

STUDY NOTES

A LETTER TO THE ROMANS at NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “The Righteousness of God” on 2/05/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 1:8-17

PAUL’S THEOLOGY AND HIS STORY

God made a covenant with Abraham and with, later on, the people of Israel to bless them. God blessed them so that they would bless the nations around them. However, they constantly failed in this so God sent Jesus to keep the covenant. God is fully just and fully righteous, so he has to keep his promises. But Israel kept failing. They kept sinning. So as a righteous God, he had to deal with sin. He did so by sending Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled the covenant.

- *What do you know about a covenant?*
- *There were two sides to this covenant—God’s side and Israel’s side. That means by sending Jesus to fulfill Israel’s side of the covenant, God actually kept both sides of the covenant. What does it mean to you that God was faithful to both sides of his covenant?*

Paul understood the cross as a huge deal. It started the overlapping of the Old Age and New Age. Theologians call this the “already, but not yet.” In other words, Jesus already started a New Age, but it is not yet fully restored. That is what we as Christians look forward to as the restoration of all things.

- *How can you live reminding yourself of the restoration of things to come?*
- *How should the hope of restoration change the way you live?*

WHY DID PAUL WRITE ROMANS?

- 1) Paul wanted a new home base for his ministry because he wanted to continue on to Spain in the future.
- 2) Paul wanted to address the racial divide.
- 3) Paul wanted to explain how unity is at the core of the Gospel.

In this new age, people of any background, color, or race are able to be unified by Jesus. This was happening in Rome. Jews and Gentiles were now supposed to come together as Christians. They were united in the same blood because of Jesus.

In order to walk in step with the Gospel, believers need to seek unity because the Gospel is for everyone.

- *Why is unity such an important marker of the Gospel?*
- *How do you need to seek unity with people?*
- *What is the difference between seeking unity and just agreeing with everyone?*

MISSION STATEMENT OF ROMANS

Paul made sure it was clear that he isn’t “ashamed of the Gospel”. We know by Paul’s life that he didn’t just think that way (orthodoxy), but he lived that way (orthopraxy). In verses 16-17, we also see his mission strategy was preach to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. In Rome, there were a lot of Gentile believers. Paul wanted to make sure the believing Jews were included. This didn’t mean that Gentiles were left out, but it meant the community of God in Rome was supposed to live in unity with each other.

Because of Christ’s death, we are reconciled back to God.

We, as the people of God, are to be a light to the world with our unity. If Christians live a divided life, we are not walking in step with the Gospel.

- *Knowing how Jesus reconciled us back to God, what does that tell us about how easy true unity will be?*
- *Unity is great to talk about, but what are some practical ways to live it out?*
- *Pray for true unity with each other, our church, and our world.*