

Stewardtrust

Rydal Hall Online Houseparty: Group Questions

Talk 1 - Justification, Access to Grace, Hope (Romans 5:1,2)

1. Why was justification by faith such an explosive idea to some of the communities that Paul wrote to? What can obscure our understanding of it? What effect does it have on our lives?
2. How have we managed with accessing God's grace over this lockdown period? what have been the gains, what have been the losses? What does it mean to stand in God's grace?
3. "The Hope of the glory of God" is a great phrase but what does it convey to you? Hope has been an important ingredient of survival this past year: the hope of restrictions being lifted, the hope of vaccines. How does this Christian hope sustain? How might we rejoice in it rightly?
4. Teaser: Supposing you New Testament was written on parchment scrolls and you had to leave you house suddenly because of fire. If you could only take three, which scrolls would you save and why?

Talk 2 - Suffering, Perseverance, Character, Hope (Romans 5: 3,4)

1. In these verses, Paul gives another side to our discipleship which involves growth through trial and difficulty: what are the tools that we have that help us to grow through difficulty (see also James 1:2-4).
2. Paul actually says "we boast/glory in our sufferings", what kind of sufferings do you think Paul has in mind?
3. Paul gives us a sequence of response to difficulty: perseverance, character and hope. How does that sequence work in practice? Which of those three words would you want to further explain? Do you have examples of how this worked, or is working or not working, for you? What is the relationship of perseverance and character to hope?
4. Teaser: Many people spend a lot of time getting fit in gyms. What is the equivalent in terms of spiritual disciplines to weights, treadmills and press-ups?

Talk 3 - Hope Not Disappointed (Romans 5: 5)

1. What is God's way of preventing disappointed hopes?

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2. Are you surprised that this is the first mention of God's love in this epistle, why is that? And how do we experience this love?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this process? And do you think that Paul's reference to God's love *having been poured out* is recalling something in particular in the Roman church?
4. Teaser: Do we need our mystics in the present age or have we outgrown the need for such a witness?

Talk 4 - The Cross has said it all (Romans 5: 6-8)

1. The Cross (by which we mean the death of Christ for us) has in the words of one worship song "said it all". What has it said? And what has it done?
2. What particular facets of the cross needs to be stressed in our modern age?
3. Paul says the Cross is a demonstration of his love. Have we found ways of making the power of the cross fresh and real to ourselves?
4. Teaser: Tom Holland in his book *Dominion* (worth reading) and in an interview on YouTube with Tom Wright (worth watching) says the cross is beyond weird. What do you think he meant?

Talk 5 - How much More, Praise and Reconciliation (Romans 5: 9-11)

1. What is the significance of Paul's argument which uses the phrase how much more?
2. What does that mean to you?
3. What is the benefit of praise? When does it come naturally to you? What happens when it doesn't? (What does the Psalmist teach us?)
4. What does Reconciliation mean to you? What is the relationship of forgiveness to Reconciliation? What does it mean for you to be a reconciler? Where might that be needed?
5. Which of the words in our lexicon from Romans 5 will be of special significance to you? And Why? (It will be in your kit bag as you make your ascent from Base Camp)

Patrick Whitworth