

## Supporting Notes & Questions

Week beginning Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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### Background

The Jews of Paul's day were divided between those who rejected claims that Jesus was their Messiah and those who accepted him and became Christians. The latter were also divided between a few who insisted that Christian believers were obliged to obey the Jewish Law and the others who didn't. In Acts you will have read how God changed Peter's attitude to Gentiles and how the argument about Gentile Christians and the Law was settled at the Council of Jerusalem in AD48 by the Jewish Christian leaders there to Paul's satisfaction. But some Jewish Christians were not convinced. Galatians 2:11-16 identifies a group based in Jerusalem visiting some of Paul's churches trying to undermine his work. Perhaps they had been to Rome.

### Monday 15<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 2.

VV1-5 From commenting on the godless and their conduct, Paul turns to ....? Who are the "you" he accuses of hypocrisy? Surely not the Christians in Rome he has just praised?

VV6-24 It seems that Paul is addressing some of the Jewish Christians in Rome. Why?

VV25-29 The nub of the argument is circumcision. The question for us is "Do I have Jesus at the very centre of my being, radically transforming who I am and therefore what I think, say and do?"

### Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 3.

VV1-18 Is there any advantage in being born a Jew? Paul, a Jew himself, thinks not; even though Jews have God's laws to guide them, they don't obey them. What advantage to you is being born a Christian?

VV19-31 Jews and Gentiles alike who have faith in Jesus are declared righteous by God. Sin is endemic across all races. "All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory". Jesus' crucifixion is a sign from God that he wants a new kind of relationship with us. Does this mean that breaking God's law no longer matters?

### Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 4.

VV1-12 Paul reinforces his argument, showing Abraham being justified by faith before circumcision had been instituted. God was creating a "realm" of all those justified by faith. Who are its "citizens"?

VV13-17 Before the Law had been written, God made his promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. Does that include us as 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians?

VV17-25 Paul describes the depth of Abraham's faith, believing God's promise in spite of being without a son, with a wife judged to be beyond child-bearing years. Would your faith stretch to believing God's promise in Abraham's circumstances?

### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 5.

VV1-5 Because of our faith in Jesus, we enjoy God's peace and grace. God's Spirit fills our hearts with love.

VV6-11 In spite of our former sinful state, Jesus died for us because of God's love for us.

VV12-21 A complicated argument. Adam's failure, the cause of mankind's sinful nature, is contrasted with Jesus' obedience, enabling salvation for all. The Law was given to prevent sin, but only produced sinners.

In contrast, the death of Jesus produces saints. Why does the Church have us believe we are miserable sinners, when St. Paul thinks of us as joyful saints?

### Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Romans Chapter 6

VV1-7 In baptism we "die" and are "resurrected" in Christ. Therefore we are set free from slavery to sin.

VV8-14 Freed from slavery, sin has lost its power over us so we can live as instruments of God's goodness. Do you count yourself "dead to sin but alive in Christ"?

VV15-Don't allow yourself to sin in the mistaken belief you are now a free agent under God's grace. Paul thanks God that the Christians in Rome, once slaves to sin, are now following the way of righteousness. This way leads to eternal life. What does it mean to you that "The wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life"?