

THE GOSPEL FOR ALL | ROMANS SERIES | WEEK 1

THE GOSPEL WE CARRY

Romans 1–3

Pastor Andrew Cole | Sunday 7 June 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *Every human being stands guilty before God - no one is righteous, not one. But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the gospel we carry, and it was never meant to terminate with us.*

Introduction - A New Series

Over the next five weeks, Hope Chapel begins a new series through Romans titled The Gospel for All, running alongside Hope Copper Coast. Each week works through a section of Romans with one thread held throughout: evangelism. The question for the whole series is - what does Romans teach us about the message we carry and the mission we are on?

In the winter of 1515, a troubled monk in Germany named Martin Luther sat down to prepare lectures on a letter he had read many times but never truly understood - Romans. As he worked through its opening chapters, something broke open in his soul. He later wrote that when he grasped what Paul was saying about the righteousness of God given through faith, he felt as though he had been born again and entered the gates of paradise. That moment changed Luther, the church, and the course of Western history.

Romans is not a collection of scattered religious thoughts - it is the most careful, systematic explanation of the gospel ever written. And it was written by a missionary, to a church Paul had never met, in a city he had never visited, because he believed the good news about Jesus had to go further.

Today, in Romans 1-3, Paul answers some of the most basic questions of all: why does this message matter? Why should anyone care? Why should we bother telling anyone? He answers in three ways:

- He shows us his own heart as a messenger
- He confronts us with the universal problem of human sin
- He unveils the divine solution

1 | The Messenger's Heart

Romans 1:14–16 *I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.*

Before Paul ever reaches his great theological argument, he lets us see his heart. Three short statements give us three windows into a man set on fire by the gospel.

“I am obligated”

The word Paul uses here actually means ‘I am indebted.’ Paul did not personally steal from these people or owe them money - this is not about money. When Jesus found Paul on the road to Damascus, he did not only save Paul, he entrusted him with something for others. The grace Paul received was never meant to terminate with Paul. It was meant to travel through him.

The moment Christ placed the gospel in his hands, Paul became a man with a debt to pay - not to God, because that debt was cancelled at the cross, but to every person who had not yet heard.

If you are in Christ, the same is true for you. The gospel was given to you, but it was not given only for you. You are holding a message that belongs to your world - your friends, your foes, your family, the ones who no longer come to church. They have a claim on what you know, not because of your eloquence, but because you have bread and they are starving.

“I am so eager”

Paul does not say, I am willing if it comes up. He says, I am eager. He is leaning forward into this. He cannot wait to get to Rome because Rome is full of people who need to hear.

When was the last time you were eager to share Christ with someone - not nervous, not obligated in a guilty way, but eager? If that eagerness has gone cold, it is not because the gospel has lost its power. It has no less power than when it was first placed in your hands and set a fire in your heart. If the flame has gone dim, it has nothing to do with the gospel - it has to do with us.

Andrew referenced blind Bartimaeus, who took off his begging cloak before going to Jesus and asking for his sight back. Maybe some of us need to take off whatever is holding us to where we can only beg, and come back to Jesus and ask him to restore our eagerness and sense of indebtedness to share the gospel again.

“I am not ashamed”

Consider what Paul was actually planning. He was going to Rome - the capital of the empire, the seat of human power, philosophy, and religion - to tell a city that worshipped Caesar about a Jewish carpenter crucified by Caesar’s governor. By every cultural measure, Paul should have been embarrassed to open his mouth.

But Paul says, I am not ashamed. Why? Because this message, however foolish it may sound, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

The enemy of our witness is often not hostility. It is shame - a quiet, creeping embarrassment, a fear of looking foolish, a fear of rejection.

Paul stares shame in the face. He was willing to walk into the very streets of the people who mocked and crucified Jesus and say, God is good. If Paul could be turned from chief sinner to writing two-thirds of the New Testament, what can God do with you, with the same gospel, the same bread, freshly baked, in your hands?

Reflect: *Indebted, eager, unashamed - which of these three is hardest for you personally right now? What would it look like to ask God to restore that one thing this week?*

2 | The Universal Problem

From the end of Romans 1 through the first half of Romans 3, Paul builds a case like a careful prosecutor in a courtroom - walking from one group of people to the next and showing that every one of them stands guilty before God.

The Pagan - Romans 1

The person who knows God exists through creation and conscience, but suppresses that knowledge and lives for themselves. Paul says the wrath of God is revealed against such people. Most of us nod along here - of course they deserve judgment.

The Moral Person - Romans 2

The one who tuts at the pagan. The one who has standards and lives a decent life. Paul says: you who pass judgment on others, you do the same. You are without excuse. Morality is not the same as righteousness.

The Religious Person - Romans 2:17 onward

The one who has a Bible, who knows the law and teaches it to others, who looks the part. Paul says: having the truth is not the same as being saved by it. Being near the gospel is not the same as being under it.

Romans 3:10–12 *There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*

No one. Not one. No exceptions, no asterisks, no hidden causes for the nice or the religious or the well-intended. The whole world stands in the dock before God, every mouth silenced, no defence, no excuse - only guilt.

