

**“A Challenge to Whole-Hearted Commitment!”**

**Romans 1:1-7 (Mostly verse :1)**

**Hymns: 34, 38, 80, 92, 111, 120, 605**

**1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God  
Romans 1:1 (NKJV)**

*When the Apostle Paul introduces himself to the Roman Church, a church he did not plant himself, he does so in a three-fold way: as a Bondservant, an Apostle and as Separated to God’s Gospel.*

*As a young believer, in my early 20s, before I was a pastor, I studied this passage prayerfully. It was my desire to be LIKE PAUL ... similar to young basketball players wanting to be “like Mike” –*

*In those early days, I read John Murray’s entire excellent commentary on Romans!*

*Later, when I was a pastor in Maine, I spoke at the Reformed Fellowship Conference, on the topic of “Suffering in Hell” ...*

*At this point, John Murray had already went to be with the LORD in Heaven, but Mrs. Murray, John Murray’s mother, introduced herself to me after I spoke ...*

**I. A Bondservant – 1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ,... Romans 1:1 A (NKJV)**  
*Paul introduces himself as a bondservant ...*

*1. This is an unusual start for him as he usually introduced himself first as an apostle ...*

**1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,  
1 Corinthians 1:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ... 2 Corinthians 1:1  
A(NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), Galatians 1:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,... Ephesians 1:1 A (NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, Colossians 1:1  
(NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, 1 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV)**

*Of course, he mentions being an apostle here as well, but before he does, he introduces himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ –*

2. *A bondservant, the Greek term is δοῦλος –*

A. *Property of an owner –*

B. *For Paul, from a Hebrew background, this meant he was a permanent slave, by choice –*

**21 “Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: <sup>2</sup> If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. <sup>3</sup> If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. <sup>4</sup> If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. <sup>5</sup> But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ <sup>6</sup> 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. Exodus 21:1–6 (NKJV)**

C. *For Paul’s readers, the Romans, Paul’s introduction of himself as a δοῦλος / bondservant / bondslave was saying Paul had no will or agenda that was his own, his only will / agenda in writing to the Romans was the one he was given by his Master, our Lord Jesus Christ –*

D. *In Rome, there were bondservants of kings, whose words / works carried great AUTHORITY because of whom they were “servants” of, Paul as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, is not claiming lowliness, no not even slightly, rather he is claiming AUTHORITY which the Roman Christians would have to respect ...*

## **II. An Apostle – sent one – called to be an apostle, Romans 1:1 B (NKJV)**

*A high, dignified office in the church.*

1. *An apostle was one who had seen the risen Christ, and had been with Him Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, John’s baptism –*

**<sup>21</sup> “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Acts 1:21–22 (NKJV)**

A. *Paul witnessed Christ’s resurrection on the road to Damascus –*

**9 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup> and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. <sup>4</sup> Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” <sup>5</sup> And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” <sup>6</sup> So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” Acts 9:1–6 (NKJV)**

B. *Yet, Paul was not with the Apostles from the start of Christ's ministry? How could he be qualified?*

<sup>15</sup> But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. <sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. Galatians 1:15–18 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 2 Corinthians 12:2 (NKJV)

- *Before Paul started his ministry he was in Arabia, and Damascus, and it seems **was caught up to the third heaven**. And so, he had his own special training for his apostolic ministry, with Jesus, not with men ...*
- *Jesus' apostles spent three years with him / Paul spent three years with him, an MDiv. Degree is a three year Masters Degree – yet we are not apostles ...*

2. *Paul claims this apostolic authority, not to boast, but to claim “thus saith the LORD” authority, Biblical Authority for his letters ...*

*The apostle Peter attests to Paul's letters being Scripture -*

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; <sup>15</sup> and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, <sup>16</sup> as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:14–16 (NKJV)

### *III. Separated to God's Gospel -*

*...separated to the gospel of God Romans 1:1 (NKJV)*

“Separated unto the gospel of God” is parallel to “called to be an apostle”. The separation here spoken of does not refer to the predestination of Paul to the office, as in Galatians 1:15, but to the effectual dedication that occurred in the actual call to apostleship and indicates what is entailed in the call. No language could be more eloquent of the decisive action of God and of the completeness of Paul's resulting commitment to the gospel. All bonds of interest and attachment alien or extraneous to the promotion of the gospel have been cut asunder and he is set apart by the investment of all his interests and ambitions in the cause of the gospel.”

John Murray – “The Epistle to the Romans”

1. *We have in our culture a phrase which is a great insult, which is sometimes used in argument I guess with someone we might think wasting their life – “Get a Life!” Paul, in his whole-hearted commitment to God's Gospel, had a LIFE!*

2. *He describes this Life / Gospel in verses :2-5 –*

<sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. <sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, <sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; Romans 1:2-6 (NKJV)

- A. *As promised in the Old Testament “Holy Scriptures” - :2*
- B. *As concerning God’s Son Jesus Christ – meaning He is eternal God :3*
- C. *Also, He is of the seed of David and so Jesus is both God & man - :3*
- D. *He is declared, I believe you could say “proved” to be Son of God, through the resurrection - :4*
- E. *He received grace, apostleship for obedience to the faith among the nation ... Paul was called to be apostle to the Gentiles / the nations - :5*
- F. *He tells them, and us, ‘you are called too,’ - :6*

IV. *We are called too; called to be “saints” –*

<sup>7</sup> 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. Romans 1:7 (NKJV)

- 1. *Saints – ἅγιος hagios Holy Ones / separated ones ... we like Paul are separated to the Gospel ...*

“All bonds of interest and attachment alien or extraneous to the promotion of the gospel have been cut asunder and he is set apart by the investment of all his interests and ambitions in the cause of the gospel.” John Murray

- 2. *What does this mean to you?*

- A. *For some singleness / missionary service –*

*“the vows of God are on me, I may not stay to play with shadows, or to pluck earthy flowers, till I my work have done, and have rendered up account.” Amy Carmichael*

- B. *For all it has to be whole-hearted commitment to Jesus Christ, He has to be first –*

<sup>26</sup> **“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:26–27 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. Philippians 1:21 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:7–11 (NKJV)