

## “The Apostle & Us”

### Romans - The Gospel of God

Romans 1:1-7

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**Jeff:** Our heavenly Father, we are thankful for this day, and thankful for the joy You have set in our hearts because of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of Your Spirit. And we're thankful for the Holy Spirit who continues to work in us and bring about the image of Jesus Christ day by day. Father, we're thankful for the means of grace that You provide in the context of the community of Your church. We're thankful for that community and for the strength that it provides each one of us. We're thankful, Father, that in this world of shifting sand and weak foundations that there is a solid rock on which to stand, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ as He is found in His word. And Lord, we're thankful that we have the time to gather together on Friday mornings to open it together. Lord, we know it to be a light to our feet. We know it to be sweet to the taste, sometimes bitter to the stomach, yet good for us. We pray, Father, that all that we study would be received by us with the utmost joy, knowing that it is Your word—infallible, inerrant and always authoritative.

And Father, as we come we not only think about the joy of coming and the joy of studying Your word, but we also think about others. And Lord, we certainly think about Cheryl as she has entered into this period in her life. And Father, as they anticipate her passing we ask that You'll be near her and be a blessing to her. Certainly be a blessing to Liam and the rest of the family.

Father, we pray for Harvey and ask that You will be with the doctors as they put this pacemaker in. We pray that the surgery would be a success and that there would be no complications and that the healing would go well.

And Father, we certainly pray for Lisa and for Your comfort in the passing of Gil. Lord, what a difficult thing it is to lose a spouse! And Father, we pray that You'll just bless her. We know, Lord, that in this life there will always be that scar. And right now it's a gaping wound. But Lord, in time we pray that You will mend. We pray that You will fill that void as only You can. And we pray that on the day of Christ Jesus there will be happiness again, not only to see Gil but to lay eyes upon Your Son, the Lord Jesus.

Father, we come to You now, asking that You will make us not just joyful at the opening of Your word. But we pray, Father, that we would embody this Word. As we go out into the world and have our interactions with others today, whether they be near or far, we pray that Your hand would be upon us for good, and others as well. Lord, let us not only speak the words of life into the lives of others, but also let us live those words before others. And we pray and ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Don, are you open to romans 1?

**Don Maurer:** Yes, I am.

**Jeff:** Why don't you read Romans 1:1-7?

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**Don:** Sure, okay. *“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; 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.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Transcriber’s Note:** NKJV.

**Jeff:** Okay. Well, last time we were together we looked at why we were studying the book of Romans. And we walked through sort of the obvious. We said it’s the word of God. We looked at some historical reasons—in other words why God in His providence uses or has used the book of Romans in the life of His church. And we also looked at some theological reasons why God used the letter of the apostle Paul, and continues to use it to this very day.

And one of the things that I said the last time that I want to reiterate this time is that it is a valuable letter because of the doctrine it contains. In fact I’ll not forget how in a presbytery examination you have a situation where a presbyter really examines a student in front of the presbytery. And then after the presbyter is done asking the questions the ministers on the floor—the ruling elders—get a chance to ask questions of the student. And so the first part of the exam is thirty minutes, and then the rest of it is an open-ended time period.

And I’ll not forget how there was a student in front of us at one particular meeting. And the examiner asked one question. And the one question that he asked was this. Using the book of Romans, take us through all the loci of systematic theology, all of the topics of systematic theology, and explain where they arise. And so he took us through the doctrine of sin and the doctrine of God and the doctrine of Christ, and so on. And he took us through the book of Romans in that way.

And it was one of those times where you were basically treated to what it was that we talked about the last time we were together. And that is that the book of Romans has many, many, many of the doctrines in it that we hold dear. As it used to be said,. It’s a compendium of Christian theology.

