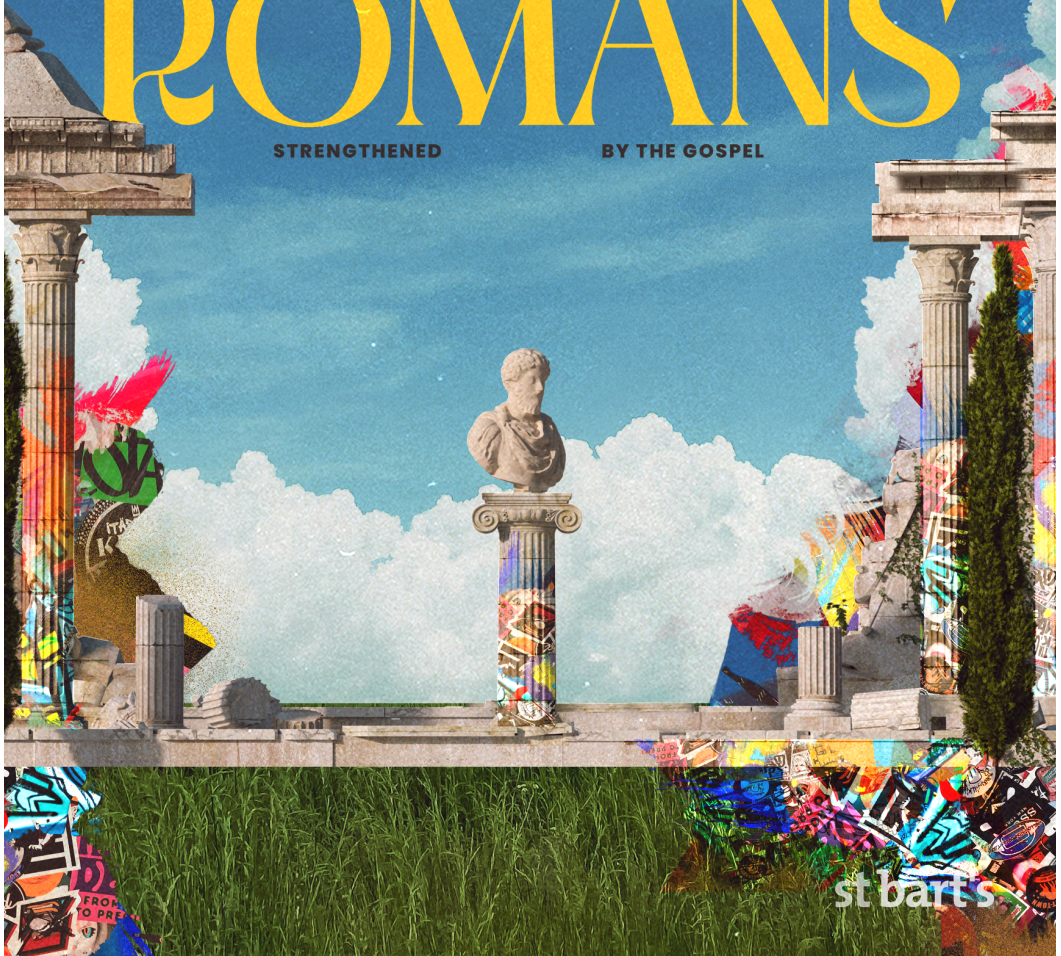


SERIES OVERVIEW

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

STRENGTHENED

BY THE GOSPEL



st bar's

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overview

Paul’s letter to the Romans is one of the most important pieces of written correspondence in all of human history. Formerly known as *Saul of Tarsus*, Paul—a Pharisee who actively persecuted Christians—had a radical encounter with the risen Lord Jesus and was commissioned by Jesus as an apostle to proclaim the Good News to the Gentiles (the world of non-Jewish people). Paul proclaimed the Gospel, established churches, and wrote to these new communities along with their leaders to instruct, encourage, and correct them. As one set apart for the gospel of God, Paul writes to the Roman Christians in order to proclaim this good news, defend his apostolic authority, enlist the prayerful support of the Roman Christians, and express his eagerness to visit them. Paul—as *apostle, teacher, and pastor*—longs for the believers to be strengthened and mutually encouraged by the gospel. We approach Romans with the same hope.

