

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Epistle to the Romans

INTRODUCTION | “Sharing the Gospel”

Sharing the gospel to the people around us can be quite difficult. What is the reason for this? First, we will talk about the fact the gospel is like a powerful medicine to heal a severe disease. Second, all of us are touched by this spiritual disease, we have to accept our condition and recognize we need the antidote. Third, let’s look at the problem of our hearts, as the gospel can heal them.

SCRIPTURE | Romans 1:14-25

1:14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” 18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

QUESTIONS |

- 1: (verses 14-17) For Paul, who wrote this epistle, how are you supposed to receive the gospel? In your opinion, how does our modern society receive the gospel? How do you feel about this? (reference: Hebrews 12:2)
- 2: According to this passage, how does the gospel work among us? If you ever experimented the power of the gospel, share an anecdote.
- 3: (verses 18-20) According to the Bible, how does God reveal himself to us? How can people today understand this?
- 4: This passage talks about the situation of our hearts and lives. How does it describe them? Paul says: “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven”. Do you agree with this affirmation? How would you explain what “God’s wrath” is? (reference: Matthew 23:37-38)
- 5: (verses 21-25) What does the Bible say about our heart situation when we are far from God? What is the cause of such a situation?
- 6: What are your heart idols? How can the gospel take care of your heart? After sharing, pray for each other. (reference: Mark 7:21-23, 1 John 1:9)

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REFERENCES |

Hebrews 12:2

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Matthew 23:37-38

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate.

Mark 7:21-23

21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

PRAYER |

- The gospel of Christ saves us from the wrath of God, and leads us to a new life where we can walk in the love of God. It is just like a powerful medicine that heals us from a severe disease. We can pray to thank God for this, and joyfully share it with the others. If there are specific people you want to share the gospel with, pray for them.
- Despite the fact God reveals himself to us clearly, we tend to rely on other things, our heart idols. Let’s repent. We often turn toward other things than God when we have problems, when we feel anger or fears. We should identify them and part with them to replace them with Christ’s love.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

lunch time meeting (19 Akasaka, 20 Kasumigaseki, 21 Otemachi)
Bible study “Walk through the Bible” 3rd session (24)
worship & fellowship (24 “Work: the Kingdom of God’s business culture”)
fellowship diner (24) *reservation needed
lunch time meeting (27 Marunouchi, 28 Otemachi) *no lunch time meeting in August
Bible study “Walk through the Bible” 4th session (31)
worship & fellowship (31 “Work: the Kingdom of God’s business culture”)