

RAISED --- IN HIM

TERM 2 2021 BIBLE STUDY BOOK

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM – TERM 2 2021

Romans 5–8

Raised in him

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Raised in him: introduction

Romans 5–8

Welcome back to Romans. We studied the first four and a half chapters of Romans in 2020, during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, when we were all online; now we're looking at the next three and a half chapters. Romans 5–8 is Paul's complex and profound exploration of what Jesus' death and resurrection means for the human race that God put in charge of his creation. Paul's argument is particularly focused on the idea of a *new* humanity that God has made in uniting Jews and Gentiles alike to the risen Messiah. It is from this concept of union with Christ that this series takes its name: we are raised *in Jesus* into a new humanity, a new creation beginning even now in our midst, as God's Spirit does his work among us and through us, as we look forward to the day when God will renew our mortal bodies, and the entire creation with them.

A brief summary of Romans 1–8

1:1–17	Introducing Paul and his gospel
1:18–32	Sin has corrupted humanity in general.
2:1–3:20	God's covenant with Israel was supposed to bring the solution to sin, but Israel broke the law, and became just as corrupted.
3:21–31	God has remained faithful to his covenant, and has provided a new solution: the Messiah has kept the law and borne the punishment mandated by the law. This solution is not only for Jews, but Gentiles, too.
4:1–25	Access to God's covenant is now based on faith in Jesus, not on law-keeping. Faith in God has always been the proper entrance to the covenant people.
5:1–11	Those who have faith in Jesus have peace and reconciliation with God and hope for the future, because in Jesus we are counted as full participants in God's covenant.
5:12–21	God's solution to sin is not just for Israel's sin; this solution is what will end sin's reign over the world.
6:1–7:6	People who have faith in Jesus are united with him in his death and resurrection, and are made into a new humanity.
7:7–25	The problem all along was not just that Israel failed, but that sin itself had taken hold of the whole human race, including God's chosen nation.
8:1–13	Union with Jesus by God's spirit solves not only the problem of Israel's failure, but even the problem of sin in the human race, by making a new humanity that has died and risen with Jesus.
8:14–30	Not only are believers a new humanity now, but there will come a day when those who have faith in Jesus will rise from the dead just as he rose, and all creation will be freed from the effects of sin; God will make a new creation.
8:31–39	If God has done all this, sending his son to die and rise and raising us with him into a new humanity, we can trust he will carry on his plans to completion, just as he has promised.

The structure and logic of Romans 5–8

This section of Romans is one of the most dense and difficult passages in Paul's letters, and it is easy to get lost in individual verses and turns of phrase. A very broad view of Paul's argument in the first half of Romans (chapters 1–8) is helpful for understanding what he's doing in chapters 5–8.

Romans so far: the gospel of the crucified Messiah (Chapters 1–5:11)

(An excellent summary of Rom 1–4 can be found in the Bible Project Youtube video, "Overview: Romans 1-4".)

After an introduction that lays out Paul's apostolic credentials, his plans to travel to Rome and Spain, and a brief summary of the gospel itself (Rom 1:1–17) Paul lays out the problem of sin and the way it has corrupted humanity: not only Gentiles (Rom 1:18–32) but also Jews, the nation of Israel, the very people whom God chose to bring blessing into his world (Rom 2:1–3:20; see Gen 12:1–3; Ex 3:1–12; 19:1–6). God's covenant with Israel was supposed to bring blessing to the nations, but Israel failed to keep God's law, and so became just as helpless as the Gentiles—perhaps even more so!

God, however, had made a covenant with Israel to be faithful to them *despite* their lawbreaking (Deut 30:1–10), so even if Israel had proved unrighteous with regard to the covenant, God himself remained faithful to his promises to Abraham and his descendants (Rom 3:21–31). Where Israel had failed to keep the law, God himself had demonstrated his righteousness apart from the law: Jesus the Messiah, the king of Israel from David's line, kept the law, and in Jesus' death for the sins—of both Jews *and* Gentiles!—God had shown himself righteous in his promise to restore Israel and in his promise to restore all of creation.

