

**2 GOLD
CHAPTERS**

saltchurch.

SERIES BREAKUP

DATE	BIBLE	DATE	BIBLE
10-16 Oct	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	14-20 Nov	Romans 8:4-13
17-23 Oct	1 Corinthians 15:12-34	21-27 Nov	Romans 8:14-27
24-30 Oct	1 Corinthians 15:35-57	Fri 25 Nov	Grow, 7pm at 275
31 Oct - 6 Nov	Choose your own	28 Nov – 4 Dec	Romans 8:28-39
7-13 Nov	Romans 8:1-4	5-11 Dec	Finishing up!

SERIES OVERVIEW

It's been another big year for many of us, on top of the last 2 years. So instead of a longer series unpacking a whole book to finish off the year in Small Groups, we're looking at just 2 chapters of the bible.

The whole bible is good but these 2 chapters are solid gold! They're rich in theology, immensely practical and deeply encouraging. We'll have 4 weeks in each chapter so we get a good grasp of it.

- 1 Corinthians 15 explores the resurrection, and how the certain fact of Christ's resurrection and the certain future of our bodily resurrection changes how we live now.
- Romans 8 explores how we're Spirit-led Christians and we'll see how God is for us, even in the midst of suffering and hardship.

Also, for many reasons, many of them good and valid ones, our Church's attendance on Sundays has been lower this year than it used to be before the Covid years. So we're running 3 'Super Sundays' in November - 3 weeks where we'll ask everyone at Salt to commit to come for all 3 Sundays, to re-kick-start the habit of coming to church weekly. This will happen on 13th 20th and 27th November, to coincide with our Romans 8 series.

1 COR 15:1-11 • 10-16 OCT

DIRECTION: We're kicking off in 1 Corinthians 15 to see that what we believe as Christians is true. We can hold firmly to the gospel and be saved.

PRAY TO START: Help us to trust you today God.

LAUNCH: What is something a parent or friend kept reminding you about?

CONTEXT: We're jumping to the end of 1 Corinthians with no context. Let's pool our knowledge: tell me everything you know about 1 Corinthians, go!

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

INTO THE BIBLE: in v3-8 Paul reminds them of the content and substance of the gospel he preached to them. What is the content of the gospel?

- Does anything in this list surprise you?
- If you had to paraphrase each item in the list in your own words, what would you say?
- Why is Paul so keen to remind them of things they already know?
- If someone asked you "what do Christians believe?" how many of the things in Paul's list would you have included in your answer? Should we say all the same things Paul does here – why, why not?
- What do we learn about Paul's life and God's grace in v8-10?

APPLY: How has God's grace changed you?

- What could it look like to 'hold firmly to the word' of the gospel (v2)?
- Are you ever tempted to 'hold firmly' to something else to save you?
- Do you ever doubt the reliability of the bible or Jesus' resurrection?
How do these verses give us confidence that what we believe is true?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that we've heard and believed the gospel. Ask for his help to hold firmly to it all our days.

1 COR 15:12-34 • 17-23 OCT

DIRECTION: The future changes how we live now. If Jesus has been raised from the dead then a day is coming when everyone will be raised from the dead and will stand before him. But if Jesus hasn't been raised from the dead, there is no coming day, so you might as well enjoy life now; there's nothing else to come. That's the logic of Paul's argument. But of course, as he tells us in v20, Jesus *has* been raised. So let's trust and live for him.

PRAY TO START: Help us to live in a way that fits the future you'll bring.

LAUNCH: If you knew you only had 7 days left to live, how would that change the way you lived? What would you do differently?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

INTO THE BIBLE: What were some of the Corinthians saying about the resurrection of the dead? What do you think this means?

Bit of background: when we say 'the resurrection of the dead' we're more usually referring to Jesus' resurrection. But when the bible's writers say it, they're more usually referring to the final judgement day, when God will resurrect everyone.

