

Romans 1_5-7.mp3.mp3

Speaker 1 [00:00:06] "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who is descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom we have received grace, an apostleship to bring about the obedience of the faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Thus reads the words of the Lord you may be seated. So as we come to this passage, one of the words that we see over and over again is called, calling, that's a word that we talk about in our world a lot. What's your calling? What's my calling? And we see here that we're all called to something, Paul has a unique calling because he's called, by God's grace to apostleship, remember big 'A' apostleship. The word apostle just means to be sent, a sent one, we're all apostles in one way, and in the fact that we've all been sent by God with the gospel message, we're all to proclaim the gospel. But there were 13 men, we've talked about the 12, with Judas being replaced by Matthias and then you have Paul, as well being the 13th. So you have these men that have been set apart by God for the office of Apostle. And Paul is taking this call very seriously, we talked about with Romans, the fact that the church was likely founded by converts from Pentecost or through the Roman army, and so there was no apostolic foundation for the Church of Rome. Paul says, in Romans, that I do not seek to build on another's foundation, meaning, that even though the Catholic Church says that the apostle Peter founded the church in Rome, there's no evidence to that in history. They have to say that because of their claim on the apostolic succession passing from Peter to the Popes and so on, when Jesus says upon you, I build my rock and the gates of hell will not prevail upon it. He's talking to Peter and so the Catholic Church claims Peter as their apostle because he's the one that the church is built upon. However, that's not recorded in history and also, we see Paul says, I do not seek to build on another's foundation. So he's likely writing to a church that has not had an apostolic foundation laid. Which is why he's so eager to write to them, so eager to visit them.

[00:02:50] But Paul was very clear on his calling, and I want to say this about us, is what is your calling? That's what the whole sermon is about today. What is your calling? You know, I like to think about things that are strange and I looked at, well, I wonder if you went and looked at some of the the celebrities what they wanted to be when they would grow up. Because oftentimes when you think about your calling, it takes you back to childhood. What did you want to be when you grow up? And most of us have achieved exactly what we wanted to be when we were children. Actually, probably most of us aren't even close to what we wanted to be as a child. I don't even remember what, I think I wanted to be a skateboarder like Tony Hawk. And I'm very close to getting there, and my sponsors are on the way, I'm just kidding, none of you know about the secret life of mine as a skater. But Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, he wanted to be an archeologist. He kind of looks like an archeologist a little bit, I could see him with an Indiana Jones hat. George Clooney wanted to be a baseball player. I really like this one. Matthew McConaughey, all right, wanted to be a lawyer. George Lucas wanted to be a racecar driver. It's interesting, there's a whole, there's a whole list. You can you can find anything on the Internet nowadays. I didn't verify these sources, it was just a Web page that told me these things. But it is interesting because when you think about your calling and you start looking at your life, has anyone ever heard of a midlife crisis? Where when you hit about 40 like Aaron, when you hit about 40, I'm a long way off from 40, so just so you know Aaron, you start... Maybe

that was...we'll cut that out of the recording. You start to think about your life, right? Have I achieved the things that I wanted to achieve? Am I going to leave a legacy behind? Have I been effective? And oftentimes we look at worldly measures, don't we? We look at finances, we look at our 401k or IRA, we look at how much equity we've built or we look at our children, how successful are they in school? And we look at all these legacy kind of guidelines, markers, right? But what we see from Paul is all of that. He counts as Skubala, that's the Greek word, rubbish, worthless, literally poop, he counts it all as rubbish for the sake of Jesus Christ. And so what we need to see is what matters for your calling is what the Bible says matters, not how the world quantifies or qualifies how successful you've been, it's about what the Bible says is a successful life. And we see that here in the introduction, this introduction is amazing, there is so much, we were just downstairs, we were going through this in the Sunday school, there is so much theology in just seven verses of an introduction. That you could spend even longer as I could, don't tempt me, I could spend longer in verses one through seven. But there's there's just so much here. And so what we're going to see today is three things. Number one, is found in verse five, is that we are called to obedience, faith of obedience, the obedience of the faith. Number two, verse six, we are called to belong, that's really important, especially in today's society. And number three, we are called to be Saints in verse seven. Called to obedience, called to belong, and called to be saints, these three things define your calling. And again, in the introduction, he's going to explain what these look like, but these three things obedience, belonging and sainthood, those are what you are called to be. And when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Bema seat judgment, and when your life is opened up in the books and all of your thoughts and actions and everything that you have done is weighed by Christ Himself, your calling will be evaluated. And to those who are faithful to their calling, they will receive reward. And to those who are not faithful to their calling, they will suffer loss. Now, this is not a salvation judgment, all of those people before the Bema seat of Christ are saved. But it's about reward, those who have been faithful with little will be faithful with much in the kingdom of God. And don't we all want rewards, if you wonder what is the rewards that we will receive, if you're a car person, you're hoping maybe it's a Lamborghini, maybe it's the new Mercedes, you know, but actually the rewards are probably responsibilities, work that God can give you that will glorify him. To those who are faithful with little, they will be faithful with much. This idea that in the eternal state, in the new heavens and new earth, those who are faithful to their calling will have more opportunity to glorify God in their obedience and work.

