

March 15, 2015

The Privileges Of Salvation

Romans 1:7 (NASB), ***“to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

There is a credit card company that used to have a marketing campaign which had the slogan “Membership Has Privileges.” Membership in clubs usually carries with them a certain set of privileges but there is a much greater set of privileges that we have when we are ***“in Christ.”***

As we continue our study of Romans 1 we see three privileges of the good news. The first privilege is that of being ***“beloved of God.”*** Paul addresses ***“all”*** of his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ ***“in Rome”*** as ***“beloved of God.”*** God’s great love for His people is one of the most consistently repeated and emphasized truths in all of Scripture. Psalm 25:6 says, ***“Remember, O LORD, Your compassion and Your lovingkindness, For they have been from of old.”*** Psalm 36:7 says, ***“How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.”*** Isaiah 63:7 says, ***“I shall make mention of the lovingkindness of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has granted us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has granted them according to His compassion And according to the abundance of His lovingkindness.”***

In Ephesians 2:4-5 in that great chapter on salvation Paul writes, ***“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”*** 1 John 3:1 says, ***“See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are.”***

We as believers are made acceptable to God only through Christ and His shed blood. Every believer is a child of God and is loved because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. In Romans 5:5 Paul writes, ***“the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*** Later in this same letter to the Romans in Romans 8:5 Paul gives us the assurance that nothing can ***“separate us from the love of Christ”*** not even ***“tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword.”***

The second privilege we have in salvation is that we are ***“called”*** of God. Paul is not referring here to God’s general call for all of mankind to believe. In Isaiah 45:22 it says, ***“Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.”*** In Isaiah 55:6 it says, ***“Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.”*** In Matthew 11:28 Jesus said, ***“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”*** In John 7:37 Jesus said, ***“If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”***

But here in verse 7 Paul is not talking about that general calling but of the very specific way in which those who have responded to that invitation have been sovereignly and effectually ***“called”*** by God to Himself in salvation. The word ***“called”*** that is used here is another term for

“elect” and “predestined.” IN Romans 8:30 Paul says, ***“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”*** We as humans have a very limited ability to understand and therefore have a very limited viewpoint. It may seem to us that we first came to God through something that we did, through an act of our will. We prayed a prayer, we went forward at a revival, we filled out a card etc... We know from God’s Word though that we could not have sought Him by faith unless He had already chosen us by the gracious act of His sovereign will.

The references in the New Testament to being ***“called”*** to salvation are always, efficacious or effective calls that save, never general invitations. Therefore the calling is the effecting of the plan of election. The doctrine of election is clearly taught throughout all of the New Testament. John 15:16 says, ***“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...”*** Romans 9:14-15 says, ***“What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, ‘I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.’”***

The third privilege we have is that we are God’s ***“saints.”*** The word ***“saints”*** is the Greek word *hagios*, which is translated to mean “being set apart.” Another word that is often used that means to be set apart is the word ***“holy.”*** Frequently in the Old Testament, holy refers to a person being set apart by God from the world and being set apart to Himself. To be set apart in that sense is to be made holy and righteous. Whether under the Old or the New Covenant, ***“saints”*** are “the holy ones.”

We are under the New Covenant so things like the Temple, priesthood, Ark, and tithes no longer exist. The only true holy things of God on earth are His people, those who He has sovereignly and graciously set apart for Himself through Jesus Christ. The new temple of God and the new priesthood of God are His church.

Paul gives a wonderful benediction to this section of Scripture with ***“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*** The only people who can receive the great and marvelous blessings of ***“grace”*** and ***“peace”*** are those who are the ***“beloved”***, the ***“called,”*** and the holy ones of God or His ***“saints”***. Only they can truly call ***“God”*** their ***“Father,”*** because only they have been adopted into His divine family through His one true Son, ***“the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

I pray that you are one of God’s beloved, that you are called, and that you are one of His saints. The only way to true peace in your life is through the repentance of sins and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then and only then is one granted the privileges of being in the family of God.