

# Romans 1:1-17

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[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, so today's reading, as you can see, is taken from Romans chapter 1 verses 1 to 7. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.

The gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures regarding his son, who, as to his earthly life, was a descendant of David, and who, through the Spirit of the Holiness, was appointed the Son of God in power.

By his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through him we will receive grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.

And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people, grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness.

[ 1 : 20 ] How constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times. I pray that now, at last, by God's will, the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong.

This is that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you, but have never been prevented from doing so until now.

In order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

This is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. 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. For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. A righteousness that is by faith, from first to last, just as it is written.

[ 2 : 39 ] The righteous will live by faith. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you for reading for us, Marochi. Do keep the passage open.

I'm going to pray, ask for the Lord's help as we come and look at his word together. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we confess that we are very easily distracted.

It is the thing that we need most, we often find the hardest. We want to hear your voice. We want to listen.

We want you to speak to us through your word. Please help us, all of us, me included, as we look together to listen to what it is that you're saying to us from your word. Help us to understand it truly, rightly.

Help us not to leave here unchanged by your spirit, through your word, as we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I wonder if perhaps on a week like this, the best and easiest way to introduce the book of Romans is to start by the fact that we all agree that this world is a broken world.

[ 3 : 52 ] You ask anybody here, you ask anybody that you meet on your street or in your work, is this world broken? And they would say to you, well, if they're over the age of about 10, they'll say, yes, definitely.

Especially at the moment. War, political violence, domestic abuse, racism, knife crime, immorality, overwhelmed public services, the rise of nationalism.

You name it, but you can't hide from it, can you? This world is not what it could be and not what all of us instinctively feel like the world should be.

So we acknowledge the world is broken. Now, as we go through this letter in the weeks and months to come, we're going to hear Paul articulate the reasons why he believes the world is broken and in

what manner it is broken in.

We're going to see some of those things in weeks to come, a lot of them next week. But this morning, just as we look at these opening 17 verses of the letter, which essentially are Paul's introduction to what he's writing here, I want you to see that Paul's letter is all about, as we were looking with the kids, salvation or rescue.

[ 5 : 05 ] So yes, says Paul, the world is in a mess, but there is salvation, says Paul. Look down at verse 16. Paul writes, For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation.

In other words, while Paul's letter will be about a lot of things, we've got lots of great treasures to see in the letter to the Romans. There's going to be much for us here, much to discover. It is, though, at its heart about salvation, rescue, deliverance.

And this rescue, deliverance, salvation, we will discover, is found not in human efforts or in religious experience or in some kind of emotional renewal.

Rather, salvation, we are told, is found in a message. Look again at verse 16. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation.

The word gospel there literally just means good news or maybe important news or big news.

Salvation that everyone is looking for everywhere is, says Paul, found in the news about Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 18 ] Big news. Think about it. Imagine it like this. Imagine for a moment that you have been struggling with your maths homework for hours and hours and hours.

There is seemingly no solution to the problem. It's an equation that needs resolving. It makes no sense. It doesn't matter what you try. It doesn't matter how hard you stare at the page.

Nothing is working. Nothing seems to happen. Been trying for ages, applying all the methods that you know. But then someone else comes in.

Your friend comes around and they look at the maths problem. They say, no, no, no, no, no. You've been looking at it all the wrong way. This is how you do it. And they get a pen out and they solve it.

In a sense, this is the letter to the Romans.

You all know that you're looking at a problem. The problem is the broken world. And Paul says, no, no, no. You've been looking at the problem in all the wrong ways. You don't solve this in your own efforts.

[ 7 : 15 ] You need the salvation that belongs to God and the message of the gospel. That's what's going on here. All of our efforts, our spiritual awakenings, our politics, our public services, our plans for moral improvement are going to be better.

Our online rage, none of it works. Salvation, says Paul, comes in a message. And it's good news. It's why if you look at the passage, look down at verse 1. Paul introduces himself as an apostle, literally a sent one.

He is set apart for the gospel of God. He's a messenger. I'm sent to tell of this message of salvation. In verse 9 and verse 15, he calls himself a preacher. I am the speaker of the message of salvation.

Salvation is found in a message, says Paul, and I'm speaking it. In 1545, the great reformer Martin Luther wrote an introduction to the letter of Paul to the Romans.

