

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, August 21 – 6:00 PM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**Don't You Know Who You Are? - Romans 1:1-2**

It seems that every time we get into the political season, certain candidates resort to name calling. It reminds me of the kind of thing we used to do in grade school.

Do you remember some of the names you were called? Those names stick for some people. For example, a certain pastor friend of mine has a rather funny nickname that he was tagged with when he was just a baby. When he enlisted in the Navy, he thought that he would be able to shed that nickname. Everything was going fine until he found himself in downtown Tokyo standing on a street corner with a bunch of his buddies when a big bus load of sailors came bay and one of the sailors yelled our "Hey Oogie!" Needless to say, the nickname stuck.

But all of us are being called names today. Next time you're in K-Mart, listen, you'll hear something like this... "*Attention K-Mart shoppers, there is a blue light special on Little Debbie's in aisle three.*" And whether you needed a nutty buddy or not, there you go headed to aisle three, running over everybody to get there first. Well, you've just been called a name...a "*K-Mart shopper!*" Now, the question I have is this...is that really the way you want to be identified? Did you get up that morning and look in the mirror and say, "*Hey you good-looking K-Mart shopper you.*" Did you answer the phone and say, "*Hello, this is Jane, the K-Mart shopper?*"

But we're all called many names. Were called *shoppers* or *Brave fans* or *couch potatoes*, or other names we can't mention.

When I was in Rome, somebody asked me if I had any lawyers in my church. I said, "*No, but I've got a car salesman.*"

He asked, "*Now why did you tell me that?*"

I said, "*Well, you know it's about as hard to find a lawyer in a church as it is a car salesman.*"

But the fact is, we're known by these names we are called - a Salesman - a Doctor - a Teacher. These names reflect what we do. They describe us, and we even see ourselves in light of those names. This is a convenient way to describe us.

Have you ever considered just how God sees us? How would God describe us? More importantly - How should we see ourselves? This is important because, how we see ourselves will determine how we live.

Remember the movie *Hook*? In that movie, Robin Williams plays a grown up Peter Pan. But in the process of growing up he lost the memory of his real identity and of his adventures in Neverland. Now he is married with children. He has become Peter Banning, an executive with more time for his cell phone than for his children. When he and his family return to England to visit Granny Wendy, Captain Hook kidnaps his children and takes them back to Neverland in order to provoke a confrontation with Peter Pan. As Granny Wendy tries to convince Peter Banning to fly away to Neverland and rescue his children, he's confused.? How could he fly away to Neverland? Then comes the line. She looks directly at him and says, "*Peter, dear- don't you know who you are?*" What a line! That line is the key to the whole movie! What Peter really needed was to know his real identity, for once he knew who he really was, he would know how to act. He would know what to do to get his kids back.

That's the problem with a lot of Christians. They don't know who they are, and so they act like someone else. They don't know who they are in Christ. We've got to come to know who we really are in Christ if we are going to act like the person God has made us. As we look at our text today, we're going to see that Paul knew exactly who he was. He was a man with a message from God. Let's look first at:

**1. Paul - The Man** - The book of Romans begins with the word - "*Paul.*" When you think of where Paul had come from, it is remarkable that he is there at all. Indeed, Paul was a very unique and remarkable man. We know that he was a citizen of Tarsus. He refers to it as "*no ordinary city*" (Acts 21:39). Tarsus has a rich history. In Tarsus there was a major University. And no doubt Paul was educated in Greek thinking in Tarsus. We also know that Paul was a Roman citizen. This was a high privilege especially for a Hebrew. Paul was also educated under one of the finest and most respected Jewish Rabbis in Jerusalem- Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). So we can see that Paul was a privileged and educated man.

From the Scripture we also know that he was the son of a Pharisee and would become a Pharisee himself

(Acts 23:6). To be a Pharisee required a great commitment, and only a select few could achieve that position. There is no doubt that Paul had achieved much in his short life. He had a lot to be proud of. But at this point in his life, Paul saw himself, not in terms of all he had achieved. Rather, he saw himself as a servant of Christ.

As a Pharisee, he had been very zealous. He saw the church of Jesus Christ as a threat to the Jewish religion. So he set out to persecute those who followed Jesus. On his way to Damascus one day, he had an encounter that would change his life. On the road he met the risen Christ, who spoke to him and changed his heart. From that moment on he was never the same. He had met the Lord. He had fallen in love with Jesus.

