

GROWING IN KNOWING

# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

ROMANS 6-12



Bible Studies  
Term 4 2017

Gympie Presbyterian Church

## Welcome

Welcome to part two of our studies in the book of Romans. Last year we looked at chapters 1-5, now we plan to tackle chapters 6-13.

## Why Did Paul Write Romans?

The Apostle Paul wrote Romans (1:1) with Tertius as scribe (16:22) around 55-57 A.D., maybe whilst in Corinth. Perhaps the impetus for writing was as part of Paul's preparation to visit Rome on his way to Spain (15:23-25). Perhaps it was simply his longing to see the Christians in Rome (1:11, 15:32). Perhaps there were several reasons. After reading the letter, you get a sense of some of the things that were on Paul's mind. These include: explaining his apostolic mission to the Gentiles, making the gospel clear, and addressing the relationship between Jew and Gentile Christians.

## The Major Theme of Romans

Many ideas are suggested as key themes of Romans, such as righteousness, justification by faith, salvation, Jew/Gentile distinctions. While all of these play a part, one word perhaps trumps them all: **gospel**. At its heart, Romans is about the good news of the right standing sinners may have before God, through faith in Jesus. Romans begins and ends with a focus on the gospel. The fact that Paul begins and ends by dwelling on the gospel points us to what his focus is on (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-9).

## Structure of the Letter

There are a few ways to analyse the structure of Romans. The most common is to divide it into two main sections. The first section, chapters 1-11, work through deep issues of sin, the Law, justification, grace, etc. The second section, chapters 12-16, are the 'application' where the truths laid down in the first section are put into practice in the Christian's everyday life.

## This Series of Growth Group Bible Studies

Week	Date*	Study
1	8th October	The Story so Far (Romans 1-5)
2	15th October	Dead to Sin, Alive to God (Romans 6)
3	22nd October	Free from Bondage to the Law (Roman 7)
4	29th October	Living by the Spirit (Romans 8)
5	5th November	The Mercy of God (Romans 9-10)
6	12th November	The Mercy of God to Israel (Romans 11 )
7	19th November	Living by the Mercy of God (Romans 12)
8	26th November	Loving by the Mercy of God (Romans 13)

\*dates here are just a guide and may differ for your group.

These studies are adapted from a series originally written for Kenmore Presbyterian Church and are used with permission. We're thankful for their partnership and generosity in the gospel.

## Word Watch #1: what does *gospel* mean?

The term *gospel* means 'good news', and the term has three main uses:

- i) a *Gospel* is a type of biblical literature that recounts the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke & John are Gospels.
- ii) official proclamations in the ancient world were sometimes referred to as *gospel* – or *good news*. Occasionally Roman emperors would issue these good news proclamations to tell people about military victories and other significant events.
- iii) *the gospel* also refers directly to the message about Jesus' death for our sins and his victorious resurrection. When Paul speaks of the *gospel* he is pointing to this last meaning (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8).

## Word Watch #2: The Righteousness of God

The concept of the righteousness of God (1:17) is central to Romans. Though it is quite a complex idea, a couple of points can help us think about it:

- i) God is righteous and always acts righteously. As a perfect and holy God, he always acts in conformity to his will and character. God flawlessly keeps his promises, judges the nations, and is merciful—in other words, because of who God is, he always does what is right. God is righteous and always acts righteously.
- ii) the *righteousness of God* is most clearly revealed in the gospel (1:17). God's faithfulness to his Old Testament promises has come to pass in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. In Christ, God has kept his promises, has dealt with sin, and has been merciful to us. In this sense, we could paraphrase verse 17, 'The gospel reveals that God is a righteous God because he always does what is right and good.'
- iii) We only possess a righteous standing before God because of what God has done for us in Jesus. Our righteousness before God has nothing to do with our obedience—it comes from what God has achieved on our behalf. In this sense we could paraphrase verse 17, to say 'the gospel reveals that people can get a right standing with God, from God, through faith in Jesus.'

## Word Watch #3: Justification and Sanctification

**Justification** - 'God's act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely, by his grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative law-keeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf (Romans 3:23-26, 4:5-8, 5:18).' *New Bible Dictionary*

**Sanctification** - 'the process by which an entity is brought into relationship with or attains the likeness of the holy.' *New Bible Dictionary*

The **two terms** are distinct yet inseparable benefits of our union with Christ. The connection is demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 1:30. In this verse we read that Christ embodies God's plan of salvation, and has become our *justification, sanctification, and redemption*. Though the terms are not interchangeable, a Christian cannot be justified and not sanctified, nor can he or she be sanctified but not justified (see 1 Corinthians 6:11). Jesus makes it possible for us to be counted righteous before God (justification), and at the same time establishes us in a distinct and exclusive relationship with God (sanctification).

