

# The Power of the Gospel

## discussion guide

based on **Romans 1** (Linked to sermon of 10/1/21)

which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks)

*This was part of a series: Romans*

Intro: Romans is one of Paul's most profound letters, rich in theology and the gospel. St Augustine and John Wesley were converted when listening to a sermon on Romans and Luther kick started the Reformation after his revelation of the importance of justification by faith from reading Romans and he considered that all Christians should read Romans and even learn it by rote! All in all, significant Christians throughout the centuries have been profoundly touched and transformed by this letter so it is exciting to be starting out on a study of it together as a church.

This study covers the first half of Romans 1. Romans 1:18-32 requires more depth and detailed study and so I have focussed on the first half of the passage so as not to give too much material for a single study. You may as a group want to read through the second half. I am sure it will provoke a lot of discussion!

*How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?*

**Up (Go deeper with God):**

**Begin with a time of praise:** *Romans 1 reminds us that God has revealed Himself through creation (Romans 1:20), begin by reading together Psalm 19 aloud. Use this as a beginning for some prayers of praise and thanksgiving.*

**Now read through Romans chapter 1:1-17 together:**

*1:1 The book of Romans begins, as most letters do, with a greeting from the author "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, and set apart for the gospel of God" (verse 1), if you were to introduce yourself in this way, how would you do it? What have you been called to be, what have you been set apart for?*

*1:2-4 Paul is keen to point out to the Roman church, which would have been made up of both Jewish converts and non-Jewish (Gentile) converts that this gospel is not a new thing but a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Read Hebrews 1:1-3 – how does God speak to his people now? How is Jesus described here? To what extent do these two passages proclaim the gospel?*

*How many times is the word gospel mentioned in chapter 1:1-17?*

*It is quite a lot!*

*The Greek word translated gospel is euangellion (good message, literally). Using pen and paper, take a little time for each member of the group to write down briefly (and using as little Christian-ese as they can!) what they consider to be the essence of this good message. Share these with one another.*

***In (Grow closer to each other):***

*Verses 8-13 speak of Paul's gratitude for and longing to see the church at Rome. What does he believe we can do to strengthen one another(see verses 10, 12)? Do you see these at work in your own group (be honest!) and if not, how do you think you might work at praying for and encouraging one another?*

*For me, the key verse in the passage is verse 16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes".*

*To what extent are you "ashamed of the gospel"? Does this prevent you from sharing it with friends, work colleagues and family?*

*In what ways do you consider the gospel to be God's power of salvation?*

***Out (Reach further with the good news):***

*If you have time, it would be good for a few people to share their first experience of hearing the gospel (you may want to ask a few individuals ahead of time if you are leading this). How did it impact them? What was it that stood out in the gospel message at the time?*

*It is good to be reminded of the power of the gospel, the power it has in our lives and power it can have in others.*

*End by praying for one another that God would enable you to proclaim the gospel boldly (Ephesians 6:19-20) and pray for individuals you know who need to hear it.*