Flowing straight from this explosive statement—that God's covenant people now includes *non-Jews*—Paul points out that the law itself was given after God's promises were already in motion (Rom 4). If observance of the Old Testament law were the only possible marker of membership in God's people, then even Father Abraham himself would be excluded! No, Paul says, it is *faith*—trust in God's promises and true reverence for him—that marks a person as a member of God's people. For this reason, all those who have faith in Jesus will be counted as righteous because of his death and resurrection: whether Jew or Gentile, they will be as fully part of God's covenant people as Abraham was (Rom 4:24–25).

In the final section before our series begins, Paul looks to the future: since we have been declared righteous—not by our own law-keeping, but by Jesus' own faithfulness unto death—therefore we have peace with God and salvation from death by Jesus' life, and a sure hope for the future (Rom 5:1–11).

Romans 5–8: a new humanity in the resurrected Messiah

The beginning of the new creation (5:12–21)

Our series begins with Paul giving a very broad sweep both through history and geography. Jesus' death and resurrection, as Paul has already argued, were not only for Jews, but for Gentiles too (Rom 3:26–31); however, this is not simply a reset on the Israel project, a second chance for Israel to do what it should have done: no, this is the *fulfilment* of that project. Jesus' death and resurrection not only frees Israel from the law's punishments, it has begun to rid the world of *death itself*. Death ruled over the world since Adam—*before* the law was given—so the problem of death is more fundamental than the problem of Israel's failure to keep the law. Now, in Jesus' death and resurrection, and the justification of Jews and Gentiles, God has begun to work out his promise to renew all creation under the rule of his image-bearers.

A new kind of humanity (6:1–7:6)

In chapters 6 and 7, Paul begins to explain what he said in chapter 5, working backwards. The key to his argument is that, in the Messiah *himself*, God is creating a new kind of humanity: one that is made up of people who are united to the Messiah in his death and resurrection, people who are fundamentally different from who they were before (Rom 6:1–7:6).

The problem with the old human (7:7–25)

The explanation for *why* God had to make a *new* humanity out of the *old* humanity takes Paul into the dark heart of the problem of sin, and with it, the problem with Israel: Israel only had to keep the law, to follow God faithfully, and they would have been counted righteous under the covenant. The fact that Israel didn't was not because the law was too hard, or because Israel was worse than the Gentiles at keeping the law. No, Israel failed to keep the law because *sin itself* had taken them captive, binding them to disobedience, and this disobedience only brought condemnation from the law (Rom 7:7–25). *This* is why a new humanity was necessary: the old humanity was enslaved to sin and so was condemned, whether by God's law (Israel) or by his general justice (Israel and Gentiles; see Rom 1–2), to death.

The solution (8:1–13)

At this point, Paul returns again to his point in chapters 5 and 6: if you are in the Messiah, Jesus, you are a *new human*: you have been set free from the condemnation that the Old Testament law would pronounce on you (8:1). This is because Jesus *himself* kept the law and suffered your lawful punishment (5:1; 8:3). Sin used to dwell in old human you, binding you to death, using the law against you; but now God's Spirit dwells in you, giving you life, marking you out as a *law-keeper* in your union with the Messiah.

Paul will go on to make the point more overtly in chapters 9–11, but this part of his argument explains how Gentiles are saved: not by bypassing the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants, but by entering *into* it through union with the Messiah by his Spirit. In the law-keeping, dead-and-risen Israelite Messiah, Gentiles and Jews alike become the new covenant people of God.

The goal (8:14–30)

Paul turns to the future. Those who are in the Messiah, by his Spirit, are not only a new humanity, they are sons: *inheritors*, just as Jesus is. Inheritors of what? Of the *whole creation*, as God always intended for humans. When will they inherit it? When the *new humanity* is raised from the dead in the same way that Jesus was raised (8:24; see 6:5; 8:11); at this time, the *whole creation* will be freed from death and decay. In the meantime, the new humanity is still subject to the effects of sin and death, but is comforted and spurred on by God's Spirit.

