

THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU

Romans 1:1-7

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Who are you?
2. You might say, “I’m Henry (or Jessica, or David, etc.)” But that’s just your name.
3. You might say, “I’m a carpenter.” That’s just your occupation.
4. Who you are (your identity) is determined and defined by your relationship to God. If there is no God, if nature is all there is, then you are just a part of nature. You’re just an intelligent animal. You have no objective value, or purpose, or moral responsibility. If you want to help others, good. If you want to hurt others, that’s fine too. If you want to be responsible, fine; if you want to be irresponsible, that’s okay too. If you want to live for money, or for fame, or for pleasure, or to make the world a better place, that’s all up to you. And if you don’t like living and want to kill yourself, that’s fine. It doesn’t matter. Nothing really matters.
5. I came across a song recently by country music singer **Kelsea Ballerini** that reflects the philosophy of atheistic naturalism. It’s called “Nothing Really Matters.” Here’s some lines from chorus:

Nothing really matters, we're on a rock in space
Nothing really matters, ain't a test that you ace
Nothing really matters when I'm seeing your face
And I'm wearing that dress that you like
Nothing really matters, aliens, pyramids
Nothing really matters, kiss whoever you kiss
Hush all the chatter, climb your own ladder
'Cause nothing really matters, nothing really matters anyway
Anyway, anyway, yeah
6. But if there is a God who created you, then that changes everything about who you are. Suddenly you have worth, and purpose, and responsibilities.

7. It's important to know who you are, because that's what determines how you treat others, and how you treat yourself, and what you do with your life.
8. Today I'm going to teach you the truth about you; four things that the Bible says about you.

II. INTRODUCING ROMANS

1. Today we are starting a new sermon series through the book of Romans.
2. Romans just might be the most important book of the Bible.
3. **Marther Luther** "[Romans is] the clearest gospel of all."
4. **John Calvin** "If a man understands it, he has a sure road opened for him to the understanding of the whole Scripture."
5. **William Tyndale** "[Romans is] the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament."
6. **J.I. Packer** "Paul's letter to Rome is the high peak of Scripture."
7. So, over the next few months we are going to take these famous theologians at their word, and we are going to study the book of Romans.
8. A little bit of background.
9. Romans was written by Paul, who wrote thirteen books in the New Testament.
10. It is believed that he wrote it in AD 57, less than thirty years after Christ died, probably while he was on his third (last) missionary journey. Paul had taken up an offering from several churches to give to the Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering due to persecution and famine. Paul didn't start the church in Rome, and he had never visited them, so his hope was to drop off the money and then visit the Christians in Rome on his way to Spain.

III. TEXT: Romans 1:1-7

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, and set apart for the gospel of God—2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures—3 concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David, according to the flesh 4 and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead. 5 Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring

about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, 6 including you who are also called by Jesus Christ.

7 To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. INTRODUCING THE SENDER

1. Romans is not a book; it is a letter. And the first part of the letter contains the salutation. This is a typical salutation back then. It begins by identifying the sender – Paul (v. 1), and then it identifies who the letter is sent to – all who are in Rome (v. 7).
2. Paul says several things about himself.
 - i. His name (v. 1). He calls himself Paul. We know a lot about Paul because he wrote much of the New Testament, and the book of Acts is mostly about Paul. Paul went by two names. Paul was his Roman name, and Saul was his Jewish name. Paul was a Jewish Christian. The most amazing thing about Paul is his conversion to Christianity. Before Paul became a Christian, he persecuted Christians. He hunted them down and had them thrown in jail. One day he was traveling to Damascus to arrest some Christians when he had a vision of Jesus, and immediately he went from persecutor to preacher. The book of Acts records his conversion, and his three missionary journeys on which he started many churches in Asia and Europe.
 - ii. He is a servant of Jesus Christ (v. 1). We'll come back to this later, but Paul makes it clear that His master is Jesus, and He is working for and living for Him.
 - iii. He is an apostle (v. 1).
 1. There are some people today who call themselves apostles. There's an entire movement called the New Apostolic Reformation in which there are some who claim to be apostles who can do miracles and are receiving new revelation. What should we think about this?
 2. The word apostle literally one sent. It refers to a messenger, or one sent on a mission. Paul was literally sent out to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Rm 1:1, 5; Acts 9:15; Gal 2:8).