And in his opening sentence, he says this. Let me read it to you. This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word, but also to occupy himself with it daily as though it were the daily bread of the soul.

[ 8 : 31 ] Now, I think Martin Luther is probably right. And that means that I need to moderate your expectations, both of the sermon this morning, but also of this series in the book of Romans.

Romans is a letter that you need to be delving into day by day and week by week.

What I'm going to do really is going to introduce it to you, and you're going to need to go away and do some of that hard work yourself. It's why over these weeks, our community groups are also going to be looking at the letter of Romans, and they're going to be following up these sermons with questions.

So if you're not in a community group, this is a good plug for joining a community group so you can discuss in the week the letter to the Romans. So let me give you four things, four, I guess, aspects of this message of salvation that we see from Romans 1.

And really, our focus is just going to be on verses 16 and 17. The first one is this, the message is powerful. Again, look down at verse 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation.

Notice that the message is not about the power of God, that the power of God doesn't exist over here, and the message is describing the power of God which is over there. No, Paul senses it is the message itself which is the power of God to save.

[ 9 : 46 ] This is what makes it good news. Not only because the content is wonderful and brilliant, and we'll see that together in a moment, but because in preaching the news, Paul is unleashing the power of God.

This is so foundational to the letter of the Romans. If you don't get this, the whole thing will make no sense to you at all. Paul's conviction is that he is preaching about Jesus Christ, the one who was promised in the past, crucified, risen, ascended, and returning.

And it is the preaching of that news about that person that changes lives, rescues, saves, transforms individuals, builds churches, sustains Christians, gives sinners like us a place in God's eternal glorious kingdom.

That conviction then, it makes sense, doesn't it, of these opening verses. Paul has this real strong desire to go to Rome. His desire is to preach, to impart some spiritual gift, to fulfill what he calls his obligation or his debt.

It's not because he's got a career to build. Oh, you know, if I'm going to be a preacher, I've got to conquer Rome. Like, Rome is the place I've got to go. It's not that, is it? It's because the message is the power of God to save, and he wants to see that salvation spread all over the world, so I must go, I must preach.

[ 11 : 07 ] I think this is so easy to get confused about. I know I have been confused about this at times. Because if what Paul is saying here is true, then you and I need to understand that the sort of the power encounters that we long for with the living God are not first and foremost emotional experiences.

I mean, we long for emotional experiences, don't we? And it will involve emotion. But an emotional experience itself does not mean that you've encountered the power of God.

Rather, you know that you've encountered the power of God by listening to him as he speaks in the gospel, this great message of salvation.

Let me try and put it another way. Because the power of God is in the message of the gospel, it means that that preaching or listening to God's spoken word, his word declared, is central to the Christian life.

The gospel is not something that you first sort of dissect or analyze or sit around and discuss, or even something that you first feel. No, the gospel is something you first hear.

[ 12 : 15 ] That's the dynamic. Jump forward in your Bibles to Romans 10. You might want to turn there. I think sometimes turning to passages during the sermon helps you stay awake and concentrated.

It is on the screen for all the people too lazy to turn to it. Romans chapter 10 and verse 12. This is what Paul says there. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile.

The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then can they call on the one they have not believed in?

How can they believe in the one of whom they've not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they're sent? As it is written, how beautiful the feet are of those who bring good news.

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message.

[ 13 : 15 ] And the message is heard through the word of Christ. I remember a few years ago, a friend of mine telling me about her son going on cub camp for the very first time.

It was the first time her boy had been away from home overnight. I mean, I think they probably stayed at relatives' houses, but this was the first time sort of on their own away from home.

So she worked with the little boy to pack his bag really carefully. So they made sure that they put in everything that he would need, you know, like soap, towel, change of clothes, pants, that kind of thing.

And they carefully packed the bag. And she dropped him off in an emotional drop off and returned to pick him up a few days later. When she returned to pick him up, there she met her son, slightly disheveled, smelling bad, standing in exactly the same clothes that she had dropped him off in, holding a perfectly packed bag with him, which had been completely unopened for three days. All of the things that he needed remained in the bag, sealed, just as his mother had left him. I want to suggest to you, that's how lots of people live their Christian life.