Now he considered himself Christ's servant. The word translated "*servant*" is *doulos*, which means slave. What Paul is saying to us here is that he loved his Lord enough to voluntarily become His slave. As passionate as he had been for the Jewish religion, now he was even more passionate for Christ. Nothing was too small, too insignificant for him to do.

That's the kind of person Jesus is looking for in His church. People who would do anything for Christ. People who are servants. Do you see yourself as His servant? Paul knew who he was, He was Christ's servant. Next, I want us to notice:

**2. Paul - His Ministry** - Paul goes on to say that he was "*called to be an apostle.*" This was his ministry. The word *apostolos* means "*sent one.*" It can refer to anyone sent out, but here it refers to special ones called by Christ Himself. And Paul had received such a call from Christ. Some believe that he received that call on the road to Damascus, but that's where he was saved. He really received his call to the ministry while he was serving in the church at Antioch. In Acts 13, Paul, still known as Saul, is listed as one of the prophets and teachers in the church. **READ Acts 13:2.** From that point on Paul began an exciting ministry as an apostle.

In the NT we find that apostles founded churches. They were the first missionaries. They would come to a place and preach the gospel, people would get saved, and churches would be started. Then they would begin to give those churches some structure by appointing pastors for each one, while they would continue to teach and counsel the leadership. In Paul's case, he was also used to write most of the NT.

This was Paul's ministry to which he had been called. And as NT Christians, each of us has a ministry as well. Ours may not be the same as Paul's, but we are just as responsible to fulfill our ministry as he was his.

Do you know what your ministry is? One thing is for sure. It will involve the church, because that is the organism God has chosen to work through. Yes, it has problems, but it's God's church. No, it's not perfect, but Jesus died for it. This is His church. Are you fulfilling your ministry in it? Third, let's notice:

**3. Paul - His Mission** - Paul goes on to describe himself as "*set apart...*" This is significant. You see, the very word Pharisee means "*separated one.*" He was separated from the common things of the world in order to better serve God. Pharisees were very strict in their observance of this separateness. There were many regulations they had to observe in order to maintain this distance from the world.

But now, Paul was "*set apart*" in a new way. He wasn't just separated **from** something, he was set apart **for** something - to preach the gospel of God. This was now his mission.

Paul was called. So are we. Paul was set apart for God. So are we. Just as Paul was set apart for the gospel of God, we all have received the Great Commission that we should proclaim the good news of His gospel throughout all the world until everyone has heard. So our mission is the same today as Paul's. It's not a suggestion. It's a mission that God has set us **all** apart to do. Do you know that you have been set apart to go on mission for Christ? Are you fulfilling it? Finally, let's notice:

**4. Paul - His Message** - Paul's message was the good news of the "*gospel of God...which He promised beforehand through His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures.*"

The very word "*gospel*" means "*good news.*" It's the good news of Christ's plan of salvation.

It is good news that Jesus came to earth as God's only begotten Son. It's good news that He lived a perfect life.

It's good news that He died on the cross for our sins.

It's good news that because of His death we can receive forgiveness.

It's the good news that we don't have to pay the penalty for our own sins because Christ has already paid the price.

It's the good news that Jesus Christ rose again victorious over death, and now He's still alive today.

It's the good news that one day, Jesus "*will come again to receive us unto Himself, that where He is, there we will be also.*" That, my friend, is good news!

This was the message of Paul. This is the gospel message we have today. What are we going to do with it? Share it or Shut it up? Herald it or Hide it? Believe it or Bury it?

Paul was a man with a message, a ministry and was on a mission from God. He saw himself as Christ's servant and followed Jesus because Christ had set him free.

I hope you can see something in Paul you would want in yourself. At the beginning of this message I asked you a question - How do you see yourself? You might have come here tonight, and all you thought of yourself was a truck driver, or a student, or something else. You may have come here tonight and you thought you were a Christian. But during the course of this service, you've realized that you are not. First and foremost tonight, if you see yourself as a sinner in need of a Savior, I want you to know that you don't have to leave here tonight wondering. You can know you are saved simply by asking Jesus into your life and giving your life to Him.

As Christians, I want us to see ourselves as servants of Jesus Christ because the way we see ourselves will determine how we live. Christian - don't you know who you are?