Small Group Questions for Romans

Chapter 1
How do most Christians define “the gospel”? How do you define it? If the gospel is indeed “the power of God,” how should that power be demonstrated among those who have embraced the Christian gospel? In what ways is the power of God evident in the church (world-wide and at First United) today as recognized by surrounding society?

Paul talks about not being “ashamed of the gospel”. Can you say the same thing? How have your actions in personal evangelism communicated whether you are ashamed of the gospel or not?

What are the biggest idols that the church is tempted to worship personally or corporately today? How many of those idols are also worshiped by the unbelieving culture that surrounds the church? What warning does Romans 1 offer about where idol worship leads?

Chapter 2
What does this chapter say about the spiritual condition of the Jews? In what ways does Paul point to hypocrisy in their faith?

If people could see my private, spiritual center (my heart), would they find it consistent or inconsistent with my public, external behavior? What does scripture say about that?
Chapter 3
In verses 9-20, Paul says in several different ways “all have sinned”. Why do you think he spent so much time establishing that? What impact does this have on how we view others around us (believers and nonbelievers)?

When I see the people around me, do I see them in terms of their standing before God?

How do Paul’s words on the moral and spiritual state of humanity affect the role of government and society to create a moral environment in which to live? Is it true that “you can’t legislate morality,” or is it a matter of whose morality is going to be legislated?

Chapter 4
What does it mean to you to “believe God”? What personal illustrations can you offer from your own life of success, or failure, in trusting God? How is your life different because you believe in God compared to those who do not?

If the church is to fulfill the Great Commission, to extend the gospel of Christ to all peoples, in what areas will greater faith be required? In what ways has a lack of faith played a part in not having fulfilled the Great Commission even after two thousand years?
Chapter 5
How does “peace with God” translate in the believer’s life into the practical realm of living? Should those who have “peace with God” also manifest a greater sense of personal peace, contentment, or tranquility in their daily lives? Why or why not?

If it is true that tribulation/suffering leads to perseverance, character, and hope, why are we so averse to experiencing tribulation/suffering? How can Christians develop a “long view” toward life, incorporating the reality of tribulation and suffering as a contributor to spiritual formation and godliness?

Chapter 6
Do you see conversion to Christ as leaving (dying to) one life and beginning (being raised to) a new life? Is that meaning of conversion is being clearly communicated to new believers?

Besides the gift of eternal life, what benefits can you cite in your life that have come as a result of your dying to sin and becoming a servant of righteousness? Why are these benefits better than “benefits” of the wicked? What does this section of scripture say about this?

Chapter 7
What parallels can be drawn between our resistance to civil laws and our resistance to the laws of God? Cite examples of laws (civil and religious) we are loathe to keep, and explain why we believe we can justify our exemption from them.

Explain the difference between bearing fruit for God and bearing fruit to death. What does “bearing fruit” look like in various aspects of a believer’s life? (Home, church, work, hobbies, etc.)

Give examples from your own experience of behavior which came to life with energy once you learned there was a prohibition against that behavior. How did you handle the situation? How does that match up with teachings of scripture?
Chapter 8
What is the evidence in the life of a person who has his or her mind set on what the flesh desires? What is the evidence of having one’s mind set on what the Spirit desires?

If the evidence of the Spirit is fruit (behavior; Gal. 5:22-23), and the presence of the Spirit is required for genuine Christianity, why does not the church put more emphasis on fruit in determining who is not a true believer in Christ? What would be the dangers of overdoing such an emphasis? What is the danger in ignoring that? What is the balance?

What would it look like to live your life as people who are “more than conquerors”? What does this phrase mean on a day-to-day level rather than just an eternal level? What are the kinds of threats to experiencing God’s love that believers face today in which they should be “more than conquerors”?

Chapter 9
What are the practical benefits of what the believer learns from Romans 9? Particularly, what do you learn about God? What do you learn about salvation? What do you learn about humankind?

What does this section of scripture teach us of God’s Justice? God’s mercy? God’s sovereignty? God’s glory?
Chapter 10
Considering all the Christian preaching that goes on in the world today, how much of it is in the spirit of Romans 10:14-16? That is, how much preaching is to the lost? How clearly has the church separated its two tasks of proclaiming the gospel to the lost (evangelism) and training believers (discipleship)? What evidence of strategic planning and thinking do you see on how to reach the lost?

Chapter 11
The last three chapters (9-11) have been a summary of the salvation history of Israel. What are the main points that we should know? Why is this important to us as current believers?

Martin Luther says about the tension between personal responsibility of accepting the gospel, and God’s choosing the elect, “There is still something hidden and far too deep for us to understand.” As you read this section of scripture, how does this impact how we live out our daily lives?

Chapter 12
This chapter is a distinct shift in the book of Romans. What does it look like to live out Romans 12:1?

What are the “patterns of this world” that 12:2 refers to? How does your life look different than a nonbeliever’s life who follows the patterns of this world?

Most of this chapter is about lives that show evidence of sacrifice in relationships. What do we learn about what our relationships should look like from this chapter?
Chapter 13

This chapter talks much about submission to authorities. What are the reasons it gives as to why we should submit to authorities? How does a strong view of God’s sovereignty (as was built in the previous chapters) impact the ability to submit to authorities in all areas of our lives? What are some areas where this submission is difficult or challenging to you?

The idea that we are to sacrifice our personal wants for the good of others is a theme throughout Romans as Paul teaches us our lives fill a role in the larger church. What does this chapter teach us about the role of love in fulfilling the law and submitting to authorities?

Chapter 14

Paul continues to teach on what it looks like practically to be a “living sacrifice” as mentioned in 12:1. Here he seems to be addressing specific issues that are causing division in the Roman church, but that are not essential to doctrinally sound belief. What are nonessential issues that cause division in churches today? What do we learn from this section about how we should respond to those issues?

What issues in the church (practical or theological) cause you frustration? What issues are you likely to make a big deal about that are not essential? What do you learn from this chapter?

Cite some contemporary examples of how a stronger believer’s actions can put a stumbling block in the path of a weaker believer. What actions should a weaker believer take in regard to such a problem? What should the stronger believer’s response be? How often are you aware of this dialogue having taken place among Christians you know? What does the frequency indicate either way?
Chapter 15
The opening two verses tell us as Christians we have an obligation to not “please ourselves” but to focus on pleasing our neighbors. What is the reasoning Paul gives for that in the opening paragraph of this chapter?

Paul selects several quotes from the Old Testament. What is the main theme these quotes convey?

In verse 13, what does he wish for the church of Rome? When you pray for others, how closely do your prayers look like this?

Chapter 16
How many :dear friends” do you have in the Lord? Who are the people that throughout your life have played a major role in encouraging you, spurring you on toward growth, and holding you accountable to continually grow in Godliness?

Paul gives some strong instructions at the end of this letter. What specific instructions does he give in v. 17-20? How might those instructions relate to our church?