

Roaming Through Romans (1-8)

Devotions and Studies for Lent 2021

Introduction

Studying the Bible is an adventure! Throughout it all – from familiar Sunday School story to weird and wonderful prophetic prose – we read the Bible and encounter God’s living and active Word. When we study the Bible, the chances are, we find *ourselves* being studied by the whispers of God’s Spirit to the depths of our souls.

Christians, for many generations, have used the season of Lent as a time for Bible study. Lent is a *journey* that begins with Ash Wednesday, when we confront our mortality and our simple *need* of God. It concludes at the foot of the cross, from which we are then grasped by the joy and grace of Easter Day. We take Lent as a spiritual journey, in the same way that we set foot into the world of the Bible; we don’t know exactly what to expect, but we desire to learn and grow.

In 2021, our journey through Lent will be a roaming through Paul’s letter to the Romans. We will focus on the first half, the first eight chapters.

Across the centuries, from St. Augustine of Hippo, through to the message of Billy Graham, Romans has been tapped into as a source of gospel grace. In this letter are truths, exhortations, and understandings, that can impact every aspect of our life: Our secret private thoughts, the plans and priorities of our family and household, and even the place and purpose of God’s people in the real world around us. By the time we reach the end of chapter eight we will have encountered both the groaning and anguish that we share with all creation, and the love of God in Jesus Christ from which we can never be separated.

Romans has sweet easy water to drink. It also has some dense and nuanced theology. On this journey there will be meat to chew, questions to ask, assumptions to question, and deep stories to learn. If we wait until we think we’ve understood Romans before we venture into its verses, we’ll never start! So let us journey together, and hear the word of the Lord.

How do I take part?

We hope to study and learn *together*. Our journey will begin on Ash Wednesday: The Vine and St. Tim’s are sharing an evening service, hosted at St. Tim’s. Each Sunday, at The Vine, the themes for Romans will also form part of our worship together. There are also these opportunities:

- 1) A Daily Devotional reading plan.** We have outlined, below, a schedule of short readings from Romans for each day of Lent.
- 2) Reading and Reflecting.** There are a number of good books and commentaries that you might find useful to use. We have made mention, below, of one book in particular – Tom Wright’s *Paul for Everyone: Romans Part 1* – on which we have based the reading schedule.
- 3) A Lent Course.** We will be running weekly sessions on Wednesday evenings – on zoom or in-person as regulations allow – for extra input and conversation. Details are below.
- 4) Small group and home group study.** Small groups and home groups might like to read the readings together. Tom Wright has also released a bible study guide, mentioned below.

Please join us

If you would like to join us on this journey, it would be great to hear from you. Even if all you can commit to is the daily devotional readings, it would be great to know. We would love to pray for you during this time.

If you're having difficulty accessing a Bible or purchasing any of the resource books, we are able to help. Do be in touch.

If you would like to be a part of the Wednesday Evening course we will need to know if you're coming. If we can meet in-person we will need to manage numbers. If we meet online we will need to be able to send you zoom links and other details.

Please contact Will on 07548050745 or will@thevinesheffield.org.uk

More information and resources:

Daily Devotional

Included below is a schedule of Bible readings from Romans 1-8 for almost every day of the 40 days of Lent. Set aside as little as 10-15 minutes each day, read the reading, and reflect and pray.

You may want to guide your thoughts using the **SOAP** method: During your devotional time, read the **Scripture**. Take a few short notes about what you **Observe** in what you read; summarise what is being said. Next, **Apply** what you have discovered; how might the reading inform and shape your own life? Finally **Pray** in response to what you have noted.

Reading and Reflecting

The devotional readings for each day line up with the short chapters of Tom Wright's, *Paul for Everyone – Romans Part 1: Chapters 1-8*. It is available to purchase for around £10 from various outlets.

Each chapter only takes a few minutes. Wright's language can sometimes be very dense, but he also has helpful illustrations and thoughts. You may find it useful to read this companion book alone, or with another person, or in a small group.

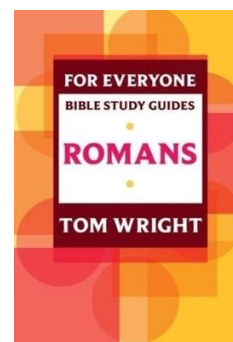
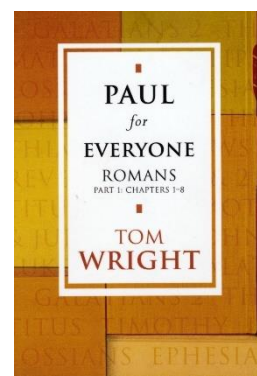
Lent Course

This will be held each Wednesday evening in Lent (Feb 24 until Mar 31), between 8pm and 9:30pm, either in-person at St. Bart's Church or on zoom (depending on lockdown requirements). Led by Will Briggs, these evenings will be an opportunity for further input and conversation. Each session will stand alone, but a commitment to come to as many as possible will be beneficial. No prior reading, apart from the reading of Romans itself, will be necessary, but we will be drawing from Wright's *Paul for Everyone* book mentioned above.

Small Groups and Weekly Rhythms

The Sunday talks at The Vine will be recorded and made available on The Vine's youtube channel. Each talk will look ahead to the themes of the upcoming week.

Small groups might also benefit from using another of Tom Wright's books, an in expensive more traditional bible study: *For Everyone Bible Study Guides – Romans*. It covers all of Romans, not just chapters 1-8 and provides introductory thoughts and questions for conversation and discussion.



Reading Schedule

The reading program begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes just before Good Friday.

