

**ROOM**

**THE LETTER THAT CHANGED THE WORLD**

**ANS**



# SERIES INTRO

Paul's letter to the Romans continues to change the world by changing people.

Charles Wesley credits his effectiveness in leading the great revival in England to the spiritual transformation he experienced preaching through Romans. The English pastor John Stott said it was Paul's devastating exposure of universal human sin in Romans that rescued him from a superficial evangelism which was preoccupied with people's felt needs. Martin Luther's study of Romans

emboldened him to lead the Reformation which reestablished the life-changing doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Luther said that Romans opened doors into paradise and broke him free from condemnation and shame. Finally, the Swiss Bible commentator F. Godet called the book of Romans the cathedral of the Christian faith.

What is it about Romans that causes such seismic shifts in the human heart? Romans is all about the gospel. Paul wrote Romans as a letter to the church in Rome in about AD 57 because he wanted them to understand and experience the gospel. Paul didn't have firsthand knowledge about the people in the church in Rome, yet he knew exactly what they needed most. They needed the gospel. So he brilliantly put the gospel on display.

Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome is a masterpiece. It is the deepest and broadest

theological document in the Bible. It was written by one of the greatest theological minds in human history under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that we might better grasp the holiness of God and the righteousness that is offered to us, as a free gift, through the life and death of Jesus.

In the coming months, we plan to study the book of Romans as a church. As we journey through this book, we'll grow to understand God's righteousness; our unrighteousness apart from him; the significance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection; and implications of the gospel for our everyday lives.

Throughout our study of Romans, the preaching team's hope is that you would grow to love God with greater passion as you better understand and experience the gospel of God. Going on this journey through Romans will change you. It will shape your heart, and Lord willing, this book of the Bible will open doors into paradise and set you free from condemnation and shame.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Charlie for the Preaching Team

# SMALL GROUPS AT FAITH

## What is a small group?

Small groups at Faith are small gatherings of people from Faith who meet regularly for friendship, prayer and Bible study.

Each small group is unique because it is shaped by the people who attend. However, at the heart of each small group is a desire to see tight-knit community form that is marked by a growing love for Jesus and for the other people in the small group.

## Why should I join a small group?

We are made for friendship with God and others. When we are not known and loved by others, we suffer because we are not experiencing all that God created us to experience. Additionally, life is too difficult to journey alone. Therefore, small groups are a place where we can connect in friendship with other people through the ups and downs of life.

## How do I get connected to a small group?

The easiest way to get connected to a small group is to click on “Small Groups” in the Faith Church app or go to [faithchurchfortcollins.org/smallgroups](https://faithchurchfortcollins.org/smallgroups). You can also sign up on Sunday by filling out the Connect Card or stopping by the Connection Center. Finally, if you would like to join a small group, you can call the church at **970-226-2095**.

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MAR  
07

HOW TO CHANGE  
THE WORLD

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:1

The book of Romans begins with an introduction from Paul. In this introduction we see that God radically changed Paul's life. Before God stepped into his life, Paul was proud and judgmental. He wasn't a servant of Christ; he was a Pharisee who was persecuting Jesus. He wasn't an apostle set apart for the gospel; Paul was a murderer who wanted to destroy the gospel. All of this changed when Jesus stepped into Paul's life. In his grace and kindness, Jesus forgave Paul and gave him a new mission for his life.

In Paul's introduction we are presented with a theme that will be woven throughout the book of Romans: **God can change our lives.**

Our main prayer for this series is that you would be changed by God as you embrace and experience his gospel. If you are open to being changed, would you spend some time this week asking God to work in your life and to work at Faith Church during our journey through Romans?

## OPENING QUESTION

- Why do people love stories about transformation?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:1. How does Paul introduce himself to the church in Rome? What stands out to you from his introduction?
- What does it mean to be a servant of Christ Jesus?
- What does it mean to be an apostle?
- What does it mean to be set apart for the gospel?

