

## SAVED TO SERVE

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Ephesians 1:1-2

In the text, Apostle Paul's ministry had such an effect on the city of Ephesus that pagans turned away from their wicked ways. He established a church there in the middle of China where Ephesus was located. All of China was changed because of Paul's witness. We want to say the same of DeKalb County, the city of Atlanta, and even the world. We want our community to be influenced and changed by our witness. It is through the church that the world will be saved. Paul wanted to make clear that God wants to bring everything on earth and in Heaven together as His kingdom. The kingdom of God doesn't come with careful observation. The kingdom of God is within us when we allow God to come and live in us. God wants us to be different and distinct in this world. For this reason, we were saved and set apart. Being in Christ is more than being a member of a Church. Membership in Church is more than having one's name on a roster.

The apostles were those who were with Jesus and witnessed his resurrection. Jesus used the apostles to go out and reach others. As a young rabbi on the way to Damascus, Saul had an encounter with Jesus. Have you ever had an encounter with God? He saves you and changes your life's path. God saved Saul's life, changed his name, and set him on a new path. When God calls, you answer. Whatever He asks of you, just do it. You have an assignment that only you can fulfill. God knew you before you were conceived. God had you on His mind. He was calling you and giving you a purpose in the world. *In his letter, Paul was saying that he was claimed by Christ.* His life was not his own. He had to live for Christ and do what Christ told him to do. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** To redeem means to buy back or buy out of. Jesus paid the cost to buy us back from slavery and to bring us into the marvelous light. Jesus paid it all to wash us white as snow. What does he want from us? Everything.

You are trying to hold on to stuff that doesn't belong to you anymore. Jesus says bring him all his stuff. In the world we are taught it is all about us. *In his letter, Paul was also saying that he had died to self.* **Galatians 2:20** Have you died to self? Paul also said he was commissioned by the will of God. He was sent out as an ambassador. As Christians we are a part of a special task force designed to go out and save the world. **2 Corinthians 5:17-20** God has given us the gift of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors. You are representing the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. When someone tries to mistreat you, don't cuss them. Bless them, because you represent God. Your reaction can influence them to become saved. You were saved by faith through grace. Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It is the kindness of God to the undeserving; and we are undeserving.

Paul was amazed that God chose him. *In his letter, Paul also said he was consecrated.* As a Christian, you are consecrated by God. In his letter, he referred to Saints but he was not speaking of dead people. He was speaking of those who are alive in Christ physically and spiritually. He was speaking of saints as those who had been set apart for God's exclusive use. It is the Holy Spirit of God living in us that sanctifies us and sets us apart so that we may serve Him in the church and in the world. Some of you know you have a call but you are running from it. Having a call does not necessarily mean you are called to preach. It means you are called to serve. **Ephesians 4:7, 11** Every member of the body of Christ has at least one gift. You may be wondering, "What is my gift?" What are you using to do your job? Why not use that skill for the church? You are not wasting your time coming to church. God has placed people in this church to help you to get to where God wants you to go; to walk with you and pray with you. As the body of Christ grows and matures it reaches out to change the world. We need each other to grow and mature. Paul said we are one body and we are intimately connected. When you are missing, the body is impaired. You are important and needed. You can be here at church and still be missing from the body. If God has given you skills, why aren't you using that skill in church to serve Him? Each of us has a role to play to help our brothers and sisters.

Peace.

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