



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | LEADER OVERVIEW

Paul's purpose in writing Romans are threefold:

1. Prepare for his coming visit to Rome & mission to Spain.
2. Present the basic system of salvation to a church that had not received teaching from an apostle before.
3. Explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's overall plan of redemption.

He explains the gospel as the problem of sin, the solution of salvation, and the response of service (or how we should live as Christians). We will highlight how God's righteousness is revealed in each section of text and try our best to help students see this as one continuous letter/idea instead of standout, quotable verses. Romans has a lot of 'Christianese' terms that students might recognize but not actually know/understand (i.e. justification, sanctification, righteous vs unrighteous, etc). Let's emphasize defining these terms each week when they come up within the text so we have consistent phrasing/understanding:

- Righteous - the quality, state, or characteristic of being in the right
 - Unrighteous - being in the wrong
 - Justified/justification - when people believe in Jesus as their Savior, God declares them not guilty (cancels the guilt of sin) and righteous (transferred from Christ to us by faith).
 - Atonement - reconciliation between God and man (satisfaction of God's wrath)
 - Redemption - Christ's death on the cross pays our sin penalty (our freedom is purchased with his death)
 - Sanctification - Gradual, growing in righteousness.
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Week 1 - Romans 1:1-17

Part of Paul's argument: The Problem of Sin

God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Major theme/topic: Paul's Introduction and Longing to Visit the Roman Church

Memory Verse: Romans 1:16-17

Summary: Paul's mission is to take the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. This letter is to the church in Rome which he has not been able to visit since his missionary journeys focused in Asia minor/Mediterranean (Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, think all NT books). The gospel is the power of salvation for everyone (v 16) and believers receive righteousness by faith in Jesus (v. 17), which is a huge shift from the OT laws/practices.

Big questions to cover:

- What are Paul's purposes for writing this letter (3-fold)?
- How would you explain the gospel to new or nonbelievers?
- How is Christianity different from other world religions?

Week 2 - Romans 1:18-32

Part of Paul's argument: The Problem of Sin

God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Major theme/topic: Unrighteousness of the Gentiles

Memory Verse: Romans 1:25

Summary: God responds to wickedness and sinfulness with wrath. We know God exists because the created world reveals him (we have no excuse to deny his existence or justify our wickedness).

Mankind chooses idol worship and refuses truth, so God allows them to indulge their sinful desires and receive due consequences, including increased wickedness and depravity. We willingly chose our current condition even though we knew it lead to death (v. 32).

Big questions to cover:

- Is it possible to have a relationship with God without hearing the gospel (like if you were never told about Christianity)? See v 18-20
 - Is anyone righteous without God?
 - Are there other ways to righteousness/salvation (this is a looser connection and would require more context to answer fully, but the convo starts here)?
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Week 3 - Romans 2

Argument: Problem of Sin

God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Major theme/topic: Unrighteousness of the Jews

Memory Verse: Romans 2:3

Summary: Though the Jews are God's chosen people, they are not exempt from his judgement. They wrongfully/hypocritically judged the Gentiles because they did not have Jewish privilege (lengthy OT history with God, customs/rituals, scriptures, generational knowledge of how to follow/serve God) as Christianity was completely new to them. As a result the Jews mistook God's kindness/favor as exemption from judgement (v. 4) and didn't repent of their sin (consider the cyclic pattern of Israel's unfaithfulness in the OT). Paul calls out several points of self-righteousness in the Jews and reaffirms that they will be judged by their obedience to the law (which they cannot fulfill, which should point back to Jesus as the only solution to sin). Additionally Paul argues that the evidence of being God's children (historically only the Jews) is faith, obedience, and the condition of one's heart. This is a big shift for the Jews from outward evidence of following God (sacrifices, rituals, feasts, the temple, priests, etc) to an inward relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Big questions to cover:

- When we judge others' sins and are blind to our own sins, how will God react to this on judgement day? How do people store up wrath for themselves and when will they feel this?
 - Why is the Jew/Gentile argument something Paul is so focused on?
 - Will we perish equally if we know the law and sin versus if we don't know the law and sin?
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Week 4 - Romans 3:1-20

Argument: Problem of Sin

God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Major theme/topic: All People are Unrighteous

Memory Verse: Romans 3:20

Summary: Still speaking to the Jewish Christians, Paul uses OT scripture to finalize his argument that humanity is inherently sinful, Jew and Gentile equally, and that obedience to the law doesn't yield righteousness. The purpose of the law is to make us aware of our sin and lead us to repentance and dependence on God.

Big questions to cover:

- Is it possible to be a "good person" and "earn" righteousness?
 - Are people inherently good or sinful?
 - What is the purpose of the law (v. 20)?
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Week 5 - Romans 3:21-31

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God's righteousness: Credited to Us by Grace

Major theme/topic: Justification: Righteousness by Faith

Memory Verse: Romans 3:21-24

Summary: Because we cannot solve the sin problem nor provide our own righteousness, God graciously provides his righteousness (imputed/granted) to us through faith in Jesus. This is available to ALL people (Jew and Gentile) for all time (OT animal sacrifices symbolized Jesus' ultimate sacrifice so Jews technically received atonement through faith as well).

Big questions to cover:

- Verse 25: "in his forbearance he (God) had left the sins committed beforehand (before Christ) unpunished"... so did the OT sacrifices not atone for sins? What happened to the OT Jews when they died since Jesus hadn't come yet?
 - So what about the law then, is it pointless if we are only justified by faith? Do we have to follow the law still or is it obsolete? (v. 31, further discussed in ch 6-7).
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Week 6 - Romans 4

Argument: The Solution to Sin Problem is Salvation

God's righteousness: Credited to Believers by Faith

Major theme/topic: Faith is "being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."

Memory Verse: Romans 4:20-21

Summary: Paul finishes chapter 3:21-31 introducing a new righteousness, apart from the law, from God, given by grace through belief in Jesus. He explains God left sins before Jesus unpunished (punished symbolically through animal sacrifices) and that all sins were 'paid'/punished/settled in Jesus' sacrificial death. Anticipating an argument from the Jews and a charge that he rejects the law, Paul answers a series of rhetorical questions (3:27-31), then launches into a full chapter example of Abraham, the father of Israel. The Jews used Abraham as their chief argument that righteousness (justification) was earned by works/following the law. But Paul points out that all of Abraham's actions are rooted in true and simple faith that God would do what he said he would do, even when Abraham didn't understand or it seemed impossible. Thus all believers can claim Abraham as their forefather (Jew & Gentile alike) and are heirs to the promise given him.

Big questions to cover:

- What is faith?
 - Why can't good deeds or following the law give us righteousness?
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Week 7 - Romans 5

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God's righteousness: Credited to believers by faith/his grace

Major theme/topic: The benefits (fruits) of righteousness and the compare and contrast of Adam and Jesus.

Memory Verse: Romans 5:10

Summary: Paul tells us in this chapter what Christians have, now that they have been justified through faith: peace, access to grace, hope, reconciliation (defined later) with God. Adam through one act brings sin and death into the world. Jesus through one act makes justification and life available to all.

Big questions to cover:

- What do we gain from being justified?
 - Why were enemies to God?
 - How can a single person, Jesus, take the punishment for every single person at once?
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Week 8 - Romans 6

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God's righteousness: Imparted by the Spirit

Major theme/topic: Dead to Sin; Alive in Christ

Memory Verse: Romans 6:22-23

Summary: Because Christ died for us, believers are no longer under sin's ruling power. We aren't sinless but we are free from sin's shackles and power over our life. We shall offer our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God. No longer are we slaves to sin but we have exchanged masters and now should be willing servants to our Lord Jesus Christ! Doesn't mean we don't struggle to serve Him and fight the pull of sin but we know ultimately sin has no power over us thanks to Jesus dying for us.

Big questions to cover:

- How and why did we die to sin?
 - How can we be "dead to sin" but "alive in Christ Jesus" (vs11) when we still live in our human sinful nature bodies? Sin shall not be our master any longer as we are not living "under the law" but "under grace". Can you explain what living "under the law" is versus living "under grace"?
 - How are we transformed from "a slave to sin" vs "a slave to God" and what does that life look like?
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Week 9 - Romans 7

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God's righteousness: Imparted by the Spirit

Major theme/topic:

- The law cannot save us.
- When we become Christians, we are no longer married to the law but to Christ.
- Christians struggle with sin, but must not surrender.

Memory Verse: Romans 7:21-23

Summary: Chapter 6 taught us that when we follow Christ and accept his salvation, we are dead to sin and become alive in Christ. Chapter 7 is an inside scoop of Paul's internal struggles as a believer (and likely ours too!). We are no longer slaves to the law (since we died with Christ) yet we keep on sinning and it's frustrating. We don't do the things we should do, instead we do the things we know we shouldn't. God gave us his good and holy law so that we would recognize our sinfulness and inability

to do anything good apart from Him and without his Holy Spirit guiding us. “Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (v 25).

Big questions to cover:

- Refresher: What does Paul mean by “the Law”?
 - Is the law good or bad? What is the difference between sin and trespass?
 - What is the danger if we forget either our own sinfulness or God’s forgiveness?
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Week 10 - Romans 8

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God’s righteousness: Imparted by the Spirit

Major theme/topic: Life in the Spirit

Memory Verse: Romans 8:1-2; 8:18, 8:26-27; 8:28-30; 8:37-39 (pick one :))

Summary: Paul uses this passage to move through several “logical questions” that build on one another, all of which are anchored in his discussion of flesh vs spirit found in Romans 7. “What is our identity” (v1-11), “What does that mean for us” (v12-17), “How should we feel about it” (v18-30) and lastly “How does this display God’s righteousness? (v31-39)

Big questions to cover:

- What purpose did Jesus coming to earth, in the flesh, serve? (v4)
 - How can we love, and serve, God despite our sinful nature?
 - What does Paul mean when he says “for those who are called according to his purposes”? (v28)
 - How would you describe the power and character of God? V 31-39
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Week 11 - Romans 9:1-29

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God’s righteousness: Demonstrated in his Sovereignty

Major theme/topic: God can do whatever he chooses but always chooses with wisdom and purpose.

Memory Verse: Romans 9:16

Summary: Romans 9 is a difficult text: it seems to tell us things about God that contradict with what we already know about Him. Ask students to make a list of the things we already know about God from the rest of the Bible and refer back to that list when the tough questions come up in chapter 9. Paul distinguishes between all Israel (the nation of God’s chosen people) and Israel (spiritual descendents of Abraham through belief in Jesus as Christ). All Israel has had every ‘advantage’ to recognize Jesus—they’re the chosen people, the covenants, the Law, the temple worship, promises directly from God, the patriarchs, and actual lineage to Jesus—but so many reject him. This allows the Gentiles to be ‘grafted in’ to God’s family by faith. God’s election is personal, not based on nationality, family, denomination, good works, or following the commandments.

Big questions to cover:

- Who is Israel (God’s children)?
 - What if God’s sovereignty (right to rule how he wants) is actually a display of his kindness & goodness?
 - Where do you need to yield to God’s sovereignty
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Week 12 - Romans 9:30-10:21

Argument: People must hear the good news from others (who are called) in order to respond to it.

God’s righteousness: Demonstrated in His Sovereignty

Major theme/topic: Righteousness is attained through inward and outward faith in Jesus, not through works.

Memory Verse: Romans 10:9-10

Summary: People will not achieve righteousness by works, but by faith in Christ, inwardly and outwardly. God calls believers to go and tell others the Gospel so that they might hear and respond to it.