[00:07:55] Now, work is a cursed thing, isn't it right now? But did you know work existed before the fall and it was a blessed thing? We're all called to explore and to work and to develop and to do things for the glory of God, and that's what it looks like to be a faithful Christian. So what I'm going to encourage you to today is this one thing, we are not saved by good works, we are saved to good works. That is a very important key to your theology, to your understanding of God, you're not saved by good works, you're saved to good works. And so we'll look at this now. Paul, Paul opens us up for us. So faith or works, this is such an important question, isn't it? And we see this all through Romans faith or works. James deals with this, John deals with this, all the apostles deal with this seemingly paradoxical question of, well, are we saved by faith or works? And you see Jesus says, if you abide in Me, if you abide in My love, you will keep My commandments, John 15.

[00:08:59] So we see works are an essential part of faith in here, verse five, we'll see the word "the obedience of faith." Is it possible to be a Christian and to have no good works? Perhaps, we need to...we need to work this out? But I want to introduce two really fun theological words to you, because I am a nerd, see the glasses for reference. Antinomianism, this is a word that pervades our church today, but no one knows what the

word actually means. What is anti-nomianism? This is something that church fathers throughout history talked about over and over again, they were concerned about antinomianism, Galatians, Romans, John, 1 John, all concerned about antinomianism, what is that? Anti means against, nomiansim, nomas, no law, against the law. The idea's cheap grace, shall we sin so that grace may abound? Most churches today would say, absolutely. Paul says, may never be, absolutely not, that's cheap grace, you're spitting upon the cross. Well, I'm saved, pastor, I can do whatever I want. That doesn't sound like a convert to me, that sounds, as John says in 1 John chapter three, that sounds like a child of the devil. He says those who are of the devil live like the devil because they keep on sinning, characterized by sinning. Downstairs someone said, you know good fruit, good fruit usually comes from good trees and bad fruit usually comes from bad trees. Absolutely. Jesus says of false teachers, you will know them by their fruit. What does their ministry produce? Does it produce lawlessness? Does it produce antinomianism? But on the other side of the coin, you have legalism, right? Another fun word, neonomianism, say it with me, neonomianism...No I'm just kidding. New legalism, this is actually a huge movement in the church today, promoted by a guy named N.T. Wright, who has kind of taken a back, a step back towards Rome where he starts to blur justification and sanctification. You know, and the reformation period, the biggest thing was Sola fide, Sola Scriptura, Sola Christus, all these different Sola's, the five Sola's. The Sola fide was you're saved by faith alone, not by works. You are justified by grace alone, not by works. This was the huge movement of the Reformation, not by the seven sacraments, not by the Church of Rome, you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone. But there's a step back towards Rome in the sense of this. That what N T Wright and those who are following him, very smart people, N T Wright has written a lot of good things, but I think this is a deadly, poisonous pill that he's reintroducing back into the church, and that is that your salvation is in some part due to your works. So if you're a good person that in some way in some measure is contributing to your salvation. You may be saying this sounds wrong and it's because it is wrong, it's called legalism just in different trappings, it's just been repackaged and some PHD's have been stamped on it. And so we have to realize that both lawlessness and legalism are equally offensive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the answers here in the passage. So, but I need to just, recap real quick verses one through four to get us ready for verses five, six and seven. So, he says this, this is this is the introduction, Paul, we talked about who is Paul? Paul is the most unlikely convert. But he is now a slave of Christ Jesus, that word servant is Doulos, slave. He is owned by Christ Jesus. Will see this in Romans Chapter six, I was once a slave to sin now I'm a slave to righteousness, a slave of Christ Jesus recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. That's why the word Christ is before Jesus and then later on it transitions to Jesus Christ, pay attention to the little things when you're studying Scripture. He's emphasizing the fact that he's owned by the Messiah Jesus, called...this is his office, called an apostle, a sent one by the Lord Jesus Himself, by the resurrected Jesus, set apart for the gospel of God. I have been set apart. Galatians one says, before my birth, called to be an apostle. Showing the sovereignty of God in His calling. Which He, that is God, "promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures." This idea is something that we see in Ephesians one that's fleshed out, that is that the gospel was decided and established before the foundations of the world. That you were chosen in Christ Jesus for good works, before the very foundations of the world. Ephesians two, that your good works were prepared before you so that you might walk in them the sovereignty of God in all things. Well, are humans responsible? Absolutely, humans are responsible. We have free will within the will of God. If that makes your brain melt a little bit welcome to the club. That's God, is so amazing, He takes a lifetime to wrestle with, but these things were promised beforehand, what's the promise? It's the great narrative, it's the grand narrative, it's the gospel of Jesus Christ. Genesis 3:15, that the Child of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. And then