What now? (8:31–39)

In view of all that God has done, Paul finishes this section of Romans in triumph, joy, and hope. God has removed all barriers to full fellowship with him, and has united us with his son by his Spirit. With Jesus, we will also inherit all creation when God restores it and our mortal bodies to glory. Therefore, we have nothing to fear in this life.

Appendix: the structure of Rom 6–7

This section is strung together in a sequence of four rhetorical questions:

6:1–14: We've been justified through faith; forgiveness is free, so can we just sin?

No, because the Messiah's people are a new kind of humanity. Sin is what the *old* human did, but you've become a united-to-the-Messiah, raised-from-the-dead human. This *new* kind of human is set free from sin: why would you go back to the old human?

6:15–7:6: We don't have to keep the law anymore, so can we just sin?

No: you used to be held captive to the *old* human by the law, but now in Jesus you're bound to the *new* human, and to righteousness.

7:7–12: Okay, the law held us captive to sin; so, is the law sinful?

No. Imagine I'm an *old human* Israelite trying to keep the law: I know that if Israel keeps the law, we will inherit God's promises to Abraham, but when the law said "don't do this", the sin living in *old human* me took me hostage and I broke the law, and so I became a lawbreaker, and the law put me to death.

7:13–25: But if failing to keep the law doomed Israel to death, doesn't that mean the law brought death?

No! The problem wasn't that God had made his law impossible to keep; the problem was that the people trying to keep the law were *old* humans, captive to sin. It didn't matter that Israel *wanted* to keep the law: they just couldn't do it because they were *old* humans, sold under sin, captive to evil and death.

How Paul writes

Romans 5–8 is written in a fairly complex style and uses some technical terms that Christians might not always know. Below are some basic principles that might help ease you into Paul's thought processes.

Pairs of words

Part of Paul's writing style is to play off concepts against each other in pairs: death and life; slavery and freedom; old and new; impure and holy; law and grace; flesh and spirit; condemnation and justification/righteousness. In most cases, these balanced pairs come from a kind of "before and after" picture, when Paul is talking about the old life in the "body of death" (7:24) versus the new life in the Messiah.

Answer before question

Paul's style of argument often works like this: Paul will state something as fact; he will then work his way through why it is fact, before stating it in a different way at the end. Paul can say things out of nowhere that seem to make little sense, but that slowly settle into their place in his argument as you read on. Because of this, reading Paul can feel more like a gradual spiralling towards a destination, rather than a more familiar linear buildup of ideas: less A→B→C→D→E→F; more C→A→B→F→D→E. When you get stuck on something Paul says, it's often more helpful to just read on and see if he explains himself.

Written to a mixed Jew–Gentile church

Paul's conviction of Israel's importance in God's salvation plan means that he will often devote large sections to discussing problems unique to Israel (Rom 2, 7), and will frame other sections around his discussion of the law and Israel's failure to keep it (Rom 3, 8).

Romans is a *letter*, not a theological textbook. Paul was addressing a situation where a predominantly Jewish church had been exiled from Rome, coming back later to find a Gentile (non-Jewish) church had become established in their absence. This led to tensions between the two ethnic groups, with Jewish believers insisting that Gentile believers keep the Old Testament, as had always been necessary for members of God's covenant people. Paul, a Jewish rabbi, writes Romans at least partly to resolve these problems, but he doesn't advocate that the Gentiles be turned into Jews, nor that the Jews be turned into Gentiles; rather, Paul argues from the Old Testament and the gospel message itself that, in Jesus, God brought the story of Israel to a fitting climax, so that in the Messiah all nations could have the blessing that God had promised would come through Abraham's descendants.

Some important concepts in Paul's thought

If the gospel is the answer, what is the question?

I mentioned above that Paul tends to write the answer first and then work his way back through the question. This isn't just the way Paul writes: it's also an insight into how Paul *did theology*: if the answer was "God himself became man in Israel's Messiah, was crucified, and rose from the dead", what was the question? Paul's thought process reveals something of what it was like for early Jewish Christians (including the writers of the New Testament) to go back and read their Bible (the Old Testament) on the other side of Jesus' resurrection, realising that God's solution to Israel's disobedience revealed both the true depths of human sin and the glory of God's solution to the problem of a sin-devastated creation.

