

Bible study  
on

# Romans

Chapters 1 - 7

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12 Sessions

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# Session 1

## Romans 1.1-7 - An Introduction

### GETTING STARTED

*These first questions are designed to get your group discussing Romans as a letter, and to help you grasp what experience they've had in reading it, talking about it or to understand things they've heard about it. Don't lose too much time on these introductory questions, and if your time is limited, you can skip them altogether.*

- What do you know about Romans?
- What are some famous verses?
- What controversial issues does it deal with?
- Have you read any parts and wondered 'What is this saying?' ?
- What would you say Romans is about?
- Looking at history, who has this book had an impact on and why?

### A FEW HELPFUL FACTS

**Author** - Paul

**Year of writing** - c. 57 AD

**Purpose** - There are tensions in the Roman church. Although Paul himself has never been there and doesn't know the Christians personally, he knows what they need: the gospel.

### READ ROMANS 1.1-7

#### VERSE 1

- How does Paul see himself?
  - How do you tend to see your relationship with Christ?
  - How would seeing Jesus as your master, and you as his servant/slave change things?
- What is an apostle?
- What is 'the gospel of God?'
  - How does understanding that the gospel is an announcement of good news, of victory over an enemy, of the triumph of a king on the field of battle AND NOT good advice, change the way we see it and relate to it and God?
- In what sense was Paul 'set apart' for this gospel?

#### VERSE 2

How does the Old Testament point forward to the gospel?

- What OT prophecies in particular come to mind when you think of it foreshadowing the gospel?

### **VERSES 3 - 4**

What does Paul tell us about Jesus here - and why do each of these points matter?

- Break down the phrase 'Jesus Christ our Lord'. What does each part mean and what are the implications for us?
  - What happens if you forget or downplay one of these?
  - Is there one that you tend to forget/downplay more than the others?

### **VERSE 5**

What is the 'obedience of faith'?

- Why does it matter that we get this right?

### **VERSES 6 - 7**

How does Paul describe the Christians in Rome (and, by extension, us)?

- In a culture that can leave us feeling adrift and without roots, constantly seeking the approval of others, how does the Gospel answer our deepest needs?

### **TAKE IT DEEPER**

As we will see over the next weeks, the book of Romans is all about the Gospel.

The verses you have just studied already contain many key elements to it!

As a group, try to come up with a summary of the Gospel based on and including elements of the verses you've just read, in such a way that you could use to explain to a non-Christian.

# Session 2

## Romans 1.8-17

### READ ROMANS 1.8 - 17

#### VERSE 8

What does Paul thank God for?

- Why thank God 'through Jesus Christ'?
  - Why are thankfulness to God, and approaching him through Christ, both fruit of the gospel?
  - What do gratitude or ingratitude in our lives reflect?

#### VERSE 9

What does it mean to serve God 'in the gospel'?

- How is the gospel the power that doesn't only *save* us, but *sustains and empowers* us in the Christian life and a life of service?

#### VERSES 11 - 13

Why does Paul want to visit them in Rome?

- One of the reasons Paul wants to go to Rome is so that they can encourage him. Why is that noteworthy?
  - Do you see yourself as a means of God's encouragement for others? How can you help strengthen others' faith?
  - What is it about being around other believers that can strengthen our own faith?

#### VERSE 14

Why is Paul, a Jew, under obligation (or indebted) to Gentiles?

#### VERSE 15

Why does Paul want to preach the gospel to those who are already Christians?

#### VERSE 16

Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel?

- What does Paul mean by 'salvation'?
- Is there anything in the gospel, or the message of Christianity that you're ashamed/embarrassed of? Or that another Christian might be ashamed of?
- What's offensive about the gospel? Think of different people's world views: why might the gospel be offensive to them?

#### VERSE 17

Why is the gospel powerful?

- What does Paul mean by 'the righteousness of God'?
- Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God, revealing God's righteousness. How does the Gospel undercut all shame?
- What does Paul mean by 'from faith for faith'?
- Paul quotes Habakkuk 2v4. What point is he making?
  - How should every day be lived by faith?
  - Consider the inverse: how do we not live by faith? For example, what is at the root of every sin, or of our self-righteousness; or of bitterness; or of self-pity? How do each of these have a failure to believe the gospel at their root?

