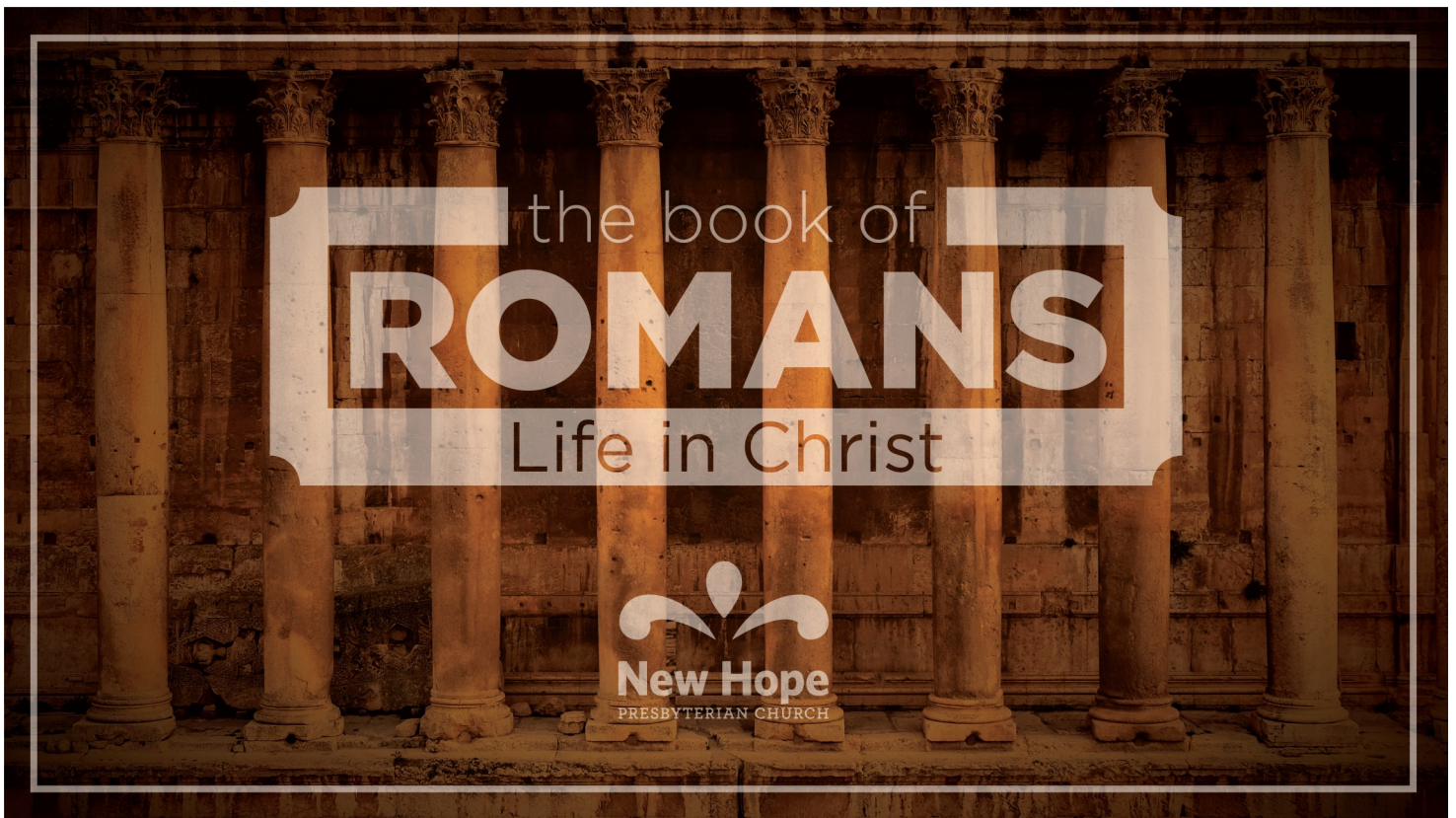




Romans: Life in Christ Study Guide (Week 3)

Why the Good News is So Good

August 22, 2021

Romans 1:18-32

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious towards parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

1. Last week when we looked at Romans 1:16-17, we defined these key words:

Gospel - *all that God has done for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Salvation – *we are rescued, delivered by Jesus.*

Faith – *a trust in God, a belief that leads to changed life.*

Righteousness – *God is right, it's who he is. And through Jesus, God makes right our relationship with him.*

This week in 1:18-32, we discover why these words are so central to our faith. We discover why the Good News is so good!

2. Read this week's passage through at least twice. What do you notice? What would you say is Paul's main point in the passage? Is there a verse or a phrase that captures this main point for you?

3. Verses 26-27 get a lot of attention. In fact, so much attention that the main point of this passage is often missed. Faithful Christians have different ways of interpreting these verses. Some see them as condemning any kind of same-sex relationship. Others suggest we need to take in account the larger context of the first century, Paul's Jewish background, and the Scriptures. When the larger context is considered, they believe these verses do not condemn same-sex relationships in our time. Regardless of how one interprets these two verses, one's perspective must be held with humility and grace toward those who may interpret them differently. As Paul makes clear in 2:1, given the broken state we all share, judging others is not for us to do. As Frank Matera puts it in his commentary on Romans, "The most prudent course of action in the present time, then, is to treat all with compassion, aware that only God is in a position to judge another person."

4. For a good summary of the "main point" of the passage, see the comments of preacher Fleming Rutledge below in *Reflections on Romans*. After reading her remarks, go back to the words we defined last week in #1 above. Then, look at the words of Tim Keller below. So *why is the Good News so good?*

Reflections on Romans

Let us not evade. Let us not flinch from the truth about ourselves. Let us submit to the word of the apostle, as sisters and brothers in the same sinking lifeboat; "There is no distinction. ... All have sinned. ... There is none righteous, no, not one." There is not one of us here that is not guilty—guilty of hurting our spouses and children and friends, guilty of self-indulgence and self-hatred, guilty of jealousy and dishonesty and laziness and selfishness, guilty of seeking power for ourselves at someone else's expense, guilty of not behaving like Christians, guilty of not caring, guilty above all of worshipping gods other than the one true God. ... it is one of the great works of the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. Thus we know that the conviction itself is a working of the Holy Spirit.

Fleming Rutledge

"The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

Tim Keller