

Called to be saints

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Innes Macrae

[0 : 00] You will find my text this evening in Romans chapter 1 and at verse 7. Romans chapter 1 verse 7.

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. Romans chapter 1 verse 7. Scripture is there by the inspiration of God and is profitable for us. Everything in Scripture has lessons to teach us. But what I want to do this evening is look with you, not so much at the word of greeting to those Christian people in Rome, but to look with you at the way in which Paul describes those people.

He gives here a threefold description of the believers in Rome, the members of the church in Rome. He says that they are beloved of God.

Then he says they are called. And then thirdly he says they are saints. The words to be are not part of the original. You will notice that they are in italics in our authorised version, indicating they were put in by the translator.

[1 : 48] We have them here, this threefold description of what a Christian is. One who is beloved of God, one who is called, and one who is a saint.

First of all then, beloved. Beloved of God. The order in which those three designations are put is important.

And Paul here begins with this, that Christians are people who are beloved of God. Salvation, you see, has its origin.

It has its source. It has its beginning in the love of God. Christians are Christians for one reason only.

The love of God. Here were those Christian people in the city of Rome. They lived in one of the foulest and most corrupt societies this world has ever seen.

[2 : 54] Read on to the end of this first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. And you'll find that Paul gives there a most terrible description of the kind of pagan society.

That of the pagan society that there was there in Rome, in the Roman Empire, and in the city of Rome in the first century. It was a society that was characterized by the foulest and the most revolting and disgusting immoralities.

But those Christian people were so different. Their whole lifestyle was entirely different. They were people who were leading clean and upright holy lives.

And their holy lives shone all the more brightly against the dark background of the pagan society in which their lot was cast.

Is that why God loved them? Is that why he set his love upon them? Is it that they were better than the immoral folk around them?

[4 : 06] No. That is not the explanation at all. Ten thousand times no. It is indeed the other way around.

They were now clean living upright Christian people. Because God had loved them. Because of his love for them.

He had brought them out from that terrible condition into which they had sunk. Once they were as vile as their fellow Romans. But God had brought them out from that terrible condition into which they had sunk.

He had brought them out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. He had brought them out from the kingdom of Satan and into the kingdom of his own dear son.

And there is only one explanation of it. The love of God. His love for them. This is the teaching of the whole Bible.

[5 : 10] Why is it, my Christian friend, that you are not tonight an unconverted person? Why is it that God does not left you in your unbelief and in your sin?

Oh, you say, it's because I made choice of Christ. I heard the gospel. I was taught that message that if I believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, I would be saved.

That salvation and justification is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I responded. Yes, but why did you respond? You yourself did not have within yourself the power to respond.

You were dead in trespasses and in sin. Spiritually dead. Incapable of making that response. You responded. You responded. You responded. Because God worked in you.

And he empowered you. He renewed you. And why did he do that? There is just one explanation.

[6 : 17] He did so because of his love for you. He loved you. He loved you. He loved you from the beginning of time. He loved you before time began.

He loved you from eternity. He set his eternal love upon you. And why, Christian friend? Why did he do that? Ah, well, there is a great mystery.

All we can say is he loved you. Because he loved you. This is the explanation of the fact that you're a Christian believer.

If you're a Christian here tonight. The love of God. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us. That we should be called the sons of God.

We love him. Because he first loved us. There is a sense in which God loves all men.

[7 : 18] We were singing in the 145th Psalm a little while ago. Good unto all men is the Lord. O'er all his works his mercy is. Our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount has told us.

That we are to love our enemies. And in doing so we'll show ourselves to be the children of our Father in heaven. Who loves his enemies. He makes, says Jesus, his son to rise on the evil and on the good.

He causes his rain to fall. He sends his rain upon the just and upon the unjust as well. God so loved the world.

That he gave his only begotten son. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish. But have everlasting life. The offer of salvation is made to all men everywhere.

But the love that is being spoken of here in my text this evening. Is that special love. That covenant love. That God bears to those who are his own people.