Big questions to cover:

- What is our role and responsibility with the truths of the Gospel?
 - How does the message of the Gospel get spread to others?
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Week 13 - Romans 11

Argument: Solution of Salvation

God's righteousness: Demonstrated in His Sovereignty

Major theme/topic: God has not rejected his people whom He foreknew. Israel will ultimately come to Christ in the end.

Memory Verse: Romans 11:33-36

Summary: There will come a day when most Jews will accept Christ. Paul believes the majority will be saved - first a remnant, then a good number of gentiles then a majority of Jews. One reason for Israel's unbelief is to make room for the non-Jews in the world. God never breaks His promises. His gifts and His calling on Israel can't be taken back. Romans 11 ends with a beloved poem about our merciful God.

Big questions to cover:

- Is Israel beyond recovery?
 - How do the Israelites' rejection of God help the reconciliation of the world?
 - How will Israel be redeemed and grafted back into God's family and who will ultimately make that happen and how?
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Week 14 - Romans 12:1-8

Argument: How Christians should live in light of the gospel

God's righteousness: Lived out in the church

Major theme/topic: Spiritual gifts! Living sacrifices!

Memory Verse: Romans 12:1-2

Summary: Paul spends chapters 1-11 explaining the sin nature of humanity, God's solution in salvation for Jew and Gentile, and the start of the sanctification process for believers (work of the Holy Spirit). In Chapter 12 he moves into instructing believers how they should live, in light of the gift they've received. Set aside time for students to take a spiritual gifts inventory, share their results, and encourage how you see those gifts already on display in their lives.

We used this inventory:

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service> and there are definitions for each gift here as well!

Big questions to cover:

- What is one area of my life I have been holding back from God that I need to work on sacrificing daily?
 - What is one way I can start using my spiritual gifting to serve within the body of Christ?
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Week 15 - Romans 12:9-13:14

Argument: How Christians should live in light of the Gospel.

God's righteousness: Lived out in the Church

Major theme/topic: Unity Among Believers

Memory Verse: Romans 12:18

Summary: Paul casts a vision for what life as believers should look like, based on love.

Big questions to cover:

- What words, ideas, or concepts stand out to you?
 - How does living this way reflect our faith?
 - What of these areas do you do well? What can we be better at?
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Week 16 - Romans 14:1-15:2

Argument: How we should live in light of the Gospel.

God's righteousness: Lived out in the Church

Major theme/topic: Major on the majors, minor in the minors, live in peace together.

Memory Verse: Romans 14:19-20a

Summary: There are some things/topics/arguments that **should divide** us as a Church (as in we must not tolerate and need to outright reject). Paul emphasizes those points in Romans and other NT letters (ie false teaching, heresy, etc) but that list is quite small compared to the things we **should tolerate**, living peacefully in an actively loving community despite our differing opinions.

Big questions to cover:

- What are things the Church cannot and should not tolerate? What are examples of the minor things we are ok to disagree on?
 - What are the consequences of arguing/splitting over the minor things? What are the outcomes of arguing over the major things?
 - What is one thing you will work on this month to 'edify the church' and live at peace within our community?
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Romans 15:14-END

Argument: How Christians should live in light of the Gospel - Spread the Gospel, support the poor, be cautious of anyone causing division (dab on the haters)

God's righteousness: Lived out in the Church

Major theme/topic: Paul is calling real people to respond in their actions according to his letter

Memory Verse: Romans 16:25-27

Summary: Paul concludes his letter to the Roman church. He lets them know of his future travel plans to spread the Gospel. He parts with personal greetings, warnings, and reminders to the church.

Big questions to cover:

- How will you apply everything we've discussed in Romans (as a whole) in your day to day life?
- How has Paul's example encouraged and challenged your own witness of the gospel?



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BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 1 | ROMANS 1:1-17

Memory Verse

- Romans 1:16-17

Main Themes

- Main Point: Paul's introduction and longing to visit Rome
- Paul's argument: The problem of sin
- God's righteousness: Revealed in wrath

Key Questions

- What are Paul's purposes for writing this letter (3-fold)?
- How would you explain the gospel to new or nonbelievers?
- How is Christianity different from other world religions?

Background

Paul's mission is to take the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. This letter is to the church in Rome which he has not been able to visit since his missionary journeys focused in Asia minor/Mediterranean (Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, think all NT books). The gospel is the power of salvation for everyone (v 16) and believers receive righteousness by faith in Jesus (v. 17), which is a huge shift from the OT laws/practices.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

- Why study Romans?
- Step up to the challenge! Read along with us! Memorize important verses! Bring more questions!
- Definitions (post it)-we all need them! Avoid 'christiany' words (use real people explanations)
- Covenant refresher (which ones we'll highlight with this study)

Roman's argument arc: sin is a problem we can't solve, the gospel is the solution, because of the life and death of Jesus Christians ought to live a certain way (3 large post-its)

Things to consider throughout this study:

1. How does each passage support Paul's "argument"?
2. How do we see God's righteousness/justice revealed?

Study:

Read 1:1-7 out loud

Who is the author? What do we know/learn about him?

What is Paul's calling/job (v 5)?

What do we learn about God?

What do we learn about Jesus?

Who is this written to?

- What do we know about the Roman church?
- What do we know about NT books of the Bible?
- How should we interpret this scripture knowing it is a letter?

Read 1:8-17 out loud

What does Paul want for the Roman believers?

What is Paul's calling/job/goal?

What are Paul's purposes for writing this letter (3-fold)?

1. Prepare for his coming visit to Rome & mission to Spain.
2. Present the basic system of salvation to a church that had not received teaching from an apostle.
3. Explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's overall plan of redemption.

Why 'first for the Jew, then for the Gentile' (v. 16b)? Does God have favorites?

Main theme of the book (v 17): we receive righteousness from God through the gospel by faith.

Define Righteousness - the quality, state, or characteristic of being in the right in relation to God.

Wrap-up:

How would you explain the gospel to new or nonbelievers?

- Conversation or give kids 5 minutes to write it out in notebook (goal is to prompt kids throughout study to update this explanation as we learn more about it, then reflect on their final answer at the end of the book)

Verse to memorize: 1:16-17

I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “the righteous will live by faith.”

How is Christianity different from other world religions? (Why we know it is the only solution to sin, and should want it to be true)

ALL religions recognize sin/brokenness/separation from (a) God and need to provide a solution.

1. Islam (24%)- God is Allah, he spoke to people through prophets of which Mohammed is the chief and last. People are judged at death for how they lived and Allah determines where they spend eternity (Heaven or Hell). You must ‘earn’ salvation by your good deeds outweighing your bad deeds and don’t find out until final judgment if you ‘did enough’ to enter Heaven. Solution to sin is self-effort, good works to earn righteousness.
2. Hinduism (15%)- There is one supreme being, creator and sovereign over all. God can only be known through the Satguru (enlightened leader/prophet). Life cycles through reincarnation where people continually work to resolve their karma (good and bad thoughts, words, deeds); once all are resolved they can be liberated from the cycle of rebirth and become one with God. Solution to ‘sin’ is you keep trying until you get it ‘right’ (pay off all bad karma).
3. Buddhism (7%)-There is no god or supernatural being (atheism). Life is a cycle of suffering and rebirth which can be broken by achieving enlightenment (absence of all desires). Solution to sin/suffering is self-effort (very few have accomplished this process).
4. Sikhism (0.3%)—There is one god (Waheguru) omnipresent and formless. Core beliefs: all people are equal (gender, race, class, etc) and have full access to god. Some similarities to Christianity: charity, serving others, selflessness, God dwells within everyone, but cannot be fully known or understood; the universe exists because he wills it. God is experienced through creation, worship, community, scriptures. BUT people stuck in karma life cycles which can only be escaped by achieving total knowledge and union with God (have to earn salvation).
5. Atheism (16%)—lack of belief in god(s). Because evil exists god(s) cannot; does not provide a solution to evil, just ‘try to do good things’.

6. Christianity (31%)—God is perfect & holy cannot coexist with sin/evil, therefore we must be separated from him. Sin is a problem we cannot solve by good works or religious practices (it's never enough, other religious beliefs support this concept). God solves the problem by sacrificing himself: Jesus lived a perfect life (fulfilling the law) and yet died a sinner's death. By believing in Jesus, God grants us Jesus' righteousness and places our sin penalty with Jesus' death (the great exchange).



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BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 2 | ROMANS 1:18-32

Memory Verse

- Romans 1:25

Main Themes

- Main Point: The unrighteousness of the gentiles
- Paul's argument: The problem of sin
- God's righteousness: Revealed in wrath

Key Questions

- Is it possible to have a relationship with God without hearing the gospel (like if you were never told about Christianity)
- Who is responsible for the situation humanity finds itself in?
- How is sin evident in our lives?

Passage Summary

God responds to wickedness and sinfulness with wrath. We know God exists because the created world reveals him (we have no excuse to deny his existence or justify our wickedness). Mankind chooses idol worship and refuses truth, so God allows them to indulge their sinful desires and receive due consequences, including increased wickedness and depravity. We willingly choose our current condition even though we know it leads to death (v. 32)

Study Guide and Questions

Recap from last week:

- Written by Paul, who is an apostle/missionary.
- Calling is to tell the gentiles the gospel.
- Writes Romans because no apostle has gone to Rome.
- Entire book of Romans is one large argument arc "sin" to "salvation" to "response".

What was the memory verse from last week?

Romans 1:16-17 - “I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “the righteous will live by faith.”

Introduction:

- Paul shifts his focus from his personal story, to the first of his main points “Sin is a problem that we can’t solve.”
 - These passages aren’t in isolation- they are part of a much larger narrative that Paul is writing.
- The main subject here is the gentiles (non-jews) in Rome.
- This is going to be a tough passage (and it's supposed to be).
 - We are going to look for 3 different ‘exchanges’ that happen in this text.
 - We are going to look for the “role of God” and the “role of man.”

Study:

Read 1:18-23 out loud

- What do we learn about God?
 - What is the root cause of “God’s wrath”?
 - Unrighteousness, NOT Person.
 - What has God done for humanity?
 - Revealed Himself.
- How do humans “See” God? What allows us to do so?
 - Invisible = Invisible!
 - Perceived = grasped, understood
 - Through His Creation
- Paul uses a phrase “They are without excuse”. What does that mean?
- How have humans responded to God?
- In this scenario, who is “at fault”?

- Man
- Our Decisions
- What is the 'exchange' Paul presents in this passage? (Glory/images)
 - How does this align with natural order?
 - Creator > Created
 - Paul is evoking something very specific here- any guesses?
 - Genesis 1:20-26
- What is the Role of God? What is the Role of Man?

Read 1:24-25

- What is the "therefore, there for?"
- What does Paul mean by "God gave them up?"
 - Key: Consequences for Decisions
 - CS Lewis - "The lost enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved"
- Where is the root of this conflict?
 - Human Heart/Mind/Choice
- What is the 'exchange' Paul presents? (Truth/Lie)
 - What is meant by truth?
 - "the quality of being in accord with what is true"
 - Not a 'fact'. It is a relationship and a state of being
 - How does this align with the natural order?
 - Truth > Lie

Read 1:26-32

- "For this reason"- what reason?
 - Exchanging Truth
- "Gave them up" appears again.
- What is the exchange that Paul presents?