you just see the Bible unfolds progressively to where you see the gospel becoming clearer and clearer until Jesus ultimately dies on the cross and is resurrected after the third day, conquering sin and death. That is the the grand story of redemption in the Bible, that is the promise that was told through the prophets in the holy Scriptures. This was not just some accident, this was not just some plan B, there is no plan B in God's plan. All plan A, no matter how far off you've gone in your life, you are still in God's plan A. The question is, is will you receive reward in His plan or will you suffer loss?

[00:15:20] Romans 9 deals intensely with this question of some vessels prepared for glory, some for greater use, some for lesser and some for destruction. Why? Well who are you O man to ask the potter why He has chosen to make some vessels for glory and others for destruction? Again, God's sovereignty just drips out of the book of Romans. Verse four and "was declared to be the Son of God," that word is better translated designated, I wanted to give a little bit more time to this because I was a little confusing last week, I confused myself last week. Is horizo is the Greek, the reason I say that is because what do what do you think that is translated to in the English horizo? Horizon. This idea is there's a clear delineation between the sky and between the Earth, there was a line, a horizon line, and what it says here is that, and the Son was declared, designated to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection. So the reason a lot of Bibles translate that declared is because designated can be confusing. What if I just said Jesus was designated the Son of God, what would that possibly bring up? Wait, was He not the Son beforehand? Which would be an old church heresy. Then at the incarnational Sonship that He became a Son when He took on human flesh. No, He's always been the Son of God. As long as there's a Father and it necessitates a...the child, at least a Son. So as long as God has been Father, which is how He reveals Himself in the Old Testament, there's always been a Son, God the Son. And so you see here that He's always been the Son, but there was a moment where He was designated as the Son of God. He was always the Son, but he made some pretty insane claims to be the Son of God on earth. And those insane claims, if they were not proven by some amazing miracle, would have either been the ravings of a lunatic, as C.S. Lewis says, or it would have been from one of the wickedest liars that has ever walked upon the planet, or as C.S. Lewis concludes, he really was the Lord, the Son of God. So if Jesus had not risen on the third day, as He prophesied over and over again, if all the things that Jesus said had not come true, He would be a false prophet, a false teacher. Paul, says that if Jesus is not risen from the dead, then we are the most to be pitied because we are still dead in our trespasses. But he says, but He did rise from the dead and we have over 500 plus witnesses and you can talk to them today, not today, today, but in Paul's day. But you see this idea of the fact that the line was drawn in the sand and that we know that Jesus is both the Son of David the Messiah and the Son of God, God incarnate, that line has been drawn like the horizon and has been declared. And He has been designated as the Son by the...according to the Spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead. Just a little point here is you cannot get rid of the resurrection and still be a Christian. There are essentials of the Christian faith that the second you let them go, you are no longer a Christian. Like the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is among the essentials, like the virgin birth of our Lord, like His death and resurrection. There there's so many things that Christians are just so quick to write off and say, oh, that's not really that essential, is it? Well, yes, it is and you are no longer a Christian, you're an apostate if you give up these things.

