



THE
GOSPEL
SHAPED
CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY BOOK

ST LUKE'S 2020 VISION

Imagine a church:

Where delight in God
overflows into all of life

Where enduring truth
inspires courageous witness
and a heart for the nations

Where the lost surrender
to the mercy of Christ

Where a hunger to
know, love & serve Christ
renews every season

Where the broken find
a family and the outsider
is embraced

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 2 2020

The Gospel Shaped Church

Study #	Title	Reading Plan
Study 1	Why the gospel is great	Romans 1:1-17
Study 2	Why we are without excuse	Romans 1:18-32
Study 3	Why good people need the gospel	Romans 2
Study 4	Why no-one is righteous	Romans 3:1-20
Study 5	Why faith in Jesus changes everything	Romans 3:21-26

Bible Studies written by Sam Morton
Cover Design by Lisa Byrnes
Copyright © 2020 All Rights Reserved
St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda

The Gospel Shaped Church

“This letter is the most important piece in the New Testament. It is the purest gospel. It is well worth a Christian’s while not only to memorise it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well”

-Martin Luther-

Mark Twain once said, “a classic is something everyone wants to have read and no one wants to read.” I think this is very true also when it comes to the book of Romans. Many of us have probably heard impressive statements made by theological giants like Martin Luther who called it “the purest gospel,” or Thomas Draxe describing the book as “the quintessence and perfection of saving doctrine.”

Yet although Romans is rich with profound doctrinal truth, we ought not be so intimidated. We must remember it is first written as a letter to real people in a unique circumstance and with a clear purpose.

At the very crux of Paul’s purpose for writing his letter to the church in Rome is the gospel. His desire is for the gospel to bring these Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome together but, at the same time, to see the good news of Jesus go out further and produce even more fruit.

And I believe this is a timely book for us. For right now, is it not challenging to feel a strong sense of unity as we are isolated and unable to meet? Similarly, we may wonder how we might have any opportunity to share the gospel when we are not leaving the house, going to work, studying or seeing friends. However, in this time we must still believe the gospel has the power to transform lives. To pray that God would bring us even closer together as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to give us new opportunities to reach those who desperately need to hear the glorious news of Jesus.

12) Currently, we are all cutting down on social interactions due to the need to distance ourselves from one another.

- How is the current situation going to make it harder to talk to others about Jesus?

- What new opportunities might there be to tell others the good news that weren't there before?

- This week, how are you going to actively take steps to sharing the gospel with others?

Prayers 1

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Pray for Brett as he serves us as our Senior Minister leading and teaching at St Luke's. Pray for Brett as he leads his staff team and the St Luke's family through this Covid-19 situation.

Pray for Matt and Lauren, Ezra, Joanna and Samuel Thomas and their mission work with OMF International to an unreached people group in South East Asia. Pray for them as they habitat in South Australia during the Covid-19 situation.

Pray for our Church Wardens: Colin Adams, Colin Contessa and Joel Garlato. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Laurie Davidson, Amanda Garlato, Elise Adams, Celia Hacker, Eliza Lucas, David Parkes, James Russell, Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer) and Kath Telfer. Pray for our Parish Nominators: Michael Easton, Timothy Clipsham, Amanda Garlato, Louise Parkes, and Megan Smith. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.

Pray for the people who visit our website searching for an anchor in an ever-changing world.

Study 2:

Why we are without excuse

Romans 1:18-32

Talk

1) What is the worst excuse you've ever heard? What is the best excuse you've ever used?

Read: Romans 1:18-32

2) LEADERS: If you're on Zoom, open up Bible Gateway in your internet browser to Romans 1:18-32. Press on "Share your screen" (green button). As a group annotate the passage by:

- Putting a circle around something that stands out
- Putting a question mark next to something you don't understand
- Putting a box around any repeated words or phrases
- Underline something that you really love

Investigate and Apply Romans 1:18-23

3) Why does Paul say God's anger is being revealed? Why are people without excuse? (vv.18-20)

4) What happens as people look at creation instead of worship God? (vv 21-23)

5) Often in times of crisis, we will often be drawn to find comfort in things other than God. What have you been tempted to worship as we've experienced the threat of Coronavirus?

- 6) Although Paul hasn't shared the answer yet, what do you think is the antidote for an idolatrous heart?

