

Romans 1:1-7

Romans begins with Paul making clear where he stands in regard to Jesus. He is a servant/slave. A slave had no rights, a slave's family and marriage were never formally recognised and a slave's death was never investigated. To be a slave was a terrible thing. However Paul uses it as some sort of badge of honour.

Thinking about people who know you well. What would they say are the things that shape you as a person? Why do you think they have this perception of you?

What shapes Paul? Where does he find his worth as a man? (1-5)

What does Paul see the gospel is all about? (2-4)

How does Paul describe a Christian?

a.V6

b.V7

c.V7

Discuss/explain what each of these terms mean?

How carefully do you form your self image around the gospel's affirmation of you?

Are you determined to see and treat others as God sees them?

What difference does/will this make to your relationships?

In this opening, we see that Paul describes/explains the gospel. How do you explain the gospel in simple terms?

Romans 1:8-17

Paul showed us his credentials in vv1-7. He makes it clear that he is a man of the gospel and that gospel is all about Jesus. In these verses he shows us a bit of his heart. What we get from Paul here, is a model. It shows us how the Christian life works in the raw. Paul makes plans that fail, but all his plans are committed to God and he is looking for God's will.

And while he is doing this, he has set himself to pray for these Christians in Rome, whom he has never met. He prays for them that he might get to visit them.

1. How would you describe Paul's generosity of spirit and his enthusiastic support of gospel work?
2. How might you be challenged by his attitude and his activities towards people he has never met?
3. Parochialism (excessive narrowness of view) can be and is a real problem in churches. It oppresses gospel ministry and eats away at our generosity of spirit. In what ways do you see it creeping into churches? How does it infiltrate your thinking at times?
4. How can we actively fight parochialism?
5. How does grace lead you to recognise your obligation?
6. How are we guilty of being ashamed of the gospel?
7. How does your sense of indebtedness show itself in your giving, praying and activities?
8. How does your life show that you are not ashamed of the gospel?

Tips for building community... Pray for your Bible study group as you work through Romans together. Pray that you would live like you understand Romans. Pray for gospel workers in our town, state, country & world. Take prayer points and commit to praying for each other over the next week.

Romans 1:18-32

God carefully watches what we do with our lives. His judgment is based on rewarding good and punishing evil. Everyone will be judged on the basis of what they have done in their lives. The only way to escape that judgment is to appeal to Jesus for mercy.

1. Do you believe people are basically good or basically evil? Why?
2. How often do we get side tracked by the symptoms, rather than looking for the root cause as to why the world is the way it is?
3. What examples does this passage give of a person who does evil? (1:29-32)
4. What excuses do you hear people give for the wrong things they do?
5. Why do people act the way they do? (24-32)
6. What is the only cure? Why?
7. Would you describe that system: as fair or unfair? Why?
8. What are the implications for these truths?
9. What is the reason for God's wrath?
10. What is the nature of God's wrath? (24-28)
11. What is the correct response to God? (21) What do people do instead?
12. How would you explain the implications of this passage to a non-Christian?

Tips for building community... The very manner in which we treat God in our natural state is we divert the glory due to him elsewhere. Share with your group your struggle with this and ask them to pray for you in this area.

Romans 2:1-3:8

In these verses, Paul shifts attention from the pagan idolater to the good living moralist. He shows that passing judgment on others does not exempt a person from God's wrath.

1. Where do you stand in light of moral judgment on others?
2. At the end of chapter 1 did you think that you would never do the things listed there?
3. What is happening to the good living moralist who is judging others? (2:5)
4. What attitude builds up when we interpret God's kindness and patience as approval of our lifestyle?
5. What is God's kindness and patience designed to do? (4)
6. What does v6 say about God's judgment?
7. How do vv12-16 help us with this? What do these verses say about those who have not ever heard the gospel? What do they say to us the believer?
8. What is contradictory about the behaviour of the Jews in this passage? (21-23)
9. How might we have to be careful of this trap?
10. Why do you think it is difficult to always do the right thing?

Tips for building community... Share and pray about your role in seeing the gospel taken to the world. Think about the way this should or does affect the way you give, pray & live.

Romans 3:9-20

J.I.Packer in his book "Knowing God" says that to understand God we need to understand ourselves first. Here in chapter 3 of Romans Paul gives us a good insight into ourselves and what we are really like.

What do you think about the idea of "only good people get to heaven"?

What did Jesus know that kept him from trusting people? (John 2:24-25)

What does the repetition in vv10-12 tell us about what Paul is trying to say?

What does Matt 12:34 say about the mouth? How is Paul building on this?

What is the link between vv11-14 & 15-18?

Many people say that vv 19-20 are a summary of all that Paul has said from 1:18-3:20. What can the law do? What can the law not do?

How does this passage help your understanding of the purpose of God's law?

Therefore, is God's condemnation of humanity just? Why?

Where does our solution for this problem come from?

For us to fully appreciate the wonder of the good news of salvation, it is important for us to be convicted about the hopelessness of our state outside of Christ. What is your understanding of where you stand outside of Jesus?

Tip for building community... Share how you came to realise your standing before God and what drove you to see this change. Share ways that you have thrown off your old self.

Romans 3:21-26

Leon Morris rates this probably the most significant paragraph ever written. How would you argue this to be true?