- Natural Relations
- We are going to SKIP this. Not because it isn't important, but because I don't want to lose Paul's point based on something our culture deems controversial.
- Without God's help, where do humans end up?
 - Debased. Filled with unrighteousness. Evil.
- Lets focus on v. 29-30
 - What do you notice about the list of sins here?
 - Who is "righteous" based on this list?
 - And the consequence of this?
- V 32 "They know God's righteous Decree."
 - What is Paul referring to here? ("Moral Law"/Conscious)

Wrap-up:

Can anyone offer up a summary of this passage?

- Paul is making a broader point about human nature and the desire of our heart.
- Where does this fit?

"They choose not to worship God but to worship gods of their own making, falling deeper into sin in the process and earning God's condemnation."

What does this passage teach us about God?

- That God desires relationship with us and reveals himself to us.
- That God releases human's to our own sinful nature.

What does this passage teach us about Man?

- We ALL choose things other than God.
- We *Should* know better.
- Left to our own devices we will choose evil vs good.

Memory verse for the week: Romans 1:25

"because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."



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BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 3 | ROMANS 2

Memory Verse

- Romans 2:3

Main Themes

- Main Point: The Unrighteousness of the Jews
- Paul's argument: The Problem of Sin
- God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Key Questions

- When we judge others' sins and are blind to our own sins, how will God react to this on judgement day? How do people store up wrath for themselves and when will they feel this?
- Why is the Jew/Gentile argument something Paul is so focused on?
- Will we perish equally if we know the law and sin versus if we don't know the law and sin?

Passage Summary

Though the Jews are God's chosen people, they are not exempt from his judgment. They wrongfully/hypocritically judged the Gentiles because they did not have Jewish privilege (lengthy OT history with God, customs/rituals, scriptures, generational knowledge of how to follow/serve God) as Christianity was completely new to them. As a result, the Jews mistook God's kindness/favor as exemption from judgment (v. 4) and didn't repent of their sin (consider the cyclic pattern of Israel's unfaithfulness in the OT). Paul calls out several points of self-righteousness in the Jews and reaffirms that they will be judged by their obedience to the law (which they cannot fulfill, which should point back to Jesus as the only solution to sin). Additionally, Paul argues that the evidence of being God's children (historically only the Jews) is faith, obedience, and the condition of one's heart. This is a big shift for the Jews from outward evidence of following God (sacrifices, rituals, feasts, the temple, priests, etc) to an inward relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Study Guide and Questions

Recap from last week:

- We talked about God's wrath against mankind.
- People turned from God and worshiped idols and indulged in their sinful desires.
- They have free will and choose sinful life even though it leads to death.

Introduction:

CH 2 starts off with scolding the Jews for the hypocritical judging of Gentiles and looking down on them. Paul continues to emphasize that people are not saved by what they do but by faith in what Christ has done for them. Encourages them to not seek approval of men but approval from God. We are all guilty before God - Jew or Gentile...or in our day you might say Christians and non Christians.

Study:

READ - get five readers. 1-5,6-11,12-16,17-24,25-29

Verse 2:1 When it says "Therefore you have no excuse"

- How many times does Paul use the word "you" in vs 1,2 and 3? Why so many times? Why do they have no excuse? (vs 1)
 - ANS : 7 times . Paul is really driving the point home of the human tendency toward pride and that we all face the same judgement and need for reconciliation with God. He is characterizing his audience as hypocrites who condemn others for doing what they themselves do.
- Let's remind people who weren't here last week why he is saying "therefore".
 - ANS - previously he ended CH 1 talking to those who were guilty in their sins. He now speaks to those who are generally moral in their behavior (the "you") No excuse because they have a greater advantage because God has revealed himself to them..the Jews.

Paul moves on to God judging mankind. If Romans 2:1 means "judge not" then Paul just spent the whole first chapter judging and now starts this one saying don't judge.

- What is he really saying?
 - Answer: we need to have moral judgments but only God is capable of judging us. (v 1-3)
- Can you give me an example of moral judging as opposed to just judging?
 - ANS: Moral judging could be judging someone for abusing their child in some way (we morally may need to step in as this is against the law) vs just judging someone because they use foul language or have pre marital sex. We have no grounds to judge people outside of church who claim no religion who are having premarital sex for example. They don't ascribe to the Bible and we can't judge them as a Christian because they aren't. Our main goal is not to get them to stop anything but to get them to know Christ. Eternity is more important to get figured out first than their sex life. :) (Melissa's words-

thought it worth sharing) And this is where the comfort comes from being a sinner saved by grace– we don't have to worry about judging people or doing it right or wrong. We can rest in the knowledge that God will take care of the evil and bad and we are not counted among that group anymore, thanks to Christ not our actions.

- Why is God more capable to judge us than fellow man?
 - ANS: God is perfect - He knows each person's life and history perfectly so He is way more qualified to judge our actions. He is the righteous judge without fault unlike any human.

Refusing God's grace and God's patience (vs4) "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

- Forbearance - who wants to take a stab at defining this word? Or explaining what they think it means?
 - ANS: It is used a lot in the financial loan world especially for mortgages/homes. So if people are desperate and can't pay their mortgage the bank will give them a forbearance of their loan. A temporary break from paying their debt. Also a definition could be patient self control, restraint or tolerance.
- What does this word tell us about how God feels and is reacting toward our sin?
 - ANS: God puts up with our crap and delays punishment waiting for us to turn to him in repentance and change our ways. He is kind and patient!
- Can someone explain what verse 4 means? Can you give me an example of someone showing "contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience?"
 - Makes me think of the president of Liberty University ...or televangelists gone bad lol
 - Don't act like the Jews of this time - entitled while being unthankful, rebellious, and unrighteous.

Verses 6-11 - Jew or Gentile does not matter. God acknowledges who we are and what we are doing. Paul makes it clear that a person's lineage as a Jew or Gentile will not affect the outcome, since God uses the same standard to judge everyone. Basically are you living a self centered life or one devoted to serving the Lord?

- Main message Paul is getting across is that those who do Good vs Evil will receive just reward. What do you notice about vs 7 and 8 compared to vs 9 and 10?
 - ANS - basically vs 9 and 10 repeat vs 7 and 8 to bring the point home but they put the punishment first before the behavior in 9 and 10.
 - I like this quote to sum up the reward for good/evil: Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, and more comfort to saints, than that Christ shall be the Judge. Secret services shall be rewarded, secret sins shall be then punished, and brought to light.
- Vs 11 - God does not show favoritism

Verses 12-15 - Do you feel convicted from vs 12-15 and why?

- What does it mean when Paul says the Gentiles show that the law is written on their heart?
- What does it mean to have their conscience bear witness?

- ANS : Whether saved or not God has written his law on every man's heart (good/evil). Our conscience either accepts or pushes it away. (vs 13-16) Our response to the conviction of sin is what determines our future with God!

Verses 17-23 - Self righteous Jews (Paul was one himself) Accusing them of spiritual superiority.

- Why do you think we hear in the news often of pastors (or presidents of christian universities for example) not practicing what they preach? What happens to these Christian leaders that makes them feel exempt to the rules?

Verse 2:24-25 - v24 sites Isaiah 52:5

- Circumcision - if you are still walking after the flesh your physical circumcision is meaningless.
 - Explain how this physical rite started and its' meaning
- Why do you think circumcision started? Like why not just put a red dot on the Jews forehead or something?
 - Circumcision started as a symbolic practice of literally cutting away the flesh - separating themselves from the sinful, flesh nature and devoting themselves to a godly life. Or a more wordy way to say it is it was designed as an outward symbol of a separation from the irreligious and ungodly world unto holy devotedness in heart and life to the God of salvation.

Verse 26 - The uncircumcised that are righteous are EQUAL to those who are circumcised.

This whole section on circumcised vs not circumcised strikes me as a repetition of what Paul said in the beginning about having the law/not having the law. He is just using a different example to get the Jews and self righteous to understand IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DO - IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD!!!

Wrap-up:

Faith, obedience and the condition of one's heart is the true evidence of one who is a devoted follower of Christ. Though we are chosen by God and our faith is NOT of our own doing, we are in no way exempt from his judgement. Throughout the rest of Romans Paul wants to make the people understand their need for the gospel and in order to do that he is spending time here teaching about everyone's shared need for reconciliation...Jew and Gentile alike!!

VERSE to memorize: Romans 2:3 Do you suppose, O man - you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself- that you will escape the judgement of God?"



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 4 | ROMANS 3:1-20

Memory Verse

- Romans 3:20

Main Themes

- Main Point: All people are Unrighteous
- Paul's argument: Problem of Sin
- God's righteousness: Revealed in Wrath

Key Questions

- Is it possible to be a "good person" and "earn" righteousness?
- Are people inherently good or sinful?
- What is the purpose of the law (v. 20)?

Summary of Passage

Still speaking to the Jewish Christians, Paul uses OT scripture to finalize his argument that humanity is inherently sinful, Jew and Gentile equally, and that obedience to the law doesn't yield righteousness. The purpose of the law is to make us aware of our sin and lead us to repentance and dependence on God.

Study Guide and Questions

Pray

Introduction:

So far we read about how the Gentiles are blatantly sinful and how the Jews are equally as sinful through the hypocrisy and failing to uphold the law. Romans 3:1-20 is basically Paul's concluding argument on the topic of our unrighteousness before moving on to our justification (how we become righteous in God's sight)

Context reminder: At the end of chapter 2 Paul is speaking to the Jews. Specifically, he is telling them that circumcision and following the law will not save them from the wrath of God. With that understanding, Paul goes on to answer some questions he knows his audience would be thinking.

Study:

READ 3:1-8

- This chunk is basically a sort of little Q and A session with Paul and his imaginary audience.

V 1 and 2

- If following the law will not save us, is there no advantage to biblical religion then?
 - Of course there is! There is definitely value in knowing the words of God (which he entrusted to the Jews).

V 3 and 4

- Have the words of God failed, since many people are unfaithful? What about God's promises?
 - No. God remains faithful even if every single person on earth is unfaithful. He keeps his promises when we don't.
- Who can briefly summarize the covenant God made with Abraham involving circumcision? (Genesis 17)
 - God tells Abraham to walk before him and be blameless. On God's end he was going to make a great nation from Abraham's decedents and have an everlasting relationship with them as their God.
- What does this covenant have to do with verses 3 and 4?
 - Abraham's decedents (the Jews) broke their end of the covenant. But God is faithful and kept his end of the promise.

V 5 and 6

- If our sinfulness is necessary to show God's righteousness, is it really fair for him to judge us?
 - Paul and the Romans (and hopefully) all of us believe that God should judge sin. (if students argue this point, use the example of murder, rape, human trafficking...if you agree these things should be punished, then you believe in judgment)
- How does our sinfulness show God's righteousness?
 - It shows us his goodness and holiness. But we also get to see God's grace and Mercy through the forgiveness of our sins.

V 7 and 8

- If my sinning makes God look better, why am I still being condemned? Shouldn't I sin more so God can show his grace more?

- Absolutely not. That is an attitude that is worthy of judgment.

****ACTIVITY****

- Create a scale of 0 to perfect on giant post-it. Put Jesus at perfection.
- Ask students to think of celebrities they would consider good people and place them on the scale.
- After this, ask them to place Hitler, Charles Manson, Osama Bin Laden.
- Then, ask them to silently place themselves on the scale. (nobody should be placed at perfect aside from Jesus).
- The point of this activity is to demonstrate that everybody on the scale, regardless of where they are, is equally unrighteous.

