

St Peter's Anglican Church, Wanneroo

Growth Group Study Guide

Term 1, 2020

The Letter to the Romans—Part One

Sunday	Sermon Text	Growth Group Passage	Sermon Title
9 Feb	1:1—17	1:1—32	The Gospel
16 Feb	2:1—16	2:1—29	Who? Me?
23 Feb	3:21—31	3:1—31	The Righteousness of God
1 Mar	4:1—25	4:1—25	Faith
8 Mar	5:1—11	5:1—21	The Peace of God
15 Mar	6:1—14	6:1—7:6	A changed life
22 Mar	7:14—8:17	7:7—8:17	Who is in control?
29 Mar	8:18—39	8:18—39	God on our side

9. What are we predestined for? How does this relate to Jesus?
10. In v30 what flows from what? Why do you think this is so?
11. Why is it important to know God is for us? How do we know this?
12. Who is our judge? Why does this give us hope?
13. How are we more than conquerors?
14. What confidence can we have? And why?
15. In life we will face many challenges and uncertainties. How does Romans 8 encourage us to handle these situations?

Study 8

1. How confident are you that God is with you and is interested in what is happening to you?

Read Romans 8:18 – 27:

2. Why do you think there is suffering in the present? How is this related to our relationship with Jesus?
3. Why is the creation waiting eagerly? What is it waiting for?
4. How does this parallel our situation?
5. Why is hope not seen? How can this help in our understanding of the tension between what we believe and what we observe around us?
6. What role does the Spirit take on in our lives?
7. How does he help in our prayers? How does this relate to what we read earlier?

Read Romans 8:28 – 39:

8. What is the encouragement contained in v28? Why do we need this encouragement?

Study 1:

Read Romans 1:1 – 17.

1. How does Paul identify himself in these verses? What does this tell us about Paul?
2. Paul summarises the Gospel in v1-5. Discuss. What is its origin? How has it been made known? Who is its central focus? For whom is it given? For what purpose?
3. What does Paul mean by the phrase “the obedience that comes from faith”?
4. How does Paul describe the people to whom he is writing (v6-8)? What is his relationship with them (v8-13)?
5. What three statements about himself show Paul’s zeal and commitment (v14-16)? Discuss the implication of these ideas in your own life (i.e. Are you under an obligation, a debtor? Why? Are you eager? For what? Are you ashamed of the Gospel? Why? If not, why not?)
6. What does Paul believe about the Gospel (v16, 17)? How does his relate to his zeal?
7. Martin Luther wrote that v17 became to him “a gateway to heaven”. What’s so significant about the ideas in this verse?

Read Romans 1:18 – 32.

8. Contrast the two things being revealed in v17 and v18. Against whom is God's wrath directed? Why?
 9. On what basis is mankind without excuse? In what ways does man refuse to honour God (v19- 23)?
 10. Why is "giving thanks" important? What does thankfulness indicate in a relationship?
 11. Why did God "gave them over" (v24, 26, 28) How is this evidence of God's wrath?
 12. What is the significance of v25?
 13. How would you define sin? Note the variety of sins listed in v24-32. In what ways are they similar? Why does Paul lump such a diversity of sins together? What happens when someone leaves God out of their thinking?
 14. As defined in this passage, what attitude toward God characterises sin?
 15. By contrast, what characterises the attitude with which a person comes into a right relationship with God?
13. Paul states that "if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die" (v13). How can this be reconciled with his teaching on justification by faith?
 14. Practically speaking, what does it mean to put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit (v13-14)?
 15. How do we experience the reality and privileges of being God's children (v15-17)?

Read Romans 8:1 – 17.

8. Romans 7 described how the law of sin brought about our spiritual death. What has God done to free us from the law of sin and death (v1-4)?

9. How does this affect the outcome of our struggle with sin described in 7:13-25?

10. In v5-8 Paul divides all of humanity into two categories: those who live according to the sinful nature and those who live according to the Spirit. In your own words, what are some of the characteristics of each group? According to v9, how do we know what category we are in?

