



4. Before talking about these words can help us with the transitions of our life, we first need to know that this book of Romans was written by Paul to Christians, who (like us) were struggling with *their* identity as God's people in the midst of a pagan world.

A--After taking the first 11 chapters to explain various Christian beliefs, he begins Chapter 12 (where our text comes from) by saying that these beliefs should form the *foundation* for a certain kind of living -- I.E., that because of *who* we are in Jesus, we should *live* a certain way.

B--In fact, many scholars believe that the qualities shared in Verses 9-13 are actually *specific instructions* given to adult converts (like today's Confirmands) *prior* to their baptism and joining of the church about *how* they should act and behave as Christians.

5. So, Paul is essentially telling them (and us) that by building upon the foundations of faith that we've *already* received, we can be *Commissioned* for an entire *Life* for and with God -- a life that manifests the virtues and characteristics that we find in these verses. <sup>1</sup>

A--For example,...

1--When we head off college, Verse 9 says that we should "*Let love be genuine; [that we should] hate what is evil, [and] hold fast to what is good.*"

2--When we start a new job, instead of focusing only on ourselves, Vs.13 invites us to "*Contribute to the needs of the saints; [&] extend hospitality to strangers*"

3--When we retire, Verse 12 says that instead of worrying about what we'll be doing, we're to "*Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, & persevere in prayer*"

4--And I could go on, but you get the idea: our Christian faith (and the behaviors that go along with it) are not just meant for church on *Sundays*, but 24 / 7 / 365.

C--They are verses meant to remind those of us who're experiencing life's transitions: "*Don't forget WHO you are and WHOSE you are, because THAT identity is what's going to get you through this new stage of your life.*"

D--In Verse 2 he put his advice this way: "*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*"

E--Over my 35 years of ministry here in North Georgia Methodism, my family and I have moved 11 times (I've served 8 churches in that time, but moved homes 11 times!).

1--Each of those moves has brought with it new challenges, new opportunities in places, with new friends and parishioners.

2--But in each one of them, we're always tried to remember that our ultimate success and fulfillment in those places did not generate from any innate talent or ability in *ourselves*, but in WHO and WHOSE we are in Jesus Christ.

3--In other words, in the end, what mattered most in each of those places was NOT what we accomplished or did, but HOW we lived out our identify and faith as followers of Jesus.

--III--

6. I don't know exactly what "transition" it is that *you* may be facing (or soon face) today.

A--Maybe it IS Confirmation, or Graduation, a job change, a new home, Retirement, life without a loved one, or something else.

B--But whatever it is, today's scripture invites us not to forget WHO or WHOSE we are.

1--Just like Simba in The Lion King, our baptism and our faith which has gone before us reminds us that we are *children of the King* -- and not just of any "King" thought up by Hollywood, but children of the *King of kings*!

2--OUR task/calling today is merely either to *claim* or to *remember* our identity and place in the King's family.

7. You see, because of *who* we are & *whose* we are in Jesus, you and I have been "**Commissioned for Life**" to serve God and our fellow humankind -- will we accept it as God's call for us?

8. [PRAYER]

### **ENDNOTES:**

<sup>1</sup> When someone is "commissioned" for something, the "commission" is usually only for a brief, specific task or period of time -- like being "commissioned in the military, or to paint a painting, & when that task or time is up, the "commission" is over. But here I believe that Paul is saying that with our *Christianity*, in essence we are "**Commissioned for LIFE**" --that our Christianity and the actions & characteristics of our faith are not just for Sunday morning, or at church, but for ALL of life