God's covenant with Israel

A covenant is a treaty or binding legal agreement between two or more parties. The term does not appear in Rom 5–8, but the covenant that God made with Israel in the giving of the law (see particularly Ex 19 and Deut 29–30) undergirds the way that Paul talks about law and righteousness in Romans and elsewhere. This covenant was a continuation of God's promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3); it was, in other words, part of God's plan to fix the problem of sin in the world by the selection of a covenant people for himself.

The law

Christians might see "law" and read "good works" or "the need to earn our way into God's love" or even "legalism", but in Paul's writing "the law" *usually* has a very specific meaning: the Old Testament Law which God gave to Israel to keep as part of his covenant with them (see Deut 30:11–20). This is why Paul can speak of Gentiles being "without the law" in chapter 2: God's moral standard still applies, but "the law" does not, because Gentiles were not under that covenant, and so were not subject to its legal code.

Justification/righteousness

The two English words (and related terms like "just", "righteous", "justify" etc.) are translated from a single set of Greek words, so "justify" could just as easily be translated as "make/declare to be righteous". "Righteousness" is used in a number of ways in the Bible, and Paul himself uses it in more than one way, but Paul's use of it here is often in a legal context, centred around the covenant God made with Israel.

Israel, covenant, law, and the problem

Imagine a courtroom: two parties are fighting over whether the accused party has kept to the terms of their formal contract. To be "righteous" in this specific legal context is to be "in the right"—that is, for the judge to pronounce that the accused party has, indeed, kept to the terms of the contract. A similar thing is happening in the case of God's covenant with Israel: in this part of Romans, to be "righteous" is to be a covenant **keeper**, and to be a covenant keeper, Israel has to keep God's law, which was given as part of the covenant at Sinai.

However, in the Old Testament, we find that Israel did **not** keep God's law. This was not simply individual sin—the law has provision for that in the sacrificial system—but a consistent pattern of national lawbreaking and idolatry. Because of this, Israel was declared by God to be a covenant **breaker**: **unrighteous**; wicked; condemned by the law itself. But, when Jesus came, he kept the law as Israel should have, bore the punishment that the law demanded for unrighteousness, and was himself declared righteous ("justified") in his resurrection.

This is why law and righteousness/justification are so wrapped up together in Paul's thought and writing, particularly in the legal metaphors of Romans. Paul knows that God's plan from the beginning was to work through his chosen nation, Israel, to bring restoration to all things in creation, but Israel proved unfaithful and unrighteous. In Jesus the

Messiah (Christ), however, God has done all that Israel should have done, so that the punishment that should come from the law has now been borne by Jesus, and the blessings—that might have come from Israel’s law-keeping righteousness—may now flow—through Jesus’ own law-keeping righteousness—to all those who are “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1).

Study 1 - Justified

Romans 5:12–21

Talk

- 1) When was the last time you received a sudden, unexpected gift?

OR

Why do Christians read the Old Testament? Isn't Christianity just about Jesus?

[Big Picture]

- 2) We looked at Romans 1–4 and the first half of Romans 5 in the middle of last year. How much can you remember from it? What kinds of things has Paul brought up already in Romans?

Read and Investigate: Romans 5:12–21

- 3) Verses 12–14 are difficult to understand, at least partially because Paul breaks off his thought process halfway through. (The NIV 2011's wording in these verses is very helpful.) Just looking at vv. 12, 13a and 14a, what is Paul's main point in this paragraph?
- 4) With that main point in mind, what is the significance of vv. 13b and 14b?
- 5) Read v. 15 again; what is this "trespass" that Paul is referring to? What is the "gift"?
- 6) How are the trespass and the gift different?
- 7) In v. 18, Paul contrasts one trespass leading to condemnation and one righteous act leading to justification; what does it mean to call Jesus' death a "righteous act"?
- 8) Paul's writing style here uses a lot of balanced pairs of concepts, e.g. gift/trespass, condemnation/justification. In verse 17, Paul makes a similar balanced comparison beginning with "if ... death reigned": what is strange about how Paul finishes this pair?
- 9) Why do you think Paul talks about us reigning? What does it mean for us to reign? (You might want to read Genesis 1:26.) What connection is there between this promised reign through Jesus in v. 17, and Paul's discussion of Adam's trespass? Why mention Adam here; why not just talk about sin?