[00:19:11] In fact, we see that in the letter of John, 1 John. So it goes on to say now verse five, we finally get there, you know I just I hear these people in the background say get on with it, okay, verse five, through whom, Jesus Christ, through whom? That's why I just went through that whole recap of Jesus Christ, through whom? We have received grace,

an apostleship. What is Grace? Unmerited, unearned favor, you cannot earn grace, there is no amount of goodness that you can do to earn grace because if you can earn it, it ceases to be grace. Grace is something that is given by someone who has the power to give it by their own desire and by their own will. God has the desire to give you grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, not because you earned it, because it would cease to be grace, but because He is a gracious and loving God.

[00:20:17] All of this ties together in Paul's introduction, and he's going to unfold all of this, but we see a huge God here. Through whom we have received, he's talking about the apostles, we've received grace, an apostleship. Only 13 people can claim this, they're all dead. We have received grace and apostleship so that, this is the therefore, to bring about the obedience of faith, you need to underline obedience of faith. This is the goal of apostleship, this this is such an interesting passage, such a hard thing to understand when we talk about obedience and faith. In the original language the idea is it's not even disconnected, it's just obedience, faith. And people have wrestled with this is, is it obedience to believe or does belief produce obedience? And you can read just paper after paper, article after article, commentary after commentary on people trying to understand, is he talking about obedience that leads to faith, or faith that leads to obedience, because of the way it's constructed. And there's an amazing tool in your interpretive tool belt called the 'both and' tool, it's not an either or, it's both and. It's the way that you're obedient to the gospel is you believe in it. But the way that, but true faith always produces obedience, a changed life, we see this in 1 John Chapter three. I'm going to read a quote before we go there, but Bill Mount says this, "faith is not intellectual ascent to a series of propositions." So it's not in the mind, that's the Gnostics, it's just special knowledge that if you if you know this knowledge, you're good. He says, "it's not just intellectual assent, but surrender to one who asks you to trust him. Surrender, waving a white flag to Jesus Christ to surrender is to obey. Biblical faith is not some mild assent to a collection of ethical maxims, but an active commitment to one's life." Meaning it's not just things, these truisms that you say, you actually live them.

[00:22:38] Obedience is the true measure of a person's faith, get that, obedience is the true measure of a person's faith. You know you do what you believe? You may say you believe certain things, but do other things because you don't actually believe what you say, but if you actually believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return, you are going to live in light of His coming. It says some, when they see Jesus appear in the heavens, they will be ashamed at His coming because they didn't live as though He was returning. If you believe that God has given you the best possible life that you can have according to the precepts, in His words, you will live according to His word because you believe this is the best way to live. But if you don't believe that, then you'll kind of laugh at His Words, you'll scoff at His Word, you'll do your own thing, and you'll hold the kind of the fire insurance in your back pocket because you prayed a prayer once. But the fact is, is that true believers practice God's Word, The best comments that faith and obedience are inextricably together they can't be separated only in obedience is their faith, for faith is not emotional feeling or intellectual acceptance, but an active response of the person. You get this, if you believe it, you're going to do it. This is this is the process of sanctification, it starts with your mind. And then it works your way into your heart. And then eventually it works its way out in your hands.

[00:24:15] This is always, we test the spirits, we work through Scriptures with our brains, and then it begins to change our affections and our desires and eventually our lives look different, that's faithful obedience. Turn if you will, to John, 1 John chapter three. I terrified my Tuesday night group with this, and I thought it only fair to terrify you as well. 1 John

chapter three, he says this, I'm going to start in verse four, "everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness, sin is lawlessness," there's your definition of sin. What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. Well, what law? God's law. So sin is breaking God's law, so if you're adding to God's law, like don't dance, as some churches have done, that is legalism, you're adding to the Scriptures. But if there was a verse in the Bible that says don't dance, which there's not, I've checked, then it would be sin. The only thing that is sin is going against what God has revealed in His Word. Sin is lawlessness, but it goes on to say this, "you know that He," that is Jesus, "appeared to take away sins, and in Him, there is no sin." Praise the Lord, that's why He can save us. "No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning," underline that, "no one who abides in Him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him." Wow, that's offensive to Christians who are living in this kind of cheap grace mentality where they can sin all day long because they prayed a prayer once, or they walk down an aisle, or they've been baptized. John says even if you've done those things, if you live in your sin, if you keep on sinning, if you're characterized by sin, you've never known Him. Wow, that's offensive, John. It's the truth. How do I know that's the truth? Because it's in the Bible. It goes on to say this, "little children," I love when he does this because every time he says, every time John says something really hurtful to our flesh, he always responds with little children, "little children let no one deceive you whoever practices righteousness is righteous as He is righteous, whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning, and the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God." Doesn't get any clearer, does it? We may not like this passage 1 John 3, it may be offensive to us but it is what God is calling us to is the obedience of faith. John, 15, Jesus says, "if you love Me, you will abide in My commandments." You cannot separate these two. Now, you are not saved by good works, let me say it again, you are saved to good works.