Brian Rosner, *in the opening words of his theology of Romans*, helpfully frames the letter this way:

The Book of Romans plumbs the depths of human sin and evil and then tells the ultimate good-news story about how God transforms all of human life and history. No book in the Bible explains more fully the amazing love of God in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and its impact on our lives and world. For those who believe its message, Romans promises that the God of hope will fill them with joy and peace, causing them to overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).¹

In this eighteen-part series, we’ll explore Romans with the same hope as Paul had for his original audience: that we would grow in our understanding of the gospel, grasp the implications of the gospel for our lives, and be strengthened as disciples of Jesus — collectively and individually.

¹ Rosner, “*Strengthened by the Gospel: A Theology of Romans*”, p.1.

Context

Whilst there is some debate regarding when Romans was written (likely around AD 57–58, during Pauls' time in Corinth), there is clear consensus that Paul is the author. The audience to whom he writes is the mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome. Likely, Paul writes in preparation for a future visit, seeking to introduce himself, unify the church, and present a clear explanation of the gospel he proclaims.

Outline

This series is split into two parts (across terms) *with a brief three-week interlude*. A second volume of the *series overview* available separately.






Part A

Week 1	Strengthened by the Gospel	Romans 1:1-17
Week 2	The World's Need for the Gospel	Romans 1:18-32
Week 3	God's Impartial Judgement	Romans 2:1-16
Week 4	Religion Isn't Enough	Romans 2:17-3:20
Week 5	The Heart of the Gospel	Romans 3:21-31
Week 6	Faith Not Works	Romans 4
Week 7	Peace with God	Romans 5:1-11
Week 8	A New Humanity in Christ	Romans 5:12-21
Week 9	Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ	Romans 6

Part B

Week 10	The Law and Sin	Romans 7
Week 11	Life in the Spirit	Romans 8:1-17
Week 12	Future Glory & Present Hope	Romans 8:18-39
Week 13	God's Sovereign Mercy	Romans 9
Week 14	The Proclamation of the Gospel	Romans 10
Week 15	Israel's Unbelief and God's Faithfulness	Romans 11
Week 16	Gospel-Shaped Community	Romans 12
Week 17	Gospel-Shaped Life in Society	Romans 13-14
Week 18	Gospel Partnership & Unity	Romans 15:1-16:27

General Resources

- *Read:* “Strengthened by the Gospel” by Brian Rosner. 
- *Read:* “The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans” by Michael Bird.
- *Read:* “Into the Heart of Romans” by N. T. Wright. 
- *Read:* “Epistle of Paul to the Romans” by F. F. Bruce. 
- *Read:* “The Message of Romans” by John Stott. 
- *Read:* “The Epistle to the Romans” by Leon Morris. 
- *Read:* “Romans 1-7 for You” by Timothy Keller.
- *Watch:* “Romans” by the Bible Project:
<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans/>


St Bart’s Resources (including for families)


For the series overview, weekly sermons, small group material, and weekly children’s curriculum, visit: stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/gospel

- *For 8-12 year olds:* “Paul’s Big Letter: A Kid-Friendly Journey through the Book of Romans” by J. Aaron White. 

ADAM LOWE

St Bart’s Anglican Church, April 2026

 Summaries by *Adam Lowe* (AL), *Amy Norman* (AN), *Daniel Rouhead* (DR), *Justin Lai* (JL)

 Available to borrow from the St Bart’s Church Library (stbarts.com.au/library)

how to use this series overview

For each week in the series, a Bible reading, “the big idea”, some reflection questions, and a prayer is provided.

- **PRAY**

Begin with prayer, for example:

Gracious God, please enlighten our minds, enliven our hearts, and shape our wills according to your life-giving Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

- **READ from the Bible**

Read the part of the Bible that we are focusing on for that week. Some key verses (from that reading) are also printed—you might even like to memorise these!

- **REFLECT**

Read the ‘big idea’ and use the questions to reflect on the Bible passage. This will help prepare for the sermon and the following week’s small group questions (provided on the St Bart’s website).

- **PRAY**

Each day a prayer is provided that you may like to use. Of course, you need not to be limited to this prayer.

