

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# **BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION**

## **Romans – God’s Righteousness Revealed**

### **Sermon Series**

<b>03 Jan 2021</b>	<b>Romans 1:1-17</b>	<b>In the Gospel of His Son</b>
<b>10 Jan 2021</b>	<b>Romans 1:18-32</b>	<b>In God’s Wrath Manifested</b>
<b>17 Jan 2021</b>	<b>Romans 2:1-29</b>	<b>In God’s Judgement Against Sin, Visible or Hidden</b>
<b>24 Jan 2021</b>	<b>Romans 3:1-20</b>	<b>Amid Man’s Unrighteousness Despite His Law</b>
<b>31 Jan 2021</b>	<b>Romans 3:21-31</b>	<b>Through Christ’s Blood</b>





(c) Read also Psalm 98. How does this help you to further understand salvation and righteousness?

5. What is the main point that Paul is making here? Why is this important?

6. Imagine that a friend of a friend contacted you via WhatsApp and told you this:

- Everyone knows what a great Christian you are
- I really want to meet you so that I can have some part in your success through teaching you, and also so that I can be encouraged by you.
- I've tried to get to know you a few times but always wasn't successful in making contact.
- God has given me a mission to minister to Gentiles – who were not originally part of God's chosen people. Many of you are part of this group. That's why I want to get to know you.

How does Romans 1:1-17 sound like to you now? Is there a difference? Why or why not?

## **APPLICATION**

7. The gospel is the framework of Paul's thinking and his decision-making principle. What would it look like for us to adopt the gospel as our thinking framework and decision-making principle as Paul has? Consider the impact on our relationships (family, friends, colleagues, classmates, strangers), on our individual ministry to each other, on how we view discipleship and disciple-making.

## **REFLECTION**

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

## **DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS**

- God's righteousness – Jesus – is revealed in the gospel.
- The gospel is the key factor in how we view the world and how we make decisions.
- The gospel is for all – the only division that exists within people when we view them through the lens of the gospel is “those who believe” and “those who do not (yet) believe.”
- The gospel is for all – the message should be preached to all, without being withheld from any.
- God's grace and peace has been extended to the Gentiles (i.e. us), including us in His kingdom where it was previously limited to the ancient nation of Israel. Our lives should reflect this grace and peace.

**10 Jan 2021**

**Romans 1:18-32**

**God's Righteousness Revealed – in God's Wrath Manifested**

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All of us have been in situations where, despite knowing the consequences of our behaviour, we make a conscious choice to continue in it. Why do we do this?

### **OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION**

1. Read Romans 1:18-23.
  - (a) What is God's wrath being revealed against? Why do these incur God's wrath? (v.18)
  
  - (b) Why are men without excuse against God's wrath? Consider also Deut 4:16-18; Jer 2:11; and Ps 106:20, as well as the context around these verses.
  
2. Read Romans 1:24-32.
  - (a) Both the ESV and the NIV translations paragraph this section as vv.24-25, vv.26-27 and vv.28-32. What subheadings would you give each of these three paragraphs?
  
  - (b) How is what is said in each paragraph here a natural consequence of man's actions in vv.18-23?
  
  - (c) Many examples of sin are given in this section. What would such a list look like if Paul were writing today?
  
  - (d) Focus on Rom 1:32. What does this tell you about the difference between how God views sin and how man views sin?
  
3. Consider Rom 1:18-32 in light of Rom 1:1-17. Why does Paul follow a discussion of the gospel with a discussion of God's wrath?

4. What is Paul saying about the wrath of God in Rom 1:18-32? What does this have to do with the Romans specifically (cf. Rom 2:1-11)?
  
5. What is our attitude towards God's wrath today, both in society and as Christians? How is this the same or different from the Romans who were reading Paul's letter?

### **APPLICATION**

6. In what ways have we ourselves exchanged God for something else or someone else? What effect has that had or is that having in our lives?
  
7. Consider your answer to Q3. How has this changed your view of the gospel and its importance in your life?

### **REFLECTION**

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

### **DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS**

- All humanity has access to basic knowledge about God through His creation
- God himself is our yardstick of righteousness – denying His yardstick is denying God
- Throughout salvation history, mankind has repeatedly exchanged God for His creation, incurring God's wrath
- The gospel is necessary because of our ungodliness and unrighteousness, which have incurred God's wrath
- The consequence of our choice to turn from God is for God to confirm us in our choice, giving us over to the sin, unrighteousness, and ungodliness which are what we have chosen.
- God does not approve of what the world approves of – whose approval will we choose?

17 Jan 2021

**Romans 2:1-29**

**God's Righteousness Revealed – in God's Judgement Against Sin, Visible or Hidden**

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Have you ever felt that you don't quite belong when making a new group of friends? What happened before you felt like you really belonged there?

### **OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION**

1. Read Romans 2:1-11.

(a) Why does Paul say that the Romans have no excuse? What does this imply about what they have been doing?

(b) How does Paul describe God's judgement?

(c) What reasons does Paul suggest the Romans may have given themselves to excuse their own behaviour?

2. Read Romans 2:12-24.

(a) According to Paul, what is the criteria for being declared righteous? Why is this important in Paul's letter to the Romans?

(b) There appears to be a deep division between the Gentiles and the Jews in the Roman church – based on what Paul is saying here, what would you say was creating the issue?

