

POINTS **FOR** PRAYER

Let's make sure our prayers extend beyond our group.

Let's keep including others in our requests to God

The spread of the gospel overseas

Please pray for Tab—as she returns to China and for her health.

Pray for the witness to volunteers in the orphanage and kids.

Please pray for the Bennett's—that Mark would enshrine Christian culture in the hospital. Pray for Christian chaplains. Generous donors.

Please pray for the Karen people of Myanmar—pray for democracy and real representation of this people group. Pray for the work of Christians in the Mae Lai refugee camp and for the Karen churches there.

And here...Christmas coming

We are considering the 'hopes & fears' of Christmas and how they are answered (or not) in Christ this year. Pray for many family, friends and neighbours to come. Start praying for a particular few to invite?

Those new with child, those without

The first few months of a child are hard—pray for the Ling family (Pete, Daph, Bethany & Clarissa) and for the Que family (Leilani, Norbert and baby yet unnamed), for the Hayes as they expect their third.

Much harder is life without a new child, if you are desiring one.

Please pray for those among us who may be struggling with this loss.

The sick and grieving

Please pray for Jean McGrath as she heads towards Christmas still doing chemo. Please pray. You also know a few people who have had deaths in the family this year. Why not pray for them?

thanks.

These bible studies were written by a collection of your group leaders at home group leader training nights and then finished off by a moderately skilled editor. So many thanks to all who contributed. To Ross Pickering, Judy Adamson, Aidan Williams, Dan & De Henderson, Joel Horscroft-Smith, Sahm & Amy Nasser, Sandra DeMarchi, Val Wilson, Jiun Der Chung, Nicole Parker, Anna Leard, Dan Cummings & Dave Hayes. Well done guys!

Letter to the Romans

Chapters 1-4

**THE
RIGHTEOUS
WILL
LIVE
BY
FAITH**

7 Studies

study 6 (cont.)

Justified by faith

The God who Gives Life to the Dead

Dead people cannot claim life for themselves. They cannot work their way to life. They are simply.....dead.

1. Why did Abraham need to have faith in the God who gives life to the dead? (4:18-22)

2. Why do we need to have faith in the God who gives life to the dead? (4:23-25)

Faith Alone???

The power of Paul's point has been so important to Christians at various points in history, that Luther even said that we are saved 'by faith *alone*'. By which he meant, without any works attached.

The Catholic church thinks this is a terrible phrase!!!

1. Do you think he is reflecting the truth of the bible?
2. Can the Christian life be lived without works? (James 2:14-20)
3. Are works credited by God as being things worthy of him saving us? (Romans 4:5)

Article XI Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort...

(from the statement of biblical faith held to by the Anglican church – the 39 Articles of Religion)

4. Do you find justification by faith alone 'very full of comfort'? Why?

study 1

the call of the gospel

The Call of Everyday Life

1. What in life makes the loudest call on your time and attention?
 2. Why is it such a loud call? And is that good or bad?
- Tonight's study is all about a call which grabbed all of Paul's time and attention and which he thinks should grab ours too.

Romans 1:1-7

Read the passage

About Paul

1. What do you know about Paul and his CV?
2. What did he want the Romans to know about him from v.1?

About the Gospel of God

1. If YOU were to say 3 things about the gospel—what would they be?
2. What 4 things does Paul say?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
3. What is different about Paul's gospel description to ours?
4. Is our gospel self-centered, or Christ-centered?

The Gentiles' Call

1. Paul's shown us Jesus —what should the effect be?
2. Let's clarify some big bible words
'grace' is....

'apostleship' is.....

'Gentiles' are....

3. Write v.5 in your own words _____
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study 1 (cont.) the call of the gospel

4. Paul calls Gentiles to 'the obedience which comes from faith': some people think faith has nothing to do with obedience—how would you put it?

Called for what?

1. Called to 'be saints'? Go figure! What does this mean?

The Call of Everyday Life and the Call of God in the Gospel

There are many calls in life.....add the other strong calls in your life to this picture, and then draw lines between the gospel of God and the things that are in real tension to it in your life. What is the tension?



Pray

Jesus taught us to pray 'Lord, lead us not into temptation' (Matthew 6) - what is the temptation we should be praying for deliverance from?

study 6

Justified by faith

The Big Boast

Australians pretend to not like boasting—but we boast all the time, especially before God.