10) Look back at vv. 12, 14, 17, and 21. What is Paul's understanding of our relationship to Adam and Christ? (You might also find it helpful to read 1 Cor 15:21–22). What do you think these verses tell us about our nature as humans who have been justified through the obedience of Jesus?

Discuss and Apply

- 11) Paul says that we are made righteous/justified through Jesus, and that this is a gift. What comfort do both these things hold for us?
- 12) When we think about what Jesus' death does to our sin, we talk about it using a variety of metaphors, such as washing something dirty, cancelling a debt, or freeing a captive. In Romans 5, sinners change from convicts into kings. How is this different from other ways of thinking about Jesus' work? What does it add to our picture of what the Christian life is?

Prayers

Pray for Brett and Mardi, Evie, Harriet, Olivia, and Willow Middleton. Please pray for Brett as he seeks to encourage, serve and build up the wider staff team. Pray for wisdom that he and the team develop ministry plans that will help St Luke's stay faithful and grow into the future.

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

Praise God that we have been able to get back into the School ministry. We pray for Kids Hope, Scripture and School Chaplains. Pray that those entering the school can care and witness Christ's love to the kids and teachers.

Pray for English as a Second Language classes each Friday during school term. Give thanks for Marina and her team as they teach and encourage this vulnerable group of people.

Study 2 - United

Romans 6:1–14

Talk

- 1) Have you ever felt like living according to Christian principles was a burden? Or, have you ever heard a Christian explain the gospel and thought, “that’s just exchanging one set of rules for a different set”?

Read and Investigate: Romans 6:1–14

- 2) In v. 1, Paul asks “are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?”
What does this mean? What has Paul said earlier that might lead someone to ask this question?
- 3) How would you respond to this kind of question? Have you ever said something like this, or heard someone say something like this?
- 4) In vv. 2–11, Paul gives his answer to the question. How is Paul’s answer similar or different from what you would say? What words or concepts does he keep coming back to?
- 5) The language of death and life is important to Paul in most of his writing, but it is particularly noticeable here. List the places in this passage where Paul refers to death and life, and note what he says in each. You might want to draw this up in two columns on a separate sheet of paper.
- 6) What do you think Paul means in v. 6? What is this “old self”—or, translated more literally, “old human”? Is there anything in last week’s passage that compares an “old human” to a “new human”? You might also want to compare v. 6 with Colossians 3:3–10.
- 7) If our “old human” was defined by slavery to sin and death in the same pattern as Adam, what does it mean that the “old human” has been crucified with Jesus? What are we defined by now?
- 8) In vv. 12–14 Paul summarises and expands what he began in v. 2. What is the relationship between how we are defined as new humans and how we act as new humans? What does this have to do with Paul’s talk of death and life?

Discuss and Apply

- 9) The death of our “old human” is a change of our *identity*: we are now a new humanity united with Jesus. How do you feel about being *united* with Jesus?
- 10) Sometimes Christians can explain the Christian life as a strict set of rules to follow “because God said so” (or maybe, “because God made it that way”). How does Paul’s understanding of why Christians should live holy lives differ from this approach? How might this encourage us as we seek to live well in God’s world?

Prayers

Pray for Jennie and Don Everist. Pray for Jennie as she ministers and cares for the people who attend the Thursday Communion Service. Pray for her as she continues to pray and care for those who are unable to attend, due to Covid.

Nicole Murray working with our Young Adults. Luke Murray working on Sundays as our Student Minister. Prayer that their time in preparation is productive and good for all they serve.

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

Pray for our Prime Minister and government. Pray for our state and federal members, our Premier and government. We pray also for our local Council including our Mayor.

