

## Rom. 1\_1 Pt. 2.mp3.mp3

**Speaker 1** [00:00:03] Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. Thus reads the words the Lord, you may be seated. We are picking up steam if you haven't paid attention yet. Last week we did one word, this week we're doing more. This is part two of chapter one, verse one. But as I've said, we've got to understand the context, we've got to understand Paul, we've got to understand the historical background here before we can understand the book. One of the things that I think our church is lacking in, and I'm talking about the church as a whole, especially the American church, is an understanding of context. We're so narcissistic in this culture that we think everything is about us. But the reality is not everything is about us. In fact, this book was written to a church, a real church, 2000 years ago in Rome. And in order to understand the message of this letter, we need to understand the situation. But before we do, we need to look at our church real quickly, again, not just Chapel in the Hills, I'm talking about the church as a whole, and that is we are a very malnourished church. Some of you may be wondering, well what does that mean malnourished? Maybe no one was wondering, but let me give you the definition of malnourished, supplied with less than the minimum or an unbalanced amount of the nutrients or foods essential for sound health and growth. So, what you have here is a church in Rome, and I'm going to explain all the intricacies of this, is you have here a malnourished church, a church that's lacking essential doctrine. They need this letter. They don't even realize how much they need this letter. And that's one of the realities of being malnourished, is you don't even realize how hungry you are if you've ever fasted for multiple days. It's interesting because the first couple of days of fasting, you're just starving. You would eat anything, even toothpaste tastes amazing. But then on day three and day four, you stop desiring food, it's just the desire goes away. And then if you do it for a week, by the time it's time to eat again, you just don't even want to eat. Because food just sounds so disgusting. And you tell someone who is malnourished that they need to eat, oftentimes they don't even realize they need to eat. And so I think we have a church today, if you're looking around our nation, you're looking around the world wondering where did we go wrong as a church? It's because we got away from His Word. What is the Word of God, the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God and they are only source of faith and obedience, says the London Baptist Confession. They are only source of faith and obedience if you have multiple authorities outside of the Word of God, then you are no longer following the Word of God. The Word of God is to be that document, that book that we have submitted our lives to, it's the bread of life. Jesus says, I don't need food, My food is to do the will of the Father. My food is the Word of God, that's where we find the will of the Father.

[00:03:53] So Paul's mission here is to take a malnourished church and to give them solid food. We see this throughout Paul's ministry. He sees malnourished churches that are off into false doctrine, their lovers of selves, they're into the experiential. All they want is to be satisfied, to satisfy their pleasures, to satisfy their desires, to be healthy, happy, wealthy, all those things and Paul knows that is the flesh. And so he writes a very difficult book to the Church of Rome. You may have read through Romans, you know a lot of college studies they'll say, let's pick a book to read through and they pick Romans because it's just an exciting book and they get through chapter one, which is kind of offensive. And then they get to chapter two, which is kind of offensive. So on so far, they eventually get to Romans Chapter nine and they don't even know what to do with the book anymore because it's so offensive. But as I've said, the Bible is designed, it is tailor made to offend our flesh. So that we bow down to King Jesus and recognize that only He has the words of life, only He can save us. We just sang that song, We are sinners, right? Sinners saved by grace if you belong to the Lord Jesus, you need His words. And Paul does not mince

words, he's very clear and there's some problems going on in the church. But Paul had one focus and that was as Acts 20:27 says, to present the whole Council of God's Word, the hard, the good, encouraging, the convicting. If you just like cherry picking this book, and I said many of us throughout history, many have used a black highlighter referred to as a Sharpie to highlight those passages they just don't like. Or they've taken scissors and they've cut out sections of Scripture they just don't like, but Paul is here to preach the whole Council of God's Word.