### **QUESTION TO CONSIDER INDIVIDUALLY**

*[can be as a take-home - doesn't have to be done in the group]*

What new perspective have you gained on the gospel thanks to the verses you read today? Think about the areas or circumstances in which you have felt ashamed of the gospel. Consider including these areas in your prayers: that you would grow in courage and conviction about the gospel and its power.

# Session 3

## Romans 1.18-32

*Even if you don't manage to get through all the questions, try to finish with the last question, which takes you back to the hope that comes with the gospel.*

### READ THE PASSAGE

This letter is about the good news of the Gospel and why we need a righteousness that is a gift of God. The first place Paul turns is the sinfulness of humanity. Why go there first?

### VERSE 18

It begins with the word 'For...' why is this important?

- What is the wrath of God?
  - Paul does not say that the wrath of God *will* be revealed, but that it *is* revealed. Briefly, according to what follows in this chapter, *how* is it revealed *now*?
  - What does Paul say God's wrath is against? What does he mean?
  - Do you struggle with the idea of God being a God of wrath? If so, why?
  - Why would a God who refused to punish the wicked be unworthy of worship?
- What does Paul say humanity does with the truth?
  - Can you give some examples of how people suppress the truth?
  - Can you give some examples of how people who deny God's existence nevertheless suggest or live as if there are moral absolutes?

### VERSE 20

How are God's eternal power and divine nature displayed in the physical world?

- Can you give examples of how people see this, but suppress/don't follow through on what they are seeing?

### VERSE 21

What do honouring God and giving thanks to him express? And, conversely, what does a failure to honour him and thank him express?

### VERSES 23 - 25

Paul describes how we exchange the worship of the Creator for created things. In what ways do we see this exchange happening in the secular west today? In what ways is the secular person still a worshipper?

### VERSES 24 - 28

Which phrase is repeated?

- We think getting what we want is a good thing. This passage suggests that is not always the case. Why should 'God giving people up to what they desire' give us pause for thought?

- Can you give current examples of God giving people/societies over to what they want?

#### VERSE 24

Paul says that God has given humanity over to the **'lusts of their heart'**. The word he uses is *epithumia* - over-desires. Why is it helpful to understand that the major problem of our heart may not be that we desire wrong things, but that we may also *over-desire* good things, and make them our god?

#### VERSE 25

Paul says that people worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. How does worshipping something other than God ultimately control us or even enslave us, not free us?

#### VERSES 26 - 27

In these verses, Paul deals with homosexual sin. However, before doing so he addresses the sinfulness of all sexual practices outside of marriage (v24).

Why does it matter that we notice this?

- Paul uses an argument from nature. What is that argument?
  - How does Paul describe same-sex physical relationships?

This is not all the Bible has to say on same-sex relationships. However, the Bible is clear that homosexual relationships that haven't been repented of, are a rejection of God's will and Christ's Lordship and leave those who engage in them outside the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). But what we read here must be taken in the context of the whole of the letter: that God's wrath is revealed against sin (not just this sin, but *all* sin), but the gospel, the good news of Jesus, is the answer and our hope for our sin.

- Look at **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. How are the wrath and the grace of God revealed in the gospel?

#### VERSES 28 - 31

Why is it wrong (if tempting!), for Christians to concentrate on the sexual sins of others?

- How does today's passage undercut the idea found in some churches that homosexuality is not a sin, or in other churches that it is the only, chief, or worst sin?

#### VERSE 32

How might we be guilty of 'giving approval' to sin? Think of some examples from day-to-day life.

- Why do we feel a need to justify sin in others?

#### TO FINISH - VERSE 25

On a more positive note (!) go back to v25.

Paul describes God as 'The Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.' We have to wait for chapter 3 before we get back to the gospel, but how do Paul's words here show us the way forward?

