wrath of God to the exclusion of His love
1. The Bible declares that one of God's essential attributes is love
1 John 4:7-8 - "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
 2. Love stands at the very heart of God's nature
 God is the father of mercies, and so the father of love, who so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son to die for it.
 3. We should not be ashamed to tell all men of God's mercy demonstrated in His love.
 4. We should not be ashamed to tell the sinner that God loved the world enough to send His Son to die for whoever would trust Him.
- C. I am not saying that God's love overrules or diminishes His other attributes such as holiness, justice, and wrath
1. To deny God's other attributes is to deny the God of the Bible – God's love doesn't deny that the world is under the wrath and judgment of God.
 2. But everything God does is motivated by love – it is God's very nature to love
 3. God is holy and a righteous judge, but as a loving God He has postponed judgment. He is full of compassion.
Psalm 145:8-9 – "The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. ⁹ The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works."

Ezekiel 33:11 – “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

4. Listen to our Lord’s words to the Rich Young Ruler:

Mark 10:21 – “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

a. This was a lost sinner. He was selfish and God hating.

b. Yet Jesus had pity upon him, He was compassionate towards him

C. God’s general love isn’t the same thing as His covenantal love for the elect
There are millions of people in hell that God loves in the general sense.

II. God has a particular love for His covenant people

A. You can see it in this verse - “**To all that be in Rome, beloved of God**”

1. Is he saying to the Romans – God loves everybody in Rome and so He loves you?

2. If I wrote a letter to Pat, “My dearly beloved Pat, I pray God will bless and keep you and protect you” would anyone have any doubt of my particular love for her.

Would anyone say, As a Christian we are to love everybody. Pat is a person thus he loves her.

3. What a low view of God’s love to say that God loves the whole world, I’m in the world so God loves me.

Is this the only kind of love you know?

4. Paul is saying in this verse of everybody that lives in Rome, I am talking to the beloved. He is writing to the beloved in Rome. He isn’t writing to everybody in Rome.

5. This is covenant love. Paul is writing to the bride of Christ. I made a covenant with Pat back in 1974 to love her supremely. I chose her above all others to be my wife. I made a sacred vow before God in His presence – What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. By God’s grace I will never break that vow. This is covenant love.

B. In John 10 Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd

John 10:11 – “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

1. Our Lord’s love for His sheep is both intense and particular.

2. He loves His particular sheep, not just any stray sheep. When He sees that His lamb is lost He goes in search of it until He finds it, He scoops it up in His arms and carries it home.

3. This is His particular love – covenant love. He calls His own sheep by name.

John 10:14 – “I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.”

John 10:27 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”

4. Listen to our Lord's prayer in John 17
John 17:21-23 – "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: ²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
 5. This is covenant love – do you know this love
- C. There is a profound difference between the Old Covenant and the New.
1. In the Covenant at Sinai He offered the law to His people and gave Himself as a forgiving God but did not give the influences of His Spirit to conform them to the Law and to hold them and safely keep them and so they broke it. God promised a new covenant.
Jeremiah 31:31-32 – "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:"
 2. In the New Covenant He promises to move upon His beloved with power to keep them forever.
Jeremiah 31:33 – "But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
Jeremiah 32:40 – "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."
 - a. God says He will not turn away from His beloved. He will not cease to do them good.
 - b. He says He would powerfully put His fear in their hearts. He isn't standing back wondering who will receive Him. He isn't standing outside the heart's door knocking hoping that someone will open.
 - c. God is powerfully keeping His people so that they will NEVER depart from Him.
 - d. That's covenant love. That's marriage between God and His people.
- D. Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?
1. Jesus came to purchase the benefits of the New Covenant
 2. What did He say at the Last Supper? What do we celebrate at the Lord's Supper?
Luke 22:20 – "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."
 3. The New Covenant is secured by the blood of Jesus.
 4. Is there anything in the universe that can destroy the promise of the New Covenant? Is there anything that can separate us from Christ?
 - a. Paul lamented that he was forsaken by men, yet his joy was that he was not alone. He was not forsaken by Christ.

2 Timothy 4:16-17 – “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. ¹⁷ Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

- b. Is there anything that can separate us from the love of Christ?
God answers it in Romans, Chapter 8.

Romans 8:35-39 – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Conclusion:

1. In **1 Corinthians 13** we read “Charity never faileth” – “Love never fails”
 - a. God’s love is unchanging. He loves you now, He loved you from eternity and He will never stop loving you.
 - b. The love of Christ and the blood of Christ have forever secured His beloved people.
2. Do you know this love? Do you marvel at this love? Do you awaken each day with the wonder, “Oh that God would save a wicked person like me; that He has fixed His love on me.” Is this your joy? Is there anything any more precious to you than that?