- Read Acts 9:1-19. How would you describe Paul before his conversion?<sup>1</sup>
  
- Why do you think God blinded Paul for three days? What lessons do you think Paul learned during those three days of blindness?

1 In case you don't know, Paul was called Saul before God changed his life.

## INTO YOUR LIFE

- Paul's life was changed by God. As you begin this study in Romans, consider your lifestyle before you became a Christian. What are some of the major changes that Jesus has made in your life? If you are not a Christian, consider what keeps you from following Jesus.
  
- Paul saw himself as a servant of Christ Jesus. This had practical and profound implications for his life. What are some of the practical ways you are serving Jesus in this season of your life? How is serving Jesus changing you?

- Paul served Jesus by encouraging Christians. What gifts has Jesus given you to help encourage other people? What difference would it make if you went to church next Sunday consciously seeking to encourage someone? Are you willing to ask God to make you an encourager of Christians?
  
- Paul wrote the book of Romans to encourage believers in Rome. What does it look like to mutually encourage one another as believers? How can we better do that as a small group?
  
- If you could describe your relationship with God in this season in a picture, what would it look like? What changes do you hope take place in your life as you better understand and experience God in the book of Romans?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAR  
14

THE GOSPEL OF  
GOD, PART 1

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:1-4

Paul's life was changed by the gospel. This begs the question, what is the gospel?

The Greek word for gospel literally means "good news," and it was used in Paul's day to refer to a proclamation that a Roman emperor would make after he won a great battle. This declaration of victory was announced throughout the empire so everyone would know what the emperor had accomplished and the freedom that was coming to

them. At its core, the gospel is a unique message of triumph that was to be believed and celebrated because the gospel was grounded in a historical victory and ushered in a brand-new reality.

Since the gospel is central to the book of Romans, we are going to take the next three weeks to explore what Paul reveals about the gospel in the opening chapter of Romans. This week we will explore Romans 1:1-4 where we find three key aspects of the gospel.

First, the gospel belongs to God (v. 1). Paul did not craft or create the gospel. It is the gospel of God. At a foundational level, this means we don't get to reshape the gospel to make it more appealing. We embrace the gospel with the understanding that it belongs to God.

Second, the gospel was promised by God (v. 2). The gospel isn't new. The Old Testament points forward to Jesus and lays the foundation for his work in this world.

Third, the gospel centers on Jesus (v. 3). The gospel is ultimately about Jesus. It is a declaration about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. So the gospel is not a message about what we do. It is about what God has done for us. The gospel is not advice to follow. It is news to be believed and celebrated.

### OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a time when someone shared some good news with you. What did it do for your day or your week?

### INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:1-4. What does Paul reveal about the gospel in Romans 1:1-4?
  
- Why is it important to remember that the gospel belongs to God?

- In Romans 1:2, Paul tells us that the Old Testament prophesied the person and work of Jesus. To see some of these occurrences, look at 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89, Isaiah 11:1-5, Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Ezekiel 34:23-24. Why is it important to remember that the gospel was promised by God in the Old Testament?
- Why is it important to remember that the gospel centers on Jesus?
- What did Jesus do? And why is this good news?

### INTO YOUR LIFE

- In your own words, what is the gospel?
- What questions about the gospel do you want answered during our study through Romans?

- How does this passage encourage your faith in Jesus?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAR  
21

**THE GOSPEL OF  
GOD, PART 2**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:1-7

This week we will take another step in our exploration of the gospel as we discover how the gospel establishes Jesus as our Lord (v. 4), brings about obedience of faith (v. 5), is for all nations (v. 5), and declares that we belong to Jesus and are loved by God (v. 6-7).

These four aspects of the gospel are valuable and life-changing.

The fact that Jesus is our Lord helps us to see his rightful place in our lives. We are not Lord; Jesus is Lord, and we are to surrender to him.

The fact that the gospel brings about obedience of faith helps us to see that faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin. Faith without obedience to Jesus isn't faith.

