June 30. 2002 Northwest Bible Church

**Romans 1:6-7**

*THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH*

**INTRO**

 Do you know who you are? The knowledge of who we are has a tremendous affect on how we live our lives. This is why Romans 1:6-7 are so important. He reminds the church at Rome what they are in Christ Jesus. What Paul says here to the church at Rome can be said to us as well.

 An initial observation. Most of the Roman Christians were **Gentiles**. “Among whom you also” (Romans 1:6) is linked back to the “Gentiles” of v. 5.

**I. THE CALLED.**

 A. The source of the call.

 B. The nature of this call.

 In theology we identify two kinds of calling.

 1) the **external call** of the gospel by which men declare that God is commanding all to repent and believe the gospel. This call in itself has no power and goes out in word only unless it is attended with . . .

 2) the **internal call** brought to our hearts by the Holy Spirit sent from Christ. It is this internal call that we find here. Not audible as with Samuel (1 Sam. 3:10). It is always effectual.

 C. The intimacy of the call. Cf. John 10:3

 This expression “he calls by name” is only found a few times in the Bible.

 1) It is used of God calling the stars of the heavens by name. Is. 40:26 “Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power not one of them is missing.” God is intimate with each star.

 2) It us used of God calling His redeemed. Is. 43:1 “But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!’” God is intimate with Israel, not only by creation, but also by redemption as His covenant children.

**II. SAINTS**

 A. What does “saint” mean?

 1) Set apart from common use to a holy use.

 2) One that is holy. We are a new man, new creature, temple of the HS.

 B. How can we be called saints in our current condition?

 We must distinguish between our position in Christ, and our practical experience. Though we experience failure and sin, as saints we have the **Holy Spirit** who is leading us into a holier life so that by His grace and power we are growing in holiness and godliness so that we are gradually becoming experientially what we already are positionally.

**III. BELOVED OF GOD.**

 A. A discriminating love. God does not love all men equally. God’s love for His people is stressed no less than 10 times in Romans 1:7; 5:5, 8; 8:35, 37, 39; 9:13, 25; 11:28; 15:30.

 B. A gracious love. Infinitely greater than human love.

 C. An astounding love. Jn. 17:22-23.

**CONCLUSION**

 Beloved, you are the CALLED, SAINTS, BELOVED.

Such love, such a calling should affect the way we live. Take these truths with you everywhere you go. When you go to work, when you enter a store, while you are at home. When you are tempted to think sinful thoughts or do sinful things, remember who you are and then plead grace to remove the temptation from you. Say to yourself*,” I can’t look at that; or I can’t do that because I am one of Christ’s sheep called by name; I have been made a saint, I am holy in Christ, and I am loved by God. To do this would be unworthy of my calling, it would bring shame on my Savior, it would despise His love for me.”*

 Let us remember who we are in Christ Jesus, and then let us live accordingly.