Date	Daily Devotion Romans Reading	Chapter in Wright's <i>Paul for Everyone</i>	Session in Wright's <i>Bible Study Guide</i>
Feb 17 (Wed)	1:1-7	Good News about the New King	Session 1 (1:1-17)
Feb 18 (Thu)	1:8-13	Paul Longs to see the Roman Christians	
Feb 19 (Fri)	1:14-17	Good News, Salvation and the Justice of God	
Feb 20 (Sat)	1:18-23	Humans Reject God and Embrace Corruption	
Feb 21 (Sun)	SUNDAY		
Feb 22 (Mon)	1:24-27	Unclean Desires, Dishonoured Bodies	Sessions 2&3 (1:18- 2:16, 2:17- 3:8)
Feb 23 (Tue)	1:28-32	Darkened Mind, Darkened Behaviour	
Feb 24 (Wed)	2:1-11	God's Coming Judgement Will Be Impartial, the Same for All	
Feb 25 (Thu)	2:12-16	How God's Impartial Judgement Will Work	
Feb 26 (Fri)	2:17-24	The Claim of the Jew - and its Problems	
Feb 27 (Sat)	2:25-29	The Badge, the Name and the Meaning	
Feb 28 (Sun)	SUNDAY		
Mar 1 (Mon)	3:1-8	God's Determined Faithfulness	Session 4 (3:9-31)
Mar 2 (Tue)	3:9-20	Jews as well as Gentiles Are Guilty of Sin	
Mar 3 (Wed)	3:21-24	The Unveiling of God's Covenant Justice	
Mar 4 (Thu)	3:25-26	Jesus' Death Reveals God's Covenant Justice	
Mar 5 (Fri)	3:27-31	The God of Both Jew and Gentile	
Mar 6 (Sat)	4:1-8	God's Covenant with Abraham	
Mar 7 (Sun)	SUNDAY		
Mar 8 (Mon)	4:9-12	Abraham the Father of Both the Uncircumcised and Circumcised	Sessions 5&6 (4:1-25; 5:1-21)
Mar 9 (Tue)	4:13-17	Abraham Is the Father of All Believers	
Mar 10 (Wed)	4:18-25	Abraham's Faith - and Ours	
Mar 11 (Thu)	5:1-5	Peace and Hope	
Mar 12 (Fri)	5:6-11	Jesus' Death Reveals God's Love and Guarantees Final Salvation	
Mar 13 (Sat)	5:12-17	The Big Picture in Shorthand: Adam and the Messiah	
Mar 14 (Sun)	SUNDAY		
Mar 15 (Mon)	5:18-21	The Triumphant Reign of Grace	Session 7 (6:1-23)
Mar 16 (Tue)	6:1-5	Leaving the State of Sin through Baptism	
Mar 17 (Wed)	6:6-11	Dead to Sin, Alive to God	
Mar 18 (Thu)	6:12-14	The Call to Holy Living	
Mar 19 (Fri)	6:15-19	The Two Types of Slavery	
Mar 20 (Sat)	6:20-23	Where the Two Roads Lead	
Mar 21 (Sun)	SUNDAY		

Mar 22 (Mon)	7:1-6	Dying to the Law	Sessions 8-9 (7:1-25; 8:1-17)
Mar 23 (Tue)	7:7-12	When the Law Arrived: Sinai Looks Back to the Fall	
Mar 24 (Wed)	7:13-20	Looking Back on Life under the Law	
Mar 25 (Thu)	7:21-25	The Double ' Law' and the Miserable 'I'	
Mar 26 (Fri)	8:1-4	God's Action in Messiah and Spirit	
Mar 27 (Sat)	8:5-11	The Work of the Spirit	
Mar 28 (Sun)	SUNDAY		
Mar 29 (Mon)	8:12-17	Children of God, Led by the Spirit	Session 10 (8:18-39)
Mar 30 (Tue)	8:18-25	Creation Renewed and Patient Hope	
Mar 31 (Wed)	8:26-30	Prayer, Sonship and the Sovereignty of God	
Apr 1 (Thu)	8:31-39	Nothing Shall Separate Us from God's Love	
Apr 2 (Fri)	GOOD FRIDAY		
Apr 3 (Sat)	EASTER SATURDAY		
Apr 4 (Sun)	EASTER SUNDAY		

Weekly Rhythms.

The Vine and St. Timothy's will be holding a shared service on Ash Wednesday, hosted at St. Timothy's, and accessible online. We'll begin our journey then

Each Sunday during Lent, at The Vine, our worship together will include a focus on some of the readings that will be in the week that lies ahead.

Each Wednesday evening we'll attempt to explore those passages in a bit more depth. We will be flexible and respond to the questions that emerge. We hope to follow something like the following outline:

Week	Section	Date	Theme
1	Romans 1-8 Overview	Ash W'sday, Feb 17	Some of the big gospel themes in Romans. Getting ready for the journey.
2	Romans 1-2	Sun, Feb 21	God's justice – the gripes of wrath?
		Wed, Feb 24	Jews & Gentiles and all that that means today.
3	Romans 3	Sun, Feb 28	Justification, being made right.
		Wed, Mar 3	When the Gospel is a scandal; how and why we might be offended by it.
4	Romans 4-5	Sun, Mar 7	The long story of Abraham, Adam, and Jesus
		Wed, Mar 10	God's covenants and the shapes of humanity.
5	Romans 6	Sun, Mar 14	The Power of Baptism
		Wed, Mar 17	Eternal life starts now: applied eschatology.
6	Romans 7	Sun, Mar 21	When the problem has power.
		Wed, Mar 24	Holiness and sin, powerlessness and flourishing.
7	Romans 8	Sun, Mar 28	New and eternal life.
		Wed, Mar 31	Convinced by the Spirit of Adoption.