However, I want to also make sure that we’re careful to realize that this isn’t simply a theological textbook. It is a letter written to a group of people at a certain time for a very specific purpose. And you remember the last time we were together I talked to you about the end of the letter. And I talked to you about the Jew/Gentile relationships and how they were at odds with one another and why Paul was addressing those, because he wanted to go to Spain and use the churches there as a hub—that sort of thing. And so it’s a letter. And it’s a letter very specifically to the people in Rome and for a very specific purpose. And so I think that it is valuable for us to think about in that way. So why the letter to the Romans? It’s just to briefly recap.

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Now I want us to enter into the letter to the Romans this morning. And I want us to look at these first seven verses. And I’ve titled this section “The Apostle and Us.” And you’ll see why I’ve titled it that way in just a minute. But one of the things that I want us to notice is some of the different ways that the apostle sees himself as connected to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And first of all he sees himself as a slave—a *dulos*.

Now I said to you previously—and I’m going to say it to you again at some point in the future, and when we get there it would be more appropriate for me to draw a conclusion from it. But what I want you to see in the book of Romans is that not only does Paul begin the book by saying, “I’m a *dulos*; I’m a slave.” But this kind of slave language persists throughout the beginning of the book of Romans.

For instance, notice that he says, “*a servant*,” a slave of Christ Jesus. But then notice what he says in verse 9. “*For God is my witness, whom I serve.*” And again this is a different word. But we find that this word plays into that idea of slavery.

And then notice what he says in 14. “*I am under obligation, both to Greeks and to Barbarians.*” And then he continues the list. And one of the things that I think that we need to take away from this particular section is that Paul is intentionally describing himself as a slave and a servant of Christ Jesus. And as a slave to Christ Jesus he is under obligation to serve Him. And that means to serve those who belong to Christ Jesus who are among the Jews and the Gentiles.

And that means what Paul says in other letters. Quite frankly his life is not his own. His life belongs to Jesus Christ.

Now the reason I say “the apostle and us” is because we don’t get away from that sort of language ourselves. We too are servants of Christ Jesus. And I think it’s a practical point, but I think one that is important for us to think about, even if it’s just for a minute nonetheless. I’ll phrase it as a question. Do we really see our lives as our own, or as Christ’s?

Now here’s the practical import of that, at least for what we find here in the book of Romans thus far. In Paul’s understanding of what it means to be a slave or a servant of Christ he understands himself to be a slave to Christ in service to others. And I think that we might be able to argue that it’s service not only to the world as he preaches the gospel, but especially to the elect in the world, they being brought out of the world by or through his preaching. But my point is that he sees himself as a servant of Christ to serve the church. And that’s the question I think that we have to ask ourselves. Do we see ourselves as servants of Christ serving the church?

And I think that immediately the letter contextualizes itself with that particular kind of thought form. It doesn’t set us off in an individualistic trend or tendency. It sets us in the direction of the church. And I think Paul is communicating that, even if it’s in an ever so subtle way at this point. but it’s still there. It’s going to come up in an in-our-face way later in the letter. But for right now it’s there, and it’s subtly there. So it’s worth thinking about and pondering. And it’s certainly worth discussing if you want to do that. But I’ll pass it over if there isn’t anything at this point. No? Okay.

So a slave first of all. But notice something else. He is an apostle. Now this word is like the word *agape*. If you think about *agape*, it’s the word *love*. It was a rarely used

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word up until the time of Jesus and Paul. And then they began to employ it, and we talked about that.

*Apostle* is another one of those words. It wasn't a popular word if used in and among people. It was a military word, which is interesting when you think about it, because what we find is that the Lord and the Lord's servants begin to employ this word to describe a particular group.

Now I'm going to say something more about that in just a minute. But this word has the idea of a commander of a Naval force.

Now I think this also brings with it the idea of what's known as a *shaliach*. Now what is a *shaliach*?