11. What evidence do you see of your life being controlled by the Spirit? What are the results of having the Spirit live in us (v10-11)?

12. In v12 Paul concludes that we have an obligation. Describe in your own words the negative and positive aspects of that obligation (v12-14).

Study 2:

Read Romans 2:1 – 16

1. The list in Romans 1:18 – 32 may prompt a self-righteous response in readers: “Well ... Others may act like that, but not me.” What does Paul say to such moralists in 2:1 – 4?

2. How does the attitude of those in 2:3 resemble the attitude of the pagans in 1:18 – 32? What are the possible effects of God’s kindness (v4)? What does an unrepentant heart say about a person’s relationship to God (v4, 5)?

3. What is the point of Paul’s discussion about works in v6 – 11? Is he saying that works “saves” anyone?

4. What can we learn about God’s judgement in 2:1 – 16? By what standards will the Gentiles be judged? The Jews?

5. Many non-Christians have high moral standards. How can we use their own standards to help them see their need of Christ?

Read Romans 2:17 – 29.

6. In v17 – 29 Paul focuses his attention on a hypothetical Jew. How does such a person view themselves and others (v17-20)?
7. Why would non-Jews blaspheme God’s name because of such people (v21-24)?
8. How has religious hypocrisy hurt the cause of Christ in our day?
9. Jews placed great value on circumcision because it was the visible sign that they were God’s people. How had some of them confused the sign with what it signified (v25-29)? What kind of circumcision is God really looking for? (c/f Deut. 10:16 and Jer. 9:25, 26)
10. How might religious people today have a similar misunderstanding about baptism or some other ritual or practice?
11. How can this chapter help us to more effectively share the gospel with respectable, religious or moral non-Christians?

Study 7:

Read Romans 7:7 – 25.

1. What good purpose does the law fulfil (v7)? How did the law create in Paul a vivid awareness of sin?
2. Explain the meaning of the statement “Apart from the law, sin is dead”. Does the law indeed create sin? Where does the problem lie? Illustrate from your own life how a prohibition aroused your desire for a forbidden act or thing.
3. What conclusions (v12) does Paul make about the law?
4. Why would it be wrong to blame the law for Paul’s spiritual death (v13-14)?
5. According to v14-20, why does Paul feel so wretched?
6. Paul compares his struggle with sin to a war, with sin as the aggressor (v23). Describe the nature and outcome of this war (v21-23)?
7. How can a person’s anguish and frustration with sin be beneficial (v24-25)? Why is it important to realise that only Christ can rescue us from the power of sin?

7. What are the positive and negative commands of v12-14? How does our choice enter into the argument? Why are we no longer under the mastery of sin?

Read Romans 6:15 – 23.

7. What now is the possible misunderstanding?
8. Why do you think Paul uses the analogy of slavery? How can you know whose slave you are (v16)? According to v18, what freedom do believers have?
9. How does slavery to God differ from our slavery to sin (vv19-23)? What is the end result of each? Why can there be no middle ground in the matter of whom you obey?

Read Romans 7:1 – 6.

10. How is the principle “that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives” illustrated by marriage (vv1-3)?
11. How does this apply to our relationship with the law and with Christ (vv4-6)?
12. What assurance and encouragement is Paul giving us in our struggle against sin?

Study 3:

Read Romans 3:1 – 20.

1. What were some of the advantages of being a Jew? Why might some Jews have accused God of unfaithfulness and injustice? How does Paul respond to these accusations?
2. In the role of prosecutor, Paul has charged that Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin (v9). How does Scripture support his charge (vv10-18)?
3. In v13-18 Paul describes how the various parts of our bodies are involved in sin. How does this figurative language graphically illustrate our condition as fallen people?
4. Imagine a courtroom scene with God as the judge and the world on trial. From what we have learned in Romans 1:18 – 3:20, summarise the charges against us, the supporting evidence and the verdict.
5. Paul does not discuss the grace of God (3:21-5:21) until he has discussed the judgement of God (1:18-3:20). He does not proclaim the good news until we have understood the bad news. Why does he follow this order?