Pray for those who serve to protect our country. Pray for health and safety for the service men and women and their Chaplains both here and overseas. Pray for their families waiting at home.

Pray that the word of God which we hear on Sundays might shape how we live Monday to Friday. Pray that we would be respectful of workplace boundaries, but 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 the workplace.

Study 3 - Released

Romans 6:15–7:6

Talk

- 1) The law has been mentioned before in Romans, but while it is mentioned in the passages for the past two studies, it hasn't been in the foreground. That changes in this section. What do you think of when the Bible says "the law"?

Read and Investigate: Romans 6:15–7:6

- 2) Like last week, Paul begins with a rhetorical question: "are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace?" How would you explain what this means? Is this the same question as the one in 6:1 from last week?
- 3) In 7:1, Paul indicates who his intended audience is for this section: who is it? Does that change how we read this section?
- 4) Verses 15–23 describe a change that has happened to Christians. What is this change, and what effects does it have on us? You might want to draw this up as a kind of "before/after" list on a separate sheet of paper.
- 5) In vv. 22–23, Paul uses the term "eternal life"; what do you imagine when you hear that phrase? Is there a difference between this "eternal life" and the "life" Paul talks about in 6:1–13? What do you think it means that this eternal life is "in" Jesus?
- 6) In 7:1–3, Paul gives an example of how death can free someone from the requirements of the law. How do you think what Paul is saying here relates to what he goes on to say in v. 4? Do the different people in the analogy refer to anything other than themselves, or is Paul saying something more general?
- 7) What does it mean in 7:4 to "die to the law"? How does it take place? Why is it necessary? Is it only Jews who die to the law, or Gentiles also?

Discuss and Apply

- 8) Most Christians (with the exception of converts from Judaism and Messianic Jews) have never been subject to the Old Testament law; we've either grown up in the faith or entered in from Gentile lawlessness. Why talk about the law then?

- 9) When we think of our sin, we often think of ourselves as trapped by recurrent or habitual sins. How might it comfort and challenge us that Paul describes believers as being “slaves of righteousness” rather than “slaves of sin”?

Prayers

Pray for Tim and Shona, Annika, Hamish, Edward and Hugo Goldsmith. Pray for Tim as our Community Pastor. Pray for Tim as he also heads up our Local Mission profile for St Luke’s and focuses on outreach and evangelism.

Pray for Eddie as he assists with the bookkeeping on a Wednesday.

Pray for Lisa in Office Admin, as she looks after the administration of the Church. Pray God would raise up a new administrator after Sharyn's retirement.

Thank God for the many and varied resources available to us as a parish. As we seek to witness to the goodness of God daily, pray that we might make the most of opportunities to invite people we know to church. Pray that God would be preparing the hearts of people we could invite to a service at St Luke’s.

Pray for Sarah and husband Tim and her work in India with BCTI and SIM.

Study 4 - Law

Romans 7:7–25

Talk

- 1) Can you remember a time, situation, or period of your life when you longed to do what was right but just couldn't seem to do it?

OR

Have you ever done something wrong precisely **because** you knew it was wrong?

Read and Investigate: Romans 7:7–25

- 2) Read vv. 21–25 again. Are there any concepts or phrases here that are similar to what Paul was saying in chapter 6 and the first part of chapter 7?
- 3) Look at the places in chapters 6 and 7 where this language appears. Is Paul describing a situation before Jesus or after Jesus? Is the “I” of chapter 7 a post-Jesus'-resurrection Christian?
- 4) How does Paul describe the “law” in vv. 7–20? Is it a good thing? A bad thing? A mixture?
- 5) If the law is “holy and righteous and good” as v. 12 says, why in 6:6 does Paul talk about his hearers being “released” from it as if it was a bad thing? What's the problem with the law? (You might want to read Deut 30:15–20 to understand the law itself a little better.)
- 6) In vv. 24 and 25, Paul hints at the solution to this problem, which he has also been talking about in chapter 6. What is this solution? What is Jesus' role in it? (You might want to look back particularly at 6:5–7.)