**Ted Wood:** Isn't that a stick that Irish guys use?

**Jeff:** It is.

**Don:** I thought it was paint that smells and makes stuff—

**Jeff:** Right. A *shaliach* is someone who is sent by another with that person's authority. In other words, when Jesus says, “If you've seen Me you've seen the Father; if you've heard Me you've heard from the Father,” that kind of idea—in other words, He is, as it were, the Father. In other words He comes with the Father's authority behind Him. And what He says is what the Father said to say. You can think of that in many different ways. But the Jews used the idea of a *shaliach* as a legal representative to represent somebody in their absence.

Well, the apostle is the Naval commander. This idea is brought forth. And I think it's an interesting word and there are some good studies that are done on it.

Now there are just a couple of things that I would say. First of all, it's a rarely used word in common parlance. And so it hits the first-century ear in quite a striking way. Secondo all, I think it's interesting that Paul and Jesus do not use something that they might have used in the Old Testament, and that's *prophet*. *Prophet* is not the word that is chosen here to be applied to those in a most intimate context with the Lord. It's *apostle* instead. And I think maybe the difference in terms of the prophet is that he comes with the authority of God not only to speak what he has heard God say, but also there's a future dimension to that. With the apostle you get the sense that there is a speaking of what the Lord has said. But you drop some of the prophetic dimension from that. It's not absent from it. But it's not the main focus of it.

For instance, when you think of a prophet you typically think of a future dimension rather than the application of the Word already written. But when you think of an apostle you think of a revelation given. You don't typically think of a future dimension to it. And so that may be a reason.

The other is that I think there is the idea of this *shaliach*. They are sent by a Naval commander who is obviously sent by someone above him to do a certain task, and he comes with orders. And I think those ideas are all captured in that word *apostle*. Noah, did you have something that you wanted to ask?

**Noah Falbo:** No.

**Jeff:** No? Are you sure?

**Noah:** Yes.

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**Jeff:** You wanted to ask about a *shaliach*, and how that applies to you? *(Laughter)*  
No? All right; okay. Yes?

**Ted:** Me first.

**Sig Tragard:** Oh always; of course!

**Ted:** I’m thinking about where it says that the church was built upon the foundation of “*the apostles and the prophets.*”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Which is a variation of the expression.

**Jeff:** It is.

**Ted:** I also think about the apostle as a commander on the one hand, but also the sentinel—*apostello*; sent out. It’s interesting, because somewhere along the line in church history the apostles pass on to the bishops, and the bishops become monarchical bishops; hence the commander of the Naval force.

**Jeff:** Uh-huh.

**Ted:** I just think that’s interesting. I thought of an apostle as the commander of the Naval force. But it fits into the historic evolution of the successors of the apostles.

**Jeff:** I actually kind of doubt this. I actually think Bruce Bickel snuck back. *(Laughter)* He’s gone back into the lexicons. I think Bruce is really behind this. *(Laughter)*

**Bishop Rodgers:** There are apostles of the church, and there are apostles of Jesus Christ. The apostle’s authority depends on to whom who said it, and the authority who said it.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. The thing that you raise is a really interesting one. You know that the apostles are going to pass away. I think it’s debatable whether or not an apostle is strictly used just for the Twelve. The Twelve is an office. But for instance in Romans 16 we’re going to see that others are called apostles who aren’t part of the Twelve, and who don’t occupy that particular office.

**Bishop:** Right.

**Jeff:** So I think that’s a given. But the interesting thing is that when you look at Acts 15, Acts 15 asks the question. How are the Gentiles justified? And the apostles are alive at that time. So it’s not just a meeting of the apostles getting together—a group of men,. A small band saying, “All right; what are we going to do about this? Does anybody remember what Jesus said? How are we going to apply this?”

In Acts 15 it says that “*the apostles and the elders*” got together and discussed these matters. And the point is that Luke is preparing us already for the passing of the apostles and its transitioning to presbyters, and for them to carry on this kind of activity in the church. What’s that?

**Ted:** He was balancing the presentation.

**Jeff:** Okay. I’m at quite a disadvantage these days. Sometimes it works out great, you know, when I can’t hear. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** I’ll just ask about your earlier point. You were talking about this earlier before you got into the part about the apostles.