Read Romans 3:21 – 31.

6. How is the righteousness from God (3:22-24) different from the

righteousness by law (2:5-13)?

7. What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ (v22)?

8. In v24-25 Paul uses three important words to describe what Christ has done for us. The word justified (v24) is borrowed from the law court. The judge declares that the person on trial has no legal charges against him. Why is our justification remarkable, given the background of Romans 1:18 – 3:20?

9. The word redemption (v24) is borrowed from the slave market. It means to buy someone out of slavery. From what type of slavery, as Christ delivered us?

10. The phrase sacrifice of atonement (v25) is borrowed from the Old Testament. Animal sacrifices turned away God's wrath from the sinner. Why does Christ's death turn away God's wrath from us? How should we respond to this fact?

11. Some people find it difficult to understand how God can be perfectly just and gracious at the same time. How do the justice and grace of God meet at the cross (v25-26)?

12. How does boasting about ourselves betray a fundamental misunderstanding of the gospel (v27-31)?

13. In what ways might you feel and act differently if you more fully grasped what Jesus has done for you?

Study 6:

1. When you became a Christian, was the change in your life dramatic, gradual or imperceptible? Explain.

Read Romans 6:1 – 14.

2. Refer back to Romans 5:20. What wrong conclusion could come from a misapplication of the last half of this verse? How does Paul answer this error? How do people today make God's mercy an excuse for sinning?

3. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, some radical changes take place. Using the ideas in Ephesians 2:1- 6, 1Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 2:20, write a summary statement that describes this life changing transaction between a person and God.

4. In what two contrasting ways are believers identified with Christ (Romans 6:4, 5, 8)? Is the baptism of v3 and 4 primarily a physical or a spiritual experience?

5. Our "old self" (v6) refers to everything we were as non-Christians. When our old self was crucified with Christ, in what sense was sin rendered powerless (v5-7)? Why do we still sin?

6. What is the significance of life and death in v8-10? How does this understand the command of v11? What is the parallel between us and Christ?

Read Romans 5:12 – 21.

7. How are Adam and Christ similar (vv12, 18-19)?

8. How is Christ's gift different from Adam's trespass (vv15-21)?

9. What have you learnt today about God's love and salvation?

Study 4:

Read Romans 4.

1. On what grounds was Abraham justified (declared righteous)? Under what circumstances (v5, 10, 13)? What is Paul's argument in using Abraham as an example (compare 3:21)?

2. What are some of the differences between justification by faith and by works (v4-8)?

3. It is easy to feel that God accepts us only when we are good. When we feel this way, how can the examples of Abraham and David give us hope?

4. Note the word reckoned (or credited to) in v3 and v5. What does it mean?

5. God promised that Abraham and his offspring would inherit the world (v13). Who are Abraham's offspring (v13-17)?

6. Paul states that the God in whom Abraham believed “gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were” (v17). How does this statement relate to Abraham’s predicament described in v18-22?

7. How does Abraham illustrate our own hopeless predicament as non-Christians and the solution provided by Jesus Christ?

8. Romans 4 builds on the teaching of the first three chapters of Romans. Why is Abraham a good choice to speak to both Jew and Gentile? Share how this chapter help in your understanding of the Gospel.

Study 5:

Read Romans 5:1 – 11.

1. How has faith in Jesus Christ changed our relationship with God?

2. In v2-11 what reasons does Paul give for rejoicing?

3. How does suffering for Christ’s sake produce the character changes mentioned in v3-4? How can knowledge of this process help us rejoice in our suffering?

4. How do v5-8 emphasise the love of God for us?

5. How do v9-10 assure us that God accepts us completely in Christ?

6. Why should God’s outpouring of love and his complete acceptance make us rejoice (v11)?