# THE POWER OF GOD

## STUDY 1: REVISING ROMANS 1-5

These Bible studies cover the second half of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Roman Christians. This year our studies are starting in chapter 6, so it's a bit like butting into the middle of a conversation or walking in halfway through a movie. To help us put everything into context, we are going to overview the first five chapters briefly.

### Read Romans 1:1-7

1. Who does the apostle Paul address his letter to?
2. What does Paul's introduction of himself reveal about:
  1. The gospel (see *Word Watch #1*)
  2. Paul's role as an apostle

### Read Romans 1:14-17

3. What is the gospel? What can it do? What does it reveal?

### Read Romans 1:18-23

4. How is sin described?
5. Why are people without excuse when they face God's wrath?

### Read Romans 2:1-5, 17-23

6. Why are those who pass judgment also without excuse?

### Think it through:

7. How well does Paul describe human nature? Is he too harsh? Too kind?

Romans could have ended at 3:20 with all humanity unrighteous before God. God would be perfectly just to condemn us. Thankfully that's not where it ends, there is good news! But the good news brings a monumental problem: how can a holy God forgive **AND** be a righteous judge? This great problem is addressed in the following passage, which Martin Luther called "the very central place of this letter, and of the whole Bible." Let's see why.....

## Read Romans 3:21-31

8. Paul introduces a righteousness ‘apart from the Law’. Where does this righteousness come from? How do we receive it?
9. How is it related to the Old Testament?
10. How can God *be just* (do the right thing) whilst also *justifying* (declaring ‘not guilty’) the wicked?

The good news of the gospel is that although everyone has sinned, Jesus, the only sinless one, took our punishment so anyone who believes can be justified.

In chapter 4 Paul pre-empted an objection. Even though he’s already said this *righteousness of God* (see *Word Watch #2*) has been spoken about in the Old Testament (3:21), the objection could be raised that the gospel is something out of the blue. Someone might say it has nothing to do with everything God has been doing with Israel. But in chapter 4 Paul shows that having faith credited as righteousness is how God has always worked—even back with Abraham, Israel’s great father.

In chapter 5 we see some of the great blessings that come through the gospel.

## Read Romans 5:9-12, 15-17

11. What things do we have *now*? (vv.9-11)
12. Why can a believer have assurance they will be saved? (vv.9-10)
13. How is the death that came through Adam like the life that comes through Jesus? (vv.16-17)
14. In what ways is the gift that came through Jesus better than what came through Adam? (v.15)

## Think it through

15. From Romans 1-5 how would you say that the gospel is the *power of salvation*?
16. How does the *righteousness of God* encourage us to share the good news of Jesus?

**Pray Together** thanking God for declaring us righteous through faith in Jesus.

# DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD

## STUDY 2: ROMANS 6

### Think about it....

What do you more often feel like: a righteous person or a sinner?

In Romans 5 Paul contrasted two kingdoms: the kingdom of sin and death that came about through the disobedience of Adam; and the kingdom of grace and life that came through the righteousness of Christ. In this study and the next, we look at the *kingdom transfer* that occurs when a person becomes a Christian. We begin with the Christians attitude towards sin.

### Should Christians go on sinning – that grace might increase?

#### Read Romans 6:1-11

1. Why could the gospel make someone think ‘I should sin more so grace increases?’
2. Why does God’s grace not lead to more sin? (vv.1-4)
3. What is the effect of being united with Christ
  1. with regard to sin (vv.5-7),
  2. with regard to life (vv.8-10)?
4. Discuss what it means for the Christian to be ‘alive to God in Christ Jesus?’ (v.11)

#### Read Romans 6:12-14

5. What does Paul command? How does this command fit with verses 1-11?
6. Discuss what it means to offer yourself to God? (v.13) How is this different to being under law? (v.14)

### Think about it....

7. If we have already been brought from death to life, why must we offer ourselves to God?

## Should Christians sin – because we are no longer under law?

### Read Romans 6:15-23

8. How would you put the idea in verse 15 in your own words?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What image/metaphor does Paul use to describe the Christian's new relationship to sin (vv16-22)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What might be some of the perceived 'benefits' Paul is discarding in verse 21?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What is the benefit he refers to in verse 22?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. Discuss what it means, then, to become 'slaves to God'.