**Jeff:** Okay.

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**Sig:** Now I was looking at verse 7.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** “*To all those in Rome who are loved by God, and called to be saints.*”

**Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** In a modern translation, a lot of us—myself included—would think, “*to all those who are loved by God.*” God loves all of us. And then some of the Reformed people have said, well, He just loves those He has called, or that are saved, or whatever. So with your point about the apostles talking about what we do with this Gentile thing, could you comment on that verse?

**Jeff:** Yeah. Yeah, I can. So the next thing he says is that he uses that word *called* three times, right?

**Brave Man:** Yes.

**Jeff:** And I think it may be—

**Sig:** Well, that worked quite nicely in your next point.

**Jeff:** It did work quite nicely; it just kind of segwayed right in. *(Laughter)* Let’s notice. So Paul says, “*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle.*” As the bishop said, he’s obviously called to be an apostle by Jesus Christ. And we see that in Acts chapter 9. “*Set apart for the gospel of God.*”

We’ll come back to that. But notice that idea of *called*. Now the idea of *called* comes up three times in these seven verses. You find it there in verse 1. You find it in verse 6: “*including you who are called to belong to Christ Jesus.*” And that I think is in some sense the inclusio that I was talking about. Here is Paul who is called to occupy the place of an apostle, “*set apart for the gospel of God.*” And then he ends this particular introductory section with “including you.” In other words, it’s through this gospel that you are included, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

And so the idea is, I belong to Christ and have been set apart for this purpose. And you have been called to belong to Jesus Christ; that’s the idea.

And then he wraps up the inclusio with verse 7 as Sig pointed out. “*To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.*” And so I think then the idea is something of a wrapping up. I think the idea is that it’s not as if Rome has been fully evangelized as of yet. There are those in Rome who are still called to be saints. And to those who are saints and who are loved by God, and to those to whom the gospel will reach and pull in.

Now Sig, I’m going to say at that moment that those who will be called are the elect, right? And so God knows who they are, who that number is. And so when he talks about all of those in Rome who are called to be saints, he’s talking about what he says in the first letter to timothy chapter 5. Paul says, “*I endure everything for the sake of the elect.*” In other words, Paul doesn’t know who the elect are. But he endures all kinds of things in order that the gospel might go out, and not to sort of find someone who might want to give it a listening ear because, well, everyone has an utterly free will and a libertarian-style way and can choose either way.

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But no; the gospel goes forth. And Paul knows that the gospel goes forth. And God enables those who are His to hear it with saving faith. And Paul doesn't know who those are. He just knows that it's his job to preach it and proclaim it, and it's God's job to awaken the elect to hear it. So that's kind of how I would see it.

So there is a sense in which I'm going to fall back on what you had alluded to and say, well then, what does this mean, that God so loved the world and yet not all in the world are saved? I'm going to have an explanation that says that there is a love of benevolence and a love of complacency. And the love of benevolence is God's love for everyone. The rain falls on the unbelieving farmer's crops just like on the believing farmer's crops. Yet the love of complacency, the settled love of God, falls upon the elect only. That's going to be my default to it. Does that make sense to everybody?

**Sig:** No, it doesn't.

**Jeff:** Okay.

**Bishop:** We have loved ones that are not believers.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** When you wrestle with the consequences of that, and you take seriously what the Bible says about the destiny of such people, it's agony, because you love them.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** And I believe that's true of God. He has more than benevolence. He has a genuine love for everyone.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** But that's not to be confused with the elect. But it must be agony for the heart of God.

**Jeff:** And you know how it is, right? We can make a distinction and not a separation. I'm sure you guys have heard R. C. Sproul talk about it. If I distinguish between your soul and your body you remain alive. But if I separate your soul from your body it's a big difference. You're dead, right?