[00:06:00] How much of the Bible do you need? All of it. All 66 books of the Bible, you desperately need, Old Testament, New Testament, you need it all. Some will offend you, some will encourage you. What matters is that you are having a whole and healthy diet. You know, I was on Keto for a little bit and not to pick on Keto people, but I was on Keto for about six months and I lost a lot of weight. And then I started having some pretty bad health problems. I got the flu, I was so dehydrated that I felt like I was going to die because I just had...you know carbs help to hold moisture in your body, I had, like, no carbs left. And I realized at that point, and I'm not trying to make any comments about those who are still in Keto in here, but we need a full diet. We need a balanced diet. And if you do one thing for too long, if you just eat one thing for too long and if that's all you eat, you're going to have a unhealthy diet. And if we just stay in certain books that we like in the Bible for too long, you're going to have a unhealthy diet. So go to those books that offend you, go to those books that are hard to understand, like Romans, and that's what we have here.

[00:07:21] So Paul speaks to a church that is in desperate need. Let's get to a brief introduction on the history here. So in the Roman church, you have a real church that has a real history under Rome. The emperor is Claudius, and there's a real problem. You have a church that is made up of Jews and Gentiles, but the Jews, the non believing Jews as far as the non Christian Jews have a problem. And that problem goes by the name, according to Suetonius, Chrestus, he writes in his history, "Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome because they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Chrestus," whose Chrestus? How many Jews are there? The population at this time in Rome was about five percent Jews in Rome, which is a significant number of people. They're constantly rioting because this person named Chrestus is causing a lot of problems. Well, who's Chrestus? Not Chris Stevenson, of course. Well, another historian comes in in the 5th century after his research and realizes that Christmas is definitely Christ. The Jews are rioting because of Christ, they have problems with Christ in Rome and it's causing problems for Emperor Claudius. And so we know this in 49 A.D., Claudius expels all the Jews from Rome. They're gone. We see the results of this by Aquilla and Priscila in Acts 18:2, it said they were expelled from Rome, that's why they were with Paul.

[00:08:56] So here you have this new church. We need to ask the question, who founded this church? If you ask a Roman Catholic, they'll say Peter founded the church, the only problem with that is we have no historical evidence that Peter founded the church in Rome. And in fact, we know from Romans 15, Paul says that he does not want to build on another's foundations. That's why he's writing to Rome, because he needs to give them apostolic authority. Their church that was founded without an apostle. Now, perhaps the church was formed by a military we know we know there are many Roman military members that believed in Jesus Christ and obviously they would make their way back and forth from Rome and they would be sharing the gospel. We also know that Peter in Acts 2 preached an amazing sermon, and there were people from Rome present and they were converted early on at the very beginning. And so either the church in Rome was founded by military or by people that were present on the day of Pentecost at Peter's preaching. But the fact is they were not founded by an apostle, and this bothered Paul. Also, with

Jews being expelled from Rome, who had a better understanding of the Old Testament obviously than the Gentiles, who were the leaders in the church before their expulsion. You have a church that is essentially a baby church without apostolic authority and without Jews that are present to help guide these Gentiles in the Old Testament and how they connect to Christ the Messiah. Now we do know from history that in 54 A.D. that Claudius lifted the ban on Jews and they began returning back to Rome. The problem is this five years has passed. What happens in a church when a group of leaders leave for five years, leaving behind others who are leading themselves and then the leaders come back? Do you think there could be some conflict? Of course, and there is already conflict between Jews and Gentiles, we see this throughout Paul's entire ministry where he's pleading for unity. That were one in Jesus Christ, and so you have conflicts which is dealt with in Romans nine through eleven, where he's constantly trying to unite Jews and Gentiles back together, wild branches, natural branches, telling the wild branches not to despise the natural branches. So the picture here is bleak. You have a church that is in conflict, has no apostolic authority. And so Paul knows that the Church of Rome desperately needs to be established by an apostle. This is why he spends seven verses in the introduction introducing himself. And I just want you to imagine very quickly this, you receive a letter from someone you don't know, and it starts this. "Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel." It's kind of jarring, isn't it? You'll see that he quickly demands their obedience. A man they've never met, a man that kind of catches them off guard writes to them, one of the most amazing pieces of literature in human history, and he begins by demanding their recognition of his Apostleship, and the fact that they obey the words that he says.