In this chapter, we see the relationship between justification (righteousness) and sanctification (holiness) (see *Word Watch #3*). In verse 19 Paul gives a command, 'offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness.' The change which has already happened in the life of the Christian is the basis for this command. Yet even this change is brought about by God. Even though we are declared righteous and holy the moment we're united to Christ by faith, we keep growing and progressing into this new life.

### Think about it....

13. How does Romans 6 help us define our responsibility as Christians? What is God's work and what is our work?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Brainstorm ways that you might explain to someone who is not a Christian the great benefits of following Christ, put so succinctly in verse 23?

### Pray Together

Confess your sin to God and ask for forgiveness through Jesus.

Pray that we will understand both God's work and our responsibility in the Christian life.

Pray for someone you know who doesn't know Christ and pray they may not receive the wages of sin.

# FREE FROM BONDAGE TO THE LAW

## STUDY 3: ROMANS 7

### Think about it....

Why do Christians struggle with the desire to sin?

In Romans chapter five Paul contrasted two realms: the realm of sin and death that came through the disobedience of Adam; and the realm of grace and life that came through the righteousness of Christ. We've been looking at the "realm transfer" that occurs when a person becomes a Christian.

Last week we looked at how this transfer saves the Christian from the wages of sin, which is death, and causes us to become alive to God. This week we look at how this transfer affects the life of the Christian with regard to God's Law.

### Read Romans 7:1-6

1. In what situation does the Law have authority (v.1)? What imagery/metaphor does Paul use to demonstrate this point (vv.2-3)?
2. In verse 4 Paul says Christians have died to the Law, in the same way that he said we died to sin in chapter 6. For what reason have Christians died to the Law?
3. What did the Law achieve when we were controlled by the sinful nature?

### Think about it....

4. When Paul talks about the Law, he means the law of Moses. So verses 1-6 raise questions for us. Didn't God give this Law to his people? Didn't he command them to obey it? How could this Law be considered an instrument of sin and death from which we need to be released?

### Read Romans 7:7-13

5. What is the function of the Law according to Paul in verse 7?
6. Who is the real culprit according to verse 8?
7. What was the Law intended to bring? What did it bring instead, thanks to sin (vv.10-11)?
8. What effect does the Law have on sin (v.13)?



## Read Romans 7:14-25

9. What evidence can you find in verses 14-25 that Paul is talking about the struggle of:
  1. Unregenerate Humanity, or Israel under the Law?
  2. Himself, or the regenerate believer who still struggles with sin?
10. Which two Laws wage war within this person (vv.22-23)?
11. Whatever this person's identity is, what is the outcome for them (vv.24-25)?

## Think about it....

We might conclude in the second part of chapter 7 Paul describes the experience of the Christian living between the two realms. On the one hand, we have been delivered from the realm of sin and death that came through the disobedience of Adam and have entered into the realm of grace and life that came through the righteousness of Christ. On the other hand, we are still affected by the realm of sin and death, while living in this earthly body.

12. Do you think Paul's words accurately describe life between these two realms? How do his words fit with your experience as a Christian?

## Pray Together

Share some of the troubles we experience as Christians, in our fight against sinful desires. Give thanks together for the rescue we have received from God.

# LIVING BY THE SPIRIT

## STUDY 4: ROMANS 8

So far we have learned lots about what Christ has done for us to free us from bondage to sin and the Law. But we have heard only brief mention of the Holy Spirit. In the opening verses to chapter 8 (vv.1-4), Paul reiterates what Christ has done for us, summarising much of chapters 5-7. There is now no condemnation since we are freed from bondage to sin and the Law. We now live not according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit. Let's see what it means to live according to the Spirit.

### Read Romans 8:5-17

1. In the table below, list the characteristics of those who live according to the sinful nature, versus the benefits to those who live according to the Spirit (vv.5-17).

Sinful Nature	Spirit

2. In your own words, describe the relationship the Christian has with the Spirit of God (vv.9-11).
3. In your own words, describe the relationship the Christian has with God, because of the Holy Spirit (vv.12-17).

