



**Only by faith in Christ**

**Romans 1:16 – 3:20 – Leaders version**

**For a one hour study, just do the starred \* questions**

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

**What does the passage say and mean?**

90 minutes

\*1. Read Romans 1:16. How does Paul describe the gospel and what does this mean?

*'The power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.'* Unpack the statement by writing it on a flip-chart and underlining and explaining the important words – 'It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.'

\*2. What is the gospel?

*Let the group tell you as much as they can and then make sure that everything has been included:*

*Gospel means good news.*

*God created everything – good and sinless, including people.*

*The first people, Adam and Eve, sinned (rebelled against God) and thus sin entered the world.*

*Sin comes from inside us, Mark 7:21-23. We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. We are all sinners.*

*God is angry at sin, Romans 5:9. Death is the penalty for sin, Gen 3:19.*

*Jesus is the Son of God – he is actually God. He lived a life of obedience to God and he died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin, Mark 10:45.*

*He rose from the dead, proving that the price for sin (death) had been paid and that he had opened the way for eternal life for all who follow him.*

*If we believe and trust in Jesus' death on our behalf, our sins have been paid for, we are forgiven and God sees Jesus' obedience in us, not our disobedience.*

\*3. Why do we need to be saved by God's power (i.e. why can't we save ourselves)?

*We don't have the power to save ourselves from sin because we are sinners. Sin is so serious that no amount of doing good will make up for it. Someone has got to die for my sin. Jesus died on the cross in our*

place. Am I willing to accept that gift from him?

\*4. Read Romans 1:17. The gospel reveals righteousness from God. How can we share in this righteousness?

*By faith. Righteousness = being right with God. Jesus is the only person who ever lived who is righteous, he never sinned. At the cross, an amazing exchange happened – our sin was put onto Jesus and his followers were given his righteousness (his total obedience to God).*

**\*?**

If you believe and trust in Jesus, how does it feel to know that God sees Jesus' righteousness in you, not your sin?

If you're not a believer, what do you think about the offer Jesus is making?

\*5. Read Romans 1:18. How does God feel about sin? (v18)

*Angry (wrath = anger)*

6. Read v19-20. What is the evidence that God exists?

*Creation*

Questions 7-9 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

7. **SDL** What invisible qualities of God have been clearly seen in creation? (Romans 1:20)

*His eternal power and divine nature.*

8. **SDL** Read Psalm 19:1-2. What does nature tell us about God, according to these verses?

*That he is glorious and he is the Creator.*

*NB there is world of difference between seeing the Creator's hand in nature, and worshipping nature itself.*

9. **SDL** What does Psalm 19:3-4 tell us about who this evidence is available to?

*Everyone! 'To the ends of the world' – it's beyond language.*

?

How do these passages help us to start to answer the question 'What about all the people who have never heard the gospel?'

*The passage tells us that there are no excuses for not recognising God through creation. The implication is that by looking at the world around us we should realise that there must be a powerful creator. This realisation should drive us to find out more. Creation points to the creator but it can't save us. To be saved, we need to know the Creator.*

\*10. Read Romans 1:21-25. What do people do that makes God angry?

*We exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship / serve creation instead of the Creator.*

Read Romans 2:12-13. (It's a tricky argument, so it's best if you read it out yourself).

\*11. What does Romans 2:12 mean?

*'The law' means the OT law God gave to Moses, not today's legal system.*

- *'All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law'. Not knowing God's law is no excuse. 'They will perish because of their sin, not because of their ignorance of the law.' (Stott 2007, p86). This refers to Gentiles.*
- *'All who sin under the law will be judged by the law' – if we know God's law, we will be judged according to it. This applies to Jews, who had been given the OT law.*

*So no-one has any excuse for sin. Sin is sin, whether it's done in knowledge or ignorance.*

\*12. Read v13 to the group again. Who does God declare righteous?

*Those who obey the law. So it doesn't matter if you're a Jew who knows the law, or a Gentile who doesn't, it's your obedience to the law that matters. However, as we already know, we are all sinners, and no-one obeys the law fully so no-one is righteous in God's sight. We can only be declared righteous in Christ.*

13. Read Romans 3:1-2. What advantage do Jews have over Gentiles?

*God entrusted the Jews with his word. They had the advantage of knowing God's law. God chose the nation of Israel (Jews) to be his people and he would be their God. They were to be witnesses to the Gentiles (everyone else) for God.*

*The teaching about Jews and Gentiles being equal in God's sight which Paul is about to unveil may not sound very impressive to your group, but it was radical teaching at the time (not new because Jesus invented it – it was in the OT, but somehow the Jews didn't seem to have noticed it!).*

14. Romans 3:3-4a. What went wrong?

*Some of the Jews lacked faith. Their Scriptures, our OT, prophesied about the one to come but they didn't accept him. Their lack of faith doesn't nullify (disprove) God's word. God is faithful to his promises.*

15. Read Romans 3:9-18. Are we any better than the Jews who rejected Jesus? Which of the statements in this passage convicts you most?

*No – without Christ we are all sinners. Encourage people to explain why a particular verse stands out to them.*

**?**

Whatever you identified in Q15 can be forgiven because Jesus paid the price for all your sin. Have you repented for your sin? If not, can you find some time today to talk to God about it – own up, admit you're responsible and sorry and allow God to forgive you?

\*16. Read Romans 3:20. Paul is in the middle of a train of thought, but we have to stop here today. What does the law make us aware of, and why do you think God gave us laws to do this?

*Make sure you end on a positive gospel note!! God gave the law (again, the 10 commandments, not today's legal system) to make us aware of our sin, thus the law is meant to drive us to our need for God. Use this statement to recap the gospel.*

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

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**What does the passage say and mean?**

1. Read Romans 1:16. How does Paul describe the gospel and what does this mean?
2. What is the gospel?
3. Why do we need to be saved by God's power (i.e. why can't we save ourselves)?
4. Read Romans 1:17. The gospel reveals righteousness from God. How can we share in this righteousness?

**?**

If you believe and trust in Jesus, how does it feel to know that God sees Jesus' righteousness in you, not your sin?

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Read Romans 2:12-13.

11. What does Romans 2:12 mean?

12. Read v13 again. Who does God declare righteous?

13. Read Romans 3:1-2. What advantage do Jews have over Gentiles?

14. Romans 3:3-4a. What went wrong?

15. Read Romans 3:9-18. Are we any better than the Jews who rejected Jesus? Which of the statements in this passage convicts you most?

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