- Why should the reality of God's wrath lead us to greater joy and thankfulness for the gospel?
- Understanding the gospel gives you the freedom to be honest with yourself: in what area am I over-desiring? How can I practically address these areas in my life, so as to re-order my loves? Consider these questions on your own.



# Session 4

## Romans 2.1-29

### READ THE PASSAGE

Who is Paul addressing in this chapter?

- Chapter 1 was an indictment of the pagan Gentile world. How might a law-observing Jewish person have responded to chapter 1? How might a religious person today respond?

### VERSES 1 - 3

How might a religious/highly moral person be guilty of the same sins that they condemn in others? Consider also chapter 1:29 - 31.

- Why are we sometimes (often) quick to judge people for wrong attitudes or behaviours that we are guilty of ourselves?

### VERSE 3

What is Paul saying? (You may also consider Matt 7:1-5)

- Francis Schaeffer used the illustration of each of us having an imaginary tape recorder around our necks that recorded everything we said in judgment or criticism of others, or how others should behave. He made the point that all God would need to do to condemn us on the day of Judgement would be to play that recording back. Why?
- What sins are you tempted to condemn in others but excuse for yourself? Why are we sometimes (often) quick to judge people for wrong attitudes or behaviours that we are guilty of ourselves?

### VERSES 4 - 5

How is God's kindness shown to the rule-keeper/religious person?

- In what ways does the religious person have a hard and impenitent heart?
- What does the self-righteous person think they are storing up? What are they actually storing up?
- Why is self-righteousness appealing?

### COMPARE & CONTRAST

How are Romans 1 and 2 like a commentary on the two sons in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son?

### VERSE 6

What will be the basis God uses for the final judgment?

- Is Paul contradicting himself from 1:16-17 where he says salvation is through the gospel, by faith, with a righteousness given by God?

### READ PSALM 62

In Romans 2:6 Paul is quoting Ps 62:12. In that Psalm two types of people are contrasted by what they do. What is the contrast, and how does this help us understand what Paul is saying in 2:6?

- Do works matter? Why?

### **VERSES 7 - 8**

What indicators does Paul give for a life that is, or is not lived in right relationship with God? Explain what these are.

- If you've not answered this already, what does it actually mean to be self-seeking?
  - How do both religious/moral people, and irreligious/secular/pagan people do this?

### **VERSES 9 - 11**

Verses 9 - 11 tell us that God shows no partiality in his judgement. He has no favourites. The religious and irreligious will all be judged alike.

- Do you ever think God does have favourites and you're not one of them? What makes you think that?

### **VERSES 12 - 16**

What point is Paul making?

- How does our conscience 'accuse and excuse' us?
- Why is conscience not always a reliable guide to what we should do?
- How can you make your conscience a more reliable guide?

### **VERSES 17 - 24**

What are the kind of things a religious Jewish person might get their sense of worth from?

- Given this, what are they trusting in for their salvation?
  - How might Christians be guilty of something similar today?

### **VERSE 21**

What would it look like for us as individuals to 'teach ourselves'?

- How do you practically do this?

### **VERSE 24**

How do moralistic or religious people cause God to be blasphemed?

- How can you use your life, where God has placed you, to commend God and a life of faith in him?

### **VERSES 25 - 29**

What was the significance of circumcision for the Jewish people?

- What is Paul's point in v25-27?

### **VERSE 29**

What does it mean to have a circumcised heart?

- What does it mean that our praise is from God, not man?

# Session 5

## Romans 3.1-20

As you read the passage, consider what main point Paul is trying to make in these verses.

### VERSES 1 - 2

What advantage did the Jewish people have over the gentiles?

- What are the advantages we have over non-Christians? Do you ever find those a reason for pride or self-righteousness?

### VERSES 3 - 4

Paul is anticipating a rejection of his message, because the majority of Jewish people have actually not responded to the promises of the gospel.

People from a Jewish background hearing this letter read may have responded, 'sure, but God's word has failed - they *haven't* believed the promise, they *haven't* believed the oracles. So *few* people, even/ especially Jewish people, believe the gospel'. How does Paul respond?

