

Commentary on Romans 1-2

by Chuck Smith

Transcript

This time let us turn in our Bibles to Romans, chapter 1. Paul opens his epistle to the Romans declaring:

Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (Rom 1:1).

Twenty-five years before Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans he was on the road to Damascus to imprison the Christians there. When suddenly about noon there came a light brighter than the mid-day sun and there the Lord said, "Saul, Saul why persecute thou me?" And he answered and said, "Who art thou Lord, that I might serve thee?" Now twenty-five years later Paul writes, "Paul, a servant or a bond slave, of Jesus Christ."

Writing to the Philippian church concerning that same conversion experience he said, "Those things which were gain to me I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse that I may know Him" (I Corinthians 3:7-8). What I am seeking to point out is that the commitment that Paul had made twenty-five years earlier was still being honored.

There are a lot of people who talk about past experiences, but the past experiences have not been translated into the present relationship, and thus, past experiences become null and void unless they are translated into present relationships. Those things which were gain to me I counted loss, twenty-five years ago. "Yea doubtless I do count them," you see, it is still going on. So past experience is only valid as it is translated into my present walk and relationship. Twenty-five years ago, "Who art thou, Lord, that I may serve thee?" Now twenty-five years later, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ."

We just finished the book of Acts, and to help place the book of Romans, the writing of the book of Romans, into the study that we just had in Acts, if you will remember when Paul was in Ephesus and Demetrius the silversmith created a big ruckus and they brought all the people of the city into the arena and they were chanting, "Great is Diana the Ephesus," and so forth. How that at that point Paul said, "Well, I am going to go to Macedonia and to Corinth and I am going to go to Jerusalem and I must also see Rome." There Paul expressed his desire as he left Ephesus going over to Macedonia and then to Corinth, ultimately going on to Rome, "I must also see Rome." When he got to Corinth, before going back to Jerusalem, it was from Corinth that Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. That will help you place it historically in the book of Acts. He wrote the letter to the church in Rome from Corinth. As he got ready to leave Corinth to go back to Jerusalem, he found out that there was an assassination, a plot against him. They were going to throw him overboard, and so instead of taking the ship from Corinth, he went back

north to Macedonia, crossed over to Troas, and then made his way around the coast catching ships back to Jerusalem. He gave up his hopes of being there for Passover and intended to be there for the Feast of Pentecost. In Jerusalem he was arrested, taken to Caesarea, held in prison for two years. He appealed unto Caesar and now, of course, in the book of Acts he was finally going to Rome. This was written some two years, a little more than two years before Paul was able to go to Rome, and he is going to express his desire to come to Rome and the purpose for which he desired to go there.

"Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." The Bible tells us that we should make our calling and election sure. Paul said, "I was called to be an apostle." It is wrong for us to classify callings of God as important or highest calling or greatest calling or whatever. I don\

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