And I think the idea of benevolent love and complacent love is not a separation, but a distinction. In other words, it's still love that we're talking about. And that just reinforces what the bishop was saying. The love of benevolence is not less than love. But it is a difference in the way that love is expressed. Yes?

**Don:** I think our problem too is our modern use of the word *complacent*. When we say complacent, we think, well I don't care; live and let live, or whatever. But that's not exactly what you mean, right?

**Jeff:** No, it is exactly what I mean.

**Don:** Oh!

**Jeff:** I don't think that complacent is I don't care. I think complacent is couch potato. A couch potato is somebody who is complacent. When you think of a couch potato you think of somebody that's settled.

Now we add on “don't care,” right? But somebody that's a couch potato is settled there for Net Flicks for the next three days. And I used to not like that. And then I realized, well, wait a minute. That's a great picture of God's love, because it's settled on me and it's not going anywhere.

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**Don:** Okay, yeah; good point.

**Jeff:** But I think we add “I don’t care.”

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** If somebody is settled, he must not care. And I think that’s an import into the word.

**Sig:** The confusion to me was when you used that term in relation to God’s love for the elect.

**Jeff:** Complacent?

**Sig:** yes, complacent. But now that you’ve explained it, okay, I get the point. And I think both you and the bishop helped me understand that God has this strong, powerful love for all of His people, for all of His creation. And so He would choose that we would all follow Him and listen to Him and be one of His people. He gives us that choice not to, I guess. I know there’s a whole lot more there.

**Jeff:** Yes, there’s a lot more to it. And it really goes into the whole idea of thinking about the will of God. And we think about God’s expressed will that people don’t steal, and yet people steal. So are people really breaking the will of God? Well yes, in one sense they are, right? They’re breaking the revealed will of God. And yet if you could get behind that, which is where we’re not supposed to go, no one ever breaks the will of God, right? They are doing what it was ordained for them to do. And yet how we explain that remains a mystery; it should. The bishop laughs at me as I even try to—*(Laughter)*

**Bishop:** You opened the can.

**Jeff:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. *(Laughter)*

**Jim Hamilton:** I’m glad you added that. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Yeah, yeah. Moving right along ... Anyway, I just find it fascinating that that’s the inclusion. That’s “the apostle and us” factor.

Okay. So what we’re going to do is that we’re going to tackle that next phrase in just a second. But I want us to notice this idea of *the obedience of faith* that is connected here, “*the obedience of faith*” that’s here in verse 5: “*through whom we received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name, among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*”

**Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.

**Jeff:** I just want us to think about that phrase “*the obedience of faith.*” And the reason why is this. You guys probably remember what an inclusio is by now. An inclusio is a word, phrase or idea that ropes off a section of text. And sometimes you get words that rope off an entire book. And sometimes those words that rope off a book are sort of a pattern of words. So for instance, the book of Philippians has the idea of thanks and prayer and joy. And then those ideas are reversed at the end of the book. So you have an a-b-c/c-b-a pattern that envelops the entire book.

Sometimes it’s a phrase like this one. And the phrase here is “*the obedience of faith.*” And “*the obedience of faith*” comes at the beginning of romans and it comes at the end. In fact in Romans 16 verse 26 he talks about how “*it has now been disclosed through the prophetic writings, and has been made known to all the nations.*” There we get the parallel from the beginning. “*According to the command of the eternal God to bring*



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*about the obedience of faith.*” And so what we find is that this expression “*the obedience of faith*” comes at the beginning of the book of romans and it comes at the end of the book of Romans.

Now what does this mean—“*the obedience of faith?*” And when you think about that expression I think that commentators basically come to the idea that there may be two ways to think about this expression, “*the obedience of faith.*” And it’s either in the objective sense, either an objective genitive, or it’s a subjective genitive.

Now let me first of all say to you that sometimes there is not a whole lot of difference between those two. And so I’m going to throw two examples on the board and you can see what I mean.

For instance, if we talk about the love of a mother, that would be in the objective sense. There’s a sense in which the love of a mother is the object. But a subjective sense would be the mother’s love.