READ 3:9-20

- According to our activity we have determined that everybody is unrighteous and under sin (which is exactly what Paul recaps in vs. 9).
- In verses 11-18 Paul lists some effects that sin has on us: what are they?
 - We don't understand, we don't seek God, we don't do what is good, we have become deceitful and venomous in our speech (gossip, foul language, crude joking, lying), we are hateful and lack peace with those around us and we don't fear God.
- There's obviously a lot of ways sin affects us. But we're going to focus on two from this list: we don't seek God and we don't fear God.
- What does it mean to fear God?
 - Fearing God does not mean you're afraid of him or his punishment. It means to understand and respect God's greatness and power. Tim Keller defines it as "an inner attitude of awe, respect and sober trembling joy before the greatness of God."
- If somebody truly feared God, what would their life look like?
 - How would they speak?
 - How would their relationships be different?
 - How would they act when nobody is looking?
- What does it mean to seek God?
 - To seek God means to desire to know who God is and enjoy a relationship with him. This does not mean a desire to know ABOUT God, or a desire to receive blessings or avoid hell. It has nothing to do with what we can gain

from God and everything to do with who he is.

- What does Paul mean when he says that no one seeks God?
 - When you sin, you run from God and forget who God is. He becomes unreal to us. The gentiles blatantly chose to pretend God wasn't real so they could pursue the desires of their flesh. The Jews preferred to try to follow the law rather than get to know the one true God.
- How do you see this played out today within the Church? Within your own heart?

Wrap-up:

Summarize:

- Who can do a one-sentence summary of this section?
 - Something along the lines of "we have all failed. We are all equally unrighteous. We all suck. Etc."

The first four weeks of Romans have focused on our sinfulness. Next week, we're going to get into the good part, about how we can be made righteous through Jesus.

Pray:



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 5 | ROMANS 3:21-31

Memory Verse:

- Romans 3:21-24

Main Themes

- Argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's righteousness: Credited to Us by Grace
- Major theme/topic: Justification: Righteousness by Faith

Summary of Passage

Because we cannot solve the sin problem nor provide our own righteousness, God graciously provides his righteousness (imputed/granted) to us through faith in Jesus. This is available to ALL people (Jew and Gentile) for all time (OT animal sacrifices symbolized Jesus' ultimate sacrifice so Jews technically received atonement through faith as well).

Study and Questions

Have student pray

Review of last week:

- Revisit the 0 - Jesus chart students made last week. **What was the conclusion?**
- *There is not a single person that is righteous. No one can attain righteousness based on their own works.*
- *The Gentiles are sinful and the Jews fail to uphold the law while judging the Gentiles.*

Overview: If none of us are righteous, how do we become right with God? Before we jump to any churchy answers, let's take a look at the next passage in Romans and find out.

READ 3:21-31 (2 Students: 21-26, 27-31)

V. 21-22

- “But now...”: What is this phrase referring to? What is the contrast here?
- *Paul just got done saying no one is righteous, and no one will be justified by works of the law in God’s sight (v. 20) (bleak, hopeless)*
- *We can get justified with God apart from the Law, through faith & belief in Jesus.*
- How do the Law and Prophets bear witness to the righteousness of God?
 - Hint: What is the big theme of Encanto? *Unrealistic family expectations/burdens*

God's expectations in the law are holy, rather than unrealistic. In either case we can't meet them.

V. 23-25a.

- What verse(s) earlier in this chapter do you see as evidence for verse 23?
 - v.10-11, v.20
- Definition time: Justification (ask students)
 - *Declaring or making righteous in the sight of God.*
- Who is this gift available for?
 - *All! All have sinned, but all are justified by His grace as a gift!*
 - Why isn’t everybody automatically saved then?
 - V.25a “... to be received by faith.”
 - Leader read John 3:16-17

Visual: Jesus bridged the chasm between people and God.

- Read James 2:19
 - Demons believe Jesus is the son of God as well. It’s about Christ’s lordship in your life.

Propitiation: Satisfying God's holy demands (through Christ's death)

V. 25b-26

- Reminder: Forbearance is refraining from enforcing the payment of a debt.
- What does it mean that God passed over former sins?
 - *God transcends time, and Christ's sacrifice covers all sins, past present and future.*
- "Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." But how could people who died before Christ was on earth believe in Him?
 - *Those who knew and loved God were aware of His covenants and prophecies regarding the messiah. They knew He would come and had faith that God would keep His promise.*

V. 27-31

- What does Paul mean when he says boasting is excluded?
 - *The law of faith understands that there is nothing we can do ourselves that justifies us.*
- What do you think is the significance of Paul mentioning both the Jews and the Gentiles here?
 - *Just as both groups are equally unrighteous, God makes no distinction in offering the free gift of Justification.*
- The chapter ends with Paul saying that faith upholds the law. How is this so?
 - *Everyone who recognizes their own sin and turns to Christ knows that they do not meet the requirements of the law on their own.*

Summary Questions:

- After reading this passage, do you think God is gracious, or God is just through Christ's sacrifice?
 - *Trick question: it's both! God is just because there was a price for sin that had to be paid. He is gracious because he allowed Christ to pay the price on our behalf.*
- If you had one minute to explain to someone how we can be right with God, what would you say?
- In your journals, place yourself on where you are at in the chasm. Explain why. Be honest with yourself.

Alter Call

- *If anyone isn't sure if they've accepted this gift from God, or you haven't yet and would like to, please talk to a leader about that. We'd love to dig deeper in that conversation with you.*

Have a student pray



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 6 | ROMANS 4

Memory Verse

- Romans 4:20-21

Main Themes

- Main Point: Faith is “being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”
- Paul’s argument: The Solution to Sin Problem is Salvation
- God’s righteousness: Credited to Believers by Faith

Key Questions

- What is faith?
- Why can’t good deeds or following the law give us righteousness?

Summary of Passage

Paul finishes chapter 3:21-31 introducing a new righteousness, apart from the law, from God, given by grace through belief in Jesus. He explains God left sins before Jesus unpunished (punished symbolically through animal sacrifices) and that all sins were ‘paid’/punished/settled in Jesus’ sacrificial death. Anticipating an argument from the Jews and a charge that he rejects the law, Paul answers a series of rhetorical questions (3:27-31), then launches into a full chapter example of Abraham, the father of Israel. The Jews used Abraham as their chief argument that righteousness (justification) was earned by works/following the law. But Paul points out that all of Abraham’s actions are rooted in true and simple faith that God would do what he said he would do, even when Abraham didn’t understand or it seemed impossible. Thus all believers can claim Abraham as their forefather (Jew & Gentile alike) and are heirs to the promise given him.

Study Guide and Questions

Announcements: WR Sign ups (March 3-5)

Introduction:

1. Summarize main points of chapters 1-3 (fill out ‘problem of sin’ post it)

- a. God's righteousness is displayed in wrath (against sin)
- 2. Last group Clay introduced the solution of salvation/gospel
 - a. We will be looking at how salvation is the solution to the problem of sin for the next 8 chapters!
- 3. What did you learn about salvation last session? IT IS...
 - a. From God (v21 &22), a gift (v24, justified freely by grace)
 - b. Apart from the law (v 21, i.e. not dependent on keeping the law)
 - c. Received by faith in Jesus (24)
 - d. Supported by the Law (Gen 15:6) & Prophets (Isa 26, Ez 18:9, Hab 2:4)
 - e. Through Jesus' sacrifice of atonement (v 24-25, satisfies God's wrath)
 - f. A demonstration of God's justice (v 25)
 - g. For everyone who believes (Jew & Gentile, v 28-30)

Let's consider how this dialogue between Paul and the Roman Christians (mostly Gentile, but some Jews) might have gone...

But are you SURE it's not works that save us? I'm pretty sure it's our obedience to the law. The law definitely is what makes us right with God. God made it and said we had to follow it, so that's definitely what appeases/makes God happy. Our forefathers did it so we should too.

Paul says: ok then, let's talk about Abraham

Study:

Read 4:1-8 out loud

- 1. What is Paul's argument about Abraham? Where did his righteousness come from?
 - a. "What does the Scripture say? (v3)"--See Genesis 15:1-6 God's covenant with Abram
 - b. Who is Abram? How did he become Abraham?
- 2. What other OT person is introduced as supporting argument?

3. We casually talk about how our sins are forgiven if we believe in Jesus, but how does v8 change your perspective? (*whose sin the Lord will never count against him*)

“But Abraham was circumcised! God blessed him because he was a true Jew! Circumcision is what earns righteousness!”

Read 4:9-12 out loud

1. Definition revisit: what does Paul mean by circumcised and uncircumcised? Is it physical or symbolic? Why does he bring this up?
2. What more do we learn about Abraham?
 - a. Genesis 12–God calls Abram to leave home & family, go to Canaan, and God will make a great nation of him, *“all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (v2-3)”*
 - b. Genesis 15:1-6–God introduces the covenant with Abram & tells him Isaac will be born
 - c. Genesis 16: Abram tries to have children via Hagar
 - d. Genesis 17:1-14–God defines his covenant to Abram & changes his name; then tells Abraham to circumcise everyone as their sign of the covenant
 - e. **When does God credit Abraham with righteousness?? Before or after circumcision?**
 - i. How does this support Paul’s argument that righteousness comes by faith?

“Then how did Abraham earn righteousness if it wasn’t circumcision or obeying the law?”

Read 4:13-17

1. What does ‘heir of the world’ mean (v13)? *His offspring inherit the earth*
2. What do we learn about the law in v 14-15? Why CAN'T the law give righteousness?
 - a. What value does faith have then?
 - b. In v 15 is Paul saying without the law there is no sin? What is he getting at here?
 - i. What is the difference between sin and transgression?
 1. Sin= missing the mark (falling short of God’s standard of holiness)
 2. Transgression=stepping over the line (God gives the law/line and we choose to step over and ignore it)

3. **The law brings wrath because it reveals sin and almost entices us to sin (ex: mom telling you not to do something, do you usually obey or challenge?).**
4. Who gets the promise then? Just the Jews? Where do Gentiles fit into God's picture (v16-17)
 - a. What does this mean for believers today? Why is it important we trace our 'lineage' to Abraham?

So what did Abraham actually DO then?

Read 4:18-22 out loud

1. What did God say he would do for Abraham (recap from prior discussion)?
2. What were the obstacles to that promise?
3. What is Abraham's faith based on? (v 20-21)
 - a. GOD's POWER (not his own ability to live out the promise)
4. How does Paul extrapolate Abraham's example of faith to the Roman church?
 - a. *God said the Messiah would come, save the world, and make us right with Him. Jesus came, lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again to give us eternal life with Him.*
5. **Do you believe that God did what he said he would do and that it worked to give us righteousness? This is the basis of Christian faith/belief.**

So what does this look like in real life?

1. What does 'against all hope' belief look like?
 - a. Is it... passing a test you didn't study for? Only showing up to a few practices but expecting to make the team? Dating your crush because clearly you are meant for each other?
 - b. When Abraham died, how much of the promise had been fulfilled?
 - i. Isaac born, saw Canaan but didn't settle there, he had many children
 - ii. See Hebrews 11:8-19; v 13 **all these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised, they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance**

- c. Believing that God can and will provide all of our (real) needs
 - i. Ghana example



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 7 | ROMANS 5

Memory Verse

- Romans 5:10

Main Themes

- Main Points:
 - The Benefits (fruits) of Righteousness
 - The Contrast (and Compare) of Adam and Jesus
- Argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's righteousness: Credited to believers by faith/his grace

Key Questions

- What do we gain from being justified?
- Why were enemies to God?
- How can a single person, Jesus, take the punishment for every single person at once?

