

Riverwood Punchbowl Anglican Church

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Paul's Letter to the

ROMANS

Chapters 9-16

Term 2, 2008

Introduction

The last half of Paul's letter to the Romans *applies* the truths set out in chapters 1-8, which we studied last term. It would be a good idea to look over your study notes for Romans 1-8, before beginning this series.

These chapters, particularly 12-15 contain very specific guidance about how Christians should behave in a number of situations. The guidance is still very relevant to us today, even though some of the immediate issues relate to Jewish-Christian relationships in the 1st century.

Our faith must affect the way we live our lives, which is why Paul always had a "practical" section in his letters, as well as a doctrinal section.

As we study the second half of the letter to the Romans, be prepared to reflect honestly on your own life, and let what you read and discuss really influence the way you live as a Christian!

Summary of Romans 9-16.

God had chosen the Israelites as his people, and in the conclusion of Chapter 8, Paul described how nothing can separate the elect from the love of God. Why then were many Jews rejecting Jesus? Had God's promise failed? What was the fate of Israel? Paul, himself a Jew, had a deep concern about this issue. He wrestles with it in chapters 9-11.

Our studies on chapters 9-11 will concentrate on how we should avoid failing like the Jews, and how we should be grateful that God has used the Jews and others as instruments to bring salvation to us.

Chapters 12 and 13 urge us to live as God wants us to. Paul uses vivid images and very practical situations to explain how we should live as Christians.

Chapter 14 through to 15:13 examines the important issue of how Christians should treat each other when they disagree about what is right and wrong. The specific examples may seem foreign to us, but the principles apply very directly to the situations we experience.

Chapter 15:14-30 gives a fascinating insight into Paul's own ministry.

Chapter 16 comprises personal messages to individuals in Rome. It helps us understand the relationships between Paul and some of his co-workers and friends. It is a model for our relationships with other Christians.

Key Verse

Perhaps the key verse in chapters 9-16 is found in 12:1. Keep this verse in mind throughout the studies. Think about what it means for you to present yourself to God as a living sacrifice.

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Romans 12:1

Prepared by Max Gilbert
March 2008

Week 1, Commencing 11 May 2008

THEME: The Potter and his Clay.

Day 1 Romans 9:1-5

Paul is in “great sorrow” because his kinsmen, the Jews have not accepted Christ (v2-3). How has God shown that he has chosen the Jews in a special way? (v4-5)

Day 2 Romans 9:6-13

It seems that God’s promises to the Jews have failed. Is this possible? (See Rom 8:38-39). How does Paul explain that God’s word has not failed?

Day 3 Romans 9:14-18

Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? (v17)

Day 4 Romans 9:19-24

Can the clay tell the potter what sort of a pot to make?

Day 5 Romans 9:25-29

Does the Old Testament say that *only* the Jews would be saved? Does it say that *all* Jews will be saved?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 9:19-24

To Discuss:

1. Paul poses a question: If God *makes* us behave the way we do, how can he *blame* us? (v19) Do you ever ask that question? Does Paul actually answer the question? Does Paul say that we should not ask that question? (v20)

2. Can you resist God's will? (v19)

3. Explain the illustration of the Potter and his Clay in your own words. In what ways do you behave like clay in your relationship towards God?

4. In v22-23 Paul suggests some reasons why God might choose some people for "destruction" and some people for "glory". What are the reasons? How does this show God's love to you?

PRAY

Thank God that though he would be perfectly just to condemn all of us, he has mercifully chosen to save some.

Week 2, Commencing 18 May 2008

THEME : Misdirected zeal for God.

Last week we examined how human unbelief fits into God's purposes. This week we examine human responsibility for unbelief.

Day 1 Romans 9:30-10:4

Were the Jews trying to please God? Why did they fail?

Day 2 Romans 10:5-13

What is necessary to be saved? (v9)

Day 3 Romans 10:5-13

Does God treat Jews differently from other people? (v12-13)

Day 4 Romans 10:14-17

What are the 4 steps which precede "calling on the name of the Lord". What should we do about this?

Day 5 Romans 10:18-21

How patient has God been with the Jews (v21)? and with us?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 9:30-10:4

To Discuss:

1. Were the Jews sincere and zealous in their dedication to God? (10:3) How did they seek righteousness? (9:31-33) How was their zeal misdirected?

2. Express 10:4 in your own words. Christ is the “end” of the law probably means that he is what the law pointed to and that he removes the condemnation that results from our failure to keep God’s law.

3. How can we fall into the trap of trying to create our own righteousness? (10:3) How can we avoid this?

4. How do you “submit” to God’s righteousness? (10:3) and what difference does it make to you? (Refer Rom 1:16-17; 9:30; 10:4) If salvation comes by faith in Jesus, what responsibility does this place on us to give others the chance to believe? (10:14-17)

PRAY

That we will be zealous for God, by confessing that Jesus is Lord, believing that God raised him from the dead.