Now if you look at those two things you’d say to yourself, “There’s not much difference there.” And truly there isn’t. And yet sometimes there’s an issue that’s connected with each of them. And that would be the case with this particular usage.

For instance, if it’s used in the objective sense here, then faith would refer to a body of doctrine. So faith is the body of doctrine that one is to obey. If it’s in the subjective sense, faith becomes an objective body of belief that one is supposed to obey. Go ahead.

**Don:** And my translation, the New King James, says, “*obedience to the faith.*”

**Jeff:** They would take the objective sense.

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Obedience to that set-apart body of doctrine. And if it’s in the subjective sense it would be the obedience that flows from faith. In other words, I exercise faith. And because I exercise faith, faith is never alone. I’m drawing down on some things that I’ve gone over with you before. Sometimes I hate to sort of put you through it again. This is union with Christ, right? If there’s the forensic, there’s also the renovative. And so if there is faith then there will be obedience; that idea. And so “*the obedience of faith*” is the obedience that flows from faith. That would be the expression.

**Don:** Is that the better translation in your opinion?

**Jeff:** Well, the bishop has his hand up. And so we’re going to find out.

**Don:** Okay.

**Bishop:** It’s important that we do not understand this to say that faith is a good work that we have done.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** Rather, it’s something that God enables in us by His grace. Therefore it seems to me that the subjective is better.

**Jeff:** Yes; I agree with the bishop. I think that it’s better to understand it as the obedience that flows from faith. What’s that?

**Sig:** It’s just Ted trying to get your attention.

**Ted:** No, no; I’m just nodding.

**Sig:** You were clearing your throat.

**Ted:** No; you think I’m clearing my throat. *(Laughter)*

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**Jeff:** I think we’re going to find out. And as the letter develops we’re going to find out how all the pieces work. In other words, we’re going to find out where we land if this is about obedience, or if faith is obedience. If faith is obedience we’re in some sense in trouble, right? And so we’re going to find that out as the letter unfolds. We’re going to find out about the righteousness of God as it unfolds, and so on and so forth. So I think that right now, without the letter behind us, I think it’s best to take it as a subjective genitive, as the obedience that flows from faith. And I think the letter will bear that out as we go along.

**Sig:** So Jeff?

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Sig:** In my simple mind the subtlety is what you just said. It’s not if faith is obedient. If someone happens to be obedient that means he has faith, which may not be the case, right? It could be just some self-obligatory pressure, thinking that’s what they have to do. And they may not have faith at all. But if there is genuine faith there comes obedience. Is that it?

**Jeff:** Well, if there’s obedience without genuine faith it won’t be true obedience.

**Sig:** Right.

**Jeff:** It will have the appearance of obedience, sort of like the Pharisees.

**Sig:** Right.

**Ted:** It will be human obedience, not Christ’s obedience. The power to obey comes out of the flesh versus coming out of Christ.

**Jeff:** Yeah; that’s great.

**Ted:** We have a question.

**Jeff:** Yes?

**Caleb Falbo:** Without getting too detailed, I’m gathering that what you’re saying—and this may not be what you’re saying—but that there is no way to tell this from the grammar itself; it has to be derived contextually.

**Jeff:** Yes, it can be either. This is often the case. With Greek it can go one way or the other. And context really does help us decide which way is best. So for instance with “*the righteousness of God*” that we’re going to read about in 1:17, what we’re going to see is that a lot of Reformers want to argue that this is the righteousness of God that is transferred, as Luther says. And I think that when you look at Romans 1:16 and 17, on the face of it it doesn’t look like that at all. That doesn’t come until later in the letter. It actually looks like an attribute of God that’s being laid out for us, without the idea of transference. And we don’t learn about the idea of transference until chapter 3.

