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Meeker Christian church 9/25//22 ROMANS SERIES #1 introduction

The book of Romans was most likely written from Corinth at the end of Paul's 3rd missionary journey in 57-58 AD only 8 years before Paul's martyrdom in Rome. It was written to explain and clarify Christianity to the believers and new converts who met together in Rome. The book of Romans is recognized by many as the greatest theological treatise ever written. It is characterized as a "systematic gospel" or simply as a step by step revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and 1/3 of the trinitarian Godhead - making it clear that Jesus is the only possible source of salvation and hope.

This Paul, writer of Romans was given the birth name of Saul. He was born in Tarsus in the area we know as Turkey. He was a very strong Jewish patriot to the point of receiving authority from the Jewish High Priest to pursue and persecute Christians to their death. On one of those trip on the road to Damascus around 35 AD He was converted to become a Christian by the miraculous calling recorded in Acts 9. A short time later Saul became known as Paul. That is the name by which we know and recognize him. Much of the book of Acts authored by Dr. Luke is about Paul. The largest number of books in the New Testament are penned by him, 13 and possibly 14 of the N.T's 27 books are inspiration of the Holy Spirit through Paul.

Keep Romans 1 handy this morning as we will return again and again to it's content: Romans 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-* The term *servant* implies Paul recognized Jesus as His rabbi – Jesus, the perfect one from whom Paul chose to learn and devote his passion, purpose and very life. The word servant is translated from the Greek word "dulos" which means slave. Paul teaches and models that a believers life fulfilling role on earth and reason for our very existence is so that we will follow his

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example and become a passionate servant of the Lord. In His own words Paul said it like this in 1 Corinthians 11:1 *Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ*; and again in Philippians 3:17 *Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.*

Romans 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus*

Christ is a title of the highest honor, but in the case of Jesus the title also became used as a name for Jesus.

Jesus was a common name used widely in that first century generation as it is in many cultures today. By the way it was not Jesus' parents Joseph and Mary's decision to name him Jesus, but rather an angel messenger bestowed the name Jesus: Matthew 1:20-21 *But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give **Him** the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins."* The literal translation of the name Jesus is "The Lord is my salvation"

In this book of Romans context *Christ Jesus*, refers to the virgin born son of God, the central figure of the Christian religion described for us in the gospel books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John who was crucified and the only person to be raised from the dead to never die again. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts makes it crystal clear to anyone searching for the answers to life: Acts 4:12 *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

Jesus himself records it for us like this in John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

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Without question and above all argument and controversy Christ Jesus for mankind is the most important and significant entity of creation. For without Him there would be no salvation and no realization of the promise of eternity for the believer in heaven.

We continue with that first verse:

Romans 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle ///*

called to be an apostle – The 9th chapter of the book of Acts records the events of Paul's specific divine call in Acts 9:15-16 *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. **16** I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.* Ananias (1 of 3 persons with that name in the NT) was a devout believer who lived in Damascus and who was well aware of Paul's persecution of Christians and quite understandably feared being sent to heal Paul's blindness that he received by the brightness of the light on the Road to Damascus at the time of his conversion./// But in spite of his fear, Ananias went anyway and by the power of God gave sight to God's chosen apostle to the gentile world. That is just another example of the Sunday School lessons we are learning about coming to Jesus, going for Jesus, living a righteous example of service and suffering in the name of Jesus!

Praise God for the instruction and examples of Christians through the ages who have carried the mandate into our generation and into our lives right here and right now for service in Meeker, Colorado, USA, on earth!!! And then if that were not already enough, to come to the realization that our personal and collective instruction and example is critical for the next generation and the future of Christianity on earth!

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The title “apostle” in the *called to be an apostle* – interpreted means a vigorous and pioneering advocate or supporter of a particular policy, idea, or cause. In this context it is a model after the likeness of the twelve apostles that Jesus selected and trained while on earth. Paul was an example of that “apostolic” title throughout his life and martyrdom. And the Bible records it for our instruction, observation, edification, and application today.

Back to Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-

We have seen the call of Paul in Acts 9, now we examine the phrase: “set apart.” A great victory of the devil and his forces of evil at work on earth has resulted in complacency regarding the high calling of being called and being “set apart” in the service of the King of Kings. As we learned from the third purpose in the Purpose Driven Life series we believers are to imitate the life of our Lord Jesus while He was on earth.

The devil delights in our Bible Colleges and seminaries struggling to get students. The devil has manipulated our culture to believe that since ministry does not meet the cultural definition of life success and financial rewards students are advised to seek other occupations./// Who are being “set apart” and trained to teach this world about Christ, to model the life of Paul who models his life after Jesus our Savior? Here is another question for you to ponder: I wonder perhaps if God has allowed all this to happen to cause believers of our generation to consider if we have given too much responsibilities and become too dependent on the professional ministry and have delegated to them the responsibilities that every believer should be doing??? There may not be a definitive answer, but in a moment of self reflection it is worth considering.///

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- In this Romans study we gain further understanding of becoming like Jesus as we study what it means to be “set apart.” Paul was “set apart” for the purpose of the proclamation of the gospel to the gentiles – in like manner, so are each of us who have made the decision to repent of our sins, confess our belief in Jesus as the virgin born Son of God and followed through with baptism. In that respect every believer no matter their occupation is “set apart” to model the example of the Apostle Paul and tell others about Jesus.

The more we know or learn about Paul, the more challenged we will become in our own glorious assignment of being “set apart” for the gospel of God.

Every generation has unique challenges with the obstructions placed before them by the devil. It is a challenge to ever believe righteous endurance! Satan hates and despises your every action and attitude of righteousness, while the angels of heaven celebrate every victory.

Let me take this every believer being “set aside” just a step further. In all the years of my life I am persuaded that we have over emphasized gaining knowledge without the practical application of putting what we know where we are in our Christian life to work in righteous service. I know for sure I am guilty as charged! I was in my 20’s and had been in church all my life when Merv said “you are our Junior High Sunday School teacher!” I discovered immediately I had not taken my instruction seriously enough and had depended on my faith and heritage values to carry me in life. If Merv had not challenged me to teach I doubt I ever would have ended up in ministry.

You and I just like Paul and the rest of Christendom are “set apart.” Please, each of you pray courageously for the Holy Spirit’s guidance on what application that has in your life and service in Jesus’ name.

Romans 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart.*

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for the gospel of God-

The last thing in this verse is the phrase “gospel of God.” Gospel defined means the good news which is the proclamation and instruction of the purposes of life explained so that the fullness and completion of our life purpose may be realized.

Take just a moment and pat yourself on the back for the righteous things you have learned about the gospel of God and put into practice so far in life. Now take just a moment and pat yourself a bit lower as a reminder of things you are being motivated to do in the proclamation of the gospel of God in your life. Now perhaps a bit more forcefully, pat yourself on the lowest part of your back where you are sitting for what righteous things you have not done that you have known to do!!!

Here is another encouraging reminder from Paul I want to leave you with today, it is in Philippians 3:17 “*keep your eyes on those who live as we do.*” The more we know and practice the models of righteous persons in the Bible and in our lives the more we are able to be a model for others to copy.

Invitation: