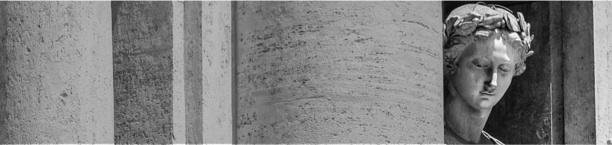
Shakespeare has penned some of the most quoted speeches in Western history. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears…" begins Mark Antony's (fictional) speech which shrewdly exercises rhetoric and sarcasm to unite and incite a Roman crowd into a riotous mob intent on bringing Caesar's assassins to justice. It agitates and manipulates the crowd's growing anger as it confronts them with the fundamental injustice of Caesar's death…

Shakespeare's opening lines are a far cry from Paul's opening (and "real") sentence in his letter to the Romans: "This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus…" Who wants to hear from a slave in a city ruled and measured by power, politics, and prestige?! Especially, the slave of One who was crucified? Paul appears to recognize he is out of step with the culture around him. Several sentences later, he will declare: "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ." (Romans 1.16). However, Paul will not be shamed for this simple reason: Rome (both Gentile and Jew) should be ashamed for being out of step with God!



LifeGroup

Resource Guide

# for the week of 21 September: Happy New Year!

This week we return to Romans: A Letter From A Life Ruined By Jesus. We do not study Paul's letter to merely learn. We reflect on this letter to grow together in our faith, understanding, and experience of Jesus in our midst. Paul did not write this letter to merely tell us how to think. He writes to teach us how to live personally and communally in Christ. This letter describes the visitation of God's grace that is available to everyone who surrenders to Jesus even as it assures us of God's everlasting faithfulness amidst trial and heartbreak.

Unity in the Roman fellowship will be established upon the vitality of God's present grace poured out upon them… and the same will be true for us!

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

Mark

on Paul’s letter to the Romans…

*Perhaps not surprisingly, it remains the case that anyone who claims to understand Romans fully is, almost by definition, mistaken!*

*– N. T. Wright, from the introduction to his commentary on Romans*

Everyone is talking about the weather! How do you stay cool when it is so "hot"? Do you prefer temperatures that are unseasonable hot or unseasonably cold? Why?

# Reviewing Romans…

Read Romans 1.16-17: Why do you think Paul feels the need to declare: “I will not be ashamed of the Gospel…” to a Christian audience?

Read Romans 1.18-23. What is Paul’s essential understanding of the nature of sin?

Write a definition of sin based on Romans 1.18-23:

Read Romans 2.17-24. What warning does God give Jewish believers that we should take heed to ourselves as followers of Jesus?

Getting to know one another better ...

Read Romans 3.21-28. How can this possibly be relevant in today’s world? Based on these verses, how would/do you share Paul’s essential understanding of sin, grace, and salvation?

Read Romans 3.29-31. What is faith?

# Reflecting on RUIN…

We are RUINED when our lives are DISRUPTED. How has Jesus disrupted your life? Can you give an example? What, if any areas/relationships in your life, do you feel Jesus wants to disrupt? Why?

We are RUINED when our passions are reDIRECTED**.** How has Jesus redirected your passions? Can you give an example? Which, if any, of your passions do you think Jesus wants to redirect? Why?

We are RUINED when our egos are DEFEATED. How has Jesus **defeated**your ego? Can you give an example? What areas, if any, of your ego remain for Jesus to defeat?

We are RUINED when our minds are DISCIPLED. How has Jesus discipled (instructed) your mind? Can you give an example? What areas/understandings do you think Jesus wants to disciple you (change how you think/understand God’s ways)?

We are RUINED when our strengths & talents are DEVOTED to God.

How have you made decisions to wholly **devote**your strengths and talents to Him? Can you give an example?

On Sunday, Mark said:

• God RUINS our lives so we receive the life He intended us to enjoy

• God RUINS our lives so we recognize the life we are called to live.

* God RUINS our lives so we are ready for the next one!

Which one of these, if any, resonated the most with you?

My prayer requests (think of what you want to share in advance)

# Highlighting...

# Praying for my group...



[**Welcome to Faith Lunch**](http://www.faithsandiego.org/upcoming-events/2014/3/9/welcome-to-faith-lunch)

**Are you new to Faith Community?**

**Sunday, Sept 28**

11:45am – 1:00pm

Do you *feel* like your new at Faith Community? This free lunch is an opportunity for you to meet our leaders and learn 13 words that will tell you everything you need to know about Faith Community!

Register at the Welcome Table or online at [faithsandiego.org](http://faithsandiego.org).

Opportunity Fair- today  
Following Worship Fellowship Center

Third Sunday- tonight 6:30-8pm

Worship Center

Welcome Lunch- Sep 28 11:45-1pm Children’s Center

HER Significance all day retreat- Oct 4 9am-8pm Fellowship Center

Children’s Ministry Musical Rehearsals- Oct 5-26 12noon-1:30pm   
Children’s Center

FORGE Men’s Retreat- Oct 17-19

Camp Ceder Crest