

Romans: The Gospel of God

“There is a Church in Rome!”

Romans 1: 1-7

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Fundamentally, the gospel is news. It’s good news—the good news about what our triune God has accomplished for His people: the Father’s sending His Son, the incarnate Jesus Christ, to live perfectly, fulfill the law, and die sacrificially, satisfying God’s wrath against us that we might not face hell, thereby atoning for our sins; and raising Him from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the victorious announcement that God saves sinners . . . The gospel is good news, not good advice or good instructions, just as J. Gresham Machen wrote: “What I need first of all is not exhortation, but a gospel, not directions for saving myself but knowledge of how God has saved me. Have you any good news? That is the question that I ask of you.” - Burk Parsons

“But He gives more grace (James 4:6). This is one of the most encouraging verses in Scripture. It tells us that whatever we forfeit when we put self in the place of God, we cannot forfeit our salvation: ‘He gives more grace.’ No matter what we do to Him, God is still not beaten. Our salvation depends not upon ourselves and is not in an ultimate sense threatened by our self-centredness, because He gives more grace. Even when we break the heart of God, His response is this, to give more grace . . . That is, even if we were to turn to God and say, ‘The supply I have had so far is not enough to carry me through in this process of cleaning up my life until it is pleasing to you’, God would reply, ‘Well, you may have more.’ His resources are never at an end. His patience is never exhausted. His initiative never stops. ‘He gives more grace.’” - Alec Motyer

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?
- What is the difference between the Gospel as good news and not mere good instructions?
 - What difference does that distinction actually make?
 - Respond to the quotation from Gresham Machen above
 - Where do you find yourself wanting instructions instead of news?
 - What relationships and circumstances in your life are crying out for good news of the Gospel?
- How can the Gospel make a community of people from such widely varying backgrounds and experiences?
 - Have you ever had an occasion for the bedrock truths of the Gospel to displace surface differences and create a relationship that otherwise would have been impossible?
- What is the allure and power of belonging in today’s culture?
 - How can we help folks to find belonging in the Kingdom of God and our local expression of the kingdom at Hope?
 - What does it cost to make room for others?
- How can the grace and peace of the Gospel enable a church to stay together in the face of conflict, brokenness, and sin?
- Can the proclamation of the Gospel really grow a church and make a difference in the world?
 - What is the role of leaders, programs, buildings, money, cultural relevance, etc in light of the proclamation of the Gospel? Are they at odds?
- In what unlikely, inhospitable place in your life do you want to see the power of the Gospel bring life?