

romans

a life of faith



“SLAVE LETTER”

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS

DATE: JUNE 26, 2022

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:

ROMANS 1:1-7, ACTS 20:28, 1 COR. 6:19-20

The Apostle Paul is a towering figure in the history of Western Civilization. Few would argue with his importance as a philosopher, theologian, and socio-political reformer. Almost single-handedly, Paul established the importance of Jesus the Messiah's birth, death, and resurrection for the non-Jewish world. He was unique within the history of his own people as well. Trained by the finest rabbinical teachers of his day, Paul was a “pharisee of pharisees.” By his own admission, he was zealous for God's Law, surpassing all of his contemporaries. And yet, he was equally a master of Greek philosophy, able to confront the Imperial power of Rome while making subtle use of their own intellectual heritage.

Despite all of that, Paul opens his letter to the Roman Church by identifying himself as a slave of Jesus, Israel's Messiah and Lord of all the world. This message grapples with the questions, “Why would he do that and what does it mean for us?”

LEAN IN: These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What was your high/low for this past week (or since group last met)? What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?
2. What stood out to you in this message, and why?
3. What do you think of when you hear the word “slave?”
4. How might that term carry additional meaning in our culture?
5. What do you think of the idea that everyone serves someone or something?

LOOK DOWN: These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How does your translation read in verse 1? What do you notice about how it makes you feel if the word “servant” is used?
2. What are the main points Paul has in his summary of the Gospel?
3. How does Paul characterize the prophets' contributions?
4. What one thing demonstrates God's choice of Jesus as Messiah and Lord?
5. What is Paul's understanding of his primary mission? How does he phrase it?

LOOK OUT: These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Why do you think slavery persists: actual slavery where one human owns another?
2. Where do you see slavery in our world that may not literally be slave-owning, but is practically the same thing?
3. What are some of the people or things in our culture that most people choose as their “master?”
4. Do you think most people in our culture value freedom or autonomy,

CONTINUED:

and why? What's the difference, if any, between how those ideas are understood in our culture?

5. How might you explain Paul's idea of being a slave to Jesus to someone who wasn't Christian? What would make you nervous about that conversation?

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How do relate personally to the idea that because Jesus is Lord he is also your master?
2. What's hard for you when you think of being "a slave to Jesus?" The phrase is there in the text so we're forced to deal with it. However, it's good to process that with others, so be as honest as you're able.
3. What might you have to give up in order to embrace Jesus as your master? How does the idea that he is Lord and master condition your idea of obedience to him?
4. Paul ends with his traditional greeting, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." How do you put all of that together in your heart and mind: grace, peace, father, and lord? How do all those big ideas come together for you?
5. What changes might you make in your life if your were to take Jesus' Lordship more seriously? How can he be a friend (John 15:15) and your lord, for example? What's that look like practically in your life?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Make a list of all the things that influence you deeply and prayerfully ask Jesus if any have become a "master."
2. Using Paul's intro as a model, write your own where you state your identity (at its most fundamental), a summary of the Gospel, and how it informs your life's mission. Prayerfully consider how your actual life matches what you've written and repent and/or rejoice as appropriate!