### Think about it....

4. From Paul's description of the Christian life in verse 1-17, to what extent are we responsible for our new life, and to what extent is it God's work in us?

### Read Romans 8:18-27

Paul now turns to the issue of suffering.

5. For what does creation eagerly awaits (v.19)?
6. What is the frustration creation was subjected to, and who subjected it to this frustration (vv.18-21)?
7. What do we eagerly await, and when will we receive it (vv.22-25)?

8. What role does the Spirit play in us while we wait (26-27)?

Living in a fallen and judged world that has been subjected to God's wrath (Romans 1:18ff) is not a pleasant experience. But as Christians, we have heaps to look forward to, and even as we wait, God works in us by his Spirit convicting us of the truth and reminding us of our hope.

### Read Romans 8:28-39

9. What has God accomplished for the Christian? Is there anything yet to be completed (vv.28-30)?

10. In verses 31-37 Paul asks a string of questions. For each of these questions the answer is either given or implied. Fill out the table below with each question and its answer.

Question	Answer

11. What does Paul mean when he says we are more than conquerors (v.37)? How do verses 38-39 help us answer this question?

### Think about it....

12. Discuss together some of the ways that you are encouraged by these verses, particularly vv.28-39.

13. What are some of the ways we might misinterpret these verses?

### Pray Together

Give thanks for the great assurance and confidence we have as Christians. Share and pray for each other about any uncertainties you may have.

Pray for Christians in the world who face suffering and persecution because of their faith.

# THE MERCY OF GOD

## STUDY 5: ROMANS 9-10

### Think about it....

How would you define God's mercy? How have you experienced God's mercy in your life?

### Read Romans 9:1-18

1. What do you think is the cause of Paul's 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' (v.2)? (Think back to Paul's argument in chapter 6 and 7)
2. What point is Paul making in verses 6-13?
3. Ultimately, what does inclusion as one of God's children depend on (v.16)? Does anyone deserve to be one of God's children? (cf Romans 3:9-10)

### Think about it....

4. God's mercy can seem arbitrary and cruel. How might we respond to someone who argues that since our destiny depends on God, he's wrong to hold us accountable for our sin?

### Read Romans 9:19-29

In verse 19, Paul anticipates just this kind of objection.

5. What analogy does he use to respond to it (vv.19-22)?
6. What reason does he offer for God's actions, in verses 22-24?
7. Who are the objects of God's mercy, and who are the objects of God's wrath (vv.22-24)?
8. From which people group does God draw his people, Jews or Gentiles (vv.25-29)?



### Word Watch #4: Mercy

The Oxford Dictionary defines mercy as “refraining from inflicting punishment or pain on an offender or enemy who is in one’s power”.

God’s mercy is heightened when we realise how much we deserve God’s wrath (Romans 3:9-10). It is heightened again when we realise that this mercy is freely available to all who believe in him, regardless of how they may have rejected him.

### Think about it....

9. If God’s shown you mercy, how does this make you feel?

### Read Romans 9:30-10:10

10. Why did Israel not obtain righteousness, according to verse 32 and verse 2-3?
11. How does one obtain God’s righteousness (v.4)?
12. What is the role of both our Heart and our Mouth? (vv.5-10)?

### Read Romans 10:11-21

13. To whom does God extend his mercy (vv.11-13)?
14. What do verses 14-15 tell us about the role of God’s people in bringing mercy to those who don’t know God?
15. Paul ends chapter 10 by dwelling further on the unbelief of Israel. What was the obstacle for those who didn’t accept the good news? And what part do the Gentiles play in bringing the good news to Israel? (vv.16-21)

You would have noticed that chapters 9 and 10 underline God’s great mercy. Until we understand how much we deserve God’s judgement (Romans 3:9-10) we will not be able to appreciate God’s mercy. We can’t accuse God of being unfair when he judges some and saves others—it’s amazing that he would choose to save anyone.

### Think about it....

16. In what ways might God be using us to demonstrate his mercy to others? In what ways might we tell the good news of God’s mercy with others?

### Pray Together

Thank God for his mercy to us in Jesus.

Share about and pray for people you know who are in need of God’s mercy.

# THE MERCY OF GOD TO ISRAEL

## STUDY 6: ROMANS 11

Chapter 10 ended with stark statements describing the disobedience of Israel and their rejection of God's mercy. In chapter 11 Paul describes God's commitment to Israel, despite their rejection of him.