[00:12:26] And so now we're going to look at this, we've got ourselves in the situation. We understand what's happening, we know this is a church in conflict, it's a baby church. They don't have any apostolic foundations laid yet, just what they heard either from Peter or from Roman Centurions or from various military members who have brought back from Palestine, back from Jerusalem, the things they've heard and the things they've believed. Paul also has one more thing he desires to go to Spain. Why does Paul desire to go to Spain? Because he wants to reach the ends of the Earth and he needs a mission hub, he needs a base and Rome is his base, he wants to be supported. He wants to be sent out by the Roman church. So he needs to establish them in the truth and then he wants them to send him so that he can get to Spain. He's at the end of his third missionary journey when he writes this, likely from Corinth, as he writes it, roughly 56 to 59 A.D. remember just a couple of years after the Jews come back from Claudius, just a couple of years before Nero's persecution that's going to just ravage the church. Paul's looking for support, but he wants to go to a good church that believes the right things.

[00:13:34] So here what we're going to see in verse one is we've already covered the first word, Paul, and that was last week's sermon. A slave, that word is *Doulos* slave, a slave of Christ Jesus called an apostle, set apart to the gospel of God. There's a lot here, we're going to break this in, we see three things about Paul, we see his Master, we see his calling, we see his mission. Paul's Master, Paul's calling and Paul's mission, if you want to know who the apostle Paul is, it is all right here in verse one. His owner, his office and his purpose, this is everything about him and he starts off with this. And what we're going to see here is that as Christians, if you belong to Jesus Christ, if you bowed the knee to King Jesus, if you've confessed Him as Lord, if you believe in His resurrection, then you have a Master, you have a calling and you have a purpose, you have a mission. And Paul is the example to us so this is what it looks like to be a Christian. So let's dig into this now, the first thing is, as we look at this word, *doulos* again, let's look at the understanding here, this background, just a quick recap of last week. So Paul, Saul of Tarsus, was once the chief

opponent to the church. He was murdering, he was persecuting, he was imprisoning members of the church. In fact, as he was breathing, as he was drinking rage towards the church, he encountered Jesus and was saved. Literally knocked off his horse and saved. We see that this is a dramatic moment where his will is turned, what he once hated he now loves. So Paul writes this, and he has to probably do some work with them, he has to show them that I'm no longer this man, that you might have heard of these rumors that you had heard of Paul Saul of Tarsus, that I am now a slave of Christ. And I've got a mission, if you will, to Romans 15. In Romans, Chapter one. In Romans, 15 and 16, we really get a good look at the situation that Paul is addressing here. And in Romans 15, starting in verse 14, we're going to see a picture of what Paul is trying to accomplish with this church. He says, I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, this is in verse 14 chapter 15, "that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another, but on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder," this is a good way to come to someone is I'm just going to remind you of these things that you already know but you've forgotten, "because of the grace given to me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus, then I have reason to be proud of my work for God, for I have not ventured to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience by word and by deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and all the way to Illyricum I have fulfilled the Ministry of the Gospel of Christ." Did you hear what he just said? I have fulfilled the ministry, past tense, I am going to hit that in just a second, "and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation. But as it is written, those who have never been told of him will see and those who have never heard will understand."

[00:17:31] So a couple of things we see here. He has done a huge work in the east of the Mediterranean. He's had three missionary journeys he's been all around, if you've turned to the back of your Bible and you look at the Paul maps, you'll just see lines everywhere all over eastern Mediterranean. Paul had amazing flight mileage. He could fly anywhere for free because of the bonus points that he had. He wanted to go to Spain. You wanted to go to Rome, he wanted to go west, why? Because Jesus gave his disciples a commission, we call it the great commission. To go into all the world, to the ends of the earth. Paul wanted to get to Spain, that to him was the ends of the Earth, he wanted to get as far as he could go west. And he needed a home base and he needed to get to Rome to establish them so that he could go on, and what we see here is that Paul has a very important ministry here now he represents himself to them as a slave, first and foremost. So I'm just going to hit on this for a second. The word slave in our culture obviously has some very negative connotations to it. The slavery in America was brutal. It was obviously unbecoming of Christians, many Christians supported it, many Christians were ashamed of what they were part of when they were part of it. But we need to be careful because English translations, pretty much all of them, I think the new CSB, the Christian standard Bible, now translates this as slave. They followed the lead of the King James version and all these versions that we have, they're good versions are excellent versions. But they come to a word like Doulos, which is the second word in Romans one, verse one, Paul a Doulos of Christ, Jesus, Paul a slave, that's all Doulos means, it means slave slave of Christ Jesus. Paul's not alone Peter refers to himself as a doulos of Christ Jesus. John in the Book of Revelation refers to himself as a doulos of Christ, Jesus, a slave of Christ Jesus. What you need to see is the biggest difference between a servant and a slave is freedom, Isn't it? A servant has the ability to serve as long as they want and then they have the