Week 3, Commencing 25 May 2008

THEME: Israel's role in our Salvation.

Day 1 Romans 11:1-6

The Jews as a nation have never accepted Christ. How does Paul know that God has not entirely rejected the Jews?

Day 2 Romans 11:7-10

Israel sought a Messiah, but failed to recognise Jesus when he came. (v7) What happens to people who reject Jesus?

Day 3 Romans 11:11-24

Did Israel's unbelief have any purpose in God's plan?

Day 4 Romans 11:25-32

Is Israel's unbelief permanent? (v25)

Day 5 Romans 11:33-36

Through chapters 9 to 11, Paul has been struggling with very difficult issues. At the end of it, how would you describe his state of mind and final conclusion?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 11:11-24

To Discuss:

- 1.** In what ways has Israel's rejection of Christ resulted in "riches for the world"(v12)? How does this apply to you personally? Do you think that you benefit in any way from the fact that so many people today reject Christ?

- 2.** As a Christian, do you think that you are superior to people who are not Christians? (v18-19). What should our attitude be to the fact that we are Christians, while many others are not? (v20-21)

- 3.** What warning should we take from the fact that God did not spare the Israelites? (v21)

- 4.** What are the main points in the Olive Tree illustration? What does it teach about the relationship of Israel and the Church (i.e., us)? What does it teach about the future of Israel? What does it teach about the character of God? What does it teach about our relationship to God?

PRAY Praise God in humility and awe, because he has grafted us into his chosen people. Pray that you will continue to believe, so that you will continue in God's kindness.

Week 4, Commencing 1 June 2008

THEME: Living Sacrifices.

Day 1 Romans 12:1-2

How should we respond to God's love to us?

Day 2 Romans 12:3-8

What are some of the gifts that God gives?

Day 3 Romans 12:9-13

What are the characteristics which Paul expects to see in a Christian's life?

Day 4 Romans 12:14-18

How should we treat our enemies?

Day 5 Romans 12:19-21

Can you think of actual examples of "overcoming evil with good"?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 12:1-8

To Discuss:

1. In chapters 12-15, Paul describes how we should live, in response to God's mercy to us. (12:1). What are some of the ways that God shows his mercy to us, as described in chapters 1-11? How do you experience God's love?

2. The phrase "living sacrifice" is a vivid image. What does it mean to you? How does it describe our proper response to God's love?

3. In what ways are we influenced to "conform ... to the pattern of this world"? (v2). How can we be "transformed by the renewal of our minds"?

4. Think with "sober judgement" about yourself. (v3). How can you use your gifts to benefit the body (people) of Christ?

PRAY

That God will renew our minds, and that we will present our bodies to him as living sacrifices.

Week 5, Commencing 8 June 2008

THEME: Put on the Lord Jesus.

Day 1 Romans 13:1

Why should we be subject to governing authorities? Do the Australian, NSW and local governments derive their authority from God?

Day 2 Romans 13:1-5

How would Paul's view of governing authorities apply to Christians living under a ruler like Hitler? Are there any current situations where you think it is not proper for you to obey the law? Compare this passage with Acts 4:19-21.

Day 3 Romans 13:6-7

Paul suggests some practical ways in which we should submit to authorities. What are they?

Day 4 Romans 13:1-7

In what ways, if any, do you think that Christians should differ from non-Christians in their attitude and behaviour towards government?

Day 5 Romans 13:8-14

What is the primary responsibility of a Christian towards his neighbour?(v8)

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 13:8-14

To Discuss:

1. Verse 8 means that we *owe a debt* of love to each other. Why do we *owe* love to our neighbours? How should we repay this debt? Can we ever fully repay this debt?
2. In verses 11-14, what images does Paul use to describe the present time? Visualise yourself in each of these illustrations. What does each illustration suggest about how we should or shouldn't live?
3. What are some of the types of behaviour that Christians must avoid? (v13)
4. In what ways do you need to "put on Christ"?

PRAY

Pray for our governments, that they might live up to the responsibilities put on them by God. Pray that we might submit to our governments, according to God's will. Pray that God will help us to "put on Christ".

Week 6, Commencing 15 June 2008

THEME: Do not judge one another.

Day 1 Romans 14:1-12

When Christians disagree over matters of opinion, they should not despise or pass judgement on each other. (v3) What should they do?

Day 2 Romans 14:13-23

A fellow Christian thinks you are doing something wrong, but you are convinced that you are right. Should you change your behaviour?

Day 3 Romans 14:13-23

What is the overriding principle which should guide the behaviour of Christians when they are in conflict over matters of opinion? (v19)

Day 4 Romans 15:1-6

How is Christ the supreme example of the sort of behaviour that Paul has been describing?