[00:27:43] So, there's a lot here in this introduction, isn't there? He goes on to say, "through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of the faith." Paul says he endeavors to present every person mature in the faith, for the sake of His name among all the nations. Whose sake is Paul working for? Jesus' sake, he's working for the name of Jesus. He's living to glorify the name of Jesus Christ, he is working for his Master, for his King, for his Lord, for his Sovereign one. And what he's saying is all the work that I'm doing is not for my own glory, it's for His namesake, it's for Jesus. I live for Him, I die for Him, and I do this so that some might be saved among the nations. I want Jesus's name glorified among the Gentiles. That's the word *ethnos*, that's where we get the word *ethnic*, it's the idea of the Gentiles. He labors so that some might be saved so that they give glory and honor and worship to the King of Kings in the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. That's amazing, isn't it? He's calling us to the obedience of the faith. That's your first calling, obedience. If anyone in here is living a lawless life, claiming out of one side of your mouth to be a follower of Jesus Christ, but the rest of the time living like the devil, sinning and loving your sin. What John says, what we see in Paul, is that you've deceived yourself. Now, I don't know your heart, no one knows your heart, David even says who can know their own heart's the heart is deceitful above all things. John writes in 1 John eleven assurances that you can have so that, you know, you're in Christ Jesus and they're all works. Works give us assurance works don't save. However, if you're struggling with your assurance, I can tell you all you need to do is look to Jesus Christ, confess with your mouth that He is Lord believe in your heart that He's risen from the dead and you will be saved, there's no conditions there as far as if if you confess, if you believe you will be saved, unless...you know, you've got bad teeth. Or unless...you don't give enough or unless...you don't attend church enough, then you won't be...No there is literally, if you do

these two things, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that He's risen from the dead, you will be saved. No if, ands or buts. But you see that true saved people live lives of obedience, growing lives of obedience, there are ups and downs we all struggle with sin. Go to Romans 7, a very encouraging chapter because, you know, misery loves company, that's what Romans 7 is. Paul says, all the things that I want to do, I just don't do, and all the things I don't want to do, I keep on doing and it is this all who will set me free from this body of sin and death. The problem is just this flesh. He says "thanks be to Christ Jesus." And so we see there is a struggle with sin, there will always be a struggle with sin this side of glory, but it needs to be a growing progression in our Christlikeness. This is called progressive sanctification, it's this progressive delineation, is this progressive line towards holiness in our lives. And so all this says is there are no benchwarmers in God's kingdom. No one is called to live a life of sin as a child of God, to do nothing for God. There's a passage that says some people will be saved by the very foundations but everything else will be burnt away and they enter into heaven smelling like smoke. I don't think any of us aspire to that, do we? I want to have no good works so that I still am saved and I've enjoyed partying on Earth, I've enjoyed hell on Earth, but I still want to be saved, so it's okay if I smell like smoke when I enter into heaven, no one should want that. We should desire God's rewards, and the first step here is to recognize no one is called with bench warming. Everyone is given a gift, everyone is given a gift to exercise for the kingdom of God, for the glory of God. Everyone needs to be obedient to whatever calling God has given you. Ryan and Ma-Linda, just for example, helped rebuild the entryway and their gift is, Ma-Linda is an amazing decorator and Ryan is an amazing carpenter, he's an amazing worker and that is his way to glorify God, that's Ma-Linda's way to glorify God. We all have different gifts. Some are called to be preachers, others teachers, others evangelists, there are so many giftings out there, but we're all called to operate in those. And so what does the obedience of the faith look like in your life? In your situation?