[14:34] Maybe you wonder why spiritually you feel like and smell like a nine-year-old boy who's been on a three-day camping trip in the same clothes day and night. It might be because God has given you everything that you need in his word and you've left it in a sealed bag.

God has given us the power in the message of the gospel. It's here in our hands. But we choose to make something else the centre of our spirituality. Soundbites on Insta or Christian music or our own moral efforts or Christian friendships, all of which are good, but it is in the message of the gospel that the power of God to save is.

And that message, because it's in the gospel, it demands preaching and listening to preaching. And so that must be at the centre of our Christian lives. The power is in the message.

The message, secondly, is for everyone. Look again at verse 16. The message of the gospel brings salvation to everyone who believes. It's also the implication of the purpose of the letter itself.

Look back at verse 5. Through him we receive grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to obedience that comes from faith for his namesake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

[15:56] The word translated Gentiles there is simply the Greek word for the nations. Ethne, from which we get ethnicity. And Paul's point is that he has been called by God to take this message to the nations that they might come to what really is the obedience of faith.

I know I've been translations give the impression that it is obedience which comes from faith, as if those are two separate things. But it's not really that. It's more the sense is that obedience, which itself is faith.

In other words, it is having faith, which is the obedient response to the gospel. And Paul has been called to go everywhere and tell everyone that through the power of God in the message of the gospel, God might call his people to himself, to faith in him.

The purpose that Paul writes his letter kind of demonstrates this. You often, in New Testament letters, find the purpose of the letter at the end. And that's the same in Romans. In Romans 15, you find out why he's really writing the letter.

You can turn to chapter 15 as well, if you'd like to. Turn over a few pages to Romans 15 and verse 23. Romans 15 and verse 23. Here, this is what Paul writes.

[17:07] He says, but now there is no more place for me to work in these regions since I've been longing for many years to visit you. I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and that you will assist me on my journey there after I've enjoyed your company for a while.

Paul's plan is that he's going from Rome to Spain. That's where his preaching tour is taking him. He wants to go to places where they've never heard before.

Spain is next on the list. He's done Turkey. He's done Greece. Now he needs to get to Spain and his jumping off point is Rome. And so he writes the letter to the church in Rome that they might send him on.

Now that means for us too, doesn't it, this morning that there is no one this morning for whom this message is not relevant. It doesn't matter who you are.

It doesn't matter whether you're young or old or black or white. It doesn't matter whether you're from a Christian family or this is the very first time you've ever sat in a church building. This message is for you.

[18:10] What I am saying is not irrelevant to anybody in the room. You and I, we must listen. I don't know why, but we're going to get back to a maths classroom.

This is, Megan, I'm really sorry. This is not singling you out in any way. But I studied A-level maths and we had a girl in our class called Helen and she sat on the front row and every maths lesson, she would have an existential crisis.

And she would say, what is the point of all of this? You know, like that. Very dramatic. I don't understand. Why does this matter anyway? She'd say. I'm bored.

Boring. It's irrelevant. When am I going to use this? There's often tears, swearing, and a teacher desperately trying to calm her down. But the thing with Helen is she really did have a point. You know, I never used any of that maths ever again. And if you ask me to do it now, I can't as much as I try. But not the gospel. None of you can sit here like Helen sat in those maths lessons. [ 19 : 15 ] Because this is relevant to you. Whoever you are, wherever you're from, whatever your background. You know, think about it. Do you live in a broken world? You do, don't you? I do. We all do.

Do you know that the brokenness is not just out there in the world, but it's in here in our own hearts? You know that, don't you? I know that. It's true for me. It's true for you. Do you know, therefore, that you need salvation?

You need rescue? You know that, don't you? I know it. Do you want to experience the power of God to rescue you? Oh, yes, please. Well, then this message is for you.

Because this message is the power of God for everyone to hear. Thirdly, the message is about God's righteousness. If the powerful message is for everyone, it's a message that saves, what is it about the message itself that makes that happen?

Well, look at verse 17. Verse 17 says, For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Notice it starts with the word for or because.

[ 20 : 18 ] This is why the message saves. The message saves, says Paul, for in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. This is why it saves. Because the message reveals the righteousness of God.

