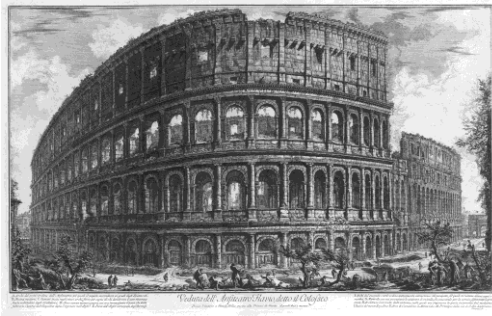


Newsletter No 81 – January 2025. ‘Growing as Christians, Growing as a Church’



Introducing the Roman’s Course

I have to be totally honest that when my daily Bible Reading notes have previously pointed me towards the Book of Romans my response would be, ‘Oh no, not Paul again’, the man who I thought always used a hundred words when ten would have done. On reflection I may have done an injustice to the Book of Romans and not really studied it in the way that I should, avoiding Romans for the safer ground of the Gospels or the Psalms or some other section of the Bible which gives a simpler message to understand.

There are no easy stories or simple applications in the Book of Romans. What Paul manages to do in a most profound way is to bring the whole story of God’s relationship with humankind together in this one short book. Reading and understanding the Book of Romans requires time and dedication and that is probably the reason why many avoid it by taking the easier routes elsewhere in scripture.

Andrew Ollerton, the author of the Roman’s Course writes in his introduction of the accompanying book; “Over the years I’ve realised that many people want to take on Romans but feel intimidated by the complex theology, Jewish backstory and controversial teachings on Sexuality”. This view is shared by many distinguished and learned Christians. David F. Ford, Emeritus Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University writes, St. Paul’s Romans is one of the most important books of the Bible, but not the easiest. The Evangelist, the Rev Canon J. John comments, “Every Christian needs a grasp of Paul’s letter to the Romans. You will find no wiser guide to this earthshaking letter than this accessible and helpful book that navigates every difficulty with both ease and enthusiasm. The notable contemporary theologian and prolific writer, Tom Wright describes Paul’s letter as his masterpiece.

Despite its difficulties, if we are prepared to take the hard route by committing ourselves to spending time tackling and studying it, Romans can provide great rewards. In the Roman’s Course, Andrew Ollerton draws parallels between the study of the book with that of climbing a mountain and associates the process of ascending and descending a mountain with his journey through the Book of Romans.

Something similar must have been in the mind of J. I. Packer in his book ‘Knowing God’ when he describes Paul’s Letter to Rome “as the high peak of scripture (and that) all roads in the Bible lead to Romans, and all the views afforded by the Bible are seen most clearly from Romans”.

During the ten weeks of the Roman Course, on the preceding Sunday the focus will be on the same subject as that to be presented on the following Tuesday. Although there may occasionally be an overlap in material the Sunday service will be very much in the hands of Sue, Diane and myself in introducing the subject. The Tuesday meetings will follow the Romans Course as presented by Andrew Ollerton through videos and the course handbook which will include group discussion. Whether you are able to join us on Tuesday afternoon sessions or not, you are invited to take a copy of the handbook and read through the Book of Romans.

Dates for January 2025

Sunday 5th at 10.30. – Rob Brooks including Sacrament. Romans the journey ahead.

Tuesday 7th at 12.30. – Monthly Church Lunch

Sunday 12th at 10.30. – Susan McArthur. Romans – The Gospel.

Monday 13th at 14.30. Church Council in the Fellowship Room. **Please note the afternoon meeting.**

Tuesday 14th at 14.00. The Roman's Course week 1
Sunday 19th at 10.30. – Rob Brooks. Romans – The Valley of Sin.
Tuesday 22nd at 14.00. The Roman's Course week 2
Sunday 26th at 10.30 – Diane Bennett. Romans - Salvation
Monday 27th at 19.30 – Deacons Meeting at 3 Kensington House
Tuesday 28th at 14.00– The Roman's Course week 3

As we start 2025 the weather is predicted to be bad with potential heavy snow. If the weather turns out as predicted and you are unable to attend on any Sunday, you can always join us through ZOOM. If you have a computer, tablet or smartphone or any device that connects to the internet you can join us on Zoom. If you would like any assistance in joining Zoom please speak to Brenda, Sue, Allyson or Rob.

Sunday Morning Worship is always shared on Zoom. Meeting ID: 874 0789 6194 and Password: 427632.

Clair House and Zoes's Place Collection. In addition to the craft table in the hall which raised £270, £130 was raised at the Christmas Concert with Pip and Nikki, £57.50 from the Christmas Post Box, £137.50 at the Christingle Service. This brings about a total of £595 which will be donated to the two children's hospices.

Member's News. We have been advised that Margaret Jenkinson who moved to live with one of her daughters in Coventry in 2023 has now moved to a care home due to a decline in her health. A few months ago, we also heard that Marjorie Hughson who has lived with one of her daughters near Cockermouth for the past few years has also been taken into care for the same reasons.

Drain update. Following the discovery of blocked drains on the Barton Avenue side of the building, investigations have identified that considerable work will need to be undertaken. The drain has large scale penetration by tree roots as well as misaligned drainage pipes. This is due to earth movement over the past 110 years! The matter is currently with our insurers.

Birthdays and Anniversaries in January. 3rd – Sue McArthur, 8th – Diane Bennett, 12th – Christine Willets, 18th – Kathryn Daniels, 19th – Betty Rowlands (80th Birthday), 25th – Janice Kennedy, Joyce Caffrey.
Wedding Anniversaries. 7th - Christine and Eric Willets, 15th - Kath and Tony Middleton, 31st – Mike and Anita Lynskey.

A Roman's Prayer



Righteous God, As we your church study Paul's letter to the Romans, we pray that we will have the endurance to persevere and reach to its heights of understanding.

Understanding about the signs that surround us each day which make us aware of your creative powers, your greatness and your everlasting presence.

Understanding about how each and every one of us one has failed to live to your standards and an understanding that everyone of us needs your forgiveness.

Make us also aware of your righteousness, a quality beyond our understanding but for something we are eternally grateful.

Let us remind ourselves that however great Rome was in terms of its power and extent, you are infinitely greater. The creations of man come and go but yours is everlasting. Remind us also that whilst many roads led to Rome, only one road leads to you.

Through our study of Paul's letter to the Roman's, remind us also of our need as Christians for unity. That the bond that binds us together by the death and resurrection of your Son made possible by your righteousness and how that outweighs everything else in life. So Righteous God guide us away from division of any form, guide us as one people. We ask these things in Jesus's name. Amen.