

“Called of God”
Romans 1:6-7
(Preached at Trinity, November 12, 2006)

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

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

1. We’ve been at Paul’s opening salutation to the Book of Romans. In these opening verses Paul gives us a lengthy description of himself and his calling.
 - A. In **Verse 1** Paul identifies himself as a servant, an apostle called by Jesus Christ, a man set apart unto the Gospel of God.
 - B. The next three verses describe this Gospel. The Book of Romans is a book that defines and outlines the Gospel.
 1. It is a planned Gospel, God’s purpose of redemption for His people. It was foretold by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures.
 2. It is a Gospel that finds it’s fulfillment in Christ. Jesus Christ IS the Gospel.
 3. It is a Gospel that describes the death of Christ, the perfect propitiating sacrifice
It is a Gospel that describes His resurrection
 4. It is a Gospel that describes the infinite power through which Christ has now been exalted to the right hand of the Father.
 - C. We looked at the Lordship of Christ. **Verse 2** describes Him as Jesus Christ our Lord. He is Lord over every aspect of our lives. We saw that there’s an intellectual implication, ethical implication, vocational implication, political implication, global implication. If Jesus is your Savior, He must also be your Lord.
 - D. Last week we examined the nature of grace that results in the obedience of faith.
2. This morning I want to direct your attention to **Verses 6-7**
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. In **Verse 1** we saw that Paul was “called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,”
I pointed out that this was a vocational call, not a call to salvation.
 - B. 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.”

3. This morning I want to examine what it means to be called unto salvation. We must distinguish between the general call and the particular call.
 - I. In a general sense all men are called unto salvation
 - A. The Gospel is offered to all of humanity
 1. We often refer to this as God's free offer of grace
 2. It is a genuine offer

Romans 10:13 – "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
 3. No one who genuinely comes to Christ has ever been turned away
 - B. Jesus describes the general call to salvation in a parable that describes the call as an invitation to a feast - **Matthew 22:1-14**
 1. Our Lord's parables taught of the nature of the Kingdom – this one speaks of God's gracious invitation to come.
 2. The invitation was first offered to the Jews, but they would not come. This surely demonstrates the cold treatment most men give towards the Gospel.

Matthew 22:5-6 – "But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*."
 3. Notice carefully God's attitude towards those who shun His Gospel

Matthew 22:7 – "But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."
 4. Being rejected by the Jews it was opened unto all men.

Matthew 22:9 – "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

 - a. To all within the call of the Gospel there is a joyous invitation to come.
 - b. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves
 5. The parable closes with the danger of hypocrites within the church. The call of the Gospel goes forth and there will be many attracted to its promises without being clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

Matthew Henry – "How camest thou to the Lord's table, at such a time, unhumbléd and unsanctified? What brought thee to sit before God's prophets, as his people do, when thy heart went after thy covetousness? *How camest thou in?* Not by the door, but *some other way, as a thief and a robber.* It was a tortuous entry, a possession without colour of a title."

Matthew 22:14 – "For many are called, but few *are* chosen."
- II. Let's look at God's particular call – the call unto salvation
 - A. It is based upon an eternal covenant
 1. When we think about the subject of salvation we need to remember that it all flows from God's eternal covenant of redemption. In this covenant God foreordained everything for the accomplishment of our salvation. All God's covenants, all of His dealings with men, all of history is an unfolding of this eternal covenant.
 2. In this eternal covenant of redemption God chose a multitude from among the fallen race of men and ordained them unto salvation

3. The Bible teaches that salvation is an act of God accomplished in eternity past – we are called from the foundation of the world.
Ephesians 1:4 – “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”
2 Thessalonians 2:13 – “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”
2 Timothy 1:9 – “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”
- B. This calling is unconditional
1. In no way was election dependent upon any foreseen faith or good works
Romans 9:11 – “(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)”
 - a. The nature of man renders him totally incapable of loving God or keeping His commands. – “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”
 - b. If election it was based upon any foreseen good then it would no longer be by grace, which Scripture denies.
Ephesians 2:8 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
 2. What about references to God’s foreknowledge.
1 Peter 1:2 – “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father”
Romans 8:29-30 – “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”
 - a. Some would teach that this means that God foreknew who would believe and then elected them based upon that knowledge.
 - b. God’s foreknowledge is not a passive recognition of future events Rather His knowledge is based upon His active decree.
Acts 2:23 – “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”
 - c. References to God’s foreknowledge refer to the foreknowledge of His chosen people not to His foreknowledge of their good works or a foreknowledge of their faith
 - d. We believe because God ordained it, not because of any ability of our own.

Acts 13:48 – “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

- e. God’s knowledge of His elect points to His intimate relationship with them – His foreknowledge points to this relationship based upon His electing love.

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

Matthew 7:23 – “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

D. It is irresistible

1. This does not mean that God overpowers the human will. Lost men willfully continue in their sin until God performs His work of grace.
2. It does mean that God by His Spirit breathes new life into the spirit of a man which enables Him to believe and which makes him willing. In essence, He changes our nature giving us a new nature.
John 6:37 – “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”
Philippians 2:13 – “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.”
3. Look at **2 Corinthians 4:2-6**
 - a. Paul said he had faithfully handled the Gospel. He had preached the Word without compromise calling all men to repent and turn to Christ.
 - b. Most, however, would not heed his call. Why?
 - c. In **Verses 3-4** we find the problem of humanity. We find the reason why most reject the general call of the Gospel. There is a conspiracy between Satan and our wicked hearts to continue to reject God’s demands upon us.
Notice their rejection did not change Paul’s message.
2 Corinthians 4:5 – “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”
 - d. We also see here the glorious effectual call of God that leads to salvation.
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.”
 - e. We were dead in sin but God’s almighty power raised us from the dead. Lazarus is the perfect example.

E. It is immutable and thus renders the salvation of the elect certain

- Romans 11:29** – “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.”
1. There is not the slightest hint of uncertainty
Romans 8:30 – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”
 2. It is accomplished in the saving work of Christ
 3. It is protected by the preserving power of the Holy Spirit

III. The Purpose of God's call unto salvation

A. Ultimately the glory of God

Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

1. God's glory is the full expression of His being or attributes or character
All of God's works magnify His Divine essence.
2. Our righteous lives testify to the power of our great God that all may see and stand in awe.

1 Peter 2:12 – “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

B. That God's will might prevail

1. We hear much about the will of man
2. God works all things after the council of His own will

Romans 9:11 – “(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)”

Matthew 11:25-26 – “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

C. That we might be His holy people

1 Peter 2:9 – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

1. God has saved us unto holiness
2. We are called to be saints

Conclusion:

1. Remember, the Gospel goes forth to all men. All are commanded to repent and turn to Christ. If you haven't, why not? Is your heart so wicked that Christ has no value in your eyes. Pray that God might open your eyes to see your wickedness.
2. If God has called you to salvation it is essential that you walk worthy of your calling.
1 Thessalonians 2:12 – “That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”
Colossians 1:10-13 – “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; ¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:”