### Think about it....

Have you been hurt or rejected by someone? How easy is it to be generous towards someone who has hurt you and is without remorse?

### Read Romans 11:1-10

1. Has Israel been rejected by God? What proof does Paul offer of this? (v.1)
2. What word does Paul use to describe those God has chosen for himself? How have they been chosen? (v.5-6)
3. Which of the Israelites received God's mercy (v.2, 7)? What happened to the others?

### Read Romans 11:11-24

4. What was the result of the sin of Israel (v.11-12, 15)?
5. How does it make you feel to know that others have experienced God's wrath in order that you might experience his mercy?
6. What is one of Paul's goals in his ministry to the Gentiles (vv.13-14)? What will be the result if Israel accepts God's mercy (v.15)?

Paul uses a farming metaphor of grafting two trees from different sub-species to describe the relationship of the Jews and Gentiles in God's grand plan of salvation.

7. As branches that have been grafted in do Gentiles have any reason to boast?(vv.17-21)
8. To what do the Gentiles owe their inclusion in the olive tree (v.22)?
9. What clues do we have to the future of Israel in verses 23-24?

### Think about it

10. Is this image of wild olive branches that have been grafted in to Israel a familiar image for most Western Christians today? How do we most commonly picture ourselves, as compared to Jews?

## Read Romans 11:25-32

11. What does Paul say is the future of Israel (vv.26-27)?
12. How does this match up with Paul's description of Israel in 9:6-16?
13. So what might Paul mean when he says "all Israel will be saved"?
14. On what basis is Paul so confident of the future of Israel in verses 28-29?
15. What is the relationship between disobedience and mercy in verses 30-32? Who has been disobedient, and who will receive mercy?



## Think about it...

16. Verse 32 has often been used to support *universalism*, the idea that, in the end, God mercifully plans to save every person. Is this what Paul is saying?

Rather than reading verse 32 to say that God plans to save all people without *exception*, we ought to read it to say that God plans to save all without *distinction*. All the way through Romans, Paul has compared Jew and Gentile. He has shown all have sinned (3:23) and are in need of God's mercy. In the same way both Jew and Gentile are exactly the same in salvation (3:24, 10:12). Therefore God's mercy will be poured out on a great multitude of people from every nation, both Jews and non-Jews.

## Read Romans 11:33-36

If you're normal, your head is spinning by this point in chapter 11.

17. What comfort can we draw from these closing verses, especially in the face of difficult or confusing teaching about God's work of salvation?

## Think about it...

Piece together some of the images of the last two studies. What final picture of God's mercy do you come away with, from chapters 9-11? Share your ideas.

## Pray Together

Give thanks for the salvation that we have through faith, and that we can look forward with hope because God loves us.

# LIVING BY THE MERCY OF GOD

## STUDY 7: ROMANS 12

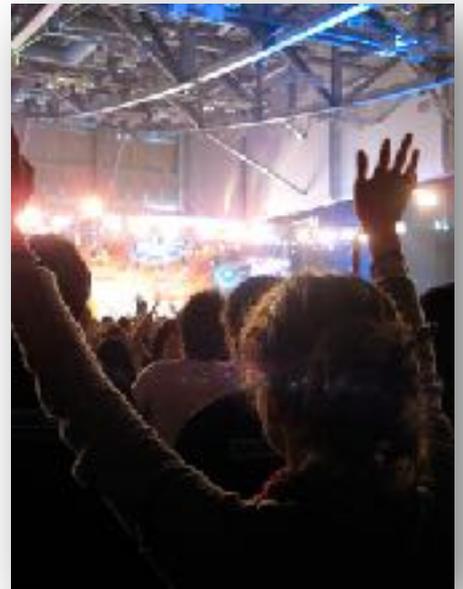
### Think about it

1. What are some of the different ways you respond to people's kindness?

### Read Romans 12:1-2

2. What is the *therefore* which starts chapter 12 referring to?
3. In your own words, describe how Paul urges us to respond to God's mercy (vv.1-2)?
4. How might our minds be *transformed* and *renewed*. What is the result of this transformation?
5. How does the use of the word *worship* (v.1) compare to some common Christian and non-Christian uses of this word?

Many people equate 'worship' with what happens at church on Sunday – often just to the singing that happens at church. But Paul has far more in mind in these verses. In fact in v1, *worship* could equally be translated *service*. Our service, or worship, of God isn't limited to Sunday, or when we're praying or reading the Bible. Worship is the new life of believers. In the rest of the chapter, Paul expands the command of verses 1-2.