Week 1

Strengthened by the Gospel

Romans 1:1-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Romans 1:16

READ ROMANS 1:1-17

REFLECT. In the opening verses of Romans, we are left without a doubt that the focal point of Paul's letter is the *gospel*. Paul has much more to say about the gospel throughout his letter, however, in these opening verses he tells us three important things: (a) the *gospel is about God's Son* (as promised through the prophets); (b) *God's righteousness by faith is revealed through the gospel*; and (c) the *gospel is the power of God that brings salvation* to everyone who believes! More simply, Paul is showing us: **who** the gospel is about (Jesus), **how** we relate to this good news (by faith), and **what** the gospel produces (salvation to everyone who believes). Paul has great affection for the Roman Christians ("I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you"), longs to visit them (especially to preach the gospel), and also impart a spiritual gift to them *in order to strengthen them* (note: whilst the reason for Paul wanting to impart the 'gift' is clear, there's plenty of speculation about the precise nature of that gift!). Whilst Paul is an apostle set apart by the Lord Jesus, he also wants the Roman Christians to recognise that they have been set apart to live in light and proclamation of the gospel, too. As people set apart by God, we are to proclaim this same gospel which continues to have power to save. AL

- If someone asked you "what is the gospel", what would you say?
- What is the fruit of the gospel? What effect does it have *and how*?

PRAY. *Gracious Father, we praise you for the gospel which we can believe, be strengthened by, and which has the power to save. Please help us to proclaim this good news and live as people set apart by you. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Week 2

The World's Need for the Gospel

Romans 1:18-32

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Romans 1:25

READ ROMANS 1:18-32

REFLECT. Imagine a city that is filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity — where the people are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. It would be a living nightmare! But this is the position of us and our world when we reject God. Just as the righteousness of God has been revealed in the gospel, the judgement and wrath of God is revealed against the godlessness and wickedness of people. Instead of loving God and loving their neighbour, people have rejected God and turned to wickedness. Everyone is accountable for rejecting God — for God's power and divine nature have been made clear through his creation. People are made to worship, however instead of worshipping the glory of the immortal God, they have turned to images or worshipping created things. Today, we might know fewer people worshipping images, but we know plenty worshipping wealth, power, status, romance, or family. One of the most confronting aspects of God's judgement, is that he gives us over to our desires: *He gave the people over to their sinful desires (v.24), to their shameful lusts (v.26), and to a depraved mind (v.28)*. The trajectory of the world without the truth and salvation of God is bleak and depraved. The world needs the gospel, for there is no way out of this darkness without Jesus. We need reminding of how much we need the gospel, too! AN

- Where do you see evil in the world, in our country, *on your own frontlines*?

PRAY. *Gracious Father, thank you that you did not give us up to our desires. Help us to worship and praise the Creator of all. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

Week 3

God's Impartial Judgement

Romans 2:1-16

Now we know that God's judgement against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgement on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgement? Romans 2:2-3

READ ROMANS 2:1-16

REFLECT. “At least I’m not like them!” is what we might be tempted to say after reading chapter 1 of Romans. But Romans 2:1-16 turns the spotlight from “them” to us, and gently—but firmly—puts us in an honest place before God. It is often easier to see the wrongs in others, and harder to see what is broken in our own hearts. Ironically, when we judge others, we are sometimes revealing that we too “do the same things” (v.3). None of us is in a position to look down on others before God. God’s judgement is not based on appearances or comparison, but *impartially* according to *truth*. Yet, instead of immediate judgement, God shows his “kindness, forbearance, and patience” (v.4). God’s kindness is not approval of our sin, but a gracious invitation to repent. So to presume upon that kindness without turning to him is to despise it. When we ignore his kindness, our hearts harden. What may feel safe is actually *danger*, for we are “storing up wrath” (v.5) for the day when God’s righteousness fully reveals. On that day, God will judge impartially. Whether we have God’s law or not, whether we hear it or not, whether we are Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious, all are accountable. What matters is not merely hearing the law, but doing it. *Yet* this sets a standard none of us can meet! The convicting nature of the law shows us that we are in deep need of Christ’s mercy. JL

- Where might you be quietly comparing your ‘moral performance’ to others, instead of honestly coming before God in repentance?