[8 : 26] That love he has for those whom he has included within his covenant. That love he has for those who were chosen before the foundation of the world.

It is the love that is determined. That has determined to save to the uttermost. And for all eternity those who are his objects.

It is the love that issues in the sinner's salvation. It is that love from which nothing can separate those who are his objects.

Objects. Nothing in all the universe will ever separate those who are his objects from that love. Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

And he reminded them of the kind of people they used to be in pagan Ephesus. They were walking according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air.

[9 : 25] The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. They were the children of wrath even as others. But says Paul. But God who is rich in mercy.

For his great love wherewith he loved us. Hath quickened us together with Christ. For his great love wherewith he loved us.

If you are a Christian here tonight. This is the explanation. This is the ultimate and the sole explanation. The love of God.

His eternal love. And listen to this. Oh get hold of this. Take hold of it. He loves you Christian believer.

As he loves his own son. Twice the voice of the father was heard. Declaring this is my beloved son.

[10 : 25] Christ is the father's beloved. That voice was heard at his baptism. It was heard again on the Mount of Transfiguration. And the word beloved there.

Is exactly the same word as we have here in Romans chapter 1 verse 7. Applied to the people of God. Beloved of God.

Jesus himself said in his great high priestly prayer. And the glory which thou gavest me. I have given them. That they may be one even as we are one. I in them and thou in me.

That they may be made perfect in one. And that the world may know that thou hast sent me. And listen. And hast loved them. As thou hast loved me.

And that thou hast loved them. As thou hast loved me. God loves us. His people. As he loves his own dear son.

[11 : 26] Does that not take your breath away? He loves us. As he loves his son. Who is in that unique relationship with himself.

He loves us in the same way. Oh what a privileged person. A Christian is. Shame upon us Christian friends.

If ever we envy the people of the world. If ever we look longingly at the world and its ways. We are those upon whom God does set his love.

Whom God loves. Those upon whom he has set. This eternal love. This special love that he bears to his own. This covenant love. There is not a blessing that he will deny to us if we are his people. He will give to us his presence. He will answer our prayers. He will give to us his peace. He will conform us to the likeness of his son. He will make us a holy people.

[12 : 26] He will deliver us out of every trouble. He will bring us at last into the everlasting glory. He loves us. He loves you Christian believer. Hold your head high.

You belong to the royal family of heaven. You are God's child. Loved by God. As Christ is loved by the Father. Beloved.

Beloved of God. That then is the first designation of Christians that the Apostle gives here. To all that be in Rome. Beloved of God.

And then secondly. Christians are people who are called. Called he says here. In this text. What is a Christian? A Christian is a person who is beloved of God.

Loved by him with that special love that he bears to his own. And a Christian is a person who has been called. Called with a special call.

[13 : 29] An effectual call. The Bible distinguishes between the general call of the gospel. And an effectual call. Effectual calling.

There is a general call. The general call of the gospel. That goes out to all men everywhere. Christians have been commissioned to go to every nation.

And tell men the world over. That God calls them to his son. That they might be saved. And we should have no inhibitions whatsoever.

About issuing this universal call. It goes out to the most respectable. Moral. Upright. Unconverted person there is.

And it goes out also to the most degraded. And notorious sinner. On the face of the earth. Unto you oh men I call. And my voice is to the sons of men.

[14 : 28] God commands all men. Everywhere to repent. Nobody is excluded. God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son.

That whosoever. Whosoever believeth in him. Should not perish. But have everlasting life. There is not one of the teeming millions. On the face of the earth.

Excluded from that. The general call of the gospel. Have you responded to that call. Has it gone out to you.

To some of you it has gone out. Many many many times. If you are lost. Of the last. You at any rate will not be able to complain.

That the call was not issued to you. And that. God did not send. His servants to. Present it to you. To make it known to you.

[15 : 28] Oh delay not a moment longer. Come to Christ tonight. Respond to that call tonight. Repent of your sin now.