Investigate and Apply Romans 1:24-32

- 7) How does God respond to our idolatry and refusing to thank God?
- 8) What happens when God gives people over to their sinfulness?
- 9) What does God teach about homosexuality? How does it illustrate his main point?
- 10) Imagine reading out this passage to an unbelieving friend, family member, classmate or colleague at work. How do you feel? What makes us embarrassed or wants to make excuses for what we've just studied?
- 11) As you've heard of God's righteous wrath, has God put someone on your heart? Who could you be praying for this week? Who could you call up this week or have zoom chat with about Jesus?

Prayers 2

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as Focus Pastor of the 8am congregation, helper to Brett at the 10am Service and as Pastoral Care Minister for St Luke's. Pray for Jennie's Pastoral Care ministries, particularly as it is ramped up to cover this unusual period in history.

Pray for Shane and Ruth, Kye, Joel, and Finn Sparks and their mission work making disciples in Gijon, Spain and for their health and safety.

Pray for our government including our Prime Minister, state and federal members, our Premier and our local government. Pray for their health and welfare as they look after the community and make decisions to protect and serve us.

Pray that the word of God we heard on Sunday might shape how we live during the week. Pray that we would be respectful of workplace/home space boundaries, and that we'd also *"be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks [us] to give the reason for the hope that [we] have"* (1 Peter 3:15). Thank God that we have the opportunity to represent Christ in how we speak and act in normal times and difficult times.

Study 3:

Why good people need the gospel

Romans 2

Talk

- 1) Who do you find it hardest to speak to about Jesus: someone who doesn't believe in God at all, or someone who thinks they are a good person?

Read: Romans 2:1-29

- 2) LEADERS: If you're on Zoom, open up Bible Gateway in your internet browser to Romans 2:1-29. Press on "Share your screen" (green button). As a group annotate the passage by:

- Putting a circle around something that stands out
- Putting a question mark next to something you don't understand
- Putting a box around any repeated words or phrases
- Underline something that you really love

Investigate and Apply Romans 2:1-16

- 3) Can you remember Paul's argument in Romans 1:18-32? Who is Paul speaking to now? How has his argument changed? (vv. 1-5)

- 4) Is Paul saying we're judged according to our works? What point is he trying to make? (vv. 6-16)

5) How do you show “contempt for God’s kindness” in your life? When have you been guilty of pride and looking down on others?

6) What is the cure for self-righteousness and pride?

Investigate and Apply Romans 2:17-29

7) What six things does Paul expose that a Jew was proud about?

8) Is Paul saying knowing the law of God is wrong? What is the core problem he is trying to reveal?

9) Imagine if you were a Jew hearing these words, how would you feel? Imagine if you were a Gentile hearing these words, how would you feel?

10) What would you say to someone who thought they were a good enough person for God? What would you say to someone who never thought they were good enough for God?

11) What are some signs that you've fallen back into re-thinking you can be saved by your goodness? How can we keep trusting in the gospel and not in what we do and don't do?

Prayers 3

Pray for Tim and Shona, Annika, Hamish, Edward and Hugo Goldsmith. Pray for Tim as Focus Pastor for the Miranda North and Church at Five congregations. Pray for Tim as he heads up our Local Mission profile for St Luke's and focuses on outreach and evangelism. Pray for Tim as he continually looks for ways, in these strange Covid-19 times, to connect with the person who doesn't know Jesus.

Pray for John-Francis Wallace. Pray for John-Francis as Pastor of Shalom Calvary Church. Pray for the John and his local mission work in Indore, North India.

Pray for ESL (English as a Second Language) as the classes are suspended. Pray for the team of teachers and students who normally attend. Keep them safe and well until they can return to meeting and learning again.

Study 4:

Why no-one is Righteous

Romans 3:1-20

Talk

- 1) Who is your favourite villain from a movie, novel or TV series? What are some qualities of a good villain?

Read: Romans 3:1-20

- 2) LEADERS: If you're on Zoom, open up Bible Gateway in your internet browser to Romans 3:1-20. Press on "Share your screen" (green button). As a group annotate the passage by:

- Putting a circle around something that stands out
- Putting a question mark next to something you don't understand
- Putting a box around any repeated words or phrases
- Underline something that you really love

Investigate

- 3) In the last two chapters, Paul has had a sustained argument about why Jew and Gentile are without excuse. Try to explain his argument in a couple of sentences.