3. Read Romans 2:25-29.

(a) What does Paul say defines Jewishness? Is this in line with Jewish teaching in the Old Testament? (cf. Deut 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4, 9:25-26)

(b) Whose approval does a true Jew seek? (cf. Rom 1:32, Jer 31:34)

4. According to Paul, who will be subject to God's judgement, and what does that mean for the Roman believers?
  
5. Without doubt, most of us are Gentiles. What difference does that make in how we understand the Law and circumcision? How do we receive Paul's message in this text differently from the Roman Jews of the time, and the Roman Gentiles of the time?

## **APPLICATION**

6. Examine your daily life and attitudes. Whose approval do we look for instinctively in everything? In what ways might we be approving each other's sin?
  
7. Self-reflection – share with your group. Paul implies that the Roman Jews have been presuming on grace because of their pre-existing covenant with God. Have we also been doing the same? Are we not concerned about the sin in our lives because of our relationship with Christ?

## **REFLECTION**

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

## **DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS**

- Knowledge of righteousness is not a basis for condemnation of others; true knowledge of righteousness reveals our own shortcomings
- God judges justly – He does not play favourites between groups of people; He knows our motivations and not just our actions
- Knowledge of righteousness is not a basis for feeling superior to others
- Knowledge of righteousness should result in a life of righteousness
- True worshippers of God have always (throughout salvation history) sought to be circumcised in heart, worshipping in spirit and in truth, seeking God's approval in all that they do

24 Jan 2021

Romans 3:1-20

## God's Righteousness Revealed – Amid Man's Unrighteousness Despite His Law

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"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." (George Orwell, *Animal Farm*)  
How does this reflect (or not) the situation in Rome when Paul was writing to them?

### OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

1. Read Romans 3:1-8.

(a) What are the objections that Paul anticipates? Why would these objections arise?

(b) How does Paul answer these objections?

(c) What major point is Paul upholding throughout this hypothetical question and answer?

2. Read Romans 3:9-18.

(a) What does Paul conclude here about the relative status of Jews and Greeks? What does he say about the righteousness (or unrighteousness) of both Jews and Greeks?

(b) Why is it important that Paul uses the Old Testament here to justify his claim?

3. Read Romans 3:19-20.

(a) What is the purpose of the law?

(b) What is the effect of the law? Consider this in light of what Paul says in Rom 2:13 – what implications does this have?

4. What is Paul's evaluation of man's standing before God? How would this have sounded to the Jewish believers who were confident in their covenant relationship with God? How does this sound to our society today?

## **APPLICATION**

5. Consider Paul's indictment of man in Rom 3:12-18. Reflect upon the past week – how has this been true of you?
  
6. Do we have a better standing before God on our own merit compared to non-believers? How do our lives reflect this understanding?

## **REFLECTION**

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

## **DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS**

- God is righteous; His faithfulness to who He is and what He has said will not change regardless of man's unrighteousness
- God's Word indicts all of mankind: none are righteous according to God's standard therefore none will be saved by their own merit
- The Law reveals that all of mankind are sinners, under the wrath of God. The Law was not given to save mankind but to show them that they need a Saviour.
- In the Old Testament, the Law revealed sin for which Israel was to offer guilt sacrifice (substitution) for so that they would not need to bear God's wrath
- In the New Testament, Christ has taken the place of the sacrificial lamb

**31 Jan 2021**

**Romans 3:21-31**

**God's Righteousness Revealed – Through Christ's Blood**

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The term “justification” is used in many ways today. What contexts have you seen it being used in? What do you understand by it?

**OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION**

1. Read Romans 3:21-26.

(a) Verse 21 begins with “but now” (both ESV and NIV) – how is what Paul says next in contrast to what he has said before?

(b) Why is it important that the Law and the Prophets testify to this righteousness?

(c) How is this righteousness accessed? Are there restrictions on it?

(d) How does Christ's sacrifice show God's righteousness and justice?

2. Read Romans 3:27-31.

(a) Who was boasting? What were their grounds for boasting? (cf. Rom 2:17)

(b) Why is boasting excluded on the principle of faith?

(c) What does this mean for the relationship between Jews and Gentiles?

(d) How does justification by faith uphold the law instead of nullifying it?

3. So far Paul has said that God's wrath will be revealed against the unrighteous (Rom 1:18), that God will judge each person based on works (Rom 2:6-13), that God is righteous (Rom 3:4), that no man is righteous (Rom 3:9), that the law serves to reveal sin rather than providing a means to righteousness (Rom 3:19-20). What does Paul now say in Rom 3:21-31? How does this develop his argument so far?
4. Why would it have been difficult for the Roman believers (whether Jew or Gentile) to accept that we are justified by faith and not works? Do we also have the same difficulty?

## APPLICATION

5. How comfortable are you with the fact that all who believe in Christ are equally justified before God? Consider: Person A with a criminal past who places his/her trust in Jesus one second before his/her death, and Person B who was born into a Christian family, placed his/her faith in Christ from a young age, and lived a godly life. Both are justified by faith in the sight of God. How do you feel about this?

## REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson that you have learnt from this study.

What is a key verse that you would like to take to heart?

## DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- Justification by faith in Jesus Christ is the only way we have to the righteousness that comes from God and belongs to God
- Justification by faith is not contradictory to the Mosaic Law
- We are justified by faith alone (*sola fide*) and not by works – obedience to the law will not earn us right standing before God because it is impossible for us to completely obey the law
- Throughout salvation history (from Old Testament times to now), justification by faith has been the only way to be in right standing before God
- Justification by faith reveals God's justice in the past, present and future