1. What does Paul say, that every person has in common? (23-24) How does a right standing with God happen?

2. Explain and discuss the words used to describe how relationship with God is possible...

Justified: 24

Redemption: 24

Sacrifice of atonement: 25

3. How then does God satisfy his own justice? i.e., how can a just God let sinners go free?

4. Why is the practice of religious rites to earn God's favour impossible and unnecessary?

5. What are some religious rites that people attempt to prove their worthiness to God?

6. Why are these truths so liberating?

7. What is God's attitude to sin? (25)

8. What is the role of faith in all of this? Is it the strength of our faith that saves us?

Tips for Building Community... Share the areas of your life that you tend to or are tempted to rely on things you do to be right with God rather than rely on his grace.

Romans 3:27-4:25

1. Do you give God the honour due to him for the fact that you are a believer?

2. Read Acts 11:18; 13:48; 16:14. Discuss the process of a persons conversion according to these verses. What are the mistakes we often make when talking about conversion?

3. What are the three points regarding justification that Paul makes?
 1. (27-28)
 2. (29-30)
 3. (31)

4. What is the central ingredient of justification?

5. How does Paul show he isn't making all this up?

6. The Jews believed that having God's law and being circumcised were safe guards against God's displeasure. In what ways do we substitute things for the only safe shelter we have for salvation, Jesus?

7. Faith has no value apart from its object. Discuss.

8. How does 19-25 show this to be true?

9. In what way is Abraham's faith in God a challenge to us?

Tips for building community... Share how putting your faith and trust in the things of this world has let you down. How has faith in God been the opposite?

Romans 5:1-11

Paul teaches in this passage that every person is doomed to death and disobedience because of sin. However, Christ has rescued us from a no-win situation just in time. Through his death on the cross, Christ is able to restore all people to a right relationship with God. All people through Jesus Christ can experience reconciliation with God.

1. How does our society practice the idea of “you get what you deserve”?

2. What are the three blessings that flow from justification?
 - a. (1)
 - b. (1)
 - c. (2)

3. How does perseverance show authenticity of our commitment? (4)

4. What was the nature of our relationship with God when Christ died for us? (10)

5. How can we be sure our hope will be fulfilled? (5-11)

6. How does Christ’s death on the cross reverse what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden? (18-19)

7. How would you describe how we as sinful people “deserve” to be treated by God?

8. What should the blessing of justification cause you to do? How can you put this into practice?

9. How does our society practice the idea of “you get what you deserve”? How does Paul show this not to be the case?

Tip for building community... Share the impact of the truth of your justification with your Bible study group. Praise God for his seeing our problem and addressing it.

Romans 5:12-21

Martin Lloyd-Jones calls this section the core of the letter. Paul here sums up all he has said about how God has released us from the penalty of sin.

1. What are the three truths revealed in 5:12?
2. Describe the roles of the two representatives of the whole human race? (14-15)
3. How do they differ in their roles?
4. How are the way we were condemned and the way we are justified parallel?
5. How is it that through one man we are all made sinners? (19)
6. How does this help to answer the question of those who have never heard the gospel?
7. What did the law do according to vv22-21?
8. What happened to all our debts - Adams trespass and our personal sin?
9. How does Christ's death on the cross personally alter your present situation and your future?

Tips for building community...Have a couple of people share the difference in their lives since they started living under captain Jesus rather than captain Adam. Praise God with each other.

Romans 6:1-7:6

1. What resources do you rely on when making difficult decisions?
2. Since grace increases to cover our sin, (5:20) why not sin more that grace may abound more and more?
3. Why are we to be holy? (2-4)
4. What is baptism according to Paul?
5. What is the key to our justification? What does this mean for us?
6. What happened when we died with Christ?
7. How is this shown to be true in our lives?
8. How does this passage help you to resist temptation?
9. What is the key to holy living? (Phil 2:12-13 may help)
10. What are the two masters we can be slaves to? (16)
11. What is the wage of the two masters?

Tips for building community... Share with the Bible study group your struggle with the two masters. Pray for each other as we all struggle in this battle. Praise God that he has won the battle through his son Jesus.

Romans 7:7-8:17

1. What is our relationship to the law? (8-13) What is the role of the law?
2. How often do you reflect on your life in light of the law, so as to realise the extent of your sinfulness?
3. What is the importance of the conviction of sin?

Read 7:14-25

4. Do you think Paul is writing this as a believer speaking of his own struggle with sin? Or is he describing his life as a God fearing Israelite and describing what they go through as they seek to please God through keeping the law?
5. Whatever was his situation in vv14-25, what two things does Paul show us in 8:1-4?
6. What are the contrasts between life in the Spirit and life in the flesh? (5-8)
7. What does life in the Spirit do for us? (9-16)
8. How can you encourage the hope of our inheritance to be more dominant in your thinking and living?

Tips for building community... Share your experience of struggling with sin and the anguish this causes. Describe the relief you find in there being no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Pray for one another as we grow in holiness.

Romans 8:18-39

As children of God we are awaiting our inheritance which is promised to us.

1. What does Paul say is our experience of waiting is going to be like? How is this true in your experience?
2. How can we be sure of our salvation and therefore sure of the end of this earthly struggle? (23)
3. Outline the groaning and suffering Paul speaks of here.
4. While our present life is one of groaning and suffering, show the positives we see in this life as a result of the guarantee we have?
5. What does the Spirit strengthen us to do? (11-27)
6. How well do you know the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you recognise his work?
7. What does it mean to be predestined? How is God at work for your good? (28-30)
8. How is your trust in God and in his hidden, sovereign hand shown in your life? How might you look for God's hand in all things?
9. How does this encourage you and drive you to praise him?
10. How does 8:31-35 impact your life?
11. What confidence do these verses give you as you live your Christian life?

Tips for building community... Share with your Bible study group, possibly over a cuppa, how Romans 1-8 has most impacted you and the way you live.