Summary of Passage

Paul tells us in this chapter what Christians have, now that they have been justified through faith: peace, access to grace, hope, reconciliation (defined later) with God. Adam through one act brings sin and death into the world. Jesus through one act makes justification and life available to all.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

Have a student pray

Play YouTube video: The Bible Project: Romans 1-4

Thoughts or questions on that recap?

Study:

V. 1-5

- **V.1 What is the “Therefore” there for?**
 - We’ve been justified through our faith. We have peace with God as a result.
- **If we haven’t always had peace with God, what did we have beforehand?**
 - War → **What was this war being fought over?**

Kingship over ourself and our world. God Also claims kingship over these things.

- *Read passage from Tim Keller’s Romans for You: “Peace with God’ means that, until salvation, there is a war going on between God and us. When we disobey God, two things happen. The first is that when you sin, you not only break his law, but you assume the right or authority to do so- you claim kingship over yourself and your world. But God claims kingship over the same things. Whenever two parties claim absolute kingly control over something, there is a war. The second is that our disobedience means that God has a problem with us. It is not just that we are hostile to him. Paul has already told us that God’s wrath is upon us (Romans 1:18). As we saw in Romans 1, God’s anger is not the same as ours. It is not vengeful or vindictive; it is legal. There is a sentence on us, and it cannot just be discarded. The debt cannot be wished away.*
- **What does it mean that we rejoice in our sufferings? Does this mean, as a Christian, that we are supposed to be happy when bad things happen to us?**

Absolutely not, God doesn’t enjoy the pain we go through, but we know the good that results from these circumstances, how it sanctifies us, and we know of the assurances that we have in eternity with God. We have hope given to us by the Holy Spirit.

V. 6-11

- **What are some descriptors of the people that God died for (the negative words and connotations)?**
 - Weak, ungodly, still sinners, enemies of God
- **Why do you think Paul includes verses 7 and 8?**
 - To show how counter-cultural, contrary to human nature God’s actions are here.
 - **What do we see the culture doing that is the opposite of the huge sacrifice God makes?**
 - - divorce, self seeking pleasure, only relationships that benefit them more than the other party.
- **Why are we considered enemies of God before accepting Jesus’ sacrifice as a free gift?**
 - Sin separates us from God, who is holy. Anything that isn’t holy can’t exist in the presence of God. When we sinned and still were responsible for the punishment of that sin, we were actively choosing to defy God.
- **What do we have now that Christ died for us?**
 - Justification, saved from the wrath of God, reconciliation

- **Definition Time: Reconciliation:** The end of estrangement between man and God, caused by sin. We are brought into God's family.
- **Memory Verse: 5:10**

V. 12-14

- **Who can summarize the story of Adam and Eve?**
 - Make sure we come to the conclusion that there was no death in the world before Adam first sinned.
- **How was sin not counted, but death was still in the world?**
 - Sin still existed, was not defined by the law, but still evil.
- **"Type of the one who was to come." What do you think this means?**

V. 15-17

- **Definition Time: Federal Headship:** a single representative takes action and responsibility for the whole group.
- **What group do both Adam and Jesus represent in their federal headship?**
 - All of humanity
- **What do you think each man's motivation was in their action?**

V. 18-21

- **What does it mean that the law increases the trespass?**
 - Makes us see how destitute we are, every broken law adds onto how much we don't amount to God's holiness.
- **How does grace abound all the more?**
 - When you receive the same free pass (grace) for a murder that you would for a parking ticket, you comprehend the full gravity of that grace.
- **Journal Answer: Read verse 21 again to yourself. How does this statement make you feel applied to your own life personally? Are you fully convinced that God can fulfill this promise like Abraham in 4:21? Why or why not?**

Wrap-up:

Student Pray

Memory Verse from last week? Ch 4:20-21

Winter Retreat Details: Autumn?



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 8 | ROMANS 6

Memory Verse

- Romans 6:22-23

Main Themes

- Main Point: Dead to Sin; Alive in Christ
- Righteousness of God: imparted by the Spirit - being a slave to God
- Paul's Argument: Solution of Salvation

Key Questions

- How and why did we die to sin?
- How can we be “dead to sin” but “alive in Christ Jesus” (vs11) when we still live in our human sinful nature bodies? Sin shall not be our master any longer as we are not living “under the law” but “under grace”. Can you explain what living “under the law” is versus living “under grace”?
- How are we transformed from “a slave to sin” vs “a slave to God” and what does that life look like?

Summary of Passage

Because Christ died for us, believers are no longer under sin's ruling power. We aren't sinless but we are free from sin's shackles and power over our life. We shall offer our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God. No longer are we slaves to sin but we have exchanged masters and now should be willing servants to our Lord Jesus Christ! Doesn't mean we don't struggle to serve Him and fight the pull of sin but we know ultimately sin has no power over us thanks to Jesus dying for us.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

Have a student pray

Recap: **Who can give me two main points from last week?**

1.Adam brings sin into the world- Jesus brings a way of being righteous before God (justified). 2.While still sinners Christ died for us. CH 5 ends with “when sin increased grace abounded all the more” hence the beginning of Ch 6.

Study:

Pick 2 students to read **ROM 6:1-14** to start

(sidenote: in the time this was written baptism and conversion to the faith were so closely linked and that is why baptism is such a focus here. This does not say baptism is required for the conversion.)

- **Can anyone tell me by reading the first verse what is Paul asking a question in response to?**
 - ANSWER: “Where sin increased grace increased all the more”
- **What do these verses tell us about God’s grace?**
 - ANSWER: It is unlimited, where sin increases grace increases all the more
- **Why do you think verse 1 and 2 are even necessary?**
 - ANSWER: people began to abuse the grace God offered
- **What is Paul’s response to people abusing God’s grace?**
 - ANSWER: By no means!
- **Who does Paul say “dies to sin”?**
 - ANSWER: us!
- **If sin is the thing that caused us to die, why do you think we continue to live in it?**
 - ANSWER: human nature, temptations
- **God knows that we still sin even in relationship with him. This does not mean that we should take advantage of his grace. Instead what should we do when we fall short?**
 - ANSWER: repent, talk to God, remind ourself that our old self should no longer reign
- **What do you think “baptized into his death” means in vs 3?**
 - The water represented the grave...As you were put in the water it was the burial of the old life... You were buried with Christ in the water of baptism. Baptism/Baptizo (greek) means immerse.

Have a student read vs 4 again -

- **The verse does NOT say “just as christ was raised we are raised” - it says “just as Christ is raised we too MIGHT walk in the newness of life” What makes it a definite that we WILL walk in the newness of life?**
 - ANSWER: strong belief that God can fulfill his promises
- **Does this living new just happen right after we accept Christ? What steps need to be taken**

in order to feel this new life?

- Important to note how Christians can miss this part of the faith.

- **What is the difference between the quote “If you died tonight would you go to heaven” (penalty of sin) versus “If you wake up tomorrow how will you live?” (power of sin)?**

Vs 6- 8 - Sin No Longer Master

- **What does it look like to have sin as our Master?**
 - ANSWER: when sin is our master we listen to our flesh but nothing makes us satisfied
 - Examples: we date people God does not want us to pursue, we watch shows that the rest of the world watches, and we repay evil with evil
- **Once we accept Christ and have the Holy Spirit, how does it look to have God as our Master as opposed to Sin?**
 - ANSWER: We are no longer under the control of sin. We will be pursue Christian community and holy lives.
- **What about when we sin? Is God still our master then?**
 - ANSWER: We don't go back and forth between masters. Our old self is crucified with him so even when we sin we still have God as our master.

Vs 9-11 -

- **What significance does Christ's resurrection have on the power of sin in our lives?**
 - ANSWER: Since we believe death no longer has dominion over Christ - nor does sin have dominion over us. We are dead to sin and alive to God.
- **Revisit the word reconciliation - do they remember what it means? (mentioned 3 x's in vs 9-11 in NIV version)**
 - ANSWER: “Restoring friendly relations” or “process of two conflicting groups agreeing to make amends or come to a truce”

Vs 12-14

- **If sin does not have dominion over us why do we still sin?**
 - ANSWER: Because we live in a broken world, free will
- **What does the word “members” mean in the verse “presenting our members to God as instruments of righteousness”?**
 - ANSWER: our bodies and our souls
- **What does God want us to give as a sacrifice?**
 - ANSWER: Our life and our whole selves
- **If you guys listened to Chad's message this week he brought up the idea of how God will never ask us to do more or less than what he asked his own son to do. How does this tie into this idea of sacrifice?**
 - ANSWER: Jesus gave his whole life so we should too (trace it)
- **It is a gift received by us but also part of it needs to be ACHIEVED by us simply BELIEVING**

what God's truths are about us.

PART II - Slaves to Righteousness

Have a student read vs15-23

- **What do you notice about verse 15?**
 - **ANSWER:** same as vs 1. Paul is driving the point home
- **Do you think that Paul included this idea two times because people are abusers of God's grace OR do you think he is anticipating what romans may say in response to the gospel?**

VS 16-18

Read verse 16

- **What is the opposite of being a slave to sin?**
 - **ANSWER:** (being a slave to obedience)
- **What do these two masters lead to according to vs 16?**
 - **ANSWER:** Slave to sin = death. Slave to obedience = righteousness.

Vs 17-18

Although you may think you sin more than what a believer should, think about what choices you would make if you had no God in your life at all. Imagine no one ever introduced you to saving faith and how rotten your heart would be.

- **What are some choice, attitudes, or general beliefs you had about yourself or God before being saved?**

Vs 21 is a powerful verse - I'm sure we all have things we have done that we are ashamed of - whether it was before we knew Christ or after. When I think of these things it just makes me want to pursue God and his power over sin in my life all the more!

Wrap Up:

Journal Answer: Ponder your old self or the person you would be without Christ and praise God for the ways He has moved in your life. Thank him for His power being available through the Holy Spirit.

Student Pray to end.

Memory Verse next week - Romans 6:22-23



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 9 | ROMANS 7

Memory Verse

- Romans 7:21-23

Main Themes

- Main Points
 - The law cannot save us.
 - When we become Christians, we are no longer married to the law but to Christ.
 - Christians struggle with sin, but must not surrender.
- Paul's argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's righteousness: Imparted by the Spirit

Key Questions

- Refresher: What does Paul mean by "the Law"?
- Is the law good or bad? What is the difference between sin and trespass?
- What is the danger if we forget either our own sinfulness or God's forgiveness?

Summary of Passage

Chapter 6 taught us that when we follow Christ and accept his salvation, we are dead to sin and become alive in Christ. Chapter 7 is an inside scoop of Paul's internal struggles as a believer (and likely ours too!). We are no longer slaves to the law (since we died with Christ) yet we keep on sinning and it's frustrating. We don't do the things we should do, instead we do the things we know we shouldn't. God gave us his good and holy law so that we would recognize our sinfulness and inability to do anything good apart from Him and without his Holy Spirit guiding us. "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v 25).

Study Guide and Questions

Pray:

Introduction:

- CHAPTER 6 HIGHLIGHTS:
 - When we accept Christ we are no longer slaves to sin, we are dead to sin and alive in Christ.
 - You are either a slave to death (sin) or a slave to obedience.
 - Sinning leads to death, but God offers us the free gift of eternal life through Christ's death and resurrection.