Now, if you're thinking this morning, which I encourage you to do as you're listening to preaching, do think. But if you're thinking, you should be going, that's not that exciting. I mean, if the message simply shows that God is right, in the right, he is righteous, I think, well, I assumed that before I came in this morning.

Everybody assumes that about God, don't they? God is the one who is in the right. He is righteous. How is that good news? How is that going to save me? In fact, that actually feels a little bit more like bad news, doesn't it?

If I told you that the God of the universe is a God who is in the right, he's righteous, and you're going to face him one day, that doesn't sound like good news, does it? But Paul means more than that, doesn't he?

He doesn't just mean to tell you that God is in the right, that God is righteous. You can see that by what comes next. Look at the verse again. For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. What is that righteousness, Paul?

[ 21 : 24 ] A righteousness that is by faith. Do you see it? Paul is explaining the righteousness of God, and he says that this righteousness of God that is revealed is also a righteousness that is by faith.

In other words, the righteousness that he is talking about is not just a righteousness that belongs to God in him, but it is a righteousness that God is able to give away to others by faith.

We'll think more about faith in a moment. But this is why the message is powerful to save everyone who believes, because the gospel is about how the good, true, righteous God can give his righteousness to others.

The God who is judge of all the world, before whom all of us in this room will one day stand, that righteous God is able, ahead of that day we meet him, to give to you, to me, his righteousness. Maybe the language here is too theological or religious sounding for you to sort of see the impact of it, but let me change it a bit and try and help us see. The message of the gospel saves by transforming people to be holy and perfect and as unbroken as God is himself.

[ 22 : 37 ] I'll put it another way. It is possible, says Paul, simply through the listening to the message of the gospel, for God through that to do something in you that transforms you from being the broken sinner that you and I are by nature to being someone who is as righteous as God himself.

It's perfect as him. I don't know whether you like the Shrek movies, but you know that part in Shrek, it's in Shrek 2, I was reliably informed this week, when they drink their happily ever after potion. Do you know the bit? And the donkey becomes a stallion, Shrek becomes a handsome man. The label on the potion reads this, happily ever after potion, maximum strength for you and your true love.

If one of you drinks this, you both will be fine. Happiness, comfort and beauty divine. Warning, side effects may include burning, itching, oozing, weeping, not intended for heart patients or those with nervous disorders.

Now, the illustration doesn't scan perfectly. I don't want to push it too hard, but notice that the drinking of the happily ever after potion gives beauty divine. It is the moment of drinking which gives you beauty divine.

[ 23 : 58 ] Taking what is ugly and making it beautiful. And spiritually, that's what Paul is saying, listening to the gospel message does. The message of the gospel is the righteous making power of God.

It is how God can transform ugly sinners like us who have lived for ourselves in the brokenness of this selfish world and make us new. More than that, make us like him.

Not by our works, not by our efforts, but by his power, defeating our sin and clothing us with his perfection. Now, if you look down at Romans 1, you'll notice that this gospel potion has been a long time in the making.

Verse 2 tells you it was promised long ago by the Old Testament. This gospel message is a story of the whole Bible. It's been promised to in the Old Testament. Verse 3 tells you it's about the eternal son of God who is born in flesh as the descendant of King David.

Verse 4 tells you that this man, Christ Jesus, dies, but is raised by the power of the Spirit and is enthroned as the Lord and King of his people. Verse 5 tells you that he is now calling people to come and belong to him.

[ 25 : 05 ] Now, the rest of the letter will explain the content of the gospel message. But here in verse 17, its powerful effect is on display for all to see.

God is the righteous maker, making sinners righteous through the message of his son who died and rose. Just think about this for a moment.

This is why content really matters in church. This is why preaching really matters in church. This is why listening in church really matters. Because this powerful news is so simple.

You know, a child can understand it, but it takes the whole Bible to tell it it's that deep and complex. You will never get to a point in your Christian life where you don't need to hear this message anymore.

You will never get to a point in your Christian life where you've plumbed all of its debts. It will take a lifetime for you to wrestle with it. This message is not just for an unbelieving world to hear, but it's for Christians to hear Sunday by Sunday by Sunday as they listen together.

[ 26 : 08 ] Because this message is about God's, his righteousness, and how that righteousness can be yours and mine through the work of his son. Finally then, the message needs to be believed.

