

Sept 22, 2019

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

Passage: Romans 1:1-7

Community Group Questions: "The Unbelievable Gospel of God"

1. This year at CCC, we are beginning a journey through the book of Romans in the New Testament. As we begin our study, it can be helpful to glean some background information on the book from a trustworthy study Bible. We recommend the ESV Study Bible (Crossway 2008) or the NIV Zondervan Study Bible (Zondervan 2015). Turn to the introduction to Romans in one of these resources (or a comparable resource) and read the introduction to the book out loud together. What insights about Romans do you find especially helpful for understanding the nature of this book? What do you look forward to the most in this study?
2. Read Romans 1:1-7 aloud as a group. Ancient letters began by announcing who the letter is from, then stating who the letter is to, and then giving a greeting. Locate these three features in Romans 1:1-7.
3. In verse 1, Paul describes himself as a "servant of Christ Jesus," an "apostle," and one "set apart for the gospel of God." What do each of these descriptions mean, and how do these terms help us understand that, ultimately, the gospel in Romans is a message from God? What would it look like this year if we really embraced the book of Romans as "God's Word to us"?
4. In verse 2, Paul insists that his gospel was "promised beforehand" in the Old Testament Scriptures. How do the promises and predications of Christ in the Old Testament give us evidence that the gospel is really true? Do you find that evidence convincing? Was it instrumental in bringing you to faith (if so, share the story)?
5. Verses 3-4 describe Jesus Christ as both fully human ("descended from David according to the flesh") and fully divine ("declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit). Why is it so important for our salvation that Jesus be BOTH human and divine? Is the nature of Jesus central to the gospel itself? If so, why?
6. Verse 4 says that God declared Jesus to be the Son-of-God-in-power through the resurrection. Paul says much the same thing in Acts 17:31 (read and compare). What was God "declaring" about Jesus when he raised him from the dead? As modern people, often skeptical about miraculous claims, what should we conclude about Jesus if he really did rise from the dead?
7. In verse 5, Paul says his gospel aims to bring about the "obedience of faith" among the nations. In other words, salvation is by faith alone (see Romans 4:5), but real faith should result in a life of obedience to

Christ. How would you describe the nature of true, biblical faith to someone you were sharing the gospel with?

8. Verses 6-7 use some wonderful terms to describe the Roman Christians. They are, “called to belong to Jesus,” “loved by God,” “called to be saints,” and they are recipients of God’s “grace and peace.” Define and discuss each of these phrases. How should the gospel transform our sense of worth and identity? What does it mean to “preach the gospel to yourself,” using these terms?

Prayer suggestion: Spend time thanking God for his gospel, and pray that God would bless our study of the book of Romans this year, giving us a gospel-shaped identity.