



slavery

*romans
part two*

Personal Preparation

Week 5 - Romans 3:9-20 - Hopelessness

Day 1 - Read Psalm 14

Consider

- What's the connection between what's in people's hearts and their actions according to this Psalm?
- What's God's judgment on people?
- What is the Psalmist looking forward to from God?

Reflect

- Do you think that between the Old Testament and now people have improved?

Pray

- That we might understand God's assessment of our situation.
- That we might look forward to salvation

Day 2 - Read Isaiah 59

These verses are written while Israel are in exile in Babylon, longing to return to the promised land.

Consider

- What behaviour has separated Israel from God?
- What is the connection between salvation and God?
- What does God promise to do in the end? (verses 20-21)

Reflect

- Should God save those who don't to repent?

Pray

- Give thanks that God is determined and able to save His people.
- That we might have opportunities to call on those we know to repent.

Day 3 - Read Romans 3:9-20

These verses are the climax of Paul's argument in the first section of Romans. Let's see what his conclusion is.

Consider

- What category of people is Paul including in this final assessment?
- How does he describe these people?
- What is his final assessment of the situation of mankind?

Reflect

- We know that people are capable of great and noble things. So how does that sit with Paul's assessment of mankind in this section of Romans?

Pray

- That we might understand what is at the heart of sin, so that we might understand God's solution to sin.

Week 6 - Romans 3:21-26 - But now...

While the last section is the conclusion to Paul's argument about the state of mankind, we have here was been described as one of the greatest "but's" ever. If Paul finished his letter at Romans 3:20, we'd be in trouble. But now we see the heart of God, and His desire for the world. (A note - the words 'righteous', 'righteousness', 'justify' and 'just' are all the same word in the original greek.)

Day 1 - Read Roman 3:21-22a

Consider

- If the 'wrath of God' characterises the world before Jesus, what characterises the world now?
- How ISN'T the righteousness of God realised in this new era?
- How IS the righteousness of God realised in this new era?

Reflect

- How would this news have affected the Jews whose identity was so closely tied to the Old Testament Law? (Consider if you were told that Passports were no longer what identified peoples country of origin.)
- What reason have we had so far in Romans for God to reveal a new righteousness for mankind?

Pray

- That we might understand how God deals with people in this new era - through Jesus.

Day 2 - Read Romans 3:22b-25a

Consider

- Why do all people need the righteousness that God offers in Jesus?
- How and why does God offer justification to people?
- How is that justification taken hold of?

Reflect

- Why does Paul stress justification as a "gift" of "grace" received through "faith"?
- How does this relate to mankind's situation describe by Paul in Romans 1:18-3:20?

Pray

- That we might understand that what God offers, he offers freely, because there is nothing we have to offer.

Day 3 - Read Romans 3:25b-26

Consider

- As well as justifying people, what does Jesus death also do?
- How had God dealt with people's sins before Jesus?
- What does the Gospel tell us about God?

Reflect

- How does this passage explain the accusation that God lets sin go unpunished?
- How does Romans 3:21-26 show that God is 'just'?

Pray

- Give thanks that in Jesus, we see God's righteous character and love explained.
- Give thanks that God justifies those who do not deserve it, at the same time he exonerates himself.

Week 7 - Romans 3:27-4:25 - You gotta have faith

Day 1 - Read Romans 3:27-31

Consider

- Why is there no room for boasting in the gaining (or maintaining) of a relationship with God?
- How does the change the dynamic for Jews & Gentiles from the Old Testament?

Reflect

- Why do you think Paul says that the law is not overthrown?
- Is he talking to Jews here, or Gentiles? Does it make a difference?

Pray

- That we might have a clear understanding of both how our relationship with God is established AND maintained.

Day 2 - Read Romans 4:1-12

In order to convince Jews that faith has always been the thing that makes people right with God, Paul pulls out some big guns - Abraham and David - to show that it's always been this way.

