



The Apennine Mountains east of Rome

# **The Gospel: The Power for Salvation**

**A 13 Week Study of Paul's Letter to**

# **The Romans**

At the Northeast church auditorium,  
**Wednesdays at 7PM, April-June. (2022)**

## **Gospel: *The POWER for Salvation***

### **-Romans 1:16**

We have 13 weeks to cover the longest of Paul's letters. At 16 chapters, there are bound to be areas that are underemphasized. The schedule has been chosen carefully, intentionally, & is most assuredly flawed. Yet, any other rearrangement could be justly criticized in areas that this one is not. May God bless us in our efforts to wrestle together with this incredible text over the next 3 months.

|          |                            |                                     |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| April 6  | 1) 1:1-17                  | Overview & Paul's Introduction      |
| April 13 | 2) 1:18-3:20               | ALL Have Sinned, None Are Righteous |
| April 20 | 3) 3:21-4:25               | God's Faithfulness To Abraham       |
| April 27 | 4) 5:1-21                  | God's Grace In Christ Jesus         |
| May 4    | 5) 6:1-23                  | God Gives Life                      |
| May 11   | 6) 7:1-25                  | God Also Gave The Law               |
| May 18   | 7) 8:1-39                  | But Ultimately, God Gives Life      |
| May 25   | 8) 9:1-11:36               | God Has Been Faithful To Israel     |
| June 1   | 9) 12:1-21                 | Christians Must Be Transformed      |
| June 8   | 10) 13:1-14                | Christians & Society                |
| June 15  | 11) 14:1-15:13             | A Plea For Unity                    |
| June 22  | 12) 15:14-16:27            | Paul's Conclusion                   |
| June 29  | <i>Catch-Up Review Day</i> |                                     |

**To best prepare for class please read through the letter in one or two sittings, then repeat.** If time allows, please at least skim-read the questions & assigned chapters provided for that week's class. Come prepared to give answers to our questions. We benefit when you join & share!

## ***Paul, To The Saints at Rome***

Most people would agree this is Paul's greatest letter, yet like any great mountaintop, there are different angles to view its beauty; this gives readers different perspectives. Several details can be discussed in an introduction, much like a good tour book introduces us to aspects of the mountain we are planning to climb.

While many people would argue Romans is Paul's most influential letter, for different reasons it is Paul's most misunderstood book. I recommend reading a good introduction to the book in a study bible or even better a bible dictionary or encyclopedia. These introductions won't answer all our questions, but they will point us to several key words, concepts, & common discussion points within Romans. These discussions are often what divides Christendom.

We must not let divisions intimidate us, for Romans has motivated great movements & revivals within the history of God's people. As F.F. Bruce says, "There is no telling what may happen when people begin to study the Epistle to the Romans."

That isn't surprising; it was written by a man who experienced drastic change. The story of Paul is well known; he was raised by the legendary Rabbi Gamaliel to be a righteous Pharisee. In the gospels, Pharisees are the enemies of Jesus Christ, & then Paul follows that tradition & persecuted the Christians until Jesus personally put an end to it.

This letter is written to one of the most famous cities in the history of man: Rome. At the time of writing, Paul is hoping to finish a major fundraising effort among the Gentiles to help needy Jewish saints in Jerusalem (**Romans 15:14-31**). This was a controversial effort, provocative not for a lack of Jews in the Gentile world (Rome was home to around 40K Jews & at least 15 synagogues), but because there was great animosity between the two groups (**Acts 18:1-2**)

So, why did Paul write such a long letter about the gospel to a group of believers he had not visited? Why not just write a short note asking for the prayers of Rome? Well, what about Paul's fear that things wouldn't go well in Jerusalem? The Holy Spirit had told him "afflictions" awaited him (**Acts 20:22-24**). It may be that Paul thinks this is the only way he'll ever be able to "preach at Rome"; he must write them a letter. The various churches in Rome all had different issues they faced. This partly explains why the letter covers so much ground. Several purposes of the letter have been proposed, the best summary of its purpose I've found is:

"The fact that each of the (suggested) reasons for Romans can find such clear support from within the letter itself points to the obvious conclusion: that Paul had not simply one but several purposes in view... No single suggested reason on its own can explain the full sweep of the document. As he stood at one of the most important transition points in his whole ministry he saw both the need & the desirability of such a fully worked-out statement—to indicate clearly *what* he preached & *why* as a Jew he preached it., & *how* it should come to expression in daily life. The completeness of the statement, as required by the multiplicity of purposes served, lifts the letter to timeless significance."

