



Getting started with Romans

The Bible book of Romans is actually a letter. That means it has a FROM, a TO, and a PURPOSE.

Who wrote it?

Romans 1:1-6 tells us that the apostle Paul wrote Romans. Paul had been set apart to preach the good news of Jesus. He had especially been given the task of taking the gospel to a group of people called the “Gentiles”, calling them to faith in Jesus. The Gentiles was a name for everyone who wasn’t a Jew. This included most people in Rome.

Who is it to?

It is to the church in Rome (Romans 1:7). Paul had not been to Rome personally but was hoping to be able to visit the church soon (Romans 1:10). From the content of the letter it appears that the church in Rome was made of both Jewish and Gentile people who had become followers of Jesus. This coming together of the two groups had caused some tensions and disunity which can be seen in what Paul says in his letter.

What is the letter all about?

It’s a letter about the **GOSPEL**. Paul explains in great detail the gospel of “Jesus Christ our Lord.” He especially shows that people are saved from God’s judgement by faith alone in Christ alone (Romans 1:16-17). Paul shows that by faith in Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross, and by His triumphant resurrection, people are made righteous before God. This is true for everyone whether Jew or Gentile.

As Paul explains the gospel it breaks up into 4 big parts:

Romans 1:16-4:25 – Everyone is a sinner, everyone needs Jesus, and faith is the only way to be saved. That is true whether you are a Jew or a Gentile.

Romans 5:12-8:30 – Having been saved by faith, followers of Jesus are given the gift of the Holy Spirit who changes us. The Holy Spirit brings about in us the kind of righteous life that the Old Testament law intended but could never achieve.

Romans 9:1-11:32 - God is faithful despite the unfaithfulness of God’s people in the Old Testament (The Jews). The church in Rome needed to remember that there is still a place for Jew and Gentile in the saved people of God who put their faith in Jesus. Preaching this gospel brings people of all backgrounds into the church.

Romans 12:1-15:12 – Paul goes on to show what impact the gospel of Jesus should now have on our relationships within the church.



SO, why does Paul remind them of the Gospel they already know (Romans 15:15)?

Unlike other letters he writes Paul does not tell us exactly the reasons he writes this letter. However the two reasons stand out are these:

1) He wants them to be partners with him in Gospel mission.

Romans 15:14-33 are a call for the church to be his partners in the mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus where he is not known.

This is the same mission that we are to be partners in today.

The letter of Romans helps us to be clear about the message, and clear about who it's for.

2) He wants them to be united with one voice and bring glory to God as a result.

In order to be involved in the mission the church needs to be united. Romans 15:5-6 are key verses to help us understand the book:

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:5-6

One writer puts it like this: "only when the church is united under grace will we be in a fit state to be mission partners. Only grace so humbles us that we can offer grace to others; all forms of self-righteous religion foster pride and bring division."

Being united with one voice about GRACE brings glory to God. The same is true today. Our local church will only be united as we humble ourselves under grace. We are only saved by faith alone in Christ alone.

So here are some big things to look out for as you read through Romans:

- Jews and Gentiles together are the one people of God. In the same boat with sin – saved by the same faith in Jesus.
- The important role of the Jews in God's plan of Salvation.
- Salvation is by grace alone. Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone and brought about by the Spirit.
- The failure of the law to save people by making them righteous– the success of the Spirit in producing true righteousness.
- The need to be transformed in mind by the Spirit so as to live in unity with God's people in the present.