This idea comes from places like Daniel 12:1-4 - 'Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.' Jesus says the same in John 5:28-29 - "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out - those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned." This truth was debated though; the Sadducees didn't believe in it for example (Mark 12:18) and evidently some Corinthians didn't either.

- Paul rattles off a bunch of things that would be true or not true if there was no resurrection of the dead. What are they?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

- There's a lot of ideas compressed in here! We won't dig into them all now, but as an initial response what strikes you most?
- What do you think v20 means?
- How does v20 undo all the things Paul rattles off in v13-19?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

- Do you know people who believe that after death we cease to exist? How does that shape how they live now?
- Paul is very keen to make sure we're not misled by the same lie. What does he urge us to do?
- What could it look like in practise this week to live in a way that fits the future God is bringing? What would you stop doing? Start doing?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that he has freed us from a purposeless life, where we just eat and drink until we die. Ask for his help to live in way that pleases him, trusting Jesus has been raised and we will be too.

1 COR 15:35-57 • 24-30 OCT

DIRECTION: God will defeat death and give his people a new resurrection body. What this body will be like raises many questions for us, not all of which God answers. What he does tell us is that there is a connection between our earthly and heavenly bodies but lots of discontinuity too - like the relationship between a seed and the plant that comes from it: our new body is still us, but a wholly transformed us. These promises help us wait.

PRAY TO START: Help us to understand your promises here God.

LAUNCH: If you could change 1 thing about your body what would it be?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

- In v36-38 what do you think Paul's metaphor of the seed / sowing is meant to teach us about resurrection bodies?
- In v38-41 what do you think Paul describing different types / kinds of bodies is meant to teach us about resurrection bodies?
- In v42-44 what do you picture when you hear of an 'imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual body'? How is that different to what our bodies are like now?
- In v45-49, what do you think the comparisons between Adam and Jesus are meant to teach us about resurrection bodies?
- So if we paraphrase Paul's questions in v35 to this - "What kind of body will resurrected Christians have?" - what answer would you give?
"...the resurrection body will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual - that is, it will be like Christ's resurrected body." (The First Letter to the Corinthians, Pillar Commentary Series, by Roy Ciampa & Brian Rosner). See also Philippians 3:20-21.
- What excites you about this picture of our resurrected bodies?
- What makes it hard to trust God's promises here and to wait for our new resurrected body?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

- Why do you think 'flesh & blood can't inherit the kingdom of God' (v50)?
- What encourages or inspires you from these verses?

PRAY TO END: Praise God for our future hope of resurrected bodies. Pray for help to trust his promises while we wait.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN • 31 OCT-6 NOV

DIRECTION: Take this week to choose your own adventure. Some options...

- Take it in turns to share your testimony of God saving you.
- Grab a feed and have social fun times (more on that below)
- Write your own bible discussion on a topic the group wants to explore (more on that below)

WHY 'CHOOSE YOUR OWN' WEEKS:

One downside of the way we unpack books at Salt is we move quick! You might have started a great chat in your group 1 week, but by the next we've moved on. This week is a chance to choose your own adventure – continue 1 of those chats or look at another topic / question / part of the bible your group wants to. Choose your own weeks can be great for your group digging into something that's puzzling, troubling or exciting them.

SOCIAL FUN TIMES:

If you haven't done a social / fun thing for a while you could use this week for that. See chap 5 & 6 of [Getting Started as a Small Group Leader](#) for tips on how to use these to grow your group, so you get more out of them.

DO YOUR OWN BIBLE DISCUSSION:

Alternatively, if you want to continue a previous discussion or dig into another topic / question / part of the bible here's how you could do that...

Getting Ideas: A week before, let your group know there's a 'choose your own' week coming up. Collect ideas, like a topic / question / part of the bible they want to explore. Vote to find the most popular 1 & get prepping.

Getting Prepped: Brainstorm where in the bible the topic / question comes up. Or for a part of the bible, read it a bunch of times to work out what it means. Ask your coach & other leaders if they know good places to go / what the passage means. If you're more experienced at this you can read a systematic theology or commentary (there's a bunch upstairs at 275 Keira St you can borrow). Plus, if you're keen to learn more about how to create studies, check out [Writing a Small Group Study](#) by Richard Sweatman.