ability to go home whenever they want. A slave is owned, a slave doesn't have freedom as an employee.

[00:20:07] Now, some of us may feel like slaves at work, but the reality is that your boss does not own your children, they don't own you. You're free to do whatever you want, you can quit, you can work hard, they can fire you but they can't kill you, they can't sell you. If you're in a situation where you can be sold and you can be killed, then you're a slave. So what you see here is that Paul is saying that I am owned, I'm purchased by Christ, that's the first thing you need to know about me. Let's turn to Romans 6, this is such an important part of your theology, this is something you need to understand. Romans Chapter six, starting in verse 15, Romans 6 is an amazing treatise on slavery, in Romans 15, Romans 6, starting in verse 15, he says this, "what then are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace." He's talking about the fact that we're slaves to sin, "by no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are a slave to the one whom you obey either sin which leads to death or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed and having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." Wait a second I thought we were free. Verse 19, "I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness. So now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification." So let me ask you the question, are you free? No. No one on earth is free in the way that we understand freedom. You're either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. You are either owned by your own sin or you are owned by Christ. This is important because I think in a narcissistic culture we like to think that we are truly free, but whether you know it or not, you're a slave to something or to someone. Ephesians 1 says that the prince of the power of the air is Satan and that he controls, he is the father of the sons of disobedience. So you are either a child of Satan, Ephesians 1, or you are a child of God Romans 6. Again, there is not one human being on the planet who has ever existed that has been free from this situation. Remember in Adam, all men died all men and in Jesus, many men live. We see that there is two representatives, there's Adam and there's Jesus, and you are either a son of Adam or you are a son of God, there is no third option.

[00:23:30] And so Paul, coming back to Romans 1 now, and he's going to really expound this throughout Romans 6 and Romans 7 and 8, and 9. What we see in Chapter 1 is what Paul is saying is I have been purchased, I am no longer my own. On the road to Damascus I was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and I am now a slave of Christ Jesus. We also know through Scripture that if you're a slave of Christ Jesus, you're also a son or a daughter of God. We also know that you are a friend of God, Jesus, says, "I call you friends." Not just slaves, friends, so we have a unique situation because as a slave of Christ Jesus something magnificent has happened. You once hated God, Romans 3, let's read that, let's turn to Romans 3 real quickly. Romans 3 starting in verse 10. Paul says, "as it is written, none is righteous, no, not one, no one understands, no one seeks God, all have turned aside, together they have all become worthless. No one does good, not even one." Let me ask you a question, who in this world does good? No one. That's what Paul says, "their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood in their paths are ruin and misery and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