Study:

READ 7:1-6

- Refresher: What does Paul mean by the law?
 - Mosaic law of specific commandments we must obey in order to be considered righteous
- What do you think is the significance of the marriage analogy used by Paul?
 - We were once bound to the law, but by dying to the law we were free to marry/ bind ourselves to Christ.
- What are some changes that should happen in a person's life when they get married?
 - Make decisions together instead of alone, consider the other person's desires and needs above your own. Change habits or behaviors that could get in the way of spending time together or honoring one another, etc.
- What do you think a marriage would be like if somebody was committed to their spouse SOME of the time rather than ALL of the time?
- With the concept of earthly marriage in mind, what are some practical changes that should happen in somebody's life when they accept Jesus?

READ 7: 7-13

- Can someone summarize?

- Is the law good or bad?
 - The law is good, because it is given by God.
- If the law is good, how does it produce death?
 - By pointing out what we are not supposed to do, it makes us want to do those things.
 - It takes our focus off what God does and puts the focus onto what we do.
- SIN TAKES WHAT IS GOOD AND TURNS IT INTO A STUMBLING BLOCK.

READ 7: 14-25

- Can someone summarize?
- When you become a Christian, this war starts in you. You now have conflicting desires. Your sin desire wants to do what is bad, and your spiritual desire wants to do what is good.
- Does anybody have an example of how this has played out in your life?
 - Conflicting feelings about who you date, what you talk about, what you watch on TV or listen to, etc.
- What does Paul mean in vs 20 “now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin living in me that does it”?
 - As Christians, sin still remains in us, but it is not who we are and it does not define our lives. Our identity and position will not change when we sin.
- What is the danger if we forget about either our own sinfulness or God’s forgiveness?
- Paul openly admits that he still struggles with sin. What does it mean to struggle with sin? What do you think happens if we stop fighting?
- What is Paul’s response to his own sin? Confession, repentance and then a reminder that although he is sinful, God has rescued him from his sin through Christ Jesus.

Wrap-up:

Take a minute to pray or journal any confessions and convictions you may have. Try to identify at least one practical step they can take.

Pray



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 10 | ROMANS 8

Memory Verse

- Romans 8:1-2; 8:18, 8:26-27; 8:28-30; 8:37-39 (pick one :))

Main Themes

- Main Point: Life in the Spirit
- Paul's argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's righteousness: Imparted by the Spirit

Key Questions

- What purpose did Jesus coming to earth, in the flesh, serve? (v4)
- How can we love, and serve, God despite our sinful nature?
- What does Paul mean when he says "for those who are called according to his purposes"? (v28)
- How would you describe the power and character of God? V 31-39

Summary of Passage

Paul uses this passage to move through several "logical questions" that build on one another, all of which are anchored in his discussion of flesh vs spirit found in Romans 7. "What is our identity" (v1-11), "What does that mean for us" (v12-17), "How should we feel about it" (v18-30) and lastly "How does this display God's righteousness? (v31-39)

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

We have a really long passage today! So instead of doing a full summary, we are going to just jump into Romans 8, and "refresh" ourselves on the important points as Paul brings them back up.

Study:

Read v1-4

- What context should we have when we read this verse? (AKA summarize end of 7)
 - “Therefore.....”
 - Our flesh and spirit are in constant conflict, one that we often lose. But, we have been given Christ to ‘break’ that cycle
- What does Paul mean by “No condemnation” (No guilt)
 - Why would be we guilty?
 - Romans 2-5, “no one is righteous”
 - How then are we found “Not guilty”?
 - In Christ, v4
- Why did we need God, and not the law? (law is “weakend by flesh”)
 - Even though the law is perfect, we are unable to keep the law. We need someone else who is capable to do it on our behalf

Read v5-11

We have talked a lot about the “Flesh and the spirit” (The two dogs) the last several weeks, so we are going to pass over those parts and focus on something new that Paul adds to the conversation.

- Where/What is our identity? (v9)
- Why does our identity matter? (v10 Although the body is dead with sin...)
- God’s spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is IN us.
- Are there any ‘qualifiers’ to Paul’s point here? (v11) If the spirit...

In v12, Paul begins to turn the corner- and his argument takes on a new purpose. Previous to now, he has been talking about Sin (Gentiles sin, Israel’s sin, his sin) but now he shifts on to application:

“So then brothers...”

- Have you ever really “owed” someone? What happened to put you in their “debt”?

I want you to keep that experience in mind when we read the next section

Read v12-17

- How can we be sure of our identity?

- V14 says ALL who are lead by the spirit
- V16 The spirit bears witness
- What do you think Paul means “suffering” and “glorified” in v17?
 - How are the two related?

We are actually going to be skipping over v18-30. Paul uses a lot of words to make a really simple point: All of creation is waiting for redemption (be glorified). Creation is. We are. God is.

Read v18

Read v22-23

There is a really famous verse in this section- one that we can't read Romans and “skip”

Read v26-28

So which is the famous verse?

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose

- What do you guys think that passage means?
- What do you notice about the passage itself?
 - Clause: for those who are called according to his purpose
- Who does this passage apply to?
- Whose definition of “Good” are we using?
- How does it fit into the earlier verses?
 - The spirit helps in our weakness, and conveys our heart to God for us.
- How does this verse bring you hope?

Final section, Paul shifts the focus back to God, and God's character. To do so, he asks a lot of rhetorical questions. There are more famous passages in here, let's see if you can catch them!

Read v31-39

- What verses/passages do you recognize?
 - V31 (If God is for us)

- v37 (more than conquerors)
- v38 (neither life, nor death, nor angels nor rulers...)
- Paul starts off by saying: “these things” in v31. What “things” does he mean?
 - Present difficulties.
 - What is Paul’s response? If God is for us, who can stand against us?!
- What Rhetorical questions does Paul ask? What is Paul’s answer to each?
 - v32 : How will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
 - He already gave his son!
 - V33: Who can bring any charge against God’s elect?
 - It is God who “justifies”
 - V34: Who is to condemn?
 - Jesus has already interceded for us!
 - V35: Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?
 - Nothing!
- What theme do you see emerging in Paul’s questions? What is the picture Paul is trying to paint?
 - God is in control, and even the difficult things in life, God is Good
- What are things that cause you to doubt God’s goodness in your life?
- How would you compare those things to the list Paul provides in v35,36?
 - Where would they fit?
- What does Paul mean when he says: “in all these things we are more than conquerors” (other translations say: Overwhelmingly conquer, More than victorious).
- How can we be “overwhelming victors” over tribulation (trouble), distress (hardship), persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword?

Wrap Up:

- How would your life look different if you lived as “more than victorious” over these situations and doubts?



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 11 | ROMANS 9:1-29

Memory Verse

- Romans 9:16

Main Themes

- Main Point: God can do whatever he chooses but always chooses with wisdom and purpose.
- Paul's argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's righteousness: Demonstrated in His Sovereignty

Key Questions

- Who is Israel (God's children)?
- What if God's sovereignty (right to rule how he wants) is actually a display of his kindness & goodness?
- Where do you need to yield to God's sovereignty?

Summary of Passage

Romans 9 is a difficult text: it seems to tell us things about God that contradict with what we already know about Him. Ask students to make a list of the things we already know about God from the rest of the Bible and refer back to that list when the tough questions come up in chapter 9. Paul distinguishes between all Israel (the nation of God's chosen people) and Israel (spiritual descendents of Abraham through belief in Jesus as Christ). All Israel has had every 'advantage' to recognize Jesus-they're the chosen people, the covenants, the Law, the temple worship, promises directly from God, the patriarchs, and actual lineage to Jesus-but so many reject him. This allows the Gentiles to be 'grafted in' to God's family by faith. God's election is personal, not based on nationality, family, denomination, good works, or following the commandments.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

What do we know about God's character? Make a post-it list (one word answers only!)

Romans 9 is a difficult text. We are going to periodically refer back to what we know about God's character from the rest of scripture and look for how his character is revealed in Paul's points.

Key definitions:

- **Sovereignty** - Supreme power or authority; self-governing (as in a state)
- **Mercy** - not getting what you deserve (being spared punishment you earned)

Study:

Paul spends most of Romans to this point addressing the Jews seemingly in support of the Gentiles, but here he shifts to considering the advantages of being a Jew.

Read 9:1-5 out loud

- What are the listed 'advantages' of being a Jew?
- What does Paul mean by 'the people of Israel' in v 4?
- If the people of Israel are God's chosen people and had access to all of these things, why did they reject Jesus on earth?
 - Why do Gentiles respond to/embrace the gospel without this support?
 - Did God fail his chosen people?

Read v6-13

- What do you remember about Abraham from ch 4? Who are his true children?
 - All Israel is not Israel; physical lineage does not a guarantee of a place in God's spiritual family (your parents beliefs don't beget your salvation)
 - Descendents are not Abraham's children (why this distinction?)
 - Draw picture from Logos for concept
- What do we do with this section on Jacob & Esau?
 - Why does Paul include this? Election is personal not national
 - *This is Paul's answer to v 6-did God's promise fail? No! God's election and promise is available to all Israel (the nation) but is fulfilled in Israel (the spiritual descendents of Abraham, children of the promise)*
- How does this support what we know about God's character?
- Is God unfair?

Read v14-18

- Share your reaction to v 15/18.

- What are some wrong/flawed ways to interpret/apply this passage?
- Why don't we like this section of text (or this view of God's character)?
- Paul frames God's sovereignty in mercy (not wrath). How does this change your view of his justice?

Read v 19-21

- What is Paul NOT saying in v 20? Is it OK to question God? When is it not OK?
 - God is NOT answerable to us (he doesn't owe us an explanation)
 - What is your motivation in questioning him?
- Have you made something? What was it, why did you make it, what was it for, how did it work?
- What is Paul getting at with the potter/clay metaphor?
 - How do you perceive God's character as the potter and the mercy controller (v14-21)?

What if God's sovereignty (right to rule how he wants) is actually a display of his kindness and goodness?

Read 22-29

- Why does God 'bear with great patience' and withhold his wrath (v22)?
 - Read Romans 2:4 for reference/reminder
 - Who are the people being 'called my people' in those OT quotes?
- God delays judgment/delivery of wrath so that people will repent and turn to him. **Can you think of other OT examples of this pattern?**
 - Israel, Israel again, Israel again... (any of the prophets)
 - Jonah & the Ninevites (what happens to Ninevah?)
 - Sodom & Gomorrah/Abraham & Lot
- What's the remnant in v27? How does this fit with our earlier discussion on 'all Israel'?

Spoiler alert... Clay is going to tell us about why Israel was ultimately rejected (and Esau, and Ishmael, etc). God's rejection/hardening of hearts is due to their unbelief. But there is still a chance for 'all Israel'! They have all the 'advantages' from v1-6 that continually point them to Christ as the solution for the sin problem.

Wrap-up:

- Which section of scripture today was most difficult for you to swallow? Why?
- Where do you need to yield to God's sovereignty? What does that look like?



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 12 | ROMANS 9:30-10:21

Memory Verse

- Romans 10:9-10

Main Themes

- Main Point: Righteousness is attained through inward and outward faith in Jesus, not through works.
- God's Righteousness: Demonstrated in His Sovereignty.
- Paul's argument: People must hear the good news from others (who are called) in order to respond to it.

Key Questions

- What is our role and responsibility with the truths of the Gospel?
- How does the message of the Gospel get spread to others?

Summary of Passage

People will not achieve righteousness by works, but by faith in Christ, inwardly and outwardly. God calls believers to go and tell others the Gospel so that they might hear and respond to it.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

Have a student pray

Review: What did we learn about when Amy taught last week?

- God is sovereign over all. (*Review sovereign definition*)
- God chooses whom to have mercy on.