Packaging a Discussion: Here's 3 options...

1. Use the COMA method: ask the group what's the *Context* | what you *Observe* | what you think it *Means* | how you think it *Applies* to us.
2. Use the [Swedish Method](#) to read the passage & ask [these questions](#):
 - a. What stands out to you?
 - b. What's a question you have?
 - c. What do you think the big point is?
 - d. What do you think this will mean for your life?
 - e. What from this passage can you share with someone else?
3. Just read a passage, ask 'what do you reckon?' & see where you go.

NEED HELP?

You don't have to have all the answers or be the expert to be a Small Group Leader, so don't stress out for this week. Just get people into God's word & let Him teach & transform us by His Spirit. Your Small Group Coach is always available & ready to give you help too.

ROMANS 8:1-4 • 7-13 NOV

DIRECTION: You can't overstate the significance of Jesus' work on the cross. The only way for humans to be right with God is to keep the requirements of the law. But we wholeheartedly fail to do that. So, God himself did it in his Son. Jesus' death is a sin-offering in our place so our sin is condemned in him, and Jesus' life fully met the law's requirements in our place so we're credited with being righteous in him. How massive is that!

PRAY TO START: Help us to grasp the significance of the cross.

CONTEXT: We're jumping to the middle of Romans with no context. Let's pool our knowledge: tell me everything you know about Romans, go!

Read Romans 8:1-4

INTO THE BIBLE: What do you think the "therefore" is there for? Why is there now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?

- Do you agree with this statement: "The Old Testament Law needs to be obeyed for us to be saved". Why, why not?
- Why did human attempts to fulfil the Old Testament Law fail?
- How did God himself provide what we needed?
- Why do you think God himself provided what we needed?

APPLY: Do you ever feel like a guilty sinner before God?

- When do you most feel condemned by God? Or by other people?
- How could God's declaration 'there is now no condemnation' for you change the way you see yourself?

If you finish early: read through the rest of Romans 8 to get an overview of it all before we dig into it more in the coming weeks.

PRAY TO END: Praise Jesus for fulfilling the law for us & being condemned for us, so there's now no condemnation for anyone who is in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 8:4-13 • 14-20 NOV

DIRECTION: Christians once lived in 'the flesh', controlled by our sin, doing what pleased us, being hostile to God. Now we live in 'the Spirit', powered by the Spirit of God to put to death our sin and to please God.

PRAY TO START: Help us to please you.

LAUNCH: What is something you really want this week?

Read Romans 8:4-13

INTO THE BIBLE: On a piece of paper draw 2 columns, one titled 'the flesh' and the other 'the Spirit'. From the passage, what goes in each column?

- Which column would you put Christians in? (see v4, v9)
- Why did Christians move from 'the flesh' to 'the Spirit' columns?
- Answering mainly from Romans 8, do you think:
 - People can become Christians without God's help?
 - Unbelievers have "free will"?
- Having changed columns, what are Christians obliged to do now? Why?

APPLY: What could it look like this week for you to:

- Have your mind set on what the Spirit desires (v5)?
- Put to death the misdeeds of the body (v13)?
- Where does the strength and power to do this come from? Does v11 give you confidence and courage in striving to do this?
- Look at 'the flesh' column and think of friends / family / workmates / neighbours who don't yet trust Jesus. Is this how you'd describe them?
- What makes it hard for us to see people the way God sees them?

PRAY TO END: Praise God for giving us who are so undeserving the Spirit of Christ. Pray God might mercifully move the many people we know from life lived in the flesh to life lived in the Spirit.

ROMANS 8:14-27 • 21-27 NOV

DIRECTION: We have the privilege of calling God our Father, by His Spirit in us. But we do this in suffering and groaning - creation groans while it waits for the new creation, we groan as we wait for new bodies, the Spirit in us groans in prayer. But in the midst of all this groaning, we have the certain hope of sharing in Jesus' glory because the Spirit joins us to Jesus and because we suffer with Jesus now. So let's live in hope and call on our Father God. *PS: Don't forget Grow is 7pm this Friday! Love you all to be there.*

PRAY TO START: Help us live in hope while we wait Christ's return.

