

Session 2: Sin.

What's wrong with the world?

ROMANS 1.18–3.20

KEY VERSE:

**'For there is no distinction: for all have sinned
and fall short of the glory of God ...'**

ROMANS 3.22–23 (ESV)

Part I: What's wrong with the world?

The gospel is good news. But that implies there is also bad news ...

GOD IS REVEALED THROUGH CREATION

'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 ...'

ROMANS 1.20 (NIV)

HUMANS TRY TO REPLACE GOD WITH THINGS HE HAS CREATED

'Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images ...'

ROMANS 1.22–23 (NIV)

HUMANS EXPERIENCE THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF SIN

'Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts ...'

ROMANS 1.24 (NIV)



Discussion time

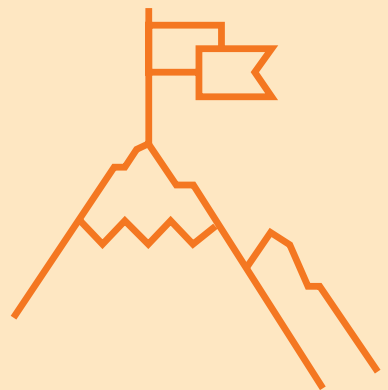
READ ROMANS 1.18–25

1. Consider Romans 1.19–20. What can we learn about God from creation? What gives you a sense of wonder?

2. Consider Romans 1.21–23 and Romans 1.25. In what ways does sin lead to a downward spiral? How have you experienced this?

3. What idols are we prone to serving today – in culture and in our own hearts? Consider Romans 1.25. How might worshipping God be a powerful way to reverse the negative effects of sin and idolatry?

NOTES:



Part II: What's wrong with religion?

IF ROMANS 1 FOCUSES ON THE PROBLEM OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, ROMANS 2 HIGHLIGHTS THE DANGER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS:

‘You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself ...’

ROMANS 2.1 (NIV)

IF WE ASSUME WE ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, WE BECOME PROUD, CRITICAL AND JUDGMENTAL. WHETHER JEW OR GENTILE, RELIGIOUS OR IRRELIGIOUS:

‘There is no difference ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...’

ROMANS 3.22-23 (NIV)

This honest diagnosis is good for us. It cultivates humility and a deep reliance on God.

NOTES:

Part II: Reflection time

READ ROMANS 3.19–24

How could this dose of realism enable greater honesty with God, yourself and others? How might the bad news of sin help us appreciate the value of the gospel?



PRAYER

Let's take a moment to humble ourselves before God and confess our need of him. The words of the Anglican liturgy may help:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault ... We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.



READING ROMANS:

Before the next session, read the following passages in Romans:

- READING 1:
Romans 3.21–26
- READING 2:
Romans 3.27–31
- READING 3:
Romans 4.1–9
- READING 4:
Romans 4.10–15
- READING 5:
Romans 4.16–25



READING SUGGESTIONS:

- Chapter 2 of *Romans: A Letter That Makes Sense of Life* by Andrew Ollerton