

“Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all Gentiles, including you who are also called by Jesus Christ. To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1: 5-7 (CSB)

There is some really powerful language in this small greeting at the beginning of Paul’s letter to the church in Rome. There are some words specifically that stand out and today we will look at some of these in a little more detail. I’m going to take a couple of the words today and write about another couple tomorrow.

The first word is GRACE. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary website ([merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com)) the first meaning of grace is “Unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification”, “A virtue coming from God” or “A state of sanctification enjoyed through divine assistance”. I like this definition. It explains what grace means better than most definitions to us as Christians. Paul uses the word grace twice in this passage. The first time is an acknowledgement of what has been received, and then later as something to be passed on to his readers. How amazing is the thought of grace after looking into it’s meaning in greater depth? We are sanctified because God has sanctified us and we can pass that sanctification on to the people around us, but only because we have been chosen by God to carry that privilege.

This moves us on to the second word to look at and that is CALLED. I don’t know about you but I find all the talk in churches about being called difficult to deal with. Called to do what exactly? What if I’m still attempting to work out what my ‘gifts’ actually are? What if I don’t fit into a mould of what the person preaching is suggesting? Does that mean I am not called? Or does it mean I have to change who I am to be accepted? I know I’m coming at this from a different angle to what you’ve probably heard before, but I write this out of a place of understanding that these topics can be - frankly - depressing. I’ve spent my life trying to work out what my calling is, and I’m still, at 37 years old, not sure I’ve found it. Churches often suggest about things like Sunday school, choirs, making drinks, cleaning, or the other end of the spectrum as a preacher or being called in the place you work...but what if none of this applies to you? I don’t work or get benefits (yes this website is work but to date it hasn’t provided me enough to have any independent income and more like a hobby that takes full time hours to maintain), I can’t sing, I spent from the age of 13 to 30 volunteering with children and just can’t do that anymore, I thought I was called to ordained ministry but that fell through before it even started, I’m not great at making drinks and have a dislike of cooking anyway so I’ve never felt called to hospitality, then there’s being called to the place I’m in? My day to day life sees me sitting on the sofa all day making items or writing for the website and editing it...not exactly people to spread the Gospel to. But then I look deeper and, perhaps I don’t have a job or any social groups at the moment, but I do have my website. I can write this devotional each day. Could that be my calling? Writing? It isn’t what is traditionally discussed as a calling, but, why not? Are you an artist? Crafter? Writer? Stay at home parent? All of these are valid callings with unique opportunities.

So how can we carry grace out into our bubbles today, and every day? Whether you have a traditional calling or you’re stuck at home all day or anything in between, you have a call on your life. Sometimes that call is as simple as just giving your actions to God. A ‘like’ on Facebook or Instagram etc. could make someone’s day if they feel down. If you have a garden that others can see, a cheerful potted plant could put a smile on someone’s face as they walk by. Whatever your situation, however difficult it is to discern what God is asking of you, perhaps start with the small things. That may be your calling or it may lead to something much bigger!

Pray

Lord of grace and compassion, you call all your children to be your disciples. You give to each and every one of us a calling. In this moment we ask for your guiding light to help us to see that even though we may not have a ‘normal’ calling, we are still called by you to do something. Please help us to do the things that may not seem like they’re not worth doing but could change the world on that day for the person we are helping, even if we don’t know we are helping them. Whether we are out in the world extroverts or housebound, please help us to spread your word in the way that is unique to us. Amen.