[00:32:58] Number two, we've been called to belong, verse six, "including you," he's talking to the Romans among the Gentiles, the Church of Rome, "including you, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ." Well, what is belonging, according to Psychology Today, belonging is like stepping up on a platform and feeling like you are fully supported. Isn't our world just seeking desperately for belonging this identity politics and identity and in so many different things, what gender you identify with and what politics, what party you identify with and all these different things, how do you identify? I was once I bought a Jeep Wrangler a long time ago, I've owned three of them, I love them, too much. And I bought a Jeep Wrangler, and first I pulled up to a Wendy's in my Jeep Wrangler and I was sitting there like, yeah I'm driving a Jeep Wrangler, whatever, I'm one of those guys. And then someone knocks on my window, no joke this really happened. I zipped down my window, I zip down the window and he says, hey, here's a Jeep Club invitation, and I thought, I have finally arrived. I have a Jeep Club invitation, I never followed through with it, but it just felt cool to be invited to a car club. There's this desire to belong to the Jeep folk, there's a desire to belong, isn't there? In fact, they've pulled workers and they've asked them how much is belonging important to you? And 79 percent of workers say it's one of their most important things.

[00:34:32] What's happening in our world today, right now with workers? They're not going to work anymore, they're isolated at home. Most of their peer groups, their friend groups are at work, especially singles among us who don't go home to a spouse and children who their closest friends are, their coworkers. No wonder we're struggling with depression and suicide right now because people don't feel like they belong anymore. Political parties look so different than they once did, all these ideologies that we found comfort in as Americans

are being torn away. And the question remains, who am I, where where am I, what am I? All you need to know is this you belong to Jesus Christ. That's it, your child of God. That's all that matters, not whether you're part of a Jeep club, not whether you have a workplace that embraces you for who you are. What matters is that you do belong, and you belong to Jesus Christ. Remember, he's writing to Romans who didn't belong to Rome, all the Jews. Let me just read you a brief history, many of the Jews were brought to Rome as slaves. Remember, there was a pretty huge battle in Rome in 70 A.D. and Jerusalem was destroyed and most of those Jews that were in Rome were brought there as slaves, and then if that wasn't enough, after they finally got settled, they were kicked out and expelled by Claudius. They had to leave, because they kept rioting over this guy named Christus, Christ. They were eventually allowed to come back and you had a split church, Gentiles, Gentiles who had been leading by themselves for five years but had no idea really what the Old Testament was about they were baby Christians struggling to know how does all this fit together? Jews coming back who have been under intense persecution, who have been expelled and then invited back and then who are despised by the younger Gentile Christians. A church in conflict, a church without apostolic foundations. And then just briefly, in five years time from the penning of Romans, you have Neros persecution, one of the worst, most bloody persecutions in the early church. And Roman's being dressed up in animal skins and being thrown into the Coliseum, being eaten by lions and tigers, being burned as torches in Neros Gardens. These are all things that actually happened, these are people that didn't belong to anyone, accept Jesus Christ. It's so important for us to understand is that they belong to Jesus Christ and He says they're called to belong, they are chosen by God. The closest analogy that I can get to this is when you adopt a pet, when you adopt a pet you don't ask for the pet's resume, do you? You choose a pet you like, sometimes you choose a pet that has one, you know, is missing a leg or is missing an eye as my dog's case is. You choose a pet not because of what they've merited, not because of something that pet has done, you just choose it because you want it. Because you love it, you've placed your love upon that pet and then you invite that pet into your family and it becomes one of you. It almost is scary how much pets become a part of our family in some ways. But you see, you see here that that's a good a good picture of why did God choose you? Called, chosen, predestined, we see this all through. Romans, Romans 8, especially, Romans 9. Why would God choose me? Not because of what you merited, not because of what you did, it's because of His good pleasure, that's it. God chose you because He chose you, because He loves you, He decided to place His love upon you. And all you can do is say thank you, thank you God for Your grace, I didn't earn it, I didn't deserve it, it was just God's grace that saved me and that that puts you in a place of humility. God chose you because He loves you. He loves the whole world, John 3:16, but He has a special love for His adopted children that were chosen in Christ before the foundations of the Earth. This is, this is such a comforting fact, Romans 8 is the chapter on this, what can separate you from the love of Jesus Christ? Nothing. Let's turn to Romans 8:30, this is just a preview of something I'll get to in five years, Romans 8:30. You laugh, I'm just kidding. Actually, we'll start in 29, this is referred to oftentimes when we get to verse 30 is the golden chain, "for those whom He foreknew," that is He's foreknown, "He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son so that in order that He might be the first born among many brothers," is the adoption language, it goes on to say, "and those whom He predestined, He called and those whom He called, He justified and those whom He justified, He glorified." And what you'll realize is there's nothing that breaks this golden chain, nothing, there's there's no outs. If you've been called you, if you've been predestined, you're called and if you've been called you will be justified, if you've been justified you will be glorified, nothing breaks the golden chain. Isn't that comforting that if you're saved, nothing can separate you from the love of Jesus Christ? And that's what we see here, is he's saying that you've been chosen, you belong to Jesus. And now turn back