-J.D.G. Dunn "Romans" in Dictionary of Paul & His Letters Ed. Hawthorne & Martin p.840

What do I already know about the book?

What questions do I have about the book?

How can I apply the book in my personal life?

Who do I know that needs to join in studying this book?

**Reading Time:** About 1 hour

**April 6 1) 1:1-17**

## **Overview & Paul's Introduction**

- 1) Why does Paul give such a long description of himself?
  
- 2) What major themes of the letter are introduced in Paul's introduction?
  
- 3) In this introduction, how does Paul use & describe the word "gospel"?
  
- 4) Why might people be ashamed of the gospel? Have you ever felt this shame?
  
- 5) Why had news of the Roman church spread far & wide? What about our own faith?
  
- 6) Why does Paul want to visit the Roman saints? Do we seek this out for ourselves?
  
- 7) Who did Paul feel an obligation to? Why does he feel this way? Do we join with him?

**April 13 2) 1:18-3:20**

**ALL Have Sinned, None Are Righteous**

- 1) What character trait of God does Paul begin to discuss in 1:18? Why start here?
  
- 2) Why does Paul say humanity is without excuse? How does Paul describe their heart?
  
- 3) List what Paul says "God gave them over to..." Why did God do this?
  
- 4) Does Paul's list of sins describe some sins as worse than others?
  
- 5) What practice does Paul warn about starting in 2:1? What heart is described in 2:5?
  
- 6) What character trait of God is found in 2:11? According to 2:16, what will God do?
  
- 7) How does Paul criticize the Jews in 2:17-29? What does Paul say about circumcision?
  
- 8) What question does Paul ask in 3:9? What is his answer? How does he prove this?

**April 20 3) 3:21-4:25**

## **God's Faithfulness To Abraham**

1) How would you summarize 1:18-3:20? What is the "righteousness of God" in 3:21?

2) How does Paul say we are justified? Who or what should we put our faith in?

3) What Old Testament language is used to describe God's gracious gift? Cf. 3:25-26

4) Why does Paul say we have no reason to boast? How can this unite mankind?

5) Why does Paul turn to Abraham next? What other OT figure is mentioned?

6) What does Paul say about Abraham's righteousness & his circumcision?

7) How is Abraham a father of us all? What did he think about his body?

8) According to 4:24-25, who raised Jesus? Why was Jesus delivered? Why was Jesus raised?

**April 27      4) 5:1-21      God's Grace In Christ Jesus**

1) What does it mean to exult (NASB)? What are we to exult in? Why? Do you pray for this?

2) According to Paul, who did Christ die for? Why is His death unique?

3) Is our salvation in the past, present, or future? How does 5:6-11 answer?

4) What does reconciliation mean? How did sin & death enter the world?

5) In 5:12-17, what three ways does Paul use the language of "reigning"?

6) How does 5:18-21 summarize the entire letter of Romans so far?

7) In what ways has God's "reign of grace" changed you? Are you at peace with God?

**May 4    5) 6:1-23            God Gives Life**

- 1) What OT events or words are used in 6:1-15?
  
- 2) What does Paul say all the saints at Rome had done? Why did they do this?
  
- 3) What does Paul say must be crucified? How does he say we now must live?
  
- 4) What does it mean to be “instruments of righteousness”? Are we?
  
- 5) What does Paul say about slavery? Do we describe Christianity this way?
  
- 6) In 6:17, what does Paul say God expects of our hearts?
  
- 7) Explain what Paul means in 6:23. Why might this passage be critical in evangelism?

**May 11**

**6) 7:1-25**

**God Also Gave The Law**

1) What analogy does Paul begin with in Ch 7? What law are Christians freed from?

2) How does Paul use the word "flesh" in Ch 7 & 8? Are humans sinful by nature?

3) Does our freedom make the Law inferior? 7:6-7 What is good about the Law?

4) How have you heard the Law summarized by others? Is the Law limited?

5) How did the Law cause Paul (& others) to struggle?

6) Who is the wretched man of 7:24? Do we describe ourselves this way?

7) In the end, what is Paul thankful for? How does that set up the next chapter?

**May 18 7) 8:1-39**

**But Ultimately, God Gives Life**

- 1) Explain how this chapter fits the rest of the book. Would you call it the pinnacle?
  
- 2) Who is not condemned? What did God do? Why? What should we set our minds on?
  