[00:25:08] So if none seek God and no one does good, says Paul, how could anyone be saved? Romans 9 says it's not by the will of man but it's by the will of God. Something magnificent happens in our hearts, it's called regeneration, the Holy Spirit quickens our hearts, He saves us, He covers us in the blood of Jesus, He redeems us, He justifies us and at that moment something magnificent happens, we are purchased from the slavery to sin that we were born in and we are set free to slavery in righteousness. Free in slavery, free to love God. Two great men, throughout church history wrote this, Martin Luther in the Bondage of the Will, said this, "men are flesh they can savor of nothing but the flesh, meaning sinful flesh, therefore free will can avail only to sin," This is magnificent when you understand it. Before Christ, you have free will, but it can only will sin, that's what Romans 3 says. Does that mean that nonbelievers don't do good things? Of course nonbelievers do good things, but it is not righteous things. They're not things that can bring salvation, they're things tainted by sin, selfishness, selfish ambition, pride, envy, there's all sorts of motives for good works in this world, but all of our good works, as the Prophet Isaiah says, are like dirty, bloody rags to God. Why? Because they're tainted by sin. Martin Luther goes on to say, "and if while the spirit of God is calling and teaching among them they go from bad to worse, what could they do when left to themselves without the spirit of God?" This is in a letter to Erasmus. Erasmus is another huge theological, you know, I call him eggheads of his day as a humanist he believed that men were essentially neutral, that they could choose good or evil. And he writes to Martin Luther and Martin Luther responds and says, no, we are wills are bound to sin something has to set that free. Jonathan Edwards later writes in the Freedom of the Will, "the will is always determined by the strongest motive." In his discussion of the will, he says, not only is your will bound by sin, he says you're always going to do that what you desire most. And until our desires are turned towards Christ, we will always desire sin. So there has to be something that occurs that changes our will and that is regeneration.

[00:27:59] Where God, says the prophet Ezekiel, takes out a cold dead stoneheart and puts in a heart of flesh. For those of us who were saved wasn't that amazing when all of a sudden the things that you used to love, you begin to hate? And the things that you used to hate you begin to love. You used to love your sin, used to just relish, revel in your sin, as Augustine recounts in his conversion, he said he used to love drunkenness, used to love adultery, he used to love carousing, all those sorts of things and then all of a sudden God got a hold of him and his desires changed. That's what we're talking about and to draw heavily on this and to just kind of clarify the point here is what, Paul, the most important thing about Paul is that he has been purchased, he's been collected. He's been bought with the price and that price is the very precious blood of Jesus Christ. And I have to ask you have you been bought by the very precious blood of Jesus Christ? Would you consider yourself as a slave to Christ? As owned by Christ? Because if you say no, I wouldn't, that raises some very serious questions for you to answer. Who do you serve? Who is your master? Who's your king? Is it the world? Is that the flesh? Is it Satan? You know, Satan parades around as an angel of light, he looks good to the flesh but in reality he is a lion seeking whom he may devour. So what we see here is this is so important. Are you a slave of Christ, Jesus, and notice the order there, Christ Jesus, not Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Jesus? When Christ comes first, that means Messiah, it's emphasizing His office. He says, I am a slave, I'm purchased by the Messiah, Jesus Christ. That's significant, isn't it? See, if we blow through introductions, we miss what's happening, Paul is going to great lengths to establish that he is no longer Saul of Tarsus seeking to devour Christians, that he's been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ and now he is a slave to Jesus Christ. But not only that, we see his calling, so we see his Master Jesus, now as he's calling look at, called an apostle. Called an apostle, those are two nouns, not verbs, called is not a verb in the Greek, it's a noun, meaning a called apostle, called as an apostle. That is what he is,

that is his calling, that is what God has called him to. So, one of the things that we need to talk about here is when did this happen, when did this calling come upon Paul? Was it on the road to Damascus? Well, if you turn to Galatians, chapter 1, let's turn there now actually, if we turn to Galatians, chapter 1 we're going to see is that this calling predated the road to Damascus. Galatians, Chapter 1 starting in verse 11, "for I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently, and tried to destroy it," noticed he once tried to destroy the Church of Jesus Christ, "and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age, among my people." He was likely in his 30s, as a leader, maybe among the Sanhedrin, he was a rising star in Judaism, "so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers, but when he who had set me apart before I was," what's the word? "Born", what? When did Paul's calling begin? Before he was born, sounds a lot like Jeremiah, doesn't it? Jeremiah when he was in his mother's womb, he was set apart to be a prophet of God. He says, "before I was born and who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His son to me in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles," hear his calling, "I did not immediately consult with anyone, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who are apostles before me," talking about the other apostles. "But I went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus." How long was he in Arabia? Verse 18, "then after three years, I went to Jerusalem." Paul was in Arabia for three years being taught directly by the Lord Jesus Christ. How long did the other disciples get with Jesus? About three years, three and a half years. We think, well, Paul kind of got shortchanged because he didn't get that time with Jesus, no, Paul had a better deal, he got Jesus one on one, he didn't have to share Him with 11 others. Paul was in Arabia receiving direct revelation from Jesus Christ, that's why he says, I do not have a gospel given to me by men, I was given this directly by Jesus Christ and I was set apart as an apostle for the Ministry of the Gospel before I was ever born.