Study:

Guys this is going to sound repetitive tonight, and that's because it is! Paul is really trying to get some points bashed into peoples' brains.

Read v9:30 - 10:4

- **What does Paul say happened to the Gentiles? Why?**
 - They received righteousness by faith in Jesus.
- **The Jews? Why?**
 - Did not succeed in achieving righteousness, because they pursued righteousness if it was based on their merit (works).
- **What is the stumbling stone?**
 - Jesus
- **Why is He a stumbling stone?**
 - One cannot believe in any form of self-righteousness and also believe that they need Jesus for their salvation.
 - Jesus conflicts with them trying to be a “good enough” person.
- **Who is the “they” that Paul keeps referring to in verses 1-3?**
 - The Jews that are not saved because they seek their own righteousness by pursuit of the law.
- **Paul says these Jews have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. What happens when you have a passion for God/religion, without a true knowledge of who God is and where you stand in relation to Him?**
 - You get a distorted view of what it takes to be in a right relationship with God. How can you please someone when you don’t know what they ask of you?
- **Do you know of anyone (groups or individuals) that are like this? How do they understand God or portray His character incorrectly?**
- **Why is Christ “the end of the law for righteousness”**
 - When you accept Christ as your savior, you no longer recognize living up to the standards of the law as the way to righteousness.
 - It’s not only a “you don’t have to” statement, it’s a “you cannot go this way” statement.
 - It’s like you are on one highway, but you realize it won’t take you to your destination. When you hop on the correct highway, you are no longer on the path you were before!

Read v5 - 13

- **V. 5-8 might not be the most effective way to say this to 21st century Americans, but Paul knew his audience (Roman Jews). He is quoting Lev. 18:5 and Deut 30: 6, 11-14.**
- **What does this section (5-7) mean?**
 - We don't have to go to unreachable lengths or to experience the penalty of death for our sins, Jesus already did both!
- **So what is the alternative? What do we say/do?**
 - Confess outwardly that Jesus is Lord.
 - Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.
 - **This is the definition of righteousness by faith!**
- **Expound on the meanings of the inward belief and outward confession.**
 - Lord (Yahweh) recognizes Jesus as Lord of your life, but also that Jesus is God (something particularly hard for some Jews of the time to admit!)
 - "Believe in your heart" implies 'with your whole self.' You fully trust our self to the person and work of Christ as our righteousness (Keller - Romans for You - p. 79)
- **MEMORY VERSE: Romans 10:9 - 10**
- **What do you think the significance is here that there are no distinctions between Jew and Greek?**
 - Many right answers here, but you don't need a specific background to be a part of God's family, anyone can be grafted in, regardless of where they come from or what their past looks like.
- *****Side-bar: If you're not sure if you've chosen that belief/faith for yourself, but would like to do that, or even just know more about that, please have a conversation with one of the leaders after group <3*****

Read v14 - 17

- **In typical Paul fashion, he goes ahead and lays out the questions he expects the readers to ask.**
- **What process is Paul outlining here with these questions?**
 - How people are used by God to bring the Word of Christ to others so that they may believe.
- **What are the two ways this chapter has called us to personal responsibility involving the**

Gospel?

- Responding to it personally with faith and belief.
- Bringing the Word of Christ to others so that they may also believe.

Read v18 - 21

- **What group of people is Paul focusing on here?**
 - The Jews
- **Does Paul's desire and heart for Israel seem in line with God's? Why or why not?**

Wrap-up:

Personal Prayer/Journal time: Take a moment to meditate on verses 9-10 again. Be honest with yourself, where do you stand in your own beliefs with this? Do you trust Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for your own salvation? If you feel firm in this, take this time to pray for a loved one that you know has not chosen into this.

Have a student pray.



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 13 | ROMANS 11

Memory Verse

- Romans 11:33-36

Main Theme

- Major Theme: God has not rejected his people whom He foreknew. Israel will ultimately come to Christ in the end.
- Main Argument: Solution of Salvation
- God's Righteousness: Demonstrated in His Sovereignty

Key Questions

- Is Israel beyond recovery?
- How do the Israelites' rejection of God help the reconciliation of the world?
- How will Israel be redeemed and grafted back into God's family and who will ultimately make that happen and how?

Summary of Passage

There will come a day when most Jews will accept Christ. Paul believes the majority will be saved - first a remnant, then a good number of gentiles then a majority of Jews. One reason for Israel's unbelief is to make room for the non-Jews in the world. God never breaks His promises. His gifts and His calling on Israel can't be taken back. Romans 11 ends with a beloved poem about our merciful God.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

Have a student pray

- Review: What did we learn about when Clay taught last week?
 - Faith > works / Evangelism still necessary - spread the gospel!
 - God chooses whom to have mercy on.

Study:**Read v1-10****v1-2**

- **What is Paul confirming in these verses?** That God will not turn his back on his people (Israelites) who he made a covenant with back in the OT.
- **Does anyone recall the story of Elijah in vs 3 and 4? Or do you know who Baal is?**
 - I will give summary of the story (Elijah has victory over the 450 plus prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel and then runs and hides in a cave after being threatened by Jezebel) He cries to the Lord he is the only believer left. Here God just brought him through a major victory against all these Baal prophets and he is right back to being fearful and no faith in God. He thinks he is the only one left.
- **What is God's answer to Elijah?**
 - See vs 4 - there are 7,000 left
- **Why would God say 7,000? What does this tell you about God?**
 - God knows every one of us by name, He knows all of his remnant. After all he CHOSE us as we learned in Romans 8 with Amy 2 weeks ago.
- **Where else in scripture have we seen a remnant saved?**
 - Noah and his family - Lot and his family.

v5-6 - go back to the subject of grace vs works. Leave it to Paul to word this in the most confusing way possible lol)

- Grace and works are mutually exclusive.
- **Just to make sure we really understand this idea - can someone explain vs 5-6 in a simple easy way to understand?**
 - (If I am seeking to be accepted by God by my works, then grace has no affect upon my life.) Or to put it simply: Grace is defined by something good given to us that we don't deserve, so it's not grace by definition if we did something to earn what we receive!
- **What was Israel seeking in vs 7?**
 - They were seeking to be righteous before God.(with works) That was the whole purpose of the sacrifice of the law, in order to develop a righteous standing before God.Jews still to this day are seeking acceptance through works. Other religions too - Jehovah witness go door to door, others do sacraments, others have prayer rituals. **Who are the elect in**

vs 7? Those who chose God - in this case the Gentiles

v8-9

- **What does this text remind you of that we studied with Amy ?**
 - basically this goes back to predestination where their hearts are hardened but God is in control of our hardening hearts.

v9

- “May their table become a snare” **How could a table be a snare?**
- May their blessings be a curse to them. **How can our blessing be a curse to us?**

v11

- **Again he asks! What point is Paul really trying to drill into their heads with this repetitive question?**
 - That the Israelites are not beyond saving (by the way this is a good thing to drill in our heads about all people)

v11

- **Who stumbled and how did they stumble?**
 - Israelites - by not believing and turning from God.
- **What does it mean that salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous?**

Have someone read v11-24 and another person read v25-32

- The Jews think they are elite and so when God extends his ministry to the Gentiles - God wants the Jews to be jealous that their King they have waited for is now offered to the common people.
- **v11 - 24** is a section that uses trees and branches and grafting as imagery to teach us how God can make us part of the family tree even though we weren't originally meant to be on this tree.

v17

- **Who are the branches and who are the wild olive shoots?**
 - Branches are Israelites - wild olive shoots are Gentiles.

v18

- **Who is being told not to boast?**
 - Gentiles

- (Evidently some Gentile believers were tempted to think that there was no future for Israel. She had rejected the gospel and it had now passed to the Gentiles; Israel was finished, rejected, cast off. God had chosen them instead. It is this kind of pride that Paul is opposing.)
- **Why are they being told not to boast?**
 - Because God does not have favorites - if he did not spare the Israelites who were his nor will he spare you if you are arrogant and feel self entitled.
- **Do you know any Christians that are boastful about their faith? What effect have you seen it have on people around them?**
 - Most look self righteous and turn people away!

v22-23

- **How do the Gentiles remain on this tree? And how do the Israelites get grafted in?**
 - Read John 15:1-8 out loud
 - We need to abide in Christ - John 15 is echoed here, where Paul is instructing believers to have a transformed life that does not want to sin anymore as we abide in Christ.
- **What two attributes about God does Paul want us to notice in vs 22?**
 - Kindness and severity
 - **Severity to whom?**
 - The unbelievers
 - **Kindness to whom?**
 - The believers
 - **What does the kindness depend on?**
 - Their need to continue in goodness

v25

- **According to this verse when will it be time to soften the Israelites hearts?**
 - When every last Gentile that is meant to come to Christ is saved.

v28-32

- **v30-32 has two words that are repeated four times each. What are they and what does this tell us about God?**

- When we are disobedient- God gives us mercy!

v33-36

- **We are going to pray over these verses quietly but before we do - can we define inscrutable (vs33)**
 - impossible to understand or interpret.

Wrap Up:

Personal Prayer/Journal time: Take a moment to meditate on/journal on verses 33-36.



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 14 | ROMANS 12:1-8

Memory Verse

- Romans 12:1-2

Main Themes

- Argument: How Christians should live in light of the gospel
- God's righteousness: Lived out in the church
- Major theme/topic: Spiritual gifts! Living sacrifices!

Key Questions

- What is one area of my life i have been holding back from God that I need to work on sacrificing daily?
- What is one way I can start using my spiritual gifting to serve within the body of Christ?

Summary of Passage

Paul spends chapters 1-11 explaining the sin nature of humanity, God's solution in salvation for Jew and Gentile, and the start of the sanctification process for believers (work of the Holy Spirit). In Chapter 12 he moves into instructing believers how they should live, in light of the gift they've received. Set aside time for students to take a spiritual gifts inventory, share their results, and encourage how you see those gifts already on display in their lives.

We used this inventory:

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service> and there are definitions for each gift here as well!

Study Guide and Questions

Pray

Introduction:

Chapters 1-11 tell us:

- Humans by nature choose to sin, God gave us over to the desires of our flesh.
- The gentiles (non-jews) blatantly rejected God by doing the obvious and extreme sins.
- The jews rejected god by trying to obey the law and earn their own righteousness.

- Abraham was justified by faith (not following the law) therefore those who have faith in Jesus are the ones considered decedents of Abraham and children of God (not necessarily those who are biologically related to him..aka jews)
- Christ died for the sins of the Jews and the gentiles and was raised again in order to defeat sin and death for good.
- When we accept Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit which goes to war with our flesh. So we will still struggle with sin. However, because of our love for Christ we fight.
- We all deserve hell, but God chose to rescue his elect, showing us his mercy.

NOW, in chapter 12 Paul goes on to tell the Romans how they should live in light of all of those truths from the first 11 chapters.

Study:

READ 12:1-2

- This passage starts out “I appeal to you therefore”...aka “because of what we read in the last 11 chapters...ya know...about the gospel you should be motivated to do the following”
- Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

CONTEXT

- In the Old Testament there were two kinds of offerings: sin offerings, which were, obviously, for sins.and whole burnt offerings, which would be the best of the flock with no blemishes, meant to show God that he didn’t just get your leftovers, but the very best you had to offer.
- Christ was our sin offering, so Paul must be talking about a whole burnt offering.
- So in that context, what does it mean to present our bodies as a living sacrifice?
 - This means we completely give God our life, not just the parts we are comfortable with or what is left after we’ve given to the world.
- If presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is what is acceptable to God, what can we assume is unacceptable to God?
 - Partial sacrifice, lukewarmness, only obeying when it is convenient or wont embarrass us or cause us to miss out on things, etc.

