



Talk-It-Over: Week 1

THE GOSPEL

Spend time going over questions and comments from the this week's sermon.

'All roads lead to Rome' is not merely a comment on traffic management in the ancient Roman empire. 'All roads lead to Rome' describes the fact that Rome was so large that it had a natural type of gravitational pull on everything around it. People from all over the world would be drawn to Rome. Food, textiles and other manufactured goods were shipped to Rome from across the world. It was quite possible, for instance, that clothes manufactured in Corinth would be sold and shipped to Rome for higher prices than the Corinthians themselves could afford.

Christianity, a religious movement from a far-flung corner of the empire, also found itself drawn to Rome. By the time Paul writes his letter to the Romans there are many Christians gathering in a numerous 'assemblies' across the city. We could easily imagine this letter being read to an assembly meeting in a crowded lounge room in a poorer district of Rome.

Within the wider Christian movement there were two broad categories of people. There were the Jewish Christians and the non-Jewish Christians. The Jewish Christians had come to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the fulfilment of the law and prophets. The non-Jewish (gentile) Christians, had come to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, but they did not have the same appreciation of the Jewish law, teaching and prophecy. This was a major source of tension with the early Church and is addressed by almost every New Testament writer. Part of Paul's genius in this letter is the way in which he encourages both groups and draws them together in a new understanding of God, us and the church.

Read:

Romans 1:1-17

Questions:

1. Have you ever been on a holiday and longed to visit a famous church or a church where your family had significant history?
2. Why do you think Paul wanted to visit the Roman Christians?
3. In verse 5, Paul says we are called to "obedience that comes from faith." What does "obedience that comes from faith" look like in a Christian's life in the 21st century?
4. The Greeks divided the world in two: Greeks and the rest. They called the rest "barbarians." Jews divided the world into two: Jews and the rest. They called the rest

“gentiles.” Within the church there were Jewish Christians who believed one way and Gentile Christians who believed something a bit different. Does your church reflect the racial or religious distinctions common in your community, or does it overcome them? Explain how and why.

5. In verse 17 Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 “The righteous will live by faith.” What does it mean to “live” in this context?

Prayer Time:

God,

We pray that we would never be ashamed of the gospel.

We pray for the chance to share the gospel with others, no matter who they are.

We pray for the power and courage to share our faith with others, and for the preparation of their hearts to receive it.

Amen.

Further Reading:

Romans 1:18 - 2:16 The Darkness of Humanity

Romans 2:17 - 3:8 The Faithfulness of God