3. The theologian John Stott says that the word “apostle” is used in three ways in Scripture.¹
 - a. In one sense it seems to be applied to all Christians, in that all Christians are sent out to be Christ’s witnesses.
 - i. **John 20:21** As the Father has sent me, I also send you.
 - b. In a second sense, it is used to describe apostles of churches. These were messengers who were sent on special errands from one church to another. In Philippians 2:5 Paul calls Epaphroditus an apostle, because the church in Philippi had sent him to help Paul. The CSB translates the word as “messenger.” Stott says that this sense may be applied to missionaries and other Christians sent on special missions.
 - c. Third, the word applies to that small group of men who were “apostles of Christ.” This is the gift of apostleship. Jesus chose twelve men and called them apostles (Lk 6:12-13), and then He later called Paul, probably James the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19), and possibly one or two others. And they had four special qualifications:
 - i. They were eyewitnesses of Jesus and his resurrection. Acts 1:21-22
 - ii. They were personally appointed and authorized by Christ. Mk 3:14
 - iii. They were specially inspired by the Holy Spirit to write and teach Scripture. Jn 16:13
 - iv. They were given the power to work miracles to validate their message. Lk 9:1; 2 Cor 12:12
4. Based on this information, I don’t think there are modern day apostles.

¹ John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, Chapter 4

- a. First, no one today fits those qualifications.
 - b. Second, the Bible says (Eph 2:20) that the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets – on the Scripture they wrote. Since the foundation has already been laid, and Scripture is no longer being written, then there is no need for apostles.
 - c. Third, the New Testament is clear that there are only two offices in the church – pastor/elder and deacon. The pastor is the leader of the church, and deacons are those who serve in the church (paid and volunteers) under the direction of the pastor.
5. So, if someone says they are an apostle, ask what they mean. If they mean that they are a missionary, or that they have been sent out by their church on a special mission, then sure. But if they mean something else, something more important, like they have the gift of apostleship like Paul and the Twelve, I think they are wrong. At the very least, I think you should be very cautious.

V. INTRODUCING THE MASTER

1. After telling the Romans a little about himself and his message, Paul mentions several things about His master. Remember, he is a servant of Christ Jesus. What does He say about Jesus?
 - i. He is God's Son.
 1. V. 3 "concerning his Son"
 2. V. 4 "and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God"
 3. What does it mean that Jesus is God's Son? All Christians are God's children. Are we on the same level as Jesus?
 4. Jesus is God's unique Son. John 3:16 describes Jesus as God's only begotten, or one and only Son. In Greek it means one of a kind, or unique.
 5. How is Jesus God's unique Son of God?
 - a. Jesus is God's Son by birth. You are God's child by adoption, and by rebirth, or being born again. Jesus is God's Son by birth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

- b. Jesus is God's Son in nature. You only have a human nature, but Jesus has a human and a divine nature (Heb 3:1). He shares all the divine qualities as God the Father – He is eternal, immortal, almighty, all-knowing, etc.
 - c. Jesus is God's Son in character. We don't share God's character. We are sinful. Jesus is perfectly righteous and loving, just like the Father (Heb 4:15).
- 6. Here's a question: How can Jesus be both God and the Son of God? Now we're talking about the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus is a part of the Triune God. The fact that Jesus is both God and God's Son tells us something about God's nature. The Bible says that there is one God in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are coequal and coeternal, and they are distinct. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father. In fact, this passage points to the Trinity. Verse 1 speaks of the gospel of God. Verse 3 says "concerning his Son." And verse 4 says that Jesus was appointed to be God's Son according to the Spirit of holiness.
 - ii. He was shown to be God's son by His resurrection.
 - 1. **Romans 1:4** and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.
 - 2. I don't like the word appointed there. It makes it sound like there was a time when Jesus wasn't God's Son, but when He rose from the grave He was appointed to be God's Son.
 - 3. I prefer the word "declared" (ESV, KJV). The NLT says He was "shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit."
 - 4. In other words, before He rose from the grave, people doubted Him. But the resurrection proved it.

VI. FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT YOU

1. Now that we've learned who Paul is, and we've learned about Paul's message – the gospel, and we've learned about Paul's master, Christ

Jesus, now we can learn about you. In this passage Paul mentions several things about the Christians in Rome, and those things are also true of you.

i. You are a slave of Christ.