- 3) According to 8:9-11, who or what does Paul imply should dwell in Christians?
  
- 4) What does Paul say Christians are obligated to do? How does the Spirit help us?
  
- 5) How did Paul think of his present suffering? What is creation waiting for? Why?
  
- 6) Where does the analogy for adoption come from? Does that contradict Ch 6:15-22?
  
- 7) What does Paul mean when using the words predestined & foreknew?
  
- 8) What type of “good” & “conquering” from God is Paul promising us in Ch 8?

**May 25 8) 9:1-11:36**

## **God Has Been Faithful To Israel**

- 1) How did God bless Israel? How does Paul express his love for them? Define Israel.
  
- 2) Why has this subject come up in this letter? What does God say about God's mercy?
  
- 3) In 9:24, where does Paul say God has called? What OT passage(s) does Paul cite?
  
- 4) Where does the stumbling stone phrase come from? Who is the stone? 9:33
  
- 5) How does Paul describe Christ in 10:4? Why does Paul believe preaching is needed?
  
- 6) What OT texts are used in 10:11-21 & why? Did God reject Israel?
  
- 7) Who does Paul say is God's gracious choice? How does his analogy of grafting work?
  
- 8) What traits of God are stressed in 11:22, 32? How do you pray for the unsaved?

**June 1    9) 12:1-21            Christians Must Be Transformed**

- 1) How would you summarize Ch 1-3? Summarize Ch 4-8. Finally, what about Ch 9-11?
  
- 2) In 12:1-2, what does Paul say Christians must do? How should grace keep us humble?
  
- 3) What is Paul's point about the "one body in Christ"? What do you think of your gifts?
  
- 4) How can we avoid hypocritical love? Which command of v9-13 is hardest?  
Which command is most neglected?
  
- 5) How does Paul say to respond to persecution? Why should we avoid vengeance?
  
- 6) What is Paul quoting in v19-21? What do these passages mean?
  
- 7) What is one thing we can do this week to use our gifts more & show better love?

**June 8 10) 13:1-14**

## **Christians & Society**

- 1) What happens in a society with no generally recognized leaders?
  
- 2) Why does Paul demand submission to government? What is the role of government?
  
- 3) How would Paul have grown up thinking about government? What does the OT say?
  
- 4) What do we owe other people? cf. 13:8, 10 How can love fulfill all the law?
  
- 5) Where did Paul get the metaphors for behavior of day & night? What day is near?
  
- 6) According to v13-14, what are some things Christians should clearly avoid?
  
- 7) What does Paul say to “put on”? How is this the focus of the whole letter & Ch 13?

**June 15 11) 14:1-15:13 A Plea For Unity**

- 1) What are some strong differences in opinions you've heard or seen in churches?
  
- 2) What command does Paul give for both "the weak" & "the strong"?
  
- 3) What specifics were debated among the Roman Christians? Are they debated today?
  
- 4) What is Paul's point in 14:7-9? What does Paul quote in 14:10-12? What's the point?
  
- 5) What does Paul tell us to do in 14:19 & 15:2? Why is this living like Christ?
  
- 6) What does Paul say about earlier Scriptures? What Scripture does he quote in Ch 15?
  
- 7) How is 15:7-13 a fitting conclusion to the doctrinal section of Romans 8:1-11:32?

## **June 22 12) 15:14-16:27 Paul's Conclusion**

- 1) According to 15:14-16, why did Paul write this letter? What is Paul's boast?
  
- 2) What were Paul's preaching plans? His travel plans? How will he get to Rome? 15:29
  
- 3) What did he ask Rome to do for him? Do we know how this request turns out?
  
- 4) Who does Paul commend & why? What did Prisca & Aquila do for him?
  
- 5) How many names are listed in 16:1-27? How would you summarize these greetings?
  
- 6) Could we write such a list to a church? How would others describe us?
  
- 7) How many are "relatives"? How many were women?  
What does Paul warn about in 16:17-20?
  
- 8) How does Paul end the letter? How is this a fitting summary of the whole letter?

**June 29**

***Catch-Up Review Day***

Some of the questions in this workbook were borrowed & adapted from the following workbooks:

The Book of Romans by Jim McGuiggan

Encountering the Book of Romans by Douglass Moo

The Book of Romans Bible Text Books by Kyle Pope

Romans: Encountering the Gospel's Power by John Stott

Romans: Studies for Individuals & Groups by N.T. Wright

Any mistakes or typos are my own. -C. Wickerham