

1. Learning Why We Are Called Saints

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics about some of the key Biblical principles that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children from the book of Romans. Although Paul had not visited the city of Rome at the time that he wrote this letter to the Christians in that city, Paul knew many Christians who were living in the city of Rome. Many of these had probably been led to Christ by Paul in other cities and had later moved to the city of Rome. As a result, Paul had some key principles that he wanted to teach his spiritual children that lived in that city. In the same way, we also want to help our physical and spiritual children to learn, understand and apply these principles.

In Romans 1:1-6, we read, “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.” Paul began this letter with a very important lesson that we want to help our children to understand by the way we apply it in our own lives. We see that Paul called himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ. The word that is translated “bondservant” is the word that was used in the Roman Empire to describe a slave who was under the total control of his master.

However, the Bible gives the word a much fuller meaning. In Exodus 21:5-6, we read, “But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.” Here, we see that among the Jews a person could choose to become a slave of his master. Such a person was willingly making a choice to become a love slave and serve a master for whom he had a great love and respect. We want to show our children by our own example that we view our relationship to Christ as that of a love slave and that we want to serve the Lord for the rest of our lives because of the great love and respect that we have for Christ.

Paul also said that he had been called by Christ to be an apostle. The word that is translated “called” is used eleven times in the New Testament and three of those times are in these first seven verses in Romans one. In verses six and seven, we see that we are called by Christ to salvation and we are called to be saints. The word means to be called by Christ to salvation or to be divinely appointed to serve the Lord. In verses six and seven, we see that the Christians in Rome had received both kinds of calls. As Christians, we also have received both kinds of calls. We want to help our children understand that we have been called by Christ to salvation. In addition, we are divinely called to be saints. Paul said that he had been set apart or appointed by God to share the Gospel. We also want to help our children understand that we have been given this same appointment.

We see that the Gospel of God was promised in the Old Testament through the men that God had

appointed as His prophets. The message of the Gospel is the message of Jesus Christ our Lord who has saved us from our sins. In Matthew 1:20-21, an angel told Joseph, “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.’” Jesus was the One from the family of David that fulfilled the promise of God and has saved us from our sins.

We see that Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power. The word that is translated “declared” means *to define or determine*. In Romans 1:4, we see that God clearly defined that Christ was different from every other human by His resurrection. God said at the beginning of the ministry of Christ in Matthew 3:17, “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Then, God verified this statement by raising Christ from the dead after His crucifixion.

We also see that Christ showed His submission to the Father by carrying out His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is also important to help our children understand as we help them grow in their understanding of how to serve the Lord effectively. Just as Christ showed His submission to the Father, we want to show our children what it means for us to be in submission to Christ. As we are in submission to Christ, He is able to work through our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 says, “‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” When we are in submission to Christ so that we minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, we see in Acts 4:31 that we will be able to speak the Word of God with boldness.

Paul said that it was through God that we have received grace. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” It is the grace of God that has provided our salvation. God is the One who gave us the faith to believe and our salvation had nothing to do with our own works. In addition, God also created us in Christ for good works. God prepared in advance the good works that He has for every single Christian. In the case of Paul, God had made the plan that Paul would be the apostle to the Gentiles. The appointment of Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles has resulted in making faith available to all nations because Paul was obedient in carrying out the ministry that the Lord had prepared for him.

In the same way, we see that we are also called of Jesus Christ. First, God has called each one of us to salvation through Christ. Second, God has prepared the good works that He has for each one of us as Christians. We want to help our children understand the fact that God called them both to salvation and to the good works that God has prepared for them once they place their faith in Christ. As physical or spiritual parents, we want to show them how to carry out the ministry that God has prepared for them. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does

its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” We see several key lessons that we want to share with our children as we show them how to put these verses in practice in their daily lives.

We want to help our children learn to speak the truth of the Word of God. We want to show them how to share the truth of the Word of God in love. We want to show them by our example what it means when it says that Christ is the head. We want to help them learn to function as a part of body of Christ. We want to help them understand that every Christian has something to supply to the rest of the body of Christ. We want to show them how to serve the Lord effectively. We want to help them understand that the body functions effectively when each person learns to do his or her share. We also see that such ministry by each Christian will cause the growth of the body because every person in the body is learning to edify or build up the other parts of the body in love.

In order for our children to learn to function effectively in the body of Christ, Romans 1:7 says, “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In this verse, we see that Paul mentioned two things about the Christians in Rome that are also true of our children once they become Christians. First, we see that every child of God is called the “beloved of God”. When we get to Romans 8, we will see that nothing can separate a Christian from the love of God. That chapter concludes in Romans 8:38-39 by saying, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We want to help our children understand that no created thing can separate them from the love of God because they are the beloved of God.

Second, we see that every child of God is called to be a saint. Here, we see that all Christians are called by God to be saints. We are called by God to salvation. We are called by God to serve Him. Here, we see that we are called by God to be saints. The word “saint” means *to be set apart from sin and made holy*. Christ has forgiven all of our sins: past, present and future. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” God has chosen us and called us His own special people. He tells us what He has called and chosen us to do.

He says that we are called to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Here, we see that we are called to be saints so that we can share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others so that they can also be called out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of Christ. As we show our children how to share the Gospel with others, they also learn to proclaim the praises of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn why we have been called saints.