

# Romans

Sundays at Sladebrook, April - June 2013

## **Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:**

*The book of Romans is perhaps the best known summary of Christian doctrine in the New Testament. Within its pages, the truth of God's Divine purposes for humanity and humanity's need to respond are revealed. The work of Christ is central to all that is taught in Romans with its focus on such fundamental doctrines as Justification, Righteousness, Election and Sanctification. These truths are not only key to understanding our faith, but essential if we are to share this gospel effectively with others.*

*The aim of this series is to grapple with these great themes that we might better understand what lies at the heart of the Christian message and our own lives. But more than that, that may we desire, as a result of these studies, to express the Christian life and share the Gospel in the ways Romans so clearly teaches so that God might be glorified in the lives of His people.*

## **Each week - Reflecting on Romans Together:**

**Questions** *There is so much in the book of Romans it would be impossible to remember everything! However, as part of our response to God's Word and as His people learning together, there will be a brief opportunity each week for the church family to ask questions at the end of each session.*

## **Each week - Responding to Romans Personally:**

**In:Sight - What have I learned?** *Scripture is intended to illuminate. Things become clear when we allow the Word to speak. Meditate on each passage until the Word of God starts to speak, transforming our minds, changing our attitudes and affecting our lives.*

**Heart:Felt - How do I feel?** *God's Word should touch our emotions and enrich our relationships with God and each other. Pray that each week the Holy Spirit will enrich your relationship with Christ and with His Church.*

**Life:Change - What am I going to do?** *So you've heard the sermon now what?! The only way in which these studies will truly impact you and others is to apply practically God's Word in real life situations. So go and do!*

# Romans

*God's Righteousness Revealed*

## 4. The Lessons and Limits of Law

*Jewish identity defined and disputed*

Romans 2v 17-29



*“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith...”*

– Romans 1v 17

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

[www.sladebrook.org.uk](http://www.sladebrook.org.uk)

**Introduction:**

For centuries Israel heralded God's law and its contents as their own special set of commands. Given by Moses, but ultimately received from God Himself, the Jews became the privileged recipients of God's communicated mind and will: Such a wonderful privilege and yet an awesome responsibility! The nation was called to show the watching world what life in communion with God looked like. With law to lead the way, God quite literally intended His people to be a shining example – a light to the nations. (Isaiah 51v 4)

Studying the Old Testament, one cannot fail to notice how much of Israel's national life and pride stemmed from stewarding these Divine guidelines. From the moment it was first given at Sinai, the nation became increasingly fascinated by the law; how best to uphold it and live faithfully under God. Yet as subsequent generations immersed themselves in law, Sinai's potent memory faded and the people deviated from God's plan: His law keepers lapsed instead into religious box ticking and self-righteous religion. Their light dulled and their hearts cooled.

By the time Paul was inspired to record Romans Israel had become little more than a caretaker, not cultivator of the law. Less bothered about the heart of its message and increasingly obsessed by adding to its detail, the nation was conversant with the commands, yet complacent in their convictions. There was still the sense of heritage and destiny, but now pride and exclusivism had crept in. Israel lost sight of God's original desire and design and replace it with sinful self-reliance, proud to possess what they considered was uniquely theirs. Instead of being set apart, they had set themselves above the other nations and assumed a unique place in God's heart and future plans. As we shall see, Paul makes it clear that such notions in any man's mind are not only foolish but likely to lead to condemnation: For God sees within the human heart, searching for humble reliance, well placed faith and total devotion to Him.

**Key verses this week:**

*“No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.” – Romans 2v 29*

**THE LESSONS AND LIMITS OF LAW:***Jewish identity defined and disputed*

In this study we will look at the dangers of pride and preconceptions when it comes to pleasing God and instead examine what God really thinks should mark out His people.

**Read: Romans 2v 17-29**

- **Pride and Prejudice: When Heritage leads to Hypocrisy- 2v17-24**  
*Despite their high calling, Israel failed to reflect God's light to the surrounding nations. Instead of obeying Him in their hearts they slid into religious dogma, preaching but not practising law.*
- **All breakages must be paid for: When Jewishness leads to Judgement - 2v25-27**  
*There is no power in simply upholding external signs! Being right with God is a matter of obedience not observance.*
- **The life that pleases God: When Ritual leads to Reality - 2v28-29**  
*God looks beyond what man sees and into the human heart. He knows His own and rewards their Spirit-born service for Christ.*

**Reflecting on Romans Together:**

- *What defines your Christianity? Is it God's definition?*
- *How does the reality of faith show itself in your life?*
- *Are you helping or hindering others in their search for God?*
- *Do you have any questions about today's study?*

**Responding to Romans Personally:**

- **In:Sight** - *What have I learned today from God's Word?*
- **Heart:Felt** - *How does this truth make me feel?*
- **Life:Change** - *What is my response going to be this week?*