What do you think are some of the classic boasts of Australians before God?

(eg. I'm basically a decent person—I'm not a murderer or anything.)

Paul excludes all boasting before God, because the reality of faith is that we have contributed nothing to becoming right before God.

Justified by Faith—Proving the point

If you think that the idea that we are made right with God simply by trusting in what God has done for us in Jesus is popular, think again!

Paul feels the need to prove the point he made in Romans 3:24-25 and 3:28, and to prove it at length with a long-discussion of how it was true even in Abraham's day.

Abraham: the Father of Faith

Faith that does not work, works (4:4-8)

Does circumcision work as a work? (4:9-12)

What about keeping the law? (4:13-15)

What is it about God that means righteousness for us had to come through faith, and not works? (4:16-17)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

study 5 (cont)

God's righteousness revealed

Faith in the God who is Right

Remember the second question....is God so right (just) that we rightly put our faith in him and all he does?

Read v25-26

1. What kinds of questions do people often ask about God's justice?
2. What questions about God's justice does the sacrifice of Jesus answer according to v25-26?
3. Some people think this is a curious kind of justice—the guilty are declared in the right, the innocent Jesus dies, God finally deals with crimes he hadn't punished before....what do you reckon? What does Paul reckon?

The Big Words of Romans and Our Own Words

We have traveled from.....

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.....
Romans 1:18

With Romans 1:18-3:20 detailing the case for God's wrath against human sinfulness, to.....

But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify....

Romans 3:21

At last...good news!!!

But the language can seem so hard to us that we struggle with this good news until we become familiar with big bible words like righteousness, justified, and sacrifice.

We've become more familiar with the big bible words, so why not get personal and share about the time when you first realized that God had declared you 'in the right' despite your sinfulness.

Perhaps you hadn't realized that you being declared in the right is what faith in Jesus' sacrifice has done for you?

study 2

passion for the spread of the gospel

Pure Passion?

One thing that strikes me about understanding these parts of the bible written by Paul is that you have to understand his passionate character. Read the passage (Romans 1:8-17) and underline every emotive word you come across.

Are you as 'eager' as Paul is to see the gospel about Jesus preached? Why....Why not?
(We'll come back to passion later...)

Paul and the Romans

Read v8-14 again...

1. How did Paul know the Romans?
2. Have a look at Romans 15:19-26 to fill out the picture
3. Summarise what Paul's basic intention is for going to Rome.

The Power of the Gospel

Read Romans 1:16

If the gospel about Jesus is the God's power to save, what are we being saved *from*? Can you work it out not from guesswork, but from details in v17 and 18?

Which of these statements do you think is most helpful to people?

*If you believe the gospel about Jesus it must be powerful
Because of the strength of your belief.*

*The gospel message about Jesus is powerful to save,
as long as you choose to believe it.*

*The gospel message is important—it is the way God saves everyone
who comes to believe it, no matter who they are.*

study 2(cont.) passion for the spread of the gospel

The Importance of Faith

Read Romans 1:17

Faith clearly matters—3 times in the verse! So 3 questions....

1. What does faith result in for us?
2. Why is it from 'first to last'?
3. Have a look at Habakkuk 2:2-5—focus on v.4—what do you think it means there? Is Paul using it in the same way in Romans 1:17?

Thinking through Faith

Some people say faith is a 'private matter' - what do you think after reading these verses?

Which of the below describes faith best...

Intellectual Belief Blind Trust Trust in a Person

Is this how you think about faith, or a change to your thinking?

Passion for the Gospel

(We said we'd get back to passion later.....)

Paul is passionate about the gospel that saves. He is unashamed and eager.

A person's passion is shaped by their personality—not everyone is passionate like Paul. Given your own personality....what would passion for the spread of the gospel look like in your life?

Are you passionate in this way?

study 5 God's righteousness revealed

Right Faith?

For many people today, faith seems to make anything right. If you believe in it, it must be right (at least for you). This is a billion light years away from biblical faith. (Thousands had faith in Hitler....it hardly made anything right!!!)

Faith needs to be in what is right. And so we have two questions in today's passage—our not being in the right (we are sinners); and the question of whether God is in the right. We need both answered—and that's exactly what Paul does.

Faith that makes us Right

Read 3:21-25a

Why?