- Do you ever think that the fact that Bible-believing Christians are in a minority invalidates Christianity? How does Paul's answer address that?

### VERSES 5 - 8

In **v5** and **v7**, Paul expresses an argument that an unbeliever might make. What is it, and how does he answer it in **v6** and **v8**?

- Why do secular people dislike the idea of God's wrath?
  - If someone argues that God is wrong to inflict justice/wrath on us, what grounds remain for arguing in favour of social justice?
  - Why is God's judgement in eternity consistent with our desire for justice now?
- When someone is facing a period of temptation, how might they argue something similar to v7?

### VERSE 9

How is this a summary of chapters 1 and 2?

- One problem of Jewish nationalism was that they *did* consider themselves better than the gentiles. What is Christian nationalism, what examples of this do you see currently around the world, and how might they believe something similar to what Paul articulates from a Jewish perspective? Finally, why is it wrong?
- What does it mean to be 'under sin'? Why is it remarkable that both Jew and gentile are 'under sin'?

### VERSES 10 - 18

Paul describes a number of ways sin has affected humanity. What are they? What areas do they cover?

- If not already discussed, in what ways is our speech like 'an open grave' **v13**?
- Paul says, **v11**, 'No one seeks for God.' What does it mean to 'seek God'?

- We can think of non-Christians as 'seekers'. What are they seeking for, and is it God?
- Why might it be closer to the truth to describe humanity, not as seekers, but as runners and hidiers from God?
- **Look at John 6:44 and 2 Timothy 2:25.** What do Jesus and Paul tell us about what must first precede us seeking God?
  - How does the truth that you only came to God because he first sought you out, and that you only believe because he gave you the faith to do so, affect you?
- Why can Paul say in **v12** that 'no one does good'? Is that true?
  - **Consider 1 Corinthians 10:31** - how often is the motive for doing good God's glory? What might people's motives be?
- **In v15** Paul says humanity is swift to shed blood. What are the root reasons we become angry, or vengeful? What does this say about the state of our hearts?
- **Considering v18**, what is the fear of God? (Consider 2 Chron 17v10; Job 28v28; Psalm 111v10, 130v3-4; Prov 1v7, 8v13)
  - How is the fear of God the opposite of all the sins Paul has just listed?

#### **VERSES 19 - 20**

What does Paul give as purposes of the law?

- Why is trying to obey the law and live a moral life a form of self-salvation? What is it doomed to failure?
- In **v20** Paul's conclusion is clear. What is it?
  - Do you ever find yourself thinking you are made right in God's sight by doing right? Why is this, do you think?
  - What are the negative results of thinking like this?

#### **WRAP IT UP**

Summarise the main points and take-home messages of this passage in a sentence or two.

# Session 6

## Romans 3.21-31

### VERSE 21

What is the 'but' at the beginning referring to and why is it so significant?

- Why is what follows the 'but' in the next verses stunning good news? How does it compare to other religions?

### VERSE 22

How do we receive this righteousness?

- Why is it the object of our faith that matters and not faith in itself? For example what is wrong with someone saying, 'what's important is that we believe in something. *What* we believe is secondary'?

### VERSE 23

According to this verse, who needs this righteousness?

- What does it mean to fall short of the glory of God?

### VERSE 24

What does it mean to be justified?

- As a Christian, do you typically feel guilty or not guilty in God's sight? What difference does it make to our lives when we understand we've been declared not guilty in Christ?
- What does 'redemption' mean?
  - What are we redeemed from and by?
  - Verse 24 makes it clear that we are justified and saved as a gift - by God's grace alone. Why is this humbling?

### VERSE 25

In this verse, Paul specifies what he means by faith. What is our faith to be in? What are the implications of this for what people say they believe?

- What is a propitiation? And how is Christ a propitiation by his blood?
- Given all this, what is faith?
  - It is possible as Christians to trust in our faith and not in Christ. What are some signs that we might be doing this?

### VERSES 25 - 26

What does it mean that God passed over former sins? How could this be just?