ACTIVITY

- On a giant post it, create a list of things that are acceptable to or loved by the world.

- gossip, jealousy, swearing, inappropriate jokes, slander, division, any kind of sexual immorality (premarital, homosexual, adultery, gender stuff, etc), lying, stealing, breaking the law, cheating, coveting, disobeying parents, etc.
- Looking at this list, I want you to take a moment and think about your view of these things. Do you conform to the world's view of these things or the biblical view of these things? What is one area where you might need to transform your thinking to align with the bible?
- Does anybody feel comfortable enough to share?
- Doing any of the things on this list is conforming to the world. As Christians, we are told be transformed. This is the process of Sanctification. (add to list of definitions if not already on there)
- Can anybody describe how the process of sanctification works?
- (hint: it's the second part of vs. 2)
- Through the renewal of our mind, testing and discernment. Ultimately, we start to sin less and less as we move through our lives. We learn what is good, acceptable and perfect to God AND we follow through with doing those things.

READ 12:3-8

- What do you think it means to think of yourself with sober judgment?
 - This is a positional thing. Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. The gifts God gives us were given for a reason and we are to use them to glorify him. This means that we don't think any better or worse of somebody based on the gifts that have been given to them: example: thinking higher of the lead pastor than the greeter at the door.

Rather than study the rest of these 6 verses in length, we're actually going to take the spiritual gifts tests.

LINKING THE TWO CHUNKS: One of the ways that we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind is through our obedience to Christ in serving.

- Who wants to share their results?
- In what ways can you use this gift to serve within the body of Christ?

Wrap-up:

-Hand out notecards- everybody is going to answer two questions:

1- What is one area of my life I have been holding back from God that I need to work on sacrificing daily?

2- What is one way I can start using my spiritual gifting to serve within the body of Christ?

Pray



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 15 | ROMANS 12:9-21

Memory Verse

- Romans 12:18

Main Themes

- Argument: How Christians should live in light of the Gospel.
- Main Point: Unity among believers
- God's righteousness: Lived out in the church

Key Questions

- What words, ideas, or concepts stand out to you?
- How does living this way reflect our faith?
- What of these areas do you do well? What can we be better at?

Summary of Passage

Paul casts a vision for what life as believers should look like, based on love.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! I am glad that you are able to join us!

A couple of things about our group #1. We would LOVE to hear from everyone at some point tonight- even if it is just reading. #2 our final word comes from the bible.

We are in the middle of a series going step by step through the book of Romans- Paul's longest (and most complex) letter. The letter itself is written to the new church in Rome, which is currently under the rule of Emperor Nero (who is trying to kill all the christians). Not only that- but there is also a HUGE racial divide between Jewish-Christians and Greek/Roman-Christians.

Unfortunately, when we study a book as long as Romans, we often forget that it is supposed to be read/understood as one continuous thought- and not as 16 different chapters. So before we jump into Romans today, I want to take a visit about where we have been.

What have been some of the main points so far in the letter? What sections have stuck out to you?

Romans breaks down loosely into 4 main sections

- The problem of Sin (Chapters 1-3). Humans, by nature, sin. It doesn't matter who we are or who our parents are, or how good we think we are... we all sin. This applies to both the Jewish and Greek members of the Roman Church
- The way we become right with God is by having faith in Jesus Christ. (chapter 4-8) He goes on to give us some famous examples of faithful people to show that it isn't about what we do, but about believing in Jesus Christ.
- God is ultimately in control of everything (Chapter 9-11)
- Because of these things, this is how we should live (chapter 12-16)

Where we are picking up today is very firmly in the "this is how a christian should live"

Before we start,

PRAY!

I want to ask you an important questions

What should it look like to be a Christian?

(Draw out a long conversation about what it means to be a christian- post it notes?) The goal is to get the students thinking about practical things... how we act, what we do, what we should be known for. Ask questions, encourage students to elaborate on their thoughts, ask for students to agree or disagree with each other's statements.

Study:

Lucky for us, Paul provides a very clear vision of what it looks like to be a Christian. Open up to Romans 12:9. We are going to read this passage a couple of times- and we are going to take notes/review it each time we go through the passage.

The first time, I want you to find several words or ideas that stand out to you- you don't even have to know why, exactly.

Read Romans 12:9-21

Open conversation about what words stand out to people, and why.

Do any of these words/themes connect back to other parts of Romans?

Second time through, look for things that are confusing- or don't make sense, or that seem hard.

Read Romans 12:9-21

Open conversation about things people bring up. What makes these passages hard? Why

How does living in this way reflect our faith?

Third time through- which of these observations or commands is the hardest for you?

Read Romans 12:9-21

Open conversation

On a scale of 1-10, how well to do you reflect the qualities that Paul lists here?

What would it take for you to be able to move up one or two “points” on the scale.

Wrap-up:

Serve event @ CVC on saturday



By: Broadview Heights LifeGroup

BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 16 | ROMANS 14

Memory Verse

- Romans 14:19-20a

Main Themes

- Main Point: major on the major, minor on the minor, live in peace together
- Paul's argument: how we should live in light of the gospel
- God's righteousness: lived out in the church

Key Questions

- What are things the Church cannot and should not tolerate? What are examples of the minor things we are ok to disagree on?
- What are the consequences of arguing/splitting over the minor things? What are the outcomes of arguing over the major things?
- What is one thing you will work on this month to 'edify the church' and live at peace within our community?

Summary of Passage

There are some things/topics/arguments that **should divide** us as a Church (as in we must not tolerate and need to outright reject). Paul emphasizes those points in Romans and other NT letters (ie false teaching, heresy, etc) but that list is quite small compared to the things we **should tolerate**, living peacefully in an actively loving community despite our differing opinions.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

- Recap of last week; what section of Paul's "argument" are we in?
- Who is Romans written to? What are some common issues in the church that we've learned about so far?
- **Context/lead in to ch 14: Read 13:8-10**
- Paul emphasizes all the law/commandments are summed up by "love one another"

Study:

Post-it; 2 columns: weak christian/strong christian; ask students to quickly describe/define what they think the two labels represent

Read 14: 1-12

- Were our definitions of weak/strong right? How does Paul differentiate them?
- What are the two examples Paul gives? How does each party interact with the food/sacred day scenario?
 - Why does Paul bring up food (what do you know about Jewish custom)?
 - What are these sacred days? (non Sabbath religious festivals)
 - *Paul is again addressing Judaizers, Jews that were forcing Gentile Christians to convert to their religious rites (salvation plus)*
- What is the “right” way to act in each scenario?

Read 14:13-18 out loud

- What is a ‘stumbling block’ or obstacle from v 13? What does it do?
- How does Paul tell us to interact with the food/sacred day scenario?
- Verse 14 can be easily misinterpreted out of context. What is Paul getting at here? Is anything permissible if we think it’s ok?
 - How does the rest of Romans help us answer this question?
 - Is sin subjective or objective?

Since the Holy Spirit lives within and guides believers, our conscience helps us know what to do in areas of Christian liberty or where Scripture doesn’t clearly give an answer.

- What are things the Church cannot and should not tolerate?
 - Heresy (clearly anti-Biblical teaching), orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, debauchery (excessive indulgence in sinful pleasures), dissension (disagreement that leads to division), jealousy;
 - Romans 1:28-30, 13:13
 - What are the outcomes of arguing over the major things?
- What are examples of the minor things we are ok to disagree on?
 - Consumption of food/alcohol, modalities of baptism, Predestination/minor theology, Age of the earth/evolution/revelation, Modest dress (what is and isn’t), Music they listen to, How often you take communion, Styles of preaching/worship music, Political viewpoints
 - What are the consequences of arguing over “minor” things?
- With that background, how should we understand and apply v 15? What is our responsibility to our ‘brother’? How then should we live?

THEREFORE... Read 14:19-15:2

- So what? Why does Paul spend an entire chapter talking about weak vs strong christians? What is the goal in his model of church community?
 - What does mutual edification mean?
- Paul's thesis point is v 21-22: what is it?

Wrap Up:

- How then should we live?
 - V15:2→ we exercise our freedoms in a way that builds up our neighbor/brother, specifically we sacrifice those freedoms for the benefit of others
 - “In essentials-unity, in nonessentials-liberty, in all things-charity”
- Does this match your experience in the church? What type of behavior/community do you observe in Christianity?
- How can we move toward this model in our small group? impact?



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BIG QUESTIONS IN ROMANS | WEEK 17 | ROMANS 15 - End

Memory Verse

- Romans 16:25-27

Main Themes

- Main Point: Paul is calling real people to respond in their actions according to his letter.
- Paul's argument: Spread the Gospel, support the poor, be cautious of anyone causing division (dab on the haters)
- God's righteousness: He is the only one deserving of any glory.

Key Questions

- How will you apply everything we've discussed in Romans (as a whole) in your day to day life?
- How has Paul's example encouraged and challenged your own witness of the gospel?

Summary of Passage

Paul concludes his letter to the Roman church. He lets them know of his future travel plans to spread the Gospel. He parts with personal greetings, warnings, and reminders to the church.

Study Guide and Questions

Introduction:

Have a student pray

What did you guys talk about last week in Chapter 14 with Amy?

Seriously, help, fill me in!

Study:

Have a student read 15:14 - 22

- By Paul's words in this section, what do you think his feelings and attitude toward the Roman church are?
 - Love, hopeful, both in who they are and that they are capable of responding to rebuke appropriately.
- Paul lays out some important desires in this section. What are they?
 - To share the gospel to those that have never heard it. To fulfill the Lord's prophecy in Isaiah 52:15

Have a student read 15:23 - 33

- Do you think that all Christians are called to be gospel spreading pioneers like Paul? Why or why not?
- Why does Paul choose such strong words regarding charitable giving in verses 26-28?
 - We have an obligation as representatives of Christ to show sacrificial love to our neighbors, as he did. God gives us blessings so that we can be stewards of them, not just consumers.
 - We owe the poor because we owe Christ!
 - Can you think of times in Jesus' life on Earth where he cared for people's physical needs?
- What does Paul ask of his Roman brothers and sisters at the end of this chapter? Pray. Why is this important?
- It is how we commune with God, Jesus prayed for the church (John 17) and we're told to as well (Phil 4:4-7)

*****Skip 16: 1 - 16*****

Leader read 16: 1 - 2 out loud

The next 14 verses follow this same sentiment

- Why do you think Paul addresses and greets specific people in the church?
 - This is a real letter written by Paul to fellow believers who lived in Rome in the 1st century and loved and followed Jesus.
- Do you have loved ones that live far away that love and follow Jesus? Do they ever give you encouragement in your faith? Do you ever give them encouragement?

Have a student read 16:17 - 27

- What is Paul's final warning to the Roman church?

- Beware of false teachers and those that cause division.
- How can we determine who those people are?
 - We always ask “What does scripture say about that?” in our small group for a reason
 - Every teaching should be weighed against the Bible.
 - They are known to serve themselves rather than glorifying God.
 - You can only know what is not sound with scripture if you know what is true about Scripture, right?! Arm yourself!

Wrap-up:

- *Watch Bible Project Romans Part 2 video*

Journal Time

- How will you apply everything we’ve discussed in Romans (as a whole) in your day to day life?
- How has Paul’s example encouraged and challenged your own witness of the gospel?

Pray

