

Romans Verse-by-Verse

Romans 1:5b-6

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Last time: The first gift is grace; the second is apostleship. John MacArthur: "It's conversion first, vocation second".

The power of "Grace": Grace is the principle thing that sets the stage for anything else that we receive in our Christian experience. See: Ephesians 2:8-10.

Grace is God's favor working on our behalf. Grace is undeserved favor. Grace is God's power in our lives. Grace is God's enablement for us to serve him. Grace is the assurance that all is well between us and our Savior. Grace is gratitude working in our lives.

- **The Medium and the Purpose Of The Calling: v5b**

1.) The Medium of the Calling:

Paul says, "**Through Him I received grace and apostleship.** For His sake I received grace and apostleship."

"Through Him" speaks directly to the medium through which he received this calling to apostleship. Note Galatians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead..."

However others might frame their calling to the apostolate, Paul's calling was a personal one. He received grace and apostleship through the direct mediation of Christ.

2). The Purpose of the Calling:

For “Christ’s name’s sake”: Drawing upon a well-established theme from the Old Testament. **God acts on our behalf for his own glory – and in a sense – for his own reputation.**

- Psalms 23:3: “He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”
- Psalms 106:8: “Yet he saved them for his name’s sake, to make his mighty power known.”

Point: We may be the recipients, but Christ is the focus. Our salvation is for His glory – not ours. Our calling is for His glory – not ours. It is the ultimate admission that all things are for His glory.

- **The Sphere of the Calling:**

To “*call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith*” stands out in this verse.

It would not be unreasonable for Paul to think of himself as the primary Apostle of the Gentiles. Although he took the Gospel to the Jews . . . his greater success was among the Gentiles.

Paul among the Gentiles: Greek word used for “among the Gentiles”: “Ethne” (as in “ethnic” or “ethnicity”). Hebrew equivalent: “Goyim” -- Gentiles, heathens, or simply non-Jews.

- **The Goal of the Calling:** “For obedience to the faith”. The theological issue: Whether Paul means “Faith” as the substance of the gospel, or “Faith” as the active response to hearing the gospel.

Note: Paul begins and ends Romans with this same thought. Romans 16:25: “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel ... now revealed and made known ... so that all nations might believe and obey him...”

The issue: “Obedience and Faith”: What is at stake:

“Since it is in Romans that Paul insists more strongly than anywhere else that justification is 'through faith alone'... here he apparently writes that it is not by faith alone, but by 'obedience of faith'. Has he lost his bearings? Does the apostle now contradict himself?” -- John MacArthur

Three possible solutions:

- 1). Paul means “faith” as the substance and body of Christian belief.
- 2). “Obedience which consists of faith”: Faith and obedience are synonymous ideas.
- 3). “Obedience that comes from faith”: Genuine faith will include the element of obedience. As such, the two are interchangeable partners.

Hebrews 11:8: Abraham’s story -- “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”

Romans 15:17-19: “Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.

- **Preamble or Apex?**

Greek verbiage for verse 5: “We have received grace and apostleship unto obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of the name of him among who are also you called of Jesus Christ.”

Some Bible versions, like the NIV, put “*Through him and for his name’s sake*” at the beginning of verse 5. The original Greek actually puts that same phrase at the end of verse 5. Why is that important to know?

The inclusion of “for his name’s sake” at the end of the sentence makes the Gentiles coming to faith as the subject and Christ’s glorification as the result.

In other words, the Gentiles or “goyim” coming to faith is the apex of the apostolic vocation.

- **A Personalized Message:**

“...You also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.” See Romans 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

Paul himself was an extremely loyal Jew. He had an intense love for the Jewish people and longed for them to accept Christ. See: Romans 9:1-3; Romans 10:1.

- **Predestination or Inclusion?**

The bulk of scholars would see Paul’s statement as an indication that the Romans were part of Paul’s sphere of intended ministry. We could read the passage this way, “I received grace and apostleship unto obedience of faith among all the Gentiles ... and you are part of that assignment.”

That flows much more naturally into what Paul is about to say in verse 7 as he finishes his preamble of apostolic credentials:

“To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”