1. In verse 1, Paul identifies himself as a servant of Christ.
2. Paul is not the only one. Peter, John, Timothy, Jude, and James also call themselves slaves of Christ Jesus.
3. 1 Pt 2:16 says that all Christians are God's servants.
4. But there's more. The Greek word used here is *doulos*, and it actually means slave. Some Bible translations use the word slave, and some don't. Some think the word "slave" has a negative connotation. But slave is the more accurate word. All slaves are servants, but not all servants are slaves. A servant is hired; a slave is owned; a servant works for wages and can quit, while a slave works for nothing and can't quit.
5. To understand what it means to be a slave of Christ, you have to understand what it meant to be a slave in the first century. Slavery was prominent in the Roman Empire. Slaves made up about 20 percent of the population, or about 12 million. Some were young, some old; they were made up of every race; some were skilled, some unskilled; some educated, some uneducated; some were treated very well, and some were badly mistreated. But all slaves had this in common: They completely belonged to their master, and they lived to serve and please their master.
6. Who are you? You are a slave of Christ Jesus. You are not in charge of your life; Jesus is. Your purpose is not to serve and please yourself, or other people, but to serve and please Jesus.
7. This defines your purpose in life.
8. **2 Corinthians 5:15** And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.
9. You no longer live for yourself, but for Christ.

10. You were not forced into slavery. You chose to become Christ's slave when you put your faith in Jesus. The word for this is bondsman. In the Old Testament you could only own a slave for six years, and then you had to release him. But if the slave loved his master, he could choose to become his slave for life. That was a bond slave. That's what you are as a Christian. You are Christ's bondsman. Out of gratitude, you live your totally and exclusively for Jesus.
11. This is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. A non-Christian asks, What do I want to do with my life, my time, my money, my sexuality? A Christian asks, What does Jesus want me to do with my life, time, money, and sexuality? A non-Christian asks, Will this get me in trouble? Will this hurt me? A Christian asks, Does God want me to do this?
12. Let me ask you: Are you living to serve and please God? Are you handling your money the way God wants you to? Are you handling your sexuality the way God wants you to? Are you treating your body the way Jesus wants you to? Are you treating your family the way God wants you to? If you are a Christian, you should, because you are a slave of Christ.
13. If there is no God and nature is all there is, then you have no purpose. You are your own boss. But the Bible says that you are a slave of Jesus Christ, and that means that you must live your life to serve and please Him.

ii. You are invited by Jesus to be saved.

1. **Romans 1:5-6** 5 Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, 6 including you who are also called by Jesus Christ.
2. Notice that Paul says "including you, who are also called by Jesus Christ." What does it mean to be called by Jesus Christ?
3. The Greek word has two basic senses.

- a. First, it means to name, designate, or give a title to. For example, some of you call me Pastor. In high school my friends called me Andrew, and some called me Drew. Now people call me Andy.
- b. Second, it means to invite. For example, Lydia might say, “Andy, can you go call the kids for dinner?”
- 4. So, when Paul says, “you who are also called by Jesus Christ,” does he mean, “you who are named by Jesus Christ,” or “you who are invited by Jesus Christ?”
- 5. And who is he talking about? Is everyone called by Jesus, or only some people?
- 6. The word “called” is important in the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism.
- 7. On the one hand, Scripture seems to refer to Christians as the called.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 1:23-24** 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. 24 Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God
- 8. On the other hand, the Bible seems to say that everyone is called, but few are chosen.
 - a. **Matthew 22:14 (ESV)** For many are called, but few are chosen.
 - b. In this sense, unbelievers are also called.
- 9. So who are the called – believers, unbelievers, or both?
- 10. Calvinism deals with this by saying that there are two calls: a general call or invitation to everyone to believe the gospel; and an effectual call or invitation given only to some. It is called “effectual” because it is irresistible – those who receive it are irresistibly drawn to Christ. It is only given to some because, according to Calvinism, God has only chosen or elected some for salvation. Therefore, the called are the elect.

11. Arminianism deals with this by saying that there is only one call or invitation to believe and it is extended to everyone. Those who believe are sometimes referred to as the called, or the elect.
12. Both Calvinism and Arminianism teach that Christians are referred to as the called, but Calvinism teaches two calls (invitations), while Arminianism teaches that there is one call rejected by some and accepted by others.
13. I agree with the Arminian position for the following reasons:
 - a. I don't see two calls or invitations in Scripture. I only see one. Scripture shows God calling on all to repent.
 - i. **Acts 17:30** Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent
 - b. Second, the idea of a general call is logically inconsistent. It doesn't make sense for God to invite people to believe, and at the same time refuse to enable them to believe.
 - c. Third, the idea of a general call contradicts God's character. It would be like me giving you a beautiful invitation to my birthday party and saying, "I really hope you can come," but on the inside I don't want you to come, and if you knock on my door, I'm not letting you in. That's hypocritical, insincere, and disingenuous. Sometimes people are like that, but that's not who God is. He doesn't want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Pt 3:9).
14. The truth is that God has invited everyone to believe and be saved, and I think that's what Paul is saying in Romans 1:6.
15. Paul is saying, "Jesus sent me to invite the Gentiles to believe in Jesus, and that includes you; you are also invited by Jesus to believe and be saved."
16. And that includes you in this room today. You are also invited to believe and be saved.