- 4) In verses 1-8 Paul asks four hypothetical questions and then answers each. Try to put Paul's questions and answers in your own words (You may want to do this individually, or get members of the group to take one question & answer each)

- Q (v 1)-
- A (v 2)-
- Q (v 3)-
- A (v 4)-

- Q (v 5)-
- A (v 6)-
- Q (v 7)-
- A (v 8)-

- 5) In what way do the quotations from the Old Testament back up Paul's statement that both Jew and Gentile are sinful? (vv.10-18) Have each person in your study look up one quotation and explain how it develops Paul's argument.
- 6) Why do you think Paul has spent a lot of time making the point that everyone (Jew & Gentile) is unrighteous? What is he hoping might happen?

Apply

- 7) Have you ever heard someone from outside the church criticise Christians of being "too obsessed with sin." Is this fair? How would you respond to such a criticism?
- 8) Re-read the quotations from the Old Testament. Personally, what things you do, say, or think about that you need to particularly say sorry to God for?

- 9) When we are meeting together face-to-face, it is much easier to keep each other accountable with struggles in our life. Now that we are practising social distancing, how can we be intentional in confessing our sin to each other?
- 10) Why do you think Paul has spent three chapters painting such a bleak picture of humanity? What do you think Paul will say next?

Prayers 4

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois and Finn Morton. Pray for Sam as Focus Pastor of Night Church. Pray for Sam as he heads up the Youth Ministry at St Luke's – coordinating our youth groups on Friday nights through Zoom. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Young Adults ministry and Young Adults Bible Studies.

Pray for Sandy Rigby, our Youth Assistant, that she may have energy and enthusiasm in supporting Sam in an ever-changing ministry as they stay connected with the youth during the Covid-19 situation.

Pray for Andrew and Adele, Isaac, Lucy, and Finn Southerton and their church plant in Wellington, City on a Hill, New Zealand.

Thank God for his loving provision in drawing us to him and making us his children and heirs. Pray for members of our families and those close to us who do not know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Pray for both wisdom and boldness in how to share the good news we have with those who are nearest and dearest to us.

Study 5:

Why faith in Jesus changes everything

Romans 3:21-26

Talk

1) If you were proud and conceited, how might you behave if you were:

- Shopping for groceries?
- Talk with friends over Zoom?
- At work, school, TAFE or university?
- Volunteering for a job at church?

Read: Romans 3:21-26

2) LEADERS: If you're on Zoom, open up Bible Gateway in your internet browser to Romans 3:21-26. Press on "Share your screen" (green button). As a group annotate the passage by:

- Putting a circle around something that stands out
- Putting a question mark next to something you don't understand
- Putting a box around any repeated words or phrases
- Underline something that you really love

Investigate

3) In Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul has been arguing one key idea about what people are like. What is it? Are you convinced?

- 6) The word “faith” carries a lot of baggage. But what does Paul mean when he speaks about “faith in Jesus Christ?”

Apply

- 7) Can you remember when you put your faith in Jesus Christ? (A couple of people might like to share their story with the group). If you haven’t put your faith in Jesus yet, what is holding you back?

- 8) How do you think a Jew and a Gentile would have felt after reading these words from Paul? How is Paul hoping it will shape the way they relate to each other? How might it encourage or challenge us too?

- 9) A friend says to you, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch! You can’t be right with God unless you work at it”. How might you respond?

- 10) A work colleague challenges you, “Anyone who is sure they are going to heaven is arrogant and presumptuous”. How can Christians be certain?

- 11) A member of your small group shares with you, “I just feel so ashamed and guilty about things I’ve done in the past. Surely God cannot forgive me!” How could you comfort your friend using the words of Romans 3:21-26?

Prayers 5

Pray for Cam, Katrina and Peyton Harte.

Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Children's Thursday night programs all through Zoom.

Pray for John & Jodi Lovell, with Gemma, Amber, Zoe, Jasmine, Claudia and Elias.

Pray for the family as they settle back into Sydney after serving in Valencia Spain. Pray for John as he takes up his new role of General Secretary of CMS NSW & ACT.

Pray that St Luke's as a community would keep connecting with each other through letters, texts, phones, emails, video conferencing and social media to express our devotion to one another.