- What does it mean for God to be both just and justifier? Or, put another way, how can a just God justly justify us, although we are sinners?
  - What goes wrong if we think God is one *or* the other but not both: just (wrathful against sin) but not a justifier, or that he is a justifying/forgiving God but not a just/wrathful one?

### **VERSE 27**

Having presented the incredible truth of a righteousness from God that's a gift, received by faith, Paul turns to the issue of boasting. Why 'boasting' do you think? Why turn there?

- What problems does boasting bring to us as individuals or wider society?
- How does the gospel of justification by grace through faith undermine these negative effects of boasting?
- What are the kinds of things you are tempted to boast in, that make you feel good about yourself?
  - Why does the gospel give us far greater confidence than anything we could boast in?

### **VERSE 31**

How does justification by faith lead us to 'uphold the law'?

### **THE IMPACT OF THIS MESSAGE**

What does the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith have to say to the person:

- Who says that as long as they believe something, they're ok...
- Who feels like they'll never be good enough...
- Who looks at their life and works and thinks "I'm doing pretty well here!" (Whether they are a Christian or secular person)...
- Who tends to compare themselves (favourably or unfavourably) to other Christians...
- Who has done stuff in their past of which they feel great guilt and who feels unworthy of forgiveness...
- Who does not think deeply about these matters but is instead pursuing his or her 'best life now'...

# Session 7

## Romans 4.1-25

### RE-READ VERSES 1 - 6

Paul has been making the case for justification by faith in Christ. He now says, 'What then shall we say was gained by Abraham...' and in v6, 'just as David also speaks...'. What's Paul doing by name-dropping here?

### VERSES 1 - 3

Paul homes in on Abraham. Did Abraham have anything to boast about before God? If not, why not?

- How was Abraham justified?

### VERSE 3

In this verse Paul uses the word 'counted' (or in some translations 'credited'). It's *the* critical word in this chapter. Go through the whole passage and document (count!) how many times the word is used.

- What does it mean to 'count something to someone'?
- Given this, what does it mean in **v3** that Abraham's faith was 'counted to him as righteousness'?
- Martin Luther said Christians are '*simul justus et peccator*' - at the same time righteous and sinful. How does the example of Abraham, and what Paul says in **v5**, exemplify this?
  - Do you tend to think of yourself as a sinner, or as righteous? Why is Luther's approach better?

### VERSE 5

In what ways could a Christian be described as someone who stops trying to be saved?

- In what ways might Christians still (wrongly) trust in their own moral performance?
- If God were to ask you, 'why should I let you into heaven?' What would you reply?

### VERSES 7 - 8

In these two verses Paul quotes from one of David's Psalms - **Psalm 32**. Read the whole Psalm.

- How does this Psalm pre-empt the gospel? i.e. what gospel themes do you see in this Psalm?
- Consider **v1-2** of the Psalm which Paul quotes in **v7-8**, what does this tell us of how David was counted righteous before God?
  - David does not pretend he is sinless. Why is justification by faith, and the forgiveness that comes with it, the only way to see yourself as you really are, without it crushing you? Or without becoming proud?
  - Do you tend more to being crushed or proud? How does the gospel speak to you?

### VERSES 9 - 13

What point is Paul making about the order of Abraham's faith and circumcision?

- In fact, according to v11, what was circumcision?

- What does this tell us about the order of God's grace and our obedience? Do we receive grace because we obey, or obey because we've received grace?
- In v13, Paul says Abraham did not receive the promise of being father to many nations through the law. Why is this (obviously!) correct?

### **VERSES 14 - 15**

According to these two verses, no one can be justified by observing the law. Why is that?

- What does Paul mean by 'where there is no law there is no transgression'?

### **VERSE 16**

Paul gives the great alternative to trying to save yourself. What is it and who is it for?

### **VERSES 17 - 22**

In this verse Paul holds up Abraham as an example to us of what faith looks like in practice.

- What does faith look like in **v18-19**?
  - Are there any areas in your life where you have experienced this kind of faith?
- What does faith look like in **v20-21**?
  - Has there been a time recently when you have needed to trust God like this?