Believe now. Upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And you will be saved. But the call that is referred to here. In the text this evening. Is not that general call. Of the gospel. It is an effectual call. That call that always issues.

In the salvation of the sinner. The one who is called. It is the calling. That always takes the sinner. Out of his sin and unbelief.

To repentance. And to faith. The calling that takes the sinner. Out of darkness. Into light. That takes the sinner. Out of the kingdom of Satan.

[16 : 26] Into the kingdom of God's dear son. That takes the sinner. Out of the world. And into the community. Of the redeemed. It is that call. That weans from sin.

And that unites to Christ. Effectual calling. There are two men. They are sitting together. In the same church. They are sitting in the same pew. They are sitting side by side. They are listening to the same sermon. Their need is exactly the same. They are both sinners. Lost in their sin. And in need of salvation. They are hearing the same message. The general call of the gospel. One of them is bored. He is longing for the sermon to end. He has no interest whatever. In what he is hearing. The other man is gripped. He is leaning forward. His elbows are on the pew. Bored. He is afraid he will miss a single word.
[17 : 25] His whole interest has been engaged. He sees that all this is applicable to himself. He has been convicted of his sin. Every word the preacher says.

Goes home to his heart. He sees the way of salvation. As he never saw it before. And he comes to Christ. He stretches out the empty hand.

That receives the gift of salvation. He makes contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been effectually called.

He is a Christian now. And what is it that makes the difference? It is justice. The power of the Holy Spirit.

Accompanying the preached word. The Holy Spirit of God takes that word. And so applies it to the heart of that man.

[18 : 26] Beloved of God from all eternity. That his mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the truth. His will is renewed. He is persuaded. And enabled to embrace Jesus Christ.

Freely offered to him in the gospel. Well he has been effectually called. The spirit of God does work in him. The New Testament refers to this many times.

Jesus on one occasion. Went through the city of Jericho. He was on his way south to Jerusalem.

Where he was to be tried and crucified. Jericho was a great important commercial center.

A city with a very large population. And the people were out on the streets to see him pass by.

Great crowds lined the streets. But it was not any of those people.

On the streets that day. Whom Jesus came to Jericho to call. He stopped underneath the sycamore tree.

[19 : 31] And he looked up into the tree. Looked into the eyes of that dishonest little tax collector. Hiding there in his branches. And he called Zacchaeus.

Come down. For today I must abide at thy house. And Zacchaeus came down and received him gladly. Joyfully.

Zacchaeus had been effectually called. Today is salvation come to thy house. Peter preached. Peter preached.

Peter preached. To an enormous congregation on the day of Pentecost. And under that one sermon. Three thousand were converted.

Three thousand were effectually called that day. Under that one sermon. Peter said to them. Repent and be converted.

[20 : 27] Repent and be baptized. Every one of you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the remission of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you.

And to your children. And to all that are afar off. Even as many as the Lord our God shall call. The Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit you see is not for all.

It is for as many as the Lord our God shall call. Those who are effectually called. Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

And he preached the gospel to them. He was preaching Christ to them. And he says this Christ I preached to you. He's a stumbling block to so many. He's a stumbling block to the Jews.

He is foolishness to the Greeks. Ah he said that to them who are called. Both Jews and Greeks.

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[21 : 27] This gospel I preach. It's a stumbling block to so many. So many Jews and so many Greeks. But to some. To some. Jews and Greeks.

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. To those who are called effectually. And he went on to say. Not many wise men after the flesh.

Not many mighty. Not many noble are called. Not all are effectually called. All receive the general call of the gospel.

It goes out to all. The effectual call goes out to some. To the beloved of God. You have it again in 1 Peter chapter 2.

We are to show forth the praises. Christians are to show forth the praises. Of him who has called them. Out of darkness. Into his marvelous light.

[22 : 23] Christians are people. Who have been called out of darkness into light. They are called people. Are you a Christian? Why are you a Christian? It is because God loved you.