to Romans 1 and we'll get to our third point. And just so you know, the children returned early, I still have time. Romans Chapter one verse seven, "you are called to be saints to all those in Rome who are loved by God," noticed that you're loved by God. That's His agape love, His special love and called to be saints. Wait a second, I learned as a child that a saint is only a saint if you've performed two verified miracles and you've lived an exemplary life and died an exemplary death. Where did we hear that? Catholic Church. The Catholic Church taught this thing called sainthood and saints are only people who have verified miracles, two of them, not just one, two. If you have one, you can be what is it, let me get the word correctly beatified. Or, but if you have two, you can be sent, you can receive sainthood. The problem with that view is it's just not biblical. The Bible is very clear throughout the Bible, that if you are in Jesus Christ, you are a saint. Well, what does it mean to be a saint? Well, first, it means to be set apart, that's what the word means hagiois, set apart. In the Old Testament. It was this word for cutting. it was this idea of you take, you cut a piece of meat and you set the meat apart and it was carried on through this idea of a saint is someone who is cut apart, they're set apart to God from the world, set apart to God. And so if you're chosen by God, if God has placed His love on you, if you're adopted into His family, He has set you apart from the world to Himself. That is why you're a saint, not because of what you've done, not because of the miracles you've performed, not because of your exemplary life, you're a saint because God has chosen you as a saint, period. End of story, so live like one. That's the whole point of sainthood. Revelation 14:12, he talks to the Saints that belonged to Jesus Christ. It's the Saints who will inherit the kingdom of heaven, not just Mother Teresa. Saints, everyone who has found in Jesus Christ will inherit the kingdom of God.

[00:42:57] Well, I don't feel much like a saint. Well, do you have two verified miracles? Just kidding. I don't feel much like a saint, that's okay cause Paul struggled with that as well. Who will set us free, who will deliver us from this body of sin of death? Jesus Christ, our Lord. Who has set His love upon us? So fulfill your calling. What do you want to be when you grow up? Kinsley asked me that this morning. And I answered it. She said, you're a grown up, right? And I was like, no, I'm not a grown up, she said, but you have kids. I was like, I know, but I'm still not a grown up, your a pastor, I'm not, you're not allowed to do those things if you're not a grown up. But I'm not grown up yet. But, what do you want to be when you grow up? The answer should be, I want to be a saint, I want to be obedient. I want to find my identity as a child of God, that's all that matters in this world. Not money, not fame, not accomplishments, not success. All that matters is who do you belong to? Are you child of the devil, 1 John 3, or are you a child of God? That's all that matters in this world, if you boil everything down, it just matters what family are you a part of? That's pretty simple.

Speaker 1 [00:44:27] So let me read you a hymn, and this is where we end. I sing a song of saints of God, patient and brave and true, who toiled and fought and live and died for the Lord they loved anew. And one was a doctor and one was a queen and one was a shepherdess on the green. They were all of them saints of God, I mean, God helping to be one to. They loved their Lord so dear, so dear in God's love made them strong. They followed the right, for Jesus sake, the whole of their good lives long. One was a soldier and one was a priest and one was slain by fierce wild beast. And there's not any reason, no, not the least why I shouldn't be one, too, they live not only in ages past. There are hundreds and thousands still, the world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will. You can meet them in school or in the lanes or at sea, in church or in trains or in shops or at Tea, this is clearly written by a British person, for the saints of God are just folks like me. And I mean to be one to.

[00:45:50] Let's pray. Father, God, I thank You for Your Word, I thank You for the fact that You've chosen us, that You love us. God that we don't have to fear sin and death, that we don't have to fear Your judgment. That we can enter into Your courts with Thanksgiving and praise because we are Your children and a smile comes to Your face every time we pray, every time we open the Word of God, we open Your Word, Lord, You just love to spend time with us. And we say dumb things, and we say things that are wrong even in our requests. But You know better, You love us and Your Spirit intercedes for us and Your Son has covered us in His righteousness. Lord, I pray that we would be saints to Your glory, that we would live as we've been called to be. We pray this in Your Son's name, Amen.