### **VERSES 24 - 25**

According to these final verses, what will saving faith look like for us?

### **TO CONSIDER**

You may have heard people say (or even thought yourself) that the Old Testament taught salvation by works and only in the New Testament do we get salvation by grace through faith. How does Paul's use of the example of David and Abraham undermine this?

Does this also have anything to say to the idea that the God of the Old and New Testaments are two different gods?

### **BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF**

(Questions for personal reflexion)

If God were to ask you, 'why should I let you into heaven?', what would you reply?

What are things you sometimes slip into thinking help save you or make you 'more accepted' in God's sight?

Reflect on the verses you have read and if necessary, repent of the times you have trusted in yourself and your works rather than fully trusting in Christ's death and resurrection that paid the price once and for all for you.



# Session 8

## Romans 5.1-11

### VERSE 1

Paul begins by saying we have been justified by faith. If you are a Christian, because of Christ's death on your behalf, you have been declared not guilty before God. Why does this change everything? For example, what does it do for feelings of shame, or guilt, or unworthiness? Why does it change the way you see God and yourself?

### VERSES 1 - 2

What 3 things flow from being justified by faith?

- How does peace with God differ from the peace of God?
- What does it mean to stand in grace?
- Why is the glory of God something we can look forward to as Christians with joy and hope?
- How does Christian hope differ from the way people usually think of hope?

### VERSE 3

Other than hope of the future glory of God, what else can we now rejoice in?

- Why is it deeply counter-intuitive to rejoice in sufferings?
- When we resent suffering or difficulties in our lives, what does it reveal about us?
- Why does knowing you are justified by faith enable you to rejoice in suffering?

### VERSES 3 - 4

What are the good purposes for which God allows suffering in our lives?

- How does suffering produce endurance?
- How does endurance produce character?
- How does character produce hope?
- When things are not going well, how do you typically respond? How can what Paul says here change that?
- Looking back, have you experienced a difficult time and seen what Paul says here working out in your own life? That you learnt endurance, or grew in character, or realised better where your real hope lies?

### VERSE 5

Paul says that the love of God has been poured into our hearts by God's Spirit. How does this affect the way we see ourselves, treat others and respond to God? (See also **1 John 4.18-19**)

- Are there people you struggle to love - maybe even who are making your life difficult? How might knowing what Paul writes here challenge you to a different response?

### VERSES 6 - 8

Let these verses sink in. Read v8 a few times, accentuating different parts.

What does Paul tell us about the staggering nature of God's love for us?

- How might reminding yourself of this change how you experience times where you feel burdened by your sin?

### **VERSES 9 - 10**

What point is Paul making in these verses?

- Paul talks about salvation in a future sense. Why, having been saved by Christ, is there still a promise that you will be saved?
- Why does Paul say we are saved by Christ's *life*?

### **VERSE 11**

The Christian life should be one of joy and rejoicing. Why? And why is justification by faith at the root of this joy?

### **TAKE IT WITH YOU**

Take a few minutes to write down the wonderful truths you have been reminded of this in this passage. Write them somewhere where you will see it throughout the week and be encouraged and built up by the reality of this Good News!

(For example, write it on a post-It and stick it anywhere - on your laptop, your fridge, your mirror... Maybe you could even design a new screen saver for your phone. The possibilities are endless!)

# Session 9

## Romans 5.12-21

### VERSES 12 - 14

According to these verses, what are the two problems humanity faces?

- How do you see these two problems continue to afflict humanity?
  - How does secularism seek to address them?
- In v12, Paul says that death spread to all because all sinned. However, the tense he uses for 'sinned' implies one single past action. What one single sin is he referring to, and how does this include everyone?
- The rest of the passage is based on this idea of Adam and Christ being our representative heads. Where do we still see the concept of one person representing a whole people show itself in other cultures and still, to some degree, in the West?
- How does the biblical concept of our being 'in Adam' or 'in Christ' - that they are our representatives, our 'federal heads', that humanity shares a corporate identity in Adam or Christ - compare to Western individualism? Do you appreciate this idea, or resent it? Why?