And so I think that in terms of the grammar at that point it might lean a little more toward what I just said with regard to the righteousness of God. Everybody has to make that judgment. But you can see that just studying the Greek sometimes doesn’t bring clarity as to the theological question that is at root. And that requires the context in the study of the whole letter and the study of the Scriptures, and so on and so forth. If you want to follow that up go ahead. That’s—

**Caleb:** No, that was good.

**Jeff:** You know, there are a number of places. Would you agree with that, Bishop?

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**Bishop:** Context, context; everything is context.

**Jeff:** Yeah. A lot of times people think that if you just study the Greek and learn the rules you’ll know. And it’s not like that. I heard D. A. Carson once say that teaching first-year Greek is teaching all the rules. Teaching second-year Greek is teaching all the exceptions to the rules. *(Laughter)* And teaching third-year Greek was teaching that all that first- and second-year stuff didn’t mean anything. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** Why didn’t he start with the third year? *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Right.

**Ted:** I like that expression a lot, because it’s really the Christian life. Without getting deeply theological that’s the Christian life—faith and obedience; it really is.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** If you have faith and not obedience, then it’s James. If you have obedience without faith, then it’s Pharisaic; it’s of the flesh.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Without getting into it, which I appreciate, it seems to me that this is the great walk that we all walk—faith and obedience.

**Jeff:** Yes. And you know, the great thing about it is that he’s going to come back to this very thing in Romans 7. Remember the last time we were together that Alexander White said, “*I never want my congregation to leave romans 7,*” because Romans 7 is about faith and obedience, right? But it’s about what faith and obedience looks like in the present life. And so all of these things that he’s pulling out here are going to be unpacked later on in the letter. And so faith and obedience is great, and it will be unpacked. Yes?

**Bishop:** It may be too late to bring this up. But it’s this phrase “*called to be saints*” You might say a word or two about saints.

**Jeff:** Yeah. So when we think about saints we have a tendency to think in an iconomous way. We think about what the Roman Catholic Church thinks about saints. And we think about what the Protestants think about saints, although there is variability within Protestantism as to who the saints are. I think I’m going in the direction that you’re suggesting. When we think that way we think about those who are canonized—i.e., Roman Catholic saints—those who are canonized by the church. And then in Protestantism we think about everyone as holy ones, or that everyone is a saint.

You know, what I find really interesting about this is that I was doing a study of the church not terribly long ago. And I was studying Roman Catholicism on this particular point, because what I was studying was the four attributes of the church. The church is one, Holy, catholic and apostolic. And I was studying this idea of the holiness of the church. And the idea of holiness is what Paul says when he writes to the Corinthians. He says, “*To those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.*” And that idea of “*sanctified in Christ Jesus*” is in the perfect tense, so it’s in the past. And it’s a passive, which means that God is the One who did it in the past. He is the One who sanctified them or set them apart. These are the Corinthians, right?

And so this Roman Catholic writer was commenting on that particular passage. And he said this, and this is what I found so striking. He said, “*How can this be? Maybe the church is something different than the people who are in the church.*” So he’s trying to

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work through this idea that the church isn't holy; they're not saints. And yet the church must be something different than that because it's expressed here in this way. I just found it interesting. It was a thought form that was foreign to me to think that the people could be separated from the church itself because of the way Paul expresses what these people are.

**Don:** I think Luther said it well: “*Simul Justus et peccator.*”

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Don:** At the same time saint and sinner.

**Jeff:** That's right.

**Jim:** What is your definition of saints?

**Jeff:** My definition of saints would be holy ones. Any Christian is a holy one.

**Jim:** Believers.

**Jeff:** Any believer is a holy one.

**Ted:** It's not so much that they believe. The belief is a consequence of the holiness.

**Jeff:** So it's this. Here it is right here. This is union with Christ, right? In Christ I have all the benefits of redemption. I have justification and I have sanctification. Now I have others. They could be put in a forensic or a renovative sort of framework.