Discuss and Apply

- 7) Does it make you uncomfortable that God's plans played out like this, with Israel becoming trapped by the very law God gave them? Why/why not?
- 8) It turns out that Israel's problem with keeping the law was only a symptom of the deeper problem of their captivity to sin, which extends to all fallen humans. What does this show us about the former human experience that Christians are saved out of?

- 9) In God's solution to Israel's problem, he did not ignore the law, nor abolish it, but he sent Jesus to fulfil the law, and to deal with the sin itself that kept Israel under the law's punishment. What does God's persistence with regard to the law and covenant people he established demonstrate about his character?

Prayers

Pray for Kylie Zietsch and her work at Johannesburg Bible College, South Africa.

Praise God for our Bible Study leaders and for their faithful work in teaching and ministering to us throughout the term.

Pray for our witness to our local community – especially as more units are developed and more people move into the area. Pray for opportunities to connect with our community.

Pray for peace and wise leadership in our world. Pray that there would be opportunities for Christians to share the love, peace and saving grace that Jesus offers to all.

Study 5 - No condemnation

Romans 8:1–12

Talk

- 1) What do you think when you hear the term “Holy Spirit”? Would you consider yourself a particularly “spiritual” Christian?

Read and Investigate: Romans 8:1–12

- 2) Paul has just spent the better part of a chapter talking about Israel and the predicament they were in while under the law. What is the problem that Paul has identified? What is the result of that problem for Israel?
- 3) Romans 8:1 is a great sigh of relief after the tension of Romans 7, and it points back to things that Paul has said in previous chapters. Look back over Romans 5 and 6: where have we seen Paul mention “condemnation”? Similarly, where have we seen Paul use the phrase “in Christ Jesus” or phrases like it?
- 4) Look at v. 3a. What was the Old Testament law “powerless to do”? (Paul talks about it in 7:8–13.) Why was it powerless?
- 5) Read 8:3b–4 again: why is there now “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”?
- 6) What is the significance in vv. 1–2 of Paul specifying people being saved “in Christ Jesus”? (Think back to the previous times Paul has used this sort of language in chapters 6 and 7.)
- 7) What is the Spirit’s role in our being “in Christ Jesus”? (Look at vv. 9–11: what does the Spirit do that relates to our union with Jesus?)
- 8) What are you reminded of from previous passages when you read Paul’s remarks in vv. 4–8 about “those in the flesh” and “those in the Spirit”? How does this new kind of obedience Paul describes fit in with the rest of his argument?

Discuss and Apply

- 9) Is living a holy life as a Christian the same thing as keeping the law? Should Christians keep the law? Or is it wrong to keep the law?

- 10) Many of us will know people of outstanding kindness, gentleness, and moral character, who nevertheless do not call Jesus Lord. What is your reaction to Paul's statement in vv. 7 and 8 that such people "cannot please God"? Do you think Paul means exactly what he says here, or is he exaggerating for effect?

- 11) Christians sometimes talk about living "Spirit-filled lives": in light of this passage, what might a Spirit-filled life look like?

Prayers

Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois, Finn and Cleo Morton. Pray for Sam as our Services Pastor, preparing the elements, which make up our Sunday services. Pray for Sam as he also heads up Youth Ministry and high school Scripture.

Pray for Sandy Rigby as she supports Sam in ministering to the youth of St Lukes. We continually bring before God, high school scripture, that he will continue to make paths for us to teach over this disrupted year.

Pray for Zack Hankin who is Chaplain at Sutherland Hospital. Pray for opportunities to talk about Jesus with those he is caring for.

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 6 - Hope

Romans 8:14–30

Talk

- 1) What direction do you think the world is headed: is it getting gradually better or gradually worse? Is it much the same? Do you expect a sudden change—for better or worse? How would people you know answer that question?
- 2) “Hope” can be a slippery word; it can be anything from a wild dream to a solid conviction. Martin Luther King Junior famously said, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” How closely does this align with your own view of the future? How would you describe the Christian hope for the future?