PRAY. *Father, soften our hearts, lead us to true repentance, and help us rely on your mercy not on a righteousness of our own. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

Week 4

Religion Isn't Enough

Romans 2:17-3:20

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. Romans 3:19-20

READ ROMANS 2:17-3:20

REFLECT. As Paul continues his line of argument concerning sin, God's righteousness, and the Lord's impartial judgement, he now turns his attention to those who possess the law and take their confidence in their identity as God's people. Paul not only reveals a disconnect between *what is claimed* and *what is practiced*, but also the universal condition that *there is no one righteous, not even one — all have turned away*. To rely on the law, to boast in God, and to instruct others, sounds righteous — but Paul presses deeper, questioning whether these same people truly obey the very law they uphold. *The result is confronting: outward privilege does not equal inward righteousness.* Paul is dismantling a false type of security built on religious status. Circumcision, the law, and heritage all have value, but only when accompanied by genuine obedience: on their own, they are empty markers. *Paul says that this inconsistency dishonours God's name among the nations.* What a sobering reminder that hypocrisy not only misleads individuals but can also distort God's reputation. Yet, Paul makes it clear that both Jews and Gentiles are in a similar position because of sin. The law is exposing, not justifying! It shows us that we are all guilty, unable to *justify ourselves, and therefore must look beyond ourselves to be set right. This is the stage for grace.* AL

- What was the purpose of the law? *If we all are guilty, what do we most need?*

PRAY. *Gracious God, thank you that it is because of your mercy that you show us that we are guilty. Please help us to see this reality and look to you. Amen.*

Week 5

The Heart of the Gospel

Romans 3:21-31

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:22-24

READ ROMANS 3:21-31

REFLECT. In these verses, we come to the very heart of the gospel. After laying bare the reality of human sin, Paul uses a decisive phrase: “But now...” These words signal a turning point: God has acted. Righteousness is revealed, not through our efforts, but through faith in Jesus Christ. This confronts our instinct to prove ourselves before God. In a culture that values achievement and self-reliance, the gospel declares something radically different: we are justified freely by God’s grace. At the centre stands Jesus, whose sacrificial death deals with sin fully and justly. God is shown to be both just and the one who justifies. There is no compromise of holiness, and no limit to mercy. This is the wonder of the cross. The result is that boasting is excluded because all come the same way. This creates a deep humility and a profound unity among God’s people. Being “strengthened by the gospel” means returning again and again to this truth. Our confidence before God does not rest on our performance, but on Christ’s finished work. Our lives are then shaped by gratitude, trust, and a desire to live faithfully. DR

- Where am I relying on my own efforts, rather than trusting fully in Christ’s finished work?
- Do I subtly compare myself to others, or boast about my achievements?

PRAY. *Gracious God, humble our hearts and help us trust fully in your grace; shape our lives by the gospel of Christ. Amen.*

Week 6

Faith Not Works

Romans 4

Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. Romans 4:4-5

READ ROMANS 4

REFLECT. If anyone could claim righteousness by works, surely Abraham would be toward the top of the list! Abraham demonstrated his faithfulness to God over-and-over again: *following* God's call to leave his homeland, *trusting* God's promise for descendants despite his old age, and *being willing* to offer Isaac in obedience. Yet surprisingly, Paul carefully shows that Abraham was not justified by what he *did*, but by what he *believed*: "What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness'" (v.3).² In what would have been a profound shift for some, Paul is making it clear that righteousness cannot be earned, but is given. To the one who works, wages are not a gift but an obligation. However, to the one who trusts God, righteousness is credited to us *apart from works*. Paul reinforces the point by pointing to David who spoke of the blessedness of the one whose sins are forgiven. As Abraham was declared righteous *before circumcision* it makes him the father of all who believe — both Jew and Gentile. *The scope of God's grace extends to all who believe in Jesus: the one who was delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification.* AL

- If we are justified by faith, how is obedience an expression of that trust?

PRAY. *Gracious Father, thank you that it is by your grace that we are saved! Please help us to hold onto the one who was delivered over to death for our sin, and rose from the dead in order that we might be justified. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

² Interestingly, by appealing to 'Scripture' (with Genesis especially in mind), Paul is seeking to demonstrate that faith has always been the way to be made right with God.