The fact that the gospel is for all nations helps us to see the expansive nature of God's love. He desires all people to be saved.

Finally, the fact that the gospel says we belong to Jesus and are loved by God helps us to see how God welcomes us into his family.

## OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a time in your life when you felt like you belonged.

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:1-7. What stands out to you from these verses?
  
- Paul refers to Jesus as “our Lord” in verse 4. What does Jesus being Lord signify? Why is it important to see him as Lord?
  
- Paul says that he and the other apostles received “grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith.” What is the relationship between obedience and faith for Christians? Why is it important to keep obedience and faith together?
  
- Paul references the expansive nature of the gospel by referencing “all the nations.” What does the fact that the gospel is for all nations tell you about God? Why is it important to see the gospel as an expansive message?

- Does your commitment to sharing the gospel reflect the reality that the gospel is for all people? Explain how and why.
- Paul says the Christians in Rome are “called to belong to Jesus” and they are “loved by God.” What happens to people when they find a place of true belonging and love?

## INTO YOUR LIFE

- What areas of your life do you need to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus?
- Are there areas of your life where faith isn’t bearing the fruit of obedience? If so, what would obedience look like for you?
- How does it encourage you to know that the gospel is a message for all people? Is there anyone in your life who needs to hear the message of Jesus?

- What has happened in your life as you have experienced the reality that you belong to Jesus and are loved by God?
  
- Is there anything in your life that keeps you from believing that you belong to Jesus and are loved by God?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAR  
28

**THE GOSPEL OF  
GOD, PART 3**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:16-17

This is our third week exploring the gospel.

In Romans 1:16-17, Paul states that he is not ashamed of the gospel because the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith and for faith. In other words, we do not earn or maintain righteousness by our own effort or goodness. The Christian life is grounded in the gospel of Jesus from beginning to end.

The gospel of Jesus is what God has done and will do for us, and this message is the power of God. It lifts people up. It transforms and changes lives and legacies. When the gospel is outlined and explained, God's power is unleashed in the world. Because of this, Paul is not ashamed to share the gospel; instead he is eager to see the power of God at work in the world.

## OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a time when you were eager to share something you had learned or experienced.

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:16-17. What does Paul say about the gospel in these verses?
- In verse 16, Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel. What evidence from Paul's life shows that this statement is true?
- How are we tempted to be ashamed of the gospel in our culture today?
- What is the righteousness of God? How does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God?

- Paul says the righteous shall live by faith. What does this mean? How is faith a central aspect of the gospel?
  
- Paul says the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. What about the gospel makes it powerful?

## INTO YOUR LIFE

- How is faith a central theme of your life?
  
- How have you experienced the power of the gospel in your life?
  
- How does the gospel affect how you live in your daily life?
  
- What makes you apprehensive about sharing the gospel?

- What steps could you take to move toward having eagerness to share the gospel?
  
- Reflect on what you have learned about the gospel over the past three weeks. How does what you have learned lead you to worship and trust Jesus? Is there anyone who needs to hear about what you have learned?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



APR  
11

**HOUSTON, WE HAVE  
A PROBLEM**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:18-23

Now that we have done a high-level exploration of the gospel, we will spend the rest of our time in Romans diving deep into each aspect of the gospel.

In our first deep dive we will look at our problem.

In Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul outlines why we need God to give us the gift of righteousness. His main argument is simple: we have a massive problem. We are objects of God's wrath. We suppress the truth about God for a lie. We worship and serve created things. We cannot earn righteousness ourselves. Apart from the gospel, we are in a hopeless situation.

Our problem with sin places us in a very dark reality, yet against this backdrop the brilliance of the gospel shines bright. So in the coming weeks we are going to explore our great problem and God's greater provision.

## OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a time when you faced a problem you couldn't solve. What did that experience teach you?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:18-23. What stands out to you from these verses?
  
- What do these verses reveal about the human condition?
  
- What do these verses reveal about God?
  