17. The fact that you are a slave of Christ Jesus defines your purpose; the fact that you are invited to believe defines your need.
18. Your deepest need in life is not material, as naturalism says - food, or water, or clothing, or shelter. It is spiritual. You have sinned against God and are headed for eternal punishment. And there is nothing you can do to save yourself. But God has provided a way of salvation. He sent His Son Jesus to die for your sins so that you can go free. If you believe in Jesus, God will forgive you and give you eternal life.

iii. You are loved by God.

1. **Romans 1:7** To all who are in Rome, loved by God
2. Paul tells the Christians in Rome that they are loved by God.
3. Does this apply to you? Does God love you? Absolutely.
4. **John 3:16 (ESV)** For God so loved the world....
5. God doesn't just love some people; He loves everyone.
6. That's the third truth about you. You are loved by God.
7. The fact that you are a slave of Jesus Christ defines your purpose – to serve and please Him. The fact that you are called or invited by Jesus to believe and be saved defines your need. And the fact that you are loved by God defines your value, your importance.
8. You aren't God, but you are loved by God. You aren't the master, you are the slave, but you are loved by the master.
9. What does it mean that God loves you?
 - a. It means you are important to Him.
 - i. Jesus said that God takes care of the birds of the sky, and you are worth more than them.
Mt 7:26
 - ii. In another place, Jesus said any man, if he had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, would rescue it. And then he said that a person is worth far more than a sheep (Mt 12:12).

- iii. Why are you so important? Because as a human being, God created you in His image (Gen 1:26-27). You are different than all the rest of creation in that you were created with the ability and the purpose to know and glorify God (1 Cor 10:31).
 - b. It means that He cares about what happens to you.
 - i. **1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
 - ii. If you are important to God, then He cares about what you're going through. He cares that you're sick; lonely; burned out; struggling financially; have a huge test coming up.
 - iii. He cares about what happens to you, and He wants you to cast all your anxiety on Him – to take it all to Him in prayer.
 - c. It means that He is committed to taking care of you.
 - i. **Psalm 46:1** God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble.
 - ii. Because God loves you, He is committed to providing for your needs, and to protecting you at all times.
 - d. It means that He only does what is best for you.
 - i. He never commands you to do something that is bad for you. His commands are for your good.
 - ii. He never allows anything to happen to you unless He has reason to work it out for your good.
10. How do I know that God loves you? Because He proved it by doing the most difficult, most painful thing that's ever been done. Jesus came to earth, took on human flesh, and was crucified for you, even though you didn't deserve it.
11. **Romans 5:8** But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

iv. You are a saint.

1. **Romans 1:7** To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.
2. There's the word "called" again.
3. Again, it is used in two basic senses. First, it means to name, or designate, or give a title to. Second, it means to invite.
4. In verse 6, the word called means to invite. You are invited by Christ Jesus to believe the gospel and be saved.
5. In this verse – verse 7, it takes on the first meaning. If you are a Christian, then you are given the name or title of saint.
6. In the New Testament, saints are not super-Christians; all Christians are saints.
7. What does it mean to be a saint?
8. The word saint literally means holy one. To be holy means to be set apart.
9. As a Christian, you are saint (set apart) in two ways:
Positionally, and practically.
 - a. Positionally you are a saint because the moment you got saved God set you apart for Himself. You are now God's property, God's slave, God's child.
 - i. Regardless of your conduct, you are a saint.
You are set apart for God.
 - b. Practically you are responsible to act like a saint; to pursue saintly conduct, or holy conduct. God wants you to grow more and more like Jesus every day.

VII. CONCLUSION

1. It's important to know who you are, because that's what determines how you treat others, and how you treat yourself, and what you do with your life.
2. So who are you? If you are a Christian...
 - i. You are a slave of Christ. That defines your purpose – serving and pleasing God. Not yourself; not other people; but God alone.
 - ii. You are invited to by Jesus to be saved. That defines your need. You are a sinner in need of a Savior.

- iii. You are loved by God. That defines your value. You are so important that God sent His Son to die on your behalf.
- iv. You are a saint. That defines your code of conduct – to be holy as God is holy.