Week 7

Peace with God

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. Romans 5:1-2

READ ROMANS 5:1-11

REFLECT. The gospel gives us the wonderful assurance that we are justified by *faith*. Paul proceeds in chapter 5 to unpack the glorious benefits resulting from our justification. When someone asks what difference it makes in following Jesus, these are things we can point to. Because we have been justified through faith, we have *peace with God* (v.1), we *stand in God's grace* (v.2), we *boast in the hope of the glory of God* (v.2), we *glory in our sufferings* (v.3), we are *given the Holy Spirit* (v.5), we are given *assurance of God's love* (v.8), and we are *reconciled with God* (v.11). All these benefits flow out of our justification by faith through Jesus Christ. Some of the benefits are surprising, like we would glory in our sufferings. But when our eyes are fixed on the sure and certain hope we have in Christ — a hope that we *possess* through God's love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit and which is *demonstrated* through Christ dying for us while we were still sinners — then we can embrace things that ground us further in hope. We can embrace suffering which produces perseverance, perseverance which produces character, and character which produces hope. We have every reason not to be ashamed of the hope we have in Christ, for God acted for us reconciling us through Jesus' death even when we were enemies, so now being reconciled, we can be confident of being saved through Jesus' life. AN

- Which benefit of justification by faith stands out to you the most?

PRAY. *Gracious Father, thank you for not abandoning us while we were enemies, but making a way through Jesus' death for us, for our reconciliation to you. Through the Holy Spirit, may we grow in confidence of the hope we have. Amen.*

Week 8

A New Humanity in Christ

Romans 5:12-21

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:18-19

READ ROMANS 5:12-21

REFLECT. To help us step back and see the sweeping scope of sin and grace, Paul now traces the origin of sin and death back to one man: Adam. As sin entered the world through Adam, the consequence of death is universal. However, we're all guilty not simply because of a shared line of heritage, *but also because the sin of Adam is prototypical — it is true — for all of us!* Whilst sharing a name with this man makes it particularly easy for me to see how I'm personally *connected* to *and share* the sinful nature of this one person, it shouldn't be hard for anyone to join the dots and recognise that what is true of Adam is true for everyone! It isn't simply that we would have eaten the fruit, but that we all disobey. Yet this confronting reality sets the stage for a greater hope. Where Adam's one trespass brought condemnation and death, Christ's saving act upon the cross brings justification and life! In fact, the grace poured out in and through Jesus, doesn't simply counter the weight of sin, but overflows in abounding measure. Through Adam, all were made sinners, and through Christ, all who believe in him are made righteous. The law (which came later) served to make sin more apparent, but praise be to God that it—nor sin—has the final word. AL

- How are these effects of sin so apparent in our world?
- How would you explain to someone the abounding nature of God's grace?

PRAY. *Gracious Father, we praise you that our sin does not have the final word, but that by believing in your Son we can know forgiveness and life. Amen.*

Week 9

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

Romans 6

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.
Romans 6:11-12

READ ROMANS 6

REFLECT. “Freedom” is not absolute autonomy, but a transfer of mastery. Sin enslaves people (vv.6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20), but God sets those *in Christ* free from sin (vv.7, 11, 18, 22) and becomes their *new master* — all by grace! Now, what does it look like to live out and *experience* this reality of God’s grace?

First question: “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” *Absolutely not!* Because we are *no longer who we were*. We are united with Christ in his death, our old self is crucified, and united with him in his resurrected life (vv.2-5). Sin’s ruling power is broken once for all time. Thus, we must not let sin reign in our mortal body (v.12) and live out our *new identity* as those alive to God. We are not called to *try harder*, but to *live truer*.

Second question: “Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?” *Absolutely not!* Because we *have a new master*. We have been freed from “master sin,” but it does not mean we are now serving “master self.” Instead, our allegiance has shifted to “*master righteousness*” (6:16-18). And this new gracious master leads us into holiness (6:19-22), bearing fruit in a life that leads to eternal life — the gift of God in Christ Jesus (6:23). Grace is not a license to coast, it is a power that transforms. Let it! JL

- Who or what is functionally your master this week—sin, self, or righteousness? How does knowing that “sin has no dominion over you” in Christ give you confidence to choose obedience?

PRAY. *Lord, thank you for freeing us from sin’s rule. Please help us to live gladly under your good mastery, walking in holiness and love. Amen.*