And called you. With an effectual call. All is of God. It is all of God. Salvation Christian believer. Has not been your work at all. Oh of course. The Christian is to. The believer. The sinner. The sinner has to respond. He responds. And by an act of will.

Repents of sin. And makes choice of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he does so. Because he is enabled. By God's power to do so. A willing people.

In thy day of power. Shall come to thee. Oh how secure. Is the Christian believer. How secure. He is a Christian.

[23 : 22] Because of the work of God. He can therefore never perish. He cannot fall from grace. And perish at the last. He is in Christ. And he is in Christ. Because God does put him there.

Let us not then. Trivialize the gospel. A person does not become a Christian. By saying. I believe. By repeating some formula.

Decision. Choice. There must be. But it will be of no avail. Unless it is the outcome. Of a mighty working. Of the spirit of God within. The effectual calling of God.

And if you are delighting in Christ tonight. If Christ is precious to your soul. Then there is sure evidence. That you have been effectually called.

Praise God. Called. That's the second designation of the Christian given here. First of all beloved.

[24 : 24] Beloved of God. Called. And the third description. Saints. Saints. What is a Christian? A Christian is a person.

Beloved of God. A Christian is a person who has been called. A Christian. Is a saint. This word. Saint.

Is a great New Testament word. We have it in all of Paul's epistles. It applies to all believers. It applies to every Christian.

Every Christian. Is a saint. We are so accustomed to thinking of a saint. As a person who has advanced far in holiness. We say he is a saintly person.

But that is a wrong usage. Of the term. According to the New Testament. The term is to be applied to every converted person. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[25 : 23] Every Christian. Is a saint. Paul wrote to the Corinthians. And he spoke to them in much the same way. As he spoke to those Romans.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1. He said I am writing to the church of God. Which is at Corinth. Sanctified in Christ Jesus. Called. Saints.

There you have it again. And it is to the Corinthians. Paul wrote that. Now if you know anything of the first letter to the Corinthians. You know that the members of the church at Corinth.

Very many of them at any rate. Were anything about people who were holy people. In the sense that they were leading consistent Christian lives.

There was bickering. And there was quarreling. And there was disunity in the church at Corinth.

There. And there. They were even tolerating gross immorality. And the church membership there.

[26 : 20] They were observing the Lord's Supper. In a thoroughly. A dishonorable manner. And in a disorderly way. There was gluttony. And there was overindulgence in drink.

And that characterized. Their being there at the Lord's table. And Paul tells them that God is chastising them for that. He speaks severely to them.

About their tolerating of an immoral member there. In the church at Corinth. With regard to the whole matter of spiritual gifts. There was terrible confusion. There in the church at Corinth.

And yet Paul writes to those people. And he calls them saints. He says to them you have been sanctified. Sanctified in Christ Jesus. You're saints. Sanctified in Christ Jesus.

The word saints applies to all Christian believers. And it is very important that we use the term correctly. What does it mean?

[27 : 17] Well the word holy or saint or sanctified. In the Hebrew language. Those words all come from the same root.

The same in the Greek language. They're all from the same root. And they're all from the same root. And the root meaning of the word from which they come is separated.

A Christian. A saint. Is a separated person. A saint. The Old Testament uses the term in this way.

Mount Sinai was a holy mountain. Moses we're told went into the holy mountain. Mount Sinai was separated from all the other mountains. Because it was used for a holy purpose.

For the giving of the law. The tabernacle in the wilderness. The temple in Jerusalem. Those were holy buildings.

[28 : 20] Because they were the buildings in which God manifested himself. The furnishings in the temple. And in the tabernacle. The vessels that were used there. Were holy vessels.

They were separated. Sanctified. Set apart from a common ordinary. To a sacred use. They were set apart for God.

The books that were used. The scrolls. The scriptures. They were holy books. The priests who officiated there.

In the tabernacle and in the temple. They were a holy people. A sanctified people. A set apart people. By virtue of their very office. There was this definitive setting apart of them.

For a holy purpose. A sanctified. A separated people. And very certainly the term is used. In this sense of separated.