- What comes to mind when you think about the wrath of God? In what ways might the wrath of God be evident in the world today?

- Why do people suppress truth about God?
  
- Where do you see people in the world claiming to be wise when, in fact, they are foolish?
  
- Where do you see idolatry in the world today? Name some modern idols that people may not recognize as idols.

### INTO YOUR LIFE

- When do you find yourself tempted to suppress truth about God?
  
- How does understanding the human propensity to suppress truth about God help you as you reach out to people who don't believe?

- Where do you see fragments of idolatry in your everyday life? What things in your everyday life challenge God's place for first and best?
  
- What does it look like for you to give glory to God in your everyday life?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



APR  
18

**WHEN GOD  
GIVES UP**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 1:24-32

In Romans, God does not offer us a superficial diagnosis of our problem. He clearly teaches us that our deepest problems concern our sin and his wrath. All of us are sinful, and God has a righteous wrath against sinners.

In our passage for today we dive deeper into our problem. Not only do we reject God, but eventually God gives us over to our sin. This means that God eventually gives us what we want. If we do not want to follow him, he will not force us. He

will hand us over to our sin, even though it leads to our destruction.

God's handing us over to our sin further highlights our dire situation. Without divine intervention, we are utterly without hope. While this might not be pleasant to reflect on, it is important to consider because when we reflect on the depth of our problem, we see more clearly our need for the gospel.

## OPENING QUESTION

- What is the biggest mess you have ever cleaned up?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 1:24-32. What stands out to you from these verses?
  
- What do these verses reveal about the human condition?
  
- What do these verses reveal about God?
  
- In Romans 1:32, Paul says that people who rebel against God try to recruit others to join them in their sin. How do you see this taking place in our culture?

- Paul repeats three times that God *gave them up* or *delivered them over*. What do these phrases tell us about God? What is Paul emphasizing through repeating this idea of God handing us over to our sinful desires?
- How would you summarize the problem that humans face when it comes to being righteous before God?
- Is it hard for you to agree with what these verses reveal about people's spiritual condition? Why or why not?

## INTO YOUR LIFE

- What ongoing problems do you have with sin?
- Is there sin that you secretly love? What would it look like if God handed you over to it?

- In this passage, Paul paints a chilling picture of a world where the hearts and minds of people are darkened and God gives sinners over to their sin. Even as believers, there are areas of our lives that are not yet fully redeemed. As a small group, spend a few moments in silent confession before the Lord. Close small group by praying for God to rescue and redeem.

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAY  
02

**GOD'S PERFECT  
JUDGMENT**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 2:1-16

We've spent the last few weeks exploring our problem with sin. We will now consider God's righteous judgment of sin.

In this section of Romans, we discover that God's judgment is perfect. He isn't a cranky God who punishes unjustly or capriciously. He is a kind God who judges righteously.

While God's judgment is something to worship, it is bad news for humanity because it means we are in a dire situation. Judgment from an impartial judge is coming. Yet the bad news of God's judgment is meant to lead us to the good news of the gospel. Jesus took God's righteous judgment for our sins at the cross so we can experience God's kindness and repent of our sins.

One last thing to mention for this week: in this passage, Paul says that there will be glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good (v. 10). This may be a bit confusing, especially if we don't take into account what Paul has said before and what he will say after verse 10.

If all we had were Paul's words in verse 10, it may seem that the point Paul is driving toward is that we can be saved by our own goodness. But this is not his point. Paul is clearly arguing in this section of Romans that no one is righteous. So why does he say there will be glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good?

Verse 10 is an argumentative set up. Paul is offering a path to deal with sin that seems plausible, but then as his argument unfolds, he shows that the path of goodness will not save us from judgment. The climax of this argument is in Romans 3:10-11 where we find that no one is righteous. No one does good. Paul's argument in Romans is that for God to save people, he would have to bring a righteousness to us that does not come from us. We'll explore more of this later in Romans. But for now, it is enough for us to wrestle with the reality that God is a righteous judge.