1. Remembering what we know from the last weeks—why do people need to be made right?
2. Why is that righteousness must now come 'apart from the law' (v21), but testified to by the law?

How?

1. How are we now put in the right according to v22-24?
2. How are we put right in v25a?
3. 'Sacrifice of atonement' - what's that? (see Leviticus 16:20-25)
4. What does all this have to do with Jesus?

Summing Up

'Grace', 'faith', 'sacrifice of atonement' & 'justified' are all very hard words—can anyone in your group make very clear the relationship between them?

Why not write them on 4 scraps of paper and shift them round the coffee table until you can see in what order they fit together?

study 4 (cont.) the judgement of both jews & gentiles

A Series of Objections

Paul is always answering unseen objectors.

Read Romans 3:1-8

See if you can work out what the objections are and why they would be powerful, and whether Paul's answer is successful to your mind.

(Try not to spend too long on this!)

Objection	Reason for its Power	Answer
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Jew and Gentile Both to be Judged

God has set a day when he will judge ALL people through Jesus Christ.

There is, as Romans 2:11 says, there is 'no favouritism' with God, for either Jew or Gentile—the Jew will be judged by the law, the Gentile by the law 'written on their hearts'.

Can we have confidence under such a day of judgment?

Paul's conclusion is in 3:9-20—read it to finish.

(Do you feel the tension?)

study 3

wrath & judgment

Judgment

When was the last time you judged someone?

On what authority did you make that judgment?

What do you think of the idea that God is a judge?

God Reveals Himself

Read Romans 1:18-20

1. What is being revealed from heaven? (v18)
2. Why is God's wrath revealed?
3. So is everyone without excuse?
4. How does this challenge your faith? Explain.

People Reject God—God Responds

Read Romans 1:20-32 (as we read underline anything that looks like sin)

1. How did all this sin begin?
 2. What could a useful definition of sin be from the passage?
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3. How would we retain the knowledge of God? What would this look like?

'Unnatural relations'? The Bible and Homosexuality

No-one can read this passage today and simply skip over the comments regarding homosexual practices. These words seem strange in our world, if not offensive.

Take some time in your group to discuss what you have come to understand *in the bible* regarding homosexual practice.

What would you say to someone who says 'it is only Paul who says homosexual practice is wrong, Jesus never says so'?

What have your non-Christian friends said in reaction to your convictions in this area?

study 3 (cont)

wrath & judgment

God's Judgment and Ours

Read Romans 2:1-11

1. Who should not pass judgment....why? (v.1-3)
2. Haven't we just passed judgment on homosexual practise?!!!
3. Could you imagine showing 'contempt for the riches of God's kindness, etc (v4)
4. What is the warning against showing this contempt?
5. How do we escape judgment? (v7)
6. Doesn't this sound more like being saved by works than by faith?
7. Why does Paul emphasise 'first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles'?

Judgment Revisited

Are you ready for God's judgment?

How would you know?

study 4

the judgement of both jews & gentiles

'The Law' in General

'The law' is a huge concept in Romans. It will come up again and again from here. Let's think about law in general.

1. Does being a *lawful* person make you a good person?
2. Is ignorance of the law an excuse for not obeying it?

'The Law' in Scripture

'The law' in scripture is not the civil law as we know it. It is a technical term for a particular law—the law given to Moses at Mount Sinai, and found more widely in the first 5 books of the bible.

Break up, one group to a passage, and report back to get a feel for it. Just give us 'the vibe'..

Exodus 23:1-9

Leviticus 19:1-8

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

Psalm 119:17-24

What do you think it meant, given what you have seen, to be a Jew?

The judgment of Gentiles

Read Romans 2:12-16

1. Is the law the only way by which God judges people?
2. What ways of judgment are there 'apart from the law'?
3. The day of judgment—when 'God will judge men's secrets'. What does this make you think?
4. Are we, as gentile Christians, likely to be judged 'by the law', or by means 'apart from the law'? Will it make any difference?

The judgment of Jews

Read Romans 2:17-29

1. How will the law lead to judgment for the Jews? (v23)
2. What is the point of the circumcision argument in vv25-29?
3. What about the Jew who does not blaspheme God's name by his actions, and who is circumcised not only outwardly, but inwardly—would that Jew still need Jesus, or are they 'sorted'?