[29 : 19] In the New Testament as well. A Christian. A saint. Is a person who has been set apart. When the great change took place in him.

When he was born again. He was set apart by God. From the world. And for God. I'm not referring at the moment. To the ongoing work of sanctification.

The gradual process. By which a person is made home. Only in character. But to a definite act. That takes place in a moment of time. The setting apart. Of people.

For God. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Paul gives a dreadful description. Of the kind of life. Those. Corinthian Christians had once led.

The kind of life they led. Before they were converted. He speaks there. He speaks there. Of most dreadful sins. That characterized. The awful society of Corinth.

[30 : 19] And then he says. Such were some of you. Some of you lived like that. But not so now. Now he says. You've been washed. You've been sanctified.

You've been justified. You see. He puts sanctified there. Even before the word justified. It's a definitive. Setting apart of them. For God.

Those people were set apart. From Corinthian society. In all its vileness. And foulness. God did set them apart from it. For himself.

A saint then. A Christian. Is a set apart person. He has been set apart. From the world. If you're a Christian. You're one. Who God does set apart.

From the world. All around you. People are walking. According to the course. Of this world. They are living. For material things. They are living. For the satisfying. Of their own.

[31 : 17] Sensual desires. They are living. For self. And for sin. But God. Does set you apart. He has brought you. Out from the ways.

Of the world. Separated you. From sin. He has put this. Definite line. Of demarcation. Between you. And the world. And sin. And his ways.

You're a saint. A sanctified person. But we are to think of this. Not only. In a negative way. There is a positive aspect.

To it as well. And this is what is. Of supreme importance. A saint. Is a person. Who God. Does set apart. To himself. Separation. To God. Separation. From sinful ways.

Will make you moral. It will not. Make you. A Christian. A saint. A Christian. Is a person. Who is. Separated.

[32 : 14] To God. He is to be. Devoted to God. He is to serve. God. He is to find. His delight. In God. He. Is to.

Enjoy. Fellowship. With God. Communion. With God. To enjoy. God. To delight. In him. And to live. To his praise. And to his honor. He has been set apart.

By God. For himself. He is God's man. God's woman. He is a saint. And of course. There is also. The ongoing work. Of sanctification. Making him holy. And separating him. More and more. As the days. And the weeks. And the months. And the years. Go by. Separating him.

More and more. From the world. And from. The ways of sin. A saint. What is a Christian? One. Beloved.

[33 : 07] Of God. One. Who has been called. One. Who is. A saint. I believe. That. Many.

Of the. Problems. We face. As Christian believers. We face. Because. We have. We fail. To realize. Just. What. We are. Are you.

A Christian. If so. Then you are. The beloved. Of God. You are one. Who has. Been called. Called. Effectually. You are. A saint. Live. Accordingly. Let us. Pray. Oh.

Lord. Our God. We thank thee. For. The. Sovereign. Work. Of God. In the salvation. Of sinners. We bless thee. For thine everlasting.

[34 : 05] Love. And pray. That thou. To remember us. With the love. Thou does. Bear. To thy name. So. We thank thee. That a Christian. Is one. Who has been called.

By thyself. In whom. Thy power. Has been at work. Bringing him. Out of death. And into life. May that be. The experience.

We pray. Of each one of us. Here tonight. And we pray. That. We will indeed. Realize. That a Christian. Is one. Who is.

Separated. Unto God. A saint. A sanctified person. And may we. Live accordingly. Oh Lord. We thank thee. For the call.

Of the gospel. That call. That goes out. To all men. Everywhere. If as yet. We are still. Without Christ. And without hope. May we be very.

[34 : 59] Conscious. Of that call. Sounding. In our minds. And in our hearts. And we pray. That we will be. Enabled. To respond. In repentance.

And in faith. That we will. Realize. That this free offer. Is made to sinners. And may we turn. In repentance. And in faith.

To the Lord. Jesus Christ. And begin to rejoice. In his great salvation. For his name's sake. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Yee!