[00:34:16] Now, this leads us to some difficult questions, because Ephesians 2:10 says this, listen to this, "for we are His workmanship," this is Paul again writing, "created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we might walk in them." What? God prepared works beforehand so that I might walk in them. God called Paul an apostle before he was ever even born, called him to fulfill that office. Sounds like God is kind of in control, doesn't it? Kind of like he's a big God, like an Author, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning of the end, that all things are working according to His purposes and His plans and nothing can thwart them. Isn't this comforting for today? That God has already gone before you, He's already prepared your steps before you so that you might walk in them doesn't mean you're not responsible, doesn't mean that you don't have a will in this. Of course you have free will. The fact is, is we can either follow God's will willingly or against our will but no matter what, we will follow God's will. The difference is, especially for believers, is that if you follow God's will willingly, you will receive reward. And if you follow God's will unwillingly before the Bema seat of Christ, the judgment seat of Christ, you will receive loss, you will suffer loss, doesn't mean you'll lose your salvation. We believe clearly Romans 8 is very clear that nothing can separate us from the love of God but we can suffer great loss. This is very encouraging, I once heard a pastor said this, there is no Plan B for God, in your life there is no Plan B.. Sometimes we feel like back then I stepped out of God's will and off of God's plan, and now he's just got to kind of recover his losses with my life. There's no plan B for God, you're always in God's Plan A. The question is, is will you receive reward in God's plan or will you suffer loss in God's plan? Now, if you're not a believer, then the very thing you need to do today is to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and get on God's plan, get as far as a plan of salvation. So you see here, Paul says something very significant, going

back to the text, Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, I was purchased by Christ, I was collected by Christ, I was called an apostle. Not something he chose something chosen for him. What's an apostle? An apostle is a sent one. There's a big "A" apostle and a little "a" apostle how many apostles have existed in human history, 12 or 13, depending on how you count it. Twelve, if you think that Judas was replaced by Matthias, which it seems like he was, obviously, and Paul so 13. Are there more apostles than that? Big "A" apostle's? No. You want to know why that's a big deal is because the church was built upon the foundations of the apostles and the prophets. Today, there's a new movement called the New Apostolic Revival, and it's a very big movement in our world by the charismatic church, and they claim that they have the the office of Apostle. There are apostles, like someone who claims this is Mark Driscoll, who claims to be an apostle. He claims to have the same office that the apostle John and the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter all had. The fact is, is that there are only 13 apostles and that they are now no longer with us. So that means the apostolic teaching that we have received in the Bible is settled. Nothing changes this anymore, nothing is added to it. Remember, John says, if anyone adds to this or takes away the curses of this book, Revelation, will be upon you. Now, is that coincidence that that command comes at the end of Revelation, the end of the Bible? No. Because God's Word has been handed down to us by the apostles and the prophets, Ephesians 2:10, the foundation, that's why behind me in this picture, what I have is a foundation. The foundation has been laid. Apostolic teaching can be read, it's here, prophetic and apostolic teaching. The foundation's been laid, and so when we look at Paul's calling, he is an apostle, a big "A" apostle, and the Romans do not get to determine whether or not they will follow Paul. If they are born again, if they belong to Jesus, they will submit to his apostolic authority. Do you see why he's writing the way he is now? He doesn't have time to get them to accept them, they're about to receive the persecution by Nero in four years time, five years time. They need to embrace him as a slave of Christ, who is an apostle. And not only that, who has been set apart. So that is his office, now let's look at this other word, "set apart, for the gospel of God." Set apart, this word is very interesting when you do some background research on it. This word comes from the Hebrew farish, what does that sound like? Pharisee, Pharisee is where this Greek word gets kind of it's the word farish to separate the Pharisees, where the separated ones. What was Paul once? A Pharisee. So what's interesting about a Pharisee is that they were separate from the people they didn't want to associate with the people, they separated themselves from the people. They didn't want to be tainted by the common folk, right? Paul was once one of those Pharisees, separate, above, holy, beautiful tassels, right? I think Paul here is using a wordplay. That Pharisee's set themselves apart from other men and women, God set Paul apart to Himself, to the gospel. It no longer a Pharisee by his own choice, is now set apart by God Himself for the gospel. This is huge. Because he no longer is on his own mission, he no longer has his own plan, he's on God's plan, he's owned by Christ Jesus, he's called as an apostle to the Gentiles. We see that throughout his writings. And he's on a mission, not his own mission, he's on gospel mission, and the mission is given directly by the Lord Jesus Christ before His ascension on Mount Olives, right, where you see what He says is you are called my disciples to go out into all the world. Making disciples, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them all that I have taught them and I will be with you always until the very end of the age. That is his mission. We see Paul is willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill that mission, he suffers stoning, he suffers being whipped and beaten, imprisonment, shipwreck, all these things Paul suffers, he's abandoned by his closest friends, he even has a confrontation with the apostle Peter over the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. But Paul does not fear man, Paul doesn't fear death, to live as Christ to die is gain, why was Paul so confident in this? Because God had changed him, Paul had even gone into the third heaven, into heaven itself, and he came back and he wasn't allowed to