Implications for Evangelism

We tend to divide people into categories: the obviously far from God (the atheist, the skeptic), the moral person (the kind-hearted friend who seems fine on their own), and the religious person (someone who attends a different church or grew up in the faith). We assume the second two are already sorted.

Paul dismantles all of that. The pagan needs Jesus. The moralist needs Jesus. The religious person needs Jesus. None of them are righteous. None of them seek God. None can stand before him on their own merits.

This is tough news - but it is also liberating for a Christian who wants to share their faith. You don't have to guess who needs it. The question is never does a person need the gospel? The question is only, will they receive it?

This isn't about being pious or walking up to people declaring 'you need Jesus.' It's about relationship, about letting people see who you are, about sharing what's in your hands - feeding them what you have.

3 | The Divine Solution

Romans 3:21 contains two of the most glorious words in the entire Bible: but now. Into the courtroom where every one of us stands condemned, something breaks in.

Romans 3:21–25 *But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made known. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood - to be received by faith.*

Four words hold the whole weight of this passage:

Righteousness

Being right with God, standing before him without shame, belonging to him without fear. It is what every religion in the world is reaching for and every human heart is aching for. Paul says it has been revealed - not achieved, not earned, but revealed, given, shown, held out as a gift.

Justified

A courtroom word - to be declared righteous by God. Picture the accused standing in the dock, every charge proved, expecting the gavel to fall. And the judge says: not guilty, cleared, free to go. God does not declare us justified because we are innocent - he declares us justified while we were still guilty, and does so justly because the penalty has been paid by someone else.

Redemption

A marketplace word - the price paid to set a slave free. We are slaves to sin and death, and Christ paid the price to buy us back. His blood for our freedom. His life for our life.

Sacrifice of Atonement

A temple word, taking us back to the altar where blood was shed so God's wrath would be turned away and his people could draw near. Jesus is that sacrifice. On the cross, the wrath your sin deserved was poured out on him so the welcome he deserved could be poured out on you.

Every human being stands guilty. No one can make themselves right. But God, out of pure mercy, sent his Son to live the life we could not live and die the death we deserved to die - so that anyone who trusts in him would be declared righteous, set free, and welcomed home.

This is not good advice. This is good news. Not a moral suggestion - a rescue. Not a message to be ashamed of - a message that can save your family, your friends, your foes, your work colleagues, your children.

Three Questions to Carry This Week

1. Who have you written off? Name the person you've quietly decided is too far gone. No one is further from grace than anyone else - grace doesn't measure distance, it covers it. Write their name down.

2. Could you actually say it? If someone asked you this week how a person gets right with God, could you say it? Not perfectly - but could you get the core out: a holy God, our sin, Christ's sacrifice, faith in him?

3. Are you ashamed? Be honest with yourself. When conversation drifts toward faith, do you lean in or pull back? If shame has a grip on your witness, pray boldly: Lord, give me courage. Give me one conversation. Loose my tongue.

The Series Challenge - One Name

Through this whole five-week series, write down the name of one person you know who, to the best of your knowledge, doesn't know Christ yet. Put it somewhere you'll see it - your Bible, your phone screen, a sticky note on the mirror.

Every day for the next 35 days, pray three simple things for them:

- Lord, draw them to yourself
- Lord, prepare their heart to hear
- Lord, use me - or someone - to tell them

At the end of the five weeks, these names will be brought back up. This is not just information - it is participation. Don't leave it to someone else in the congregation. It's you.

Conclusion

Romans is not only a letter to be studied. It is a letter that sends us.
The gospel in it is not only a gospel to be believed - it is a gospel to be carried.

We carry something so unique, so amazing, so life-changing. Like Paul, we are called to carry it with obligation, with eagerness, and without shame.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Paul describes himself as indebted, eager, and unashamed. Which of these three words is hardest for you to apply to yourself honestly right now, and why?

2. Andrew said the grace we receive was never meant to terminate with us. Has this challenged or changed how you think about your own salvation - as something only for you, or something that was always meant to travel through you to others?

3. Paul's argument dismantles the categories we put people in - pagan, moral, religious - by showing all three groups equally need Jesus. Is there someone in your life you've quietly assumed doesn't need the gospel because they seem fine, kind, or already religious?

4. Who is the person you've written off as too far gone? What would it look like to bring them before God this week and write their name down?

5. If someone asked you this week how a person gets right with God, could you actually explain it? What would you say?

6. Andrew asked: are you ashamed? Be honest with yourself about how you respond when faith comes up in conversation. What is one specific prayer you could pray this week to address that?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Romans 1:14–16 - I am obligated, I am eager, I am not ashamed
- Romans 1:18–32 - The pagan: suppressing the truth
- Romans 2:1–16 - The moral person: without excuse
- Romans 2:17–3:8 - The religious person: truth is not salvation
- Romans 3:10–12 - There is no one righteous, not even one
- Romans 3:21–25 - But now: righteousness, justified, redemption, atonement