### Read Romans 12:3-8

6. Why does Paul command us to think of ourselves with humility (vv.3-5)?
7. List the gifts Paul mentions in verses 6-8.
8. Does everyone have each gift? What are we to do with the gifts we have?

### Think about it...

9. Is our church one where people use their gifts and abilities cheerfully for the good of everyone? In what ways do we encourage people to serve? Is there more we could do?

10. Many churches are into doing surveys to determine *your gift/s*. Do you really need to know what 'your gift' might be in order to serve?

### Read Romans 12:9-21

11. In what ways is sincere love expressed in the life of the Christian (vv.9-16)?
12. How is this love expressed particularly in response to evil (vv.9, 14, 17-21)?

### Think about it...

13. Share examples of ways you have given or received the kind of love described in verses 9-21. Share particular areas where you struggle to show sincere love.
14. In what ways are these many expressions of love an appropriate response to our loving and merciful God? How is the love of God reflected in the kind of love Paul teaches us to display?

### Pray...

Thank God for his great love and mercy. Pray that we would respond by offering ourselves as living sacrifices. Share the areas where you find this difficult, and pray for each other to grow and mature in our daily worship of God.

Thank God that even while we were sinners, God demonstrated his love for us in Jesus. Pray that we would practice showing this kind of love to others.

# LOVING BY THE MERCY OF GOD

## STUDY 8: ROMANS 13

### Recap

Take a few minutes to look over the last 6 studies, and review all that God, in His Mercy, has done for us. Share your ideas.

Study	Chapters	Title	What has God done for us?
1	1-5	The Power of God (Review)	
2	6:1-23	Dead to Sin, Alive to God	
3	7:1-25	Freed from Bondage to the Law	
4	8:1-39	Living by the Spirit	
5	9:1-10:21	The Mercy of God	
6	11:1-36	The Mercy of God to Israel	
7	12	Living by the Mercy of God	

### Think about it

How do most Australians talk about politicians?

### Read Romans 13:1-7

1. Remembering Paul is writing to Christians living in Rome, the capital of the world's most powerful empire, why is it important to know *governing authorities* are put there by God?
2. What roles or jobs do governing authorities have?
3. Why should Christians (a) submit to authorities, (b) pay taxes, (c) respect and honour those in government?

## Think about it

4. From early on, Christians faced persecution from the Roman government (e.g. Acts 18:2 mentions Jews being kicked out of Rome. Christians were probably included in this expulsion. Also, between 64-68AD the emperor Nero persecuted Christians). For the Christians who first received this letter, what difficulties would there be in doing what it says?
5. The political system we live under in Australia is quite different from that of Rome. What similarities and differences do you think there are between our two situations? In a democracy, what does it mean for us to *submit to governing authorities*?

## Read Romans 13:8-14

6. What command sums up all the commandments? Why do you think this is?
7. Does this *summed up* command mean God's expectations are higher or lower for Christians?
8. What is the *hour* that's already come? How does the time impact how we live?
9. How can we put off the *deeds of darkness*? What are we to clothe ourselves with in their place?
10. Some of the *deeds of darkness* are quite extreme (orgies) but others are more 'normal' (quarrelling, jealousy). How are all of these things related to the *law of love*? What does this mean for our *rating* of different sins?

## Think about it

11. Who is our neighbour? How can we encourage each other to *love our neighbour as ourselves*?
12. How do we *clothe ourselves* with Christ? How does this aid in our struggle against sin?

## Pray

Pray for 'kings and all those in authority' (1 Timothy 2:1-2) and for our response to them. Ask God to keep helping us to replace the deeds of darkness with the love of Christ.

As you think back over these eight studies, you'll notice how important it is for us to understand the extent of our guilt before God and the enormousness of God's love and mercy towards us. Thanks to the work of Christ we have been brought out from the realm of sin and death into the realm of grace and life. Having been buried and raised again with Christ, we have been made dead to sin and alive to God, and are free from bondage to the Law. We can now throw off the sinful nature, and live by the Spirit, confident that nothing can separate us from our God.

We marvel as this great transfer was expressed in God's merciful act of love. God made available his unmerited grace to all people, Jew or Gentile, without distinction or prejudice. Our response to such mercy can be nothing less than a life of love, lived in service and worship of him.

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