share what he saw there. If anyone knew the glory that was set before him, it was Paul. And he was willing to suffer anything for Jesus Christ, that was his primary concern and his mission was the gospel of God, the good news that Jesus Christ has come to save sinners. This is why we have to be so careful not to get off mission, we can be so distracted by things of this world that we just lose track of gospel ministry but that's what it's about. And so now, let's turn the attention towards you. Again, who is your Master? What's your calling? And what's your mission? Are you bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Do you belong to King Jesus? What's your calling? Have you ever asked yourself that question? What am I called to do with my life? Some people are called to be preachers, other people are called to be music leaders, other people are called to be shoemakers, other people are called to be janitors. Other people are called to be attorneys, other people are called to be nurses, I could go on and on. Your calling is different, callings are unique and in the church, there are many different callings. But they all have equal significance, but have you thought of your calling under the umbrella of Christ being your Master and the fact that we all have the same mission, which is to make disciples. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, isn't this pretty significant here for your life? We all have the same Boss, we all have the same Owner, we all have the same mission. But we all have different callings. Paul is an apostle. Guess what, I'm not an apostle, I'm not a prophet, I'm a preacher. What's your calling? How can you use that to serve Jesus? That's what our world needs right now, is for Christians to get back on mission, isn't it? Let's get back on mission, let's preach the gospel. I'm going to end with Luther again, he says this, "the maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays not because she may sing hymns as she sweeps, but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship."

[00:45:24] You can fulfill God's calling in your life by doing it for His glory. And by doing it as a focus or being on mission for the gospel. So when you go back to work, when you when you're when you're dealing with your children. Even in retirement, when you're dealing with your nurses and others and you're and you're talking to your neighbors about Christ, Jesus, no matter whether you're working, whether you're retired, no matter where you are, you have a calling and you can be on gospel mission in that calling, serving your King, your Master. So let's commit to do that and let's pray to our King. Father as we look at Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called an apostle, set apart to the gospel of God. God, I pray that that would also represent us. That we would recognize, that we would submit ourselves to Your Kingship, that we would bow our knee to You every morning and as our head rises from the pillow and as our head lies back on the pillow Lord, I pray that we would meditate on Your Word that we would obey the gospel, and Father, I pray for those of us who may not know You, who have not been saved, God I pray You would save us now. And Lord, for those of us who are saved, Father, I pray that we would get back on mission or continue on mission. And Father, I pray that we would be the light of the world, a City on a hill that we would be the salt of the Earth and that we would call this dark and dying world back to Jesus Christ. We pray this in His name. Amen.