Let's end with this. If the gospel is the power to make us righteous, what do we do? What do we do? Look again at the end of verse 17. For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last.

Just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith. This is it then, isn't it? We both need to hear the audible words of the message of the gospel, and we need to believe the message.

Put our faith and our hope in it. That's how it works. The message is powerful to save because it makes people righteous by faith. You know, no hearing, no faith.

Romans 10. You don't hear, you don't have faith. No faith, no righteousness. No righteousness, no salvation. I wonder if you've ever just thought about this before.

[ 27 : 13 ] Just think about it with me. You know, here you are, it's Sunday morning, and you're sat in church. You and I are listening together to a message that has the power to transform us from the inside out. A message that for centuries has taken men and women, boys and girls, from every nation in the world and made them into righteous saints, destined for glory.

It's a message that's taken them safely through this life until their death, till they've been in God's presence, waiting for Christ's return. And this morning, all you have to do to receive the benefits of this message is believe, to stop trusting in your own salvation projects.

Stop thinking, no, I'm okay. Stop painting over the cracks in your life and come to God and say, no, listen, I trust in you. I trust in your work, not my work.

I trust in your righteousness, not mine. I mean, just tease this out. This is the uniqueness of the Christian gospel. Right? If you go to the mosque and you speak to the imam and say, you know, listen, I've been thinking, how can Allah save me from the brokenness of this world and the sort of

ugliness of my own heart?

What can Allah do for me? How can he save me? He will tell you what to do. He will tell you to sincerely recite the shahada and live it out in your life.

[ 28 : 31 ] Then you won't be okay. And so you go away and do it, hoping that salvation somewhere along that line might come to you through what you've done. You know, go to a religious person, a religious Christian, and say, listen, how can I be saved?

We live in a broken world. It's a terrible place. How can I be saved from the brokenness of this world and the ugliness of my own heart? They will tell you what to do. Clean up your life. Come to church. Read your Bible. Get baptized. And you go away and you do all those things. And salvation comes to you somewhere along the line where you've done those things enough. Or go to a secular agnostic and you say, listen, this world is broken.

My heart is ugly. How can I be saved and rescued from the brokenness of this world and the ugliness of my life? And they will tell you what to do. Work harder.

Be the best version of yourself. They'll tell you. Stop doubting yourself. Look in the mirror every morning and tell yourself that you believe in yourself. Take a bit of exercise as well.

[ 29 : 35 ] Go away and do it. And somewhere along the line, you might have done enough to save yourself. But in the Christian church, it's totally different, right?

You come here this morning and you say, listen, how could we live in a broken world? It's terrible out there. How can I be saved from the brokenness of this world and the ugliness that I feel inside? I know. How can I be saved? And the gospel says to you, listen, I can do that for you right now. Right now.

Hear this and believe. Hear about Christ. Hear about his death in your place. Hear about his resurrection to new life. Hear about how your sin can be transferred onto him and his righteousness can be transferred over to you.

Hear how he is calling people from all over the world to belong to him and be part of his family. And put your faith in him. Stop trusting in yourself and put your faith in him and you will be saved.

[ 30 : 37 ] Right here. Right now. Not tomorrow when you start acting like a Christian. Not in a few months time when you've really proved yourself to be worthy of it.

But right now. The old hymn writer put it like this. Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood to every believer, the promise of God, the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

We were thinking about this in my sermon read-through on Fridays where with a little group of people I read through what I've got so far for my sermon and we talk about it. And we're thinking about some of the objections that might come and one person said, listen, that just sounds, it just sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

All I have to do to be rescued from the brokenness of this world and the ugliness of my own heart, all I have to do is believe. Is that right? Is that too good to be true? Let me tell you, it is too good not to be true.

Because if anybody else in this room was making up a message whereby you might be saved, I guarantee that every one of us would have written some duty for us in it. This is what you do.

[ 31 : 49 ] But this is profoundly humbling. You do nothing. All you bring is your sin and Jesus saves and rescues with his righteousness and all you do is believe. It's too good not to be true.

Maybe though you've been a Christian for a long time and maybe as you hear this message, something is happening in your heart which is what happens in my heart as I hear it. It's like, yes, I want to believe all over again, Lord.

I want to become a Christian again. Again, I reject my efforts and my own righteousness and I trust in you. And that's exactly how this works. That's salvation.