### VERSES 13 - 14

What is Paul referring to when he says that sin is not counted as sin where there is no law? And how does this differ from Adam's sin?

### VERSE 14

Considering this verse, what does it mean for death to reign?

- As you look at our post-Christian, secular societies, how do you see death still reigning?
- Paul describes Adam as a 'type' of Jesus. What does he mean by that?

### VERSES 15 - 17

Paul makes a number of contrasts between what Adam brought upon humanity, and what Christ has:

- In v15, what contrast is Paul making? (See also 1 Corinthians 15:22)
- In v16, what contrast does he make between Christ's free gift and the result of Adam's sin?
- Does the concept of grace and justification by faith minimise sin, or say 'it doesn't really matter', or sweep it under the carpet? Why or why not?
- Again, what contrast is Paul making in v17?

### VERSE 17

What does it mean to 'reign in life'?

- How might the message that *in Christ you reign in life* impact how you live and see life?

**VERSE 18**

This is a summary verse. Summarise in your own words the difference between Adam and Christ.

- Is Paul teaching universalism (the idea that all will be saved)?

**VERSE 19**

Why does the obedience of Christ matter?

**VERSE 20**

How does the law increase the trespass?

- Do you ever find yourself wanting to do something just because you've been told you can't? After all, 'rules are meant to be broken!' aren't they?!
- How did/does God respond to humanity's increasing sin?

**APPLICATION**

Basing your answer on what you saw in today's passage, how do you pick yourself up again when you stumble in sin - in your thoughts, words or actions?

# Session 10

## Romans 6.1-14

### GETTING STARTED

How and why do you think people can change their behaviour? What are the good and bad sides of each way?

### VERSE 1

Why might believing in God's grace lead one to think that it's ok to sin or give in to temptation?

- Do you ever find yourself thinking along these lines?

### VERSE 2

What does it mean that we died to sin?

### VERSES 1 - 2

Why do you think we continue to do things that we know are wrong/sinful?

- What does this say about us?

### PAUSE TO LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

Looking at v3-11 as a whole, how does the concept of 'union with Christ' feature in this passage?

### VERSES 3 - 4

How do these verses summarise Christianity?

### VERSES 5 - 7

How does Christ's death and resurrection deal with every aspect of our sin problem?

- In v6 Paul talks of 'the old self' and the 'body of sin'. What are these, how do they differ, and what has Christ's death done about them?
- How does someone's identity influence the way they live? How should our identity as Christians, as those united with Christ, change the way we live?
- In v6, what does it mean to be enslaved to sin?
  - How should knowing we are no longer enslaved change the way we see decision making in the moment of temptation?
  - Do you truly believe that you don't have to sin?

### VERSE 11

What does it mean to 'consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God'. How should you practically do this?

- How might this help you in the moment of temptation?
- Considering v5-11: In what sense do we already get to experience resurrection life now?

### VERSES 12 - 13

What does it mean, and what will it practically look like, not to let sin reign but rather to present yourself to God and your members as instruments of righteousness?

## VERSE 14

Why should knowing you are not under law but under grace break sin's power over you?

- Do you actively reflect on why you do what you do, or preach the gospel to yourself? If not, what could you do to change that?

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

Go back over v14 and its questions.

Think about an area (or areas) in your life in which you regularly struggle with the same sin or temptation. Take time to think of a "game-plan" based on these verses (and v14 in particular) that you can put into practice when these temptations come knocking at your door. Remind yourself that sin does not have dominion over you - because you are in Christ you can resist, you can choose his way, the better way.

# Session 11

## Romans 6.15 - 23

### GETTING STARTED

What images does slavery conjure up for you?

### VERSE 15

In this verse Paul repeats what he wrote in v1. Why do you think he feels the need to repeat himself?

- Someone has said that you have to repeat a message at least 7 times before people get it. Have you experienced times when the Lord has had to repeatedly bring something to your attention before you got the point?
- We are to obey God because we live under grace, and not despite the fact of his grace. Why is this something that we need to be reminded of?