Day 5 Romans 15:7-13

What is Paul's prayer for the Romans? (v13). How is this a fitting conclusion to this section from the beginning of Chapter 14?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 14:1-12

To Discuss:

1. The Bible gives many clear directions, but there are also many moral issues on which it is silent. These can be a source of conflict amongst Christians. The Romans were apparently disputing about whether it was right to eat meat. What are some modern examples of moral issues where Christians disagree? (*Don't debate the issues.*)
2. What attitudes do you have when you disagree with another Christian? How do you feel when another Christian tells you that what you are doing is wrong?
3. The movie "The Chariots of Fire" describes how Eric Liddell refused to run in an Olympics race because it was held on a Sunday. He believed that to run on a Sunday would break the 4th Commandment. Was he right or wrong to run in the race? (v5-6)
4. What reasons does Paul give for why it is wrong to pass judgement on other Christians?

PRAYER and REFLECTION

Reflect on things you do that might distress other Christians. Also think about other Christian's actions which offend you. Ask God for wisdom in dealing with these areas of your life.

Week 7, Commencing 22 June 2008

THEME: The Fully Preached Gospel.

Day 1 Romans 15:14-22

Why had Paul so often been hindered from going to Rome? (v22)

Day 2 Romans 15:23-29

What were Paul's travel Plans?

Day 3 Romans 15:30-33

Why did Paul face dangers in Jerusalem? Under what circumstances did Paul eventually get to Rome? (see Acts 28, especially v16).

Day 4 Romans 16: 1-20

How many people in Rome does Paul mention by name? What sorts of relationships did Paul have with these people?

Day 5 Romans 16:21-27

Many of Paul's letters were written by a "secretary", presumably from Paul's dictation. Who was the secretary for the letter to Romans?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 15:14-22

To Discuss:

1. Why does Paul write “boldly” to the Romans, when he is already “satisfied” about them? (v14-15) Do you think that “reminding” is an important task of any minister of the gospel? What is the end purpose of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles? (v16b).

2. How would you describe Paul’s attitude to his work? (v17-18)

3. What was special about the people to whom Paul preached the Gospel? (v20-21). What does Paul mean when he says that he has “fully preached” the gospel?

4. How would you apply the answers to the above questions to the work of the ministry team at St. Andrews? How do you apply them to your own ministry?

PRAY

Pray for the ministry team at St. Andrews and St Matthews, for the members of your Home Church Group, and for yourself, as we all seek to fully preach the gospel.

Week 8, Commencing 29 June 2008

THEME: Living by Faith. Review of Romans 1:1-16:27

Day 1 Romans 1:18-21

Do the people of the world have any excuse for failing to honour God and give him thanks? (v20) What is God's response? (v18)

Day 2 Romans 3:21-26

How is God just (i.e., righteous) when he declares us innocent (i.e., "justifies us" v26), though we have all sinned (v23)? Our justification/redemption is a gift from God (v24). How do we receive this gift? (v25)

Day 3 Romans 6:15-23

Is it a *reasonable* to ask the question, "*Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?*" (v15) What is the answer to that question?

Day 4 Romans 12:1-2

How should we respond to the love that God has shown to us in Christ?"

Day 5 Romans 14:19-20

What principle should guide Christians in their relationships with each other?

STUDY PASSAGE Romans 1:16-17

To Discuss:

Verse 17b, “*The righteous will live by faith,*” can be taken as a summary of the entire letter.

1. Chapters 1-5 and 9-11 discuss what it means to be “*righteous through faith*”. What does it mean? What difference does it make to your relationship with God, and to the way you make the gospel known to others?
2. Chapters 6-8 and 12-16 discuss what it means “*to live*”. How does Paul describe the Christian life in general terms (e.g., 6:12-14) and in terms of specific behaviour (e.g., 12:14-21; 13:1-7; 14:1-12)? Read 8:31-39 and reflect on the triumph which God has given us through his love for us in Jesus.
3. In 1:16, Paul described the gospel as the “*power of God*”. Having studied Romans, how is that power now more evident to you?
4. What have you most enjoyed about studying Romans?

PRAY

Thank God for his love for us, and that we might live as he wants us to.

HOW TO USE THESE NOTES

- 1.** Read the daily Bible readings on the left hand side of the double page, and think about the question for the day. Make a note of your answer and any difficulties you have.
- 2.** The questions on the right hand side of the double page are designed for group discussion. Think about these questions before you go to your discussion group.
- 3.** The daily bible readings and study passages follow the morning and evening sermon series. You may find it helpful to take notes of the sermons.
- 4.** Please don't be frustrated if you can't understand or answer the questions: the important thing is that you read God's word.
- 5.** Use this guide for family or personal Bible reading, and if you would like to join a discussion group, please see one of the ministers.

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