### OPENING QUESTION

- When you think of an upright judge, what images or words come to mind?

### INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 2:1-16. What stands out to you from these verses?
- What does this passage reveal about God's judgment?
- What does this passage teach about our equal standing before God? What standard does the passage say God uses to judge everyone?

- Why is God's perfect judgment both good news and bad news?
- In a passage focused on judgment, Paul praises God's kindness. How do these two aspects of God's character work together in the gospel?
- How would you describe a hard and impenitent heart?
- Why do people need God's kindness, forbearance and patience?

### INTO YOUR LIFE

- When have you passed judgment on another person?

- What are indicators that your heart is becoming hard and impenitent?
  
- What helps to soften your heart?
  
- How have you experienced God's kindness, forbearance and patience?
  
- How can you be a tangible expression of God's kindness, forbearance and patience?
  
- Jesus endured the wrath of God so you can enjoy the grace of God. If you are a Christian, you have experienced this. Take a few moments to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind things from which you have been saved. Then thank Jesus for these things.





MAY  
09

**RELIGION CAN'T  
SAVE YOU**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 2:17-29

Paul's discussion in this section of Romans is that religion can't save you. To make this point, Paul traces the shortcomings of Old Testament Jews. In the Old Testament, God directly revealed to the Israelites what a righteous life looked like. He gave them the law, which detailed exactly what to do and what not to do to honor God. Had the Jews chosen to follow the commands of God's law, they could have been a light to those who are in darkness and teachers of wisdom to the nations (2:19). But they did not follow the commandments. They fell massively

short of God's law, and their inability to attain righteousness on their own revealed the shortcomings of religion. Religion can't save.

In Paul's day, an important religious issue was male circumcision. Many people believed that if a person underwent that change to his body, he was saved, even if his soul was unchanged. Today, many people believe outward religious acts like going to church or living a balanced life saves us. Paul's point is that while there is nothing wrong with outward religious acts, ultimately what matters is an inward transformation of the heart brought about by the Holy Spirit. Outward religious acts do not save.

In this section of Romans, Paul reminds us that God must intervene to bring righteousness to us through the work of his Son, Jesus. Jesus saves us because he is the light to those in darkness, and his death and resurrection allow God's law to be written on our hearts.

## OPENING QUESTION

- When you think of “religion” or “outward religious acts,” what ideas or images come to mind?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 2:17-29. What stands out to you from these verses?
  
- Why would some Jews think that God viewed them as superior to other people?
  
- Romans 2:17-29 identifies how some Jews took pride in the law, but at the same time, they broke parts of God’s law. How have we, as Christians, been guilty of a similar type of hypocrisy?
  
- Based on Romans 2:17-29, what are the shortcomings of religion?

- What does Paul mean when he describes circumcision of the heart and how is it demonstrated?

## INTO YOUR LIFE

- What outward religious acts do some people look to for salvation?
  
- Have you ever had a season where you judged people based on external things without giving attention to internal things that matter like a changed heart?
  
- Have you experienced people rejecting God because of the hypocrisy of those who say they are his people? How can your life draw people to God?
  
- In your life, where are you tempted to view yourself as superior to other people? How so?

- In what ways have you looked to religion or “being a good person” to save you? What are you tempted to rely on to bring you acceptance and confidence and purpose in life? What does it look like to repent of this and be changed by the gospel?
  
- How is your heart being changed by the Spirit?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAY  
16

**NO ONE RIGHTEOUS**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 3:1-20

We now come to the pinnacle of Paul's argument about why we need God to give us righteousness as a gift. No one is righteous. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside.

Paul clearly wants us to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that both Jews and Gentiles are sinners in need of a Savior. The reality of our unrighteousness apart from Jesus is devastating. But laying this foundation is absolutely necessary in order for us to embrace and celebrate Jesus.