Consider

- If Abraham had been justified by works (which he wasn't) why wouldn't he still be able to boast before God?
- What is Paul's proof that Abraham was justified through faith?
- How is Abraham the spiritual father of both Jews & Gentiles?

Reflect

- If circumcision was a marker of being one of God's people in the Old Testament, what do you think are the markers that we use today for God's people?
- Is there a difference between how our relationship with God is established as to how it's maintained?

Pray

- Give thanks that God has included us in the people of God, and that through faith.

Day 3 - Read Romans 4:13-25

Consider

- What were the promises that God made to Abraham? (Use your cross references to look them up in Genesis.)
- What happens if a relationship with God is sought through the law (or works)?
- Abraham placed his faith in the promises of God. What do we place our faith in?

Reflect

- What's the relationship between faith and grace?
- How does Abraham faith in real life? Translate that to your own life and what it might look like.
- What is Jesus' death & resurrection seen to do in verse 25?

Pray

- Give thanks that God counts righteousness to us, because of what Christ has done.

Study 5 - Romans 3:9-20 - Hopelessness

To start: What have been Paul's common themes over the last three passages we've looked at in describing the human condition?

Read Romans 3:9-20

How do the Old Testament references help Paul build his case here?

Look at:

- Psalm 14

- Isaiah 59

- Any other cross references you have time for.

How does Paul describe mankind?

How is our body used to describe our problem?

What does this look like for people in day to day life?

What role does the law place in being justified before God? (v.19-20) Why?

What does this say about 'doing stuff' to be right with God?

What role does the law play in helping us to understand ourselves?

Bringing it home

What are the implications of accepting, or not accepting, God's assessment of your character?

What is it that makes people think they can be right with God through what they do?

Study 6 - Romans 3:21-26 - But now...

This passage has been described as one of the most significant passages in the Bible. Let's find out why.

To start: Describe the ways in which religions & ideologies throughout the world seek to get and stay right with God (or some sort of higher existence). Are the things in common between them?

Read Romans 3:21-26

How are people made right with God?

Define 'righteousness'.

What does this way have to do with the Law?

Is this the same way that they stay right with God?

What's the contrast between the new era and the old era?

Why has God offered the world this righteousness?

What is the connection here between 'gift', 'grace' and 'faith'?

Why do people not take it up?

What does it cost us? What did it cost God?

How does Jesus death 'justify' God?

How is God's justice demonstrated if guilty people walk free?

What does this passage say to those who would accuse God of letting sin go unpunished?

Bringing it home

In what ways does your life reflect your acceptance, or rejection, of God's offer of righteousness in Jesus?

What would the Christian life look like that **didn't** understand righteousness from God as a gift? What would one that **did** look like?

Study 7 - Romans 4 - You gotta have faith

The Jews would have struggled with what Paul was saying here. Because it would have seemed like he was doing away with their heritage, and change the way they'd always related to God. But not so Paul says.

To Start: How do people generally understand faith? How do you understand faith?

Read Romans 3:27-4:25

What role does faith play in relation to being righteous?

How did it work for Abraham & David (4:1-8)?

What do Ephesians 2:8-9 & Hebrews 12:1-2 contribute to our understanding of faith?

Does this change the Jews relationship to the Law?
Does it change Gentiles relationship to the Law?

How does Paul explain that faith had always been the way people related to God?

Knowing what we're like, why does (and did) it have to be like this?

How is Abraham the spiritual father of all of God's people?

If circumcision was the "marker" in the Old Testament, is there a "marker" for us today?

With Abraham as the model, what does Paul say are the similarities and differences in faith for us today?

What promises did God make to Abraham, and what did Abraham do with them?

If Abraham's faith were in God's promises, what is our faith meant to be in? (v.24)

Bringing it home

Looking at the evidence in your life, what would you say you have placed your faith in?

Are you convinced of the promises of God in Jesus Christ? How do you know?

What steps are you taking to ensure you're trusting in the promises of God in Jesus Christ?