For instance justification is not the only forensic benefit. But there is adoption, right? And sanctification is not the only transformative benefit. What are the others? Glorification, or new birth. Those are other transformative benefits. But all of those benefits are found in union with Christ.

Sanctification—and I know I'm getting myself in trouble on the tape here—but it can be both definitive and progressive.

**Sig:** That's only if Bill McCoy is here.

**Jeff:** I'm going to get an email from Bill. (*Laughter*)

**Ted:** Bill gave up his rights because he's not showing up.

**Jeff:** Okay. So definitively sanctification means that I've been taken from one realm and placed down in another. Now that's what Paul was expressing in 1 Corinthians 1:2: “*those sanctified in Christ Jesus.*” They've been removed from one kingdom and set down in another, definitively. But they are now learning how to be citizens of that new kingdom. That's the progressive aspect of it, or what bill would call maturing.

So those are the saints—those who have been taken from one kingdom and put down in another. And now they're learning how to live in that new kingdom. Those are saints.

The Roman Catholic church would say no, no, no. A saint is one that we deem worthy of that title, and that we then canonize to that office upon review.

**Ted:** Although I've listened to several Roman Catholic theologians talk about this. And they will say that all the people of God are the saints of God.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** What they will say is that the church has recognized (we use the term canonized as if it's a magical thing.) But it has recognized some of us as being greater examples than others.

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**Jeff:** Right. I do think that some of that kind of talk is the limiting of the Bible on the church and sort of the divorcing itself over the years from the documents of the church. Do you know what I mean?

**Ted:** I understand what you’re saying. But I think the roman church has a lot of things right. The problem is that when it gets down to the laity it is just profound. Even orders of nuns that I’ve talked to have just a profound ignorance and a fleshly attitude toward religion, even amongst priests.

**Jeff:** I know. But I still think that when you look at the Canons of Dordt, Session 30:9, 10 and 11 clearly condemn a Protestant understanding of justification.

**Don:** You mean Trent, right?

**Jeff:** Trent, yes. What did I say?

**Brave Men:** Dordt.

**Jeff:** Thanks for that clarification.

**Don:** And their merits can be transferred to a soul in purgatory.

**Jeff:** I think you’re right. I mean, we share ecumenical councils for a reason. I almost think that the Counter-Reformation was a reaction to the reformation of the church, and just sort of saying, “We’ll fix you guys.” And this is charitable; this is speaking charitably. Now you have Roman Catholics today going, “I don’t think that we would have said the same thing had we been back in those days,” because the Bible has greater sway over them.

This is why I say that it’s an authority/salvation issue. Their authority is the magisterium. And the magisterium says, “We don’t care what you think. These documents are infallible, and they are authoritative for the church, and so you can’t change them.” And so what you get today is Catholics today who are dealing with the Bible are trying to finesse.

**Ted:** They don’t think about it.

**Jeff:** Or they think about it, but then you have a guy like Joe Fitzmeyer who looks at the Bible and says, “Yeah, but now I have to reconcile this with the documents of the church.”

**Bishop:** It’s hard to be infallible and to repent. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Okay. We have one point left in this. And we’re going to pick it up rather quickly the next time, although it’s not a quick issue. I’ll tell you what. I’m just going to introduce it now. No, I won’t introduce it now. *(Laughter)* Forget it. Let me pray with you. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** Are we going to pick up with III?

**Jeff:** No, I’m going to make a new outline.

**Sig:** That’s what you said last week. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** I know, but there’s no outline left. *(Laughter)*

**Sig:** All right. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** Father in heaven, we thank You and praise You. And as we come to You we ask that Your hand would be upon us to remind us continually that we belong to You by faith alone in Christ alone. And it’s by Him coming clothed in the gospel of grace that saves. Father, this produces in us obedience, and we’re thankful for that. Lord, as we live our

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lives, continue to cause this phrase “*the obedience of faith*” to resound with us—not just upon our lips, but upon our very lives—as we remind ourselves continually and are reminded by Your Spirit that we are Your servants, for we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)