Jesus is the ultimate declaration of God's love and salvation to the unrighteous. Jesus is the refuge for those who have turned away from God. Jesus is God's faithfulness both to himself and to his people. So, may this week lead you to acknowledge your own unrighteousness and sinfulness, and may you find yourself clinging to Jesus as your only hope and salvation.

## OPENING QUESTION

- Talk about a time you felt utterly hopeless and in need?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 3:1-20. What stands out to you from these verses?
  
- What is Paul's main message to us in Romans 3:1-20?
  
- What does Paul say all people share in common when it comes to God's laws and standards? Do you believe that you have this in common with all people?
  
- Why is it important for Paul to establish that all people are unrighteous?

- How do you understand Romans 3:10 when you see seemingly good people doing seemingly good deeds?
- How does the unrighteousness of humanity fit into the good news of the gospel?
- A common perspective in our culture is that some people are more sinful than other people. Based on Romans 3:1-20, is it worth our time to debate who is more or less sinful? Why or why not?
- In Romans 3:3-4 Paul claims that God remains faithful to us. How has God been faithful to you even when you have failed to be faithful to him?

### INTO YOUR LIFE

- This passage can leave us feeling hopeless about our inability to please God. As a Christian, what hope do you have to be able to please God?

- Have you come to accept your own unrighteousness apart from Christ? If so, when did that happen in your life?
  
- How do you see the effects of your sin on your life, thoughts and relationships?
  
- Paul says that the more we understand God's commands, the more aware we are of the ways we fall short. How have you seen your awareness of your own sin and your need for Jesus increase the more you have learned from the Bible?
  
- What were some of the first areas of unrighteousness that God convicted you of as a new Christian?
  
- What are some areas of unrighteousness that God is convicting you of in this season of your life?

- Many people in Paul's day had a great degree of misplaced confidence when it came to their relationship with God. Many thought they were righteous because of what they did or the family they were born into. How have you been tempted to trust in things other than Jesus when it comes to your relationship with God?

## NOTES AND PRAYER



MAY  
23

**GOD'S  
RIGHTEOUSNESS IN  
CHRIST**

**Main Passage:**  
Romans 3:21-31

This week we get to wade into the glories of the gospel, which is the good news that the righteousness of God comes to us as a gift because of what Jesus did on the cross.

After laboring to reveal our hopeless condition outside of Jesus, Paul now labors to help us see our hope-filled position in Jesus. In Jesus, we are given the gift of righteousness. This gift is costly. Jesus' blood was shed to pay the penalty for our sin, error and unrighteousness. The costliness of the gift doesn't mean that we must work to earn the gift. We receive the costly gift of righteousness by faith in Jesus. For those of us who love Jesus, we do not live from our righteousness; we now live from Jesus' righteousness that we have received as a gift.

This section of Romans is one of the most important texts in the Bible. It clearly reveals that we are saved from the penalty of our sins solely by placing our faith in Jesus' work on the cross. Jesus alone saves! By his blood we are redeemed! We are justified by his grace as a gift! So we do not boast in ourselves. We boast in Jesus. We make much of Jesus. To him be glory and thanks and praise now and forevermore!

## OPENING QUESTION

- What is one of the most extravagant gifts you have ever received?

## INTO THE BIBLE

- Read Romans 3:21-31. What stands out to you from these verses?
- How do these verses change your view of yourself?
- How do these verses change your view of God?
- What does Paul mean when he says that *the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it*?

- How is Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross an appropriate solution to the problems Paul has been raising up to this point in Romans?
- Based on Romans 3:21-31, what is the gospel? How are people made right with God? What is required of them?

### INTO YOUR LIFE

- How is it a relief to trust that if you have Jesus, you have everything needed to be right with God? What burdens does this lift for you personally?
- What happens when you forget that in Jesus you are righteous?
- How does believing the gospel humble you and enable you to be honest about yourself?

- Consider all that we've covered in this ten-week study through Romans 1-3. What have been some of the most important takeaways for you? List one or two important takeaways from our study so far and share with your small group how God is using those insights to change your life.

## NOTES AND PRAYER