Salvation is in a message, a message for everyone, a message with the power to make sinners perfect, a message which is about Jesus, a message that we need to believe. I hope as I finish you can just see, kind of why Paul starts his sentence in verse 16 with I'm not ashamed.

It's because the gospel is so good. I don't know if you've ever sold anything on like Vinted or eBay. I've sold a few cars on eBay.

[ 32 : 56 ] And I admit it now, but some of the cars that you sell, you were just hoping to get rid of them. You were hoping that they drive away far enough that they aren't able to bring it back to you and tell you what it was really like.

But sometimes, you know, you've got something that's really, really brilliant. And you know you're selling it for like a knockdown price. This is a bargain. And so when you speak to the person who's buying it, you're like full of enthusiasm. This is brilliant. I have never had it. I don't even know why I'm selling it. I've never had a car like this before. And I'm not at this price. Now listen, the price is nothing to us. Everything to Jesus. It's come and believe. Trust in him and you will be saved. And Paul is not ashamed. Why is he not ashamed? Because there's nothing like this. This is the best news ever. Of course I'm not ashamed. There's nothing else that can come anywhere near this in terms of value.

[ 34 : 03 ] Hear and believe. Salvation from God. You know, shame on you religious teachers who are telling people to go away and do stuff. It's a shoddy product. It's like a broken down car that Steve sold and he's trying to get you down the road far enough so you won't come back to him.

It's a shoddy product. You don't want that. You want this. The good news. And Paul has no need to be ashamed. So for you, if you're a Christian this morning, go and preach the gospel.

Go and tell people about Jesus. Invite them to church. Tell all your friends. You know, put the sticker on your car, put the band around your wrist, put the flyer in your hand. You have nothing to be ashamed of because there is no news like this news in this world.

Jesus saves through the power of the gospel. Let's pray as we close. Let's close. Oh, Heavenly Father, we thank you that in our broken world and into the ugly hearts that we have comes this powerful gospel of your righteousness gifted to us through your son's work on the cross by faith. how we pray that you might well up in each of our hearts that we might believe and trust in you. Oh, Lord, do that work for the sake of your glory, we ask.

[ 35 : 29 ] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right. As we draw to a close, I want to say thank you, Steve, for bringing us into the introduction of the book of Romans, which is a wonderful book, as Steve has said, but I would encourage you all.

It would be nice to see you in the weeks to come because Romans really talks about everybody has sinned, nobody exempt. It talks about God's salvation for every single person.

It talks about God's sovereignty. It talks about service and, yeah, God's sovereignty again. So it'd be wonderful to see you all in the weeks to come as we venture through this book.

I'm sure we'll receive a lot. What really helped me, what Steve said as well, what we heard today was really interesting when he mentioned about a three-year-old boy or a three-year-old girl going on a camping trip and not opening their bag, you know, to see the things that their parents had actually packed for them.

And, you know, if we look at that as a kind of metaphor for us not really looking into God's perfect words, you know, it hinders us to actually know the power of the gospel. So my prayer is that, you know, as well as we're here today and as well as we hear the gospel, the gospel will impact our hearts and our minds that we too will feel like Paul, that we are under obligation, knowing that many people for various reasons are not going to come church because of experience that has put a barrier up towards them to make them figure, I'm not going into the building.

[ 36 : 59 ] But likewise, as we proclaim the gospel to our loved ones, family members, our friends, and even as we've seen God's grace through many people bringing friends here, we've seen them come to know the Lord Jesus.

So thanks again, Steve, and it's important again as a church that we don't just hear, but we listen and we take heed. So let me just pray and then we'll thank the Lord.

Father God, we do thank you again for your word and introduction into the book of Romans. Lord, I pray that you would help each and every one of us not just to be hearers of your word, but help us to be doers, help us to understand the impact of what we've heard today, Lord.

Help us too, Lord, as we come church and as we hear the gospel, help us to rejoice and know that we are not ashamed because we all have that personal experience of what you've done in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

So as already been said, Lord, we do pray and desire that you would be glorified in all things, in our words, in our thoughts, and our deeds. So I pray that you bless your people throughout this week, Lord, and help us to live, to be a light wherever you lead us.

[ 38 : 09 ] In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Thank you.