LAUNCH: What's something you're looking forward to in the future?

Read Romans 8:14-17

- What can we call God? Why?
- Have your earthly parents impacted the way you think about God?
- What will Jesus inherit from his Father? So what does it mean that we are 'co-heirs with Christ' (v17)?
- There's an 'if' connected to this promise in v17 – what is it?

The way Jesus inherited all things from his Father was to suffer and then to get glory (e.g. Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 12:1-2) so it's the same path for us: to share in his sufferings if we want to then share in his glory.

Read Romans 8:18-27

- Who is groaning here? What are they groaning about / longing for?
- Does v24-25 help you to keep waiting for the end of suffering?
- How does the Spirit help us while we groan in suffering?
- Do you agree with what Paul says in v18?

PRAY TO END: Ask God to help us live in hope while we wait and to call out to him, our perfect Father.

ROMANS 8:28-39 • 28 NOV-4 DEC

DIRECTION: What've we seen in Romans 8? We're not condemned in Christ Jesus, we live now by the Spirit, we call God our Father, and we suffer with Christ now so we will share in his glory then. This last section of Romans 8 gives us the encouragement to keep going: we can endure in hope, since God is at work in all things to make us more like Christ, and since nothing can overturn his verdict on us or separate us from his love. So keep going!

PRAY TO START: Thank God for his love for us.

LAUNCH: Have you ever super-glued something to yourself? What?

Read Romans 8:28-39

- What do you find most amazing about these verses?
- In v28 what do you think "the good" is, that God is working in all things to bring about? Do you get any clues from v29?
- Can you think of times God used hard moments in your life to make you become more like Jesus? What about good exciting moments?
- What do you think of this statement: 'We seek our happiness, but God seeks our holiness'?
- In v31-35 what answers does Paul give to his questions? Try to answer each question in your own words.

APPLY: Do you ever feel like God is stingy? How does v32 speak to that?

- How certain are you that when you stand before Jesus to be judged, you will be saved? How does v33-34 speak to that?
- Does v38-39 seem true to you, or do you at times feel separated from God's love and far from him? How does v38-39 speak to that?

PRAY TO END: Praise God for his love for us in Christ Jesus. Ask for his help to, like Paul 'be convinced' of these solid truths.

FINISHING UP • 5-11 DEC

DIRECTION: Have a Christmas party with your group to end the year! The reason we have Small Groups is so we can help each other know God better and learn to love each other like He's loved us. As you finish up for the year – or maybe even finish up as a group – take the chance to reflect on how God's grown you in your relationships with Him and each other.

Fyi groups normally finish up in early Dec rather than later, because:

1. It's way better for the vibe of your group to finish well, with people coming and wanting more, rather than limping to the end of the year with people slowly dropping off. That's painful for everyone!
2. December's a full time for lots of people with shopping, holidays, Christmas parties. So beat the rush & get in early!

If your group's finishing up altogether, or if people might change groups next year, think through ending well. Chat with your Coach & check out 'It's a Living Thing' in chap 5 of [Getting Started as a Small Group Leader](#) for tips.

REFLECT: Think back to when you first joined this group.

- How have you seen your relationship *with God* grow this year?
- How have you seen your relationship *with other people here* grow?
- How have you seen *someone else in our group* grow as a Christian?

PLAN: As we finish up meeting for the year, what can you do:

- To keep growing as a Christian over summer and into next year?
- *To help others in this group* keep growing as Christians over summer?

PRAY: Finish your Small Group year in prayer:

- Thank God for how He's grown us to know Him better and taught us to love each other like He loves us this year.
- Ask God to help us grow over summer and next year, so we'd all know, love and trust Him more at the end of next year than we do this year.



Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:58

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39