

**Word notes Sunday 13/04/08 Tony Hodge**  
**Introduction to Romans**

**Summary**

Written by Paul from Corinth to the church in Rome and unlike the other letters, Romans stands alone as a clear exposition of Christian doctrine – a “Christian Manifesto”. The letters are just that – letters written by the apostle to the churches and leaders he either planted or is nurturing – Paul has yet to visit Rome but states that this is his desire.

The world of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Middle East/Southern Europe is not so far from today – occupying forces, clashes of religious nationality etc but with the Roman Empire in charge there is an enforced peace enabling travel and letters to get about – an exciting period into which the new church is birthed.

What is the main message of the letter:

**Key Text 1:**

1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

**Key Text 2:**

5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Its meaning today:

It spells out in detail the way in which a relationship with God is possible – crucial for anyone wanting to know Him. It influenced Martin Luther in the 16th century and in the evangelical awakening of the 18th this has been a key part of scripture speaking across the centuries to the present and releasing the power of God into people’s lives.

**Application:**

Paul’s letter is written to a church but is nonetheless personal (“I am not ashamed” – Paul uses “I” 85 times in the letter, “you” 108 times and “we” 56 times – NIV).

Letter writing is often said to be something of a lost art in this electronic age – who in the cell has received a personal letter from someone close in the last month – ask them to share who it was from and what it said in general. If you have such a letter and are prepared to take it to cell and read an extract do so.

If you were to sit down and write a letter would you approach it differently that eg writing an email? If so how and why?

What range of purposes/motivations are behind the letters in the New Testament – for instance “encouragement”?

To whom and for what purpose might each member of the Cell write such a heartfelt letter as Romans?

**Homework:**

Learn the two key texts above.

Write the letters each said they might;