### VERSE 16

Paul asks a direct question here. How would you answer? Has the reality that everyone is a slave to something - to sin or to God - sunk in?

- 'Sin' is a generic term for anything other than God that people give themselves to as their highest good. Dig down into that: what specific things can people give themselves to that they become enslaved to?

### VERSE 16 & 21

Paul says that sin leads to death. How come / In what way?

- How does obedience lead to righteousness?

### VERSE 17 - 18

What 'before and after' contrast is Paul drawing?

- Paul begins this contrast with 'thanks be to God'. Does the gospel warm your heart? Do you remind yourself of it and use it as the basis of thanksgiving to God? List some of the things God has done for you in Christ that could be the basis of such thanksgiving.
- What is Paul referring to when he talks of 'the standard of teaching'? Break that phrase down and draw out its implications.
- We are exposed to various messages/teachings in the course of our lives that shape and form us - either as slaves to righteousness or to sin. The gospel has that effect, but so to do the messages of the world. How does the world preach at you?

### VERSE 19

How does lawlessness (choosing to live contrary to God's law in one area) lead to more lawlessness in our lives?

- How does presenting yourself as a slave to righteousness lead to sanctification? How can our actions and habits shape our character for good?
- Can you give an example of where you have practically done this?

### VERSE 20

What do you think Paul means when he says that when we were slaves of sin we were free in regard to righteousness?

- What is the irony in this freedom from righteousness?

### **VERSE 22**

Why does it matter that we understand that we have already been set free from sin and become God's slave?

### **VERSE 23**

What's the difference between a wage and a gift?

- Why does this difference matter when it comes to life and death?

### **WRAP IT UP**

How would you summarise Paul's message in this passage. What difference should it make in our lives?



# Session 12

## Romans 7.1 - 25

### GETTING STARTED

As we look at chapter 7, first look back to **6.15**: what question is Paul still dealing with? In **v1-6** of chapter 7 Paul will give a further reason why we don't go on sinning.

### READ VERSES 1 - 7

Paul is giving another reason why we can't just carry on sinning if we're not under law but under grace. What reason is that? i.e. what point is he making in these verses?

### VERSE 4 - 6

With these verses in mind, think further about the metaphor of being married to Christ. Not continuing in sin is the 'negative' side of this metaphor, but what are some of the positives?

### VERSE 7

Why does Paul need to anticipate the question, 'Is the law sin?'

- How does Paul answer the question? What does he say the purpose of the law is?

### VERSE 8 - 9

What effect can the law have on us?

### VERSE 9 - 10

What experience with God's law and his own heart is Paul describing here?

It was clearly the 10th Commandment, 'You shall not covet' that helped Paul see all this. Briefly look at the Ten Commandments in **Exodus 20:1-17**. Why might it have been the command not to covet that brought the reality of sin and his true spiritual condition home to Paul?

### VERSE 7 - 12

Paul describes how the law against coveting revealed something to Paul about his own covetousness and the more he tried not to covet, the more covetous he became. What about you? Have you experienced something similar? Have you read a rule/command/law and immediately thought 'I'm not going to obey that!' or found a desire to break that command growing inside you?

- Is the problem with God's law, or does it lie elsewhere (**v10-13**)?

### READ VERSES 14 - 23

What conflict is going on in Paul's heart, mind, and life?

- Is Paul talking about his past, pre-Christian life or his current life as a Christian? What makes you say one way or the other?
- Have you experienced this same inner struggle in your own life?
- Given what Paul writes here, what should concern you more - that you don't see your sin, or that you do and grieve over it? What is the attitude of someone growing in holiness, that they become less aware of their sin or more?
- Why should being conscious of your sinfulness actually be an encouragement to you?

**VERSE 24**

What is Paul's summary judgment about himself?

- Why is understanding we are 'wretched' key to understanding the gospel of God's righteousness in Christ and of the joy and peace that come with it?

**VERSE 25**

Where does Paul find the answer to his wretchedness? Can he sort himself out himself?