

The
New
Testament
in a Year

Week 34

Romans 8-12

*This week's reflector is **Heather Weaver-Orosz** from the ministry team at Wellington Square UC in Burlington.*

General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God (including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your prayer today.

Monday

Romans 8

We believe all of Romans was written at a time when Paul couldn't get to the Roman church he so desperately longed to visit. No matter how much he wanted to or tried, life and ministry kept him elsewhere. He was living in a time of separation – unchosen, unwanted, but unavoidable for the present time.

Somehow that distance seemed to draw him closer in faith, though – reminding him and moving him to write powerfully and passionately about the impossibility of our separation from God's love. The chapter is full of rich, sometimes head-spinning theology on the magnitude of God's grace, and yet it all comes clearest in vv. 38 and 39. Paul challenges every "what if," lays to rest anything real or imagined, seen or unseen, and proclaims that "it is impossible to get beyond God's loving reach." (NIV Study, 1985).

As you reflect...

Where will God reach out to you, for you today?

How can and will you offer that reach of merciful love in turn?

Tuesday

Romans 9

Paul continues to teach the early Roman Christians, navigating complicated debates about God, the church and Jesus. He takes his listeners back through ancient, Biblical history with complex arguments and teaching. And yet again, in the depths of an almost overwhelming defense of God's Word and work in history, Paul still manages to give us clear nuggets to hang a life of faith upon.

In the midst of the complexity, there is profound clarity of praise for God's glory. Paul finds the thread of God's continuous story, and holds up for us, again and again, the depth and breadth of God's mercy. He brings us face to face, again and again, with our God who is the same God through the ages, for all people, for all time to come.

As you reflect...

How can you praise God's glory in your day's unfolding?

How can and will you make it plain for the complex world around you? – a world that longs for the simple promise of God's unstoppable love.

Wednesday

Romans 10

If ever there was a call to evangelism, vv. 14-15 is it. In this string of rhetorical questions, Paul leaves no room for argument about the need for us to be part of telling God's story in Christ: an eternal telling of unconditional love and boundless grace, for any and every one.

Paul writes out of his deep desire for the Gospel to be shared across all of creation – and then invites you and me into the life-changing, life-giving task of proclaiming this Good News to all, for all. It is a calling and a gift for each of us that presents itself in different ways for each of our unique lives, but it all begins and ends with our shared confession that “Jesus is Lord.”

As you reflect...

In a world that gravitates to the bad news, how can your daily actions and interactions proclaim the Good News?

Will those around you know – with or without your words – that Jesus is Lord of your life?

How will God speak through you today?

Thursday

Romans 11

The end of Paul's letter is still 5 chapters away, but by the end of Chapter 11 it's clear that Paul has reached another point where he simply can't contain his praise. And so he offers this beautiful doxology: an outpouring of grateful joy, letting the faith he has been describing come bursting forth in a song of wonder and awe. It is as if Paul has been stopped in his own tracks, left to gaze at the glory of God's uncontainable grace, love, mercy and wisdom – and all because “God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.”

As you reflect...

Where will this doxology become your own today?

May this be a prayer to keep on your lips through today, as you encounter “the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.”

“To Him be the glory forever! Amen.”

Friday

Romans 12

After pages of complex theological discussion, with one word - ‘therefore’ – Paul turns us back to that place of straightforward understanding.

In simple, powerful ways, he names what all of this means for our coming and going in the community of faith, and in the wider world around us. With some of the best-known verses of this letter, he walks us through the realities of discipleship, laying out practical pieces of what it means to be a Christ-follower, what it means to live in Christian community, and what it means to live in a world that doesn't yet know of God, in Christ.

As you reflect... Let Paul's words flow over you, again and again: hear the call to love, to honour, to be devoted to one another. Remember and live in the call to be joyful, patient, faithful; to share, to bless, to rejoice and mourn together; to live humbly, with and for one another, in peace, without malice or revenge, overcoming evil with good. Hear God's call on your life, again, in and through this text – for the sake of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.