Read and Investigate: Romans 8:14–30

- 3) Paul begins to explain the Spirit’s role in uniting us with Jesus in his death and resurrection in the first third of chapter 8 (8:1–12). Paul now introduces a new concept: adoption as children of God. How is it that God has adopted us? How is this adoption different from just being forgiven? How does our status as God’s children relate to Jesus’ status as God’s son?
- 4) “Adoption to sonship” (v. 15 NIV) is a technical legal term that indicates that someone has become a full heir of their adoptive father. This is confirmed when Paul describes us as “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”; but God cannot die: what does it mean to be God’s heir? What, exactly, do we inherit?
- 5) In v. 17, Paul hints at our future glorification with Jesus as his co-heirs; in vv. 18–23, he goes on to describe the future hope of Christians. How is our destiny as God’s family linked with the destiny of God’s creation?
- 6) Verses 29 and 30 are famous and tricky; they are Paul’s explanation of v. 28. Paul says that God intended all along that we would be “conformed to the image of his Son” (v. 29). What does this mean? Is it past, present, or future? (You might want to review the context in Rom 8, as well as similar passages in 2 Cor 3:18, Phil 3:21, 1 Cor 15:20, and 1 Cor 15:49.)

Discuss and Apply

- 7) Verses 23–28 form a picture of the Christian life as one of hopeful, prayerful waiting for God to restore all things. Why do you think Paul zooms in on prayer in particular at this point? How should our understanding of the Spirit’s work shape how we pray?

- 8) In this passage, Paul is insistent that we will be **physically raised** from the dead, and that the creation will be restored **along with us**. Are these big parts of your hope? What would be different about Christian hope if we were only raised in a non-physical sense? What would be different if creation were not restored along with God's family?
- 9) How does this Christian hope—of physical resurrection and the restoration of creation—tell a different story from the other hopes of our culture and backgrounds?

Prayers

Pray for Cam, Katrina, Peyton and Thea Harte. Pray for Cam as he heads up Children's Ministry, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Children's Thursday arvo programs.

Pray for Jess Moran as she overseas our Crèche and Playtime programs. We pray for energy and enthusiasm as she looks after this age group as well as providing support and encouragement for the parents.

Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.

Pray for Geoff and Liz, Johanna, Will, Tom and Zoe Robson and their work with Christian Union in Canterbury University, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Pray for David and Kathryn, Reuben and Felix Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.

Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.

Study 7 - Assurance

Romans 8:31–39

Talk

- 1) Are you a naturally trusting person? How much evidence or prior experience do you need to have before you will just take someone's word for something?

Read and Investigate: Romans 8:31–39

- 2) How can you see Paul summarising the main themes of Romans 5–8 in this passage?
- 3) What is Paul's logic in v. 32? Can you put it in a statement of "if —, then —"?
- 4) Verses 33 and 34 present an image of a courtroom: who is in this courtroom; what are they doing; what is the outcome of the trial?
- 5) In v. 35, Paul lists a number of threatening things; he then quotes Psalm 44:22. Read the entire psalm together: what is it about? Why might Paul have quoted it here?

Discuss and Apply

- 6) When you experience suffering—either as a result of your faith or just from living in a corrupted creation—what do you look to for security? If it's God, what **exactly** about him? What is Paul's approach to facing suffering in this passage?
- 7) Look at Paul's list in v. 35: how broad is the scope of what he lists? How can Paul's response to v. 35 encourage us as we look at the problems in our world?

Prayers

Please pray that our new system for welcoming people would be useful and encouraging to keep loving new people. Pray that we would continue to connect with hospitality and warmth even with the current restrictions in place.

We pray for Evan Caddy our Ministry Trainee, with us over the next 2 years, working alongside Brett and Sam.

Pray that St Luke's as a community would be a welcoming family to the new person who walks through our doors, as well as the person who's been walking through our doors for many years. Pray that God would help us to love the people as he first loved us. Give St Luke's a spirit of hospitality, care and inclusivity.

Pray for Marty & Katrina, Simeon, Jed and Luke Feltham, preparing to serve in Kenya with CMS.