

# Congregational Discussion Guide-Romans 1-8

## Big Idea

In the gospel, God reveals His righteousness by silencing every human boast, justifying sinners through faith in Christ, freeing believers from sin's dominion, and carrying them by the Spirit to certain glory.

## Observe the Argument

- How does Romans 1:16–17 function as the thesis for chapters 1–8?
- What groups does Paul bring under guilt in Romans 1–3?
- What changes with the words “But now” in Romans 3:21?
- What blessings flow from justification in Romans 5?
- How does union with Christ answer the objection raised in Romans 6:1?
- What can the law do, and what can it not do, according to Romans 7?
- Which ministries of the Spirit appear in Romans 8?
- How does Romans 8 move from no condemnation to no separation?

## Understand the Doctrine

- Why must justification remain distinct from sanctification?
- Why is faith not a meritorious work?
- How does the Adam–Christ contrast explain both condemnation and justification?
- What does it mean that sin's dominion is broken while indwelling sin remains?
- How do assurance and perseverance strengthen rather than weaken the pursuit of holiness?

## Apply the Gospel

- Which form of boasting most tempts you: moral comparison, religious privilege, knowledge, service, or improvement?
- Where are you tempted to obey for acceptance rather than from acceptance?
- Which sin needs a specific mortification plan rather than a vague intention?
- Where do you need the church's help instead of private isolation?
- Which fear does Romans 8 place beneath God's saving purpose?
- How can your family or small group make the movement from guilt to glory visible this week?

# Careful Congregational Applications

## For the Unconverted or Religiously Familiar

- Do not confuse gospel knowledge with saving faith. Romans was written to bring every hearer beneath God's verdict and then to Christ.
- Stop appealing to relative goodness, family heritage, baptism, church attendance, service, or sincerity as the basis of acceptance.
- Repent and receive Christ Himself. Faith rests upon His righteousness, blood, resurrection, and promise.
- Do not wait to become worthy. "Justification is free" because mercy is granted to the unworthy on the ground of Christ's worthiness.

## For Believers Struggling with Assurance

- Distinguish justification from sanctification. Your uneven progress does not become the ground of God's verdict; Christ remains the ground.
- Distinguish conviction from condemnation. Conviction is specific and leads toward confession; condemnation is hopeless and drives away from Christ.
- Examine the object of faith rather than endlessly measuring its emotional strength. A trembling hand may rest upon a sufficient Savior.
- Use assurance as strength for obedience. God's preserving grace produces perseverance, not carelessness.

## For Believers Fighting Entrenched Sin

- Begin with identity: in Christ, sin is no longer your master.
- Identify the sin precisely, expose its promised reward and underlying lie, and bring Scripture against it.
- Use both removal and replacement. Cut off provision for sin and practice the opposite obedience.
- Seek help early. Confession, accountability, pastoral counsel, and church discipline are gifts, not embarrassments.
- Expect a real war. Romans 7 prevents perfectionism; Romans 6 prevents surrender.

## For Those Walking through Suffering

- Do not read pain as automatic evidence of rejection. Romans 5 and 8 place suffering within grace and hope.
- Give yourself permission to groan. Biblical hope is honest about the curse while waiting for resurrection.
- Receive help. The Spirit's ministry often reaches us through Scripture and Christ's people.
- Define the promised good carefully: conformity to Christ and final glory, not immediate ease.
- Name the feared separator and place it under Romans 8:35–39.

## For Families

- Teach the whole gospel: guilt, grace, growth, and glory. Do not reduce Christianity to behavior management.
- Make confession and forgiveness normal. Parents should model repentance without shifting adult burdens onto children.
- Distinguish Christian nurture from conversion. Bring children under the means of grace while calling each one personally to repentance and faith.
- Speak of holiness as grateful belonging to Christ, not as payment for God's love.

- Pray through Romans 8 when family members suffer or face uncertain futures.

## For GPEH as a Congregation

- Keep the gospel central in preaching, counseling, membership, discipline, evangelism, and care.
- Cultivate a culture where sin can be confessed because grace is treasured and holiness is taken seriously.
- Refuse both cultural compromise and self-righteous moralism. Speak biblical truth with humility born from universal guilt and free justification.
- Use the ordinary means faithfully: read, preach, pray, sing, and see the Word through baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Care tangibly for afflicted members. Assurance should take visible form in meals, transportation, presence, prayer, generosity, and patient friendship.
- Carry the gospel to Jew and Gentile without arrogance, remembering that Romans 9–11 will defend God's continuing faithfulness concerning Israel.