

The Church in an alien culture

Chris is about to embark on a significant series on the book of Romans to support this we would love you to follow up the sermons with study in Life groups. To help you we have ordered TWO study guides for every Life Group leader to use with groups and help in your planning or for personal study. When these arrive at VBC I will let you know, and they can be collected. (If you are not able to collect from church, let me know).

Background

The Church in Rome was a mixture of Greek and Jewish Christians who were attempting to live out what it meant to be a Christian in a hostile and alien environment. The Jewish Christians were struggling with living in a society that did not understand their heritage, language, or practices. The Greeks were struggling to understand a new way of living with a new world view and moral outlook. Both groups were struggling to integrate and be a united Church. Paul is desperate for them to become a united body of Christ.

Paul writes to them to encourage them, to explain to them what they need to understand and know in order to live in the alien environment of Rome. He then he explains to them how to live so that they have an impact on those around them without being sucked into alien lifestyles.

For the Church today, this book is so relevant. Society has moved on from being “Christian” in its morality, laws, and language. Today Christians often feel like aliens living in a world they do not understand nor understands them. The challenge for the Church today, as it was for the Church in Rome, is how can we effectively build the kingdom of God, reveal the love of Christ to a culture that does not understand it or even want to know about it.

Some starter questions to reflect on:

What makes you uncomfortable about society today?

What is challenging at work/ in your daily life?

What are you tempted to assimilate from today’s culture as a norm?

Do you feel like you would rather go back in time to when things were “Christian”? OR would you like to escape and live in a community away from it all?

What do you think were some of the challenges the Christians in Rome faced?

Is it similar to the challenges faced by the Church today in North Korea, Saudi Arabia or Iran?

What are the biggest challenges you think the UK church faces today?

How can we (The Church) reflect the truth of the Gospel in a way that draws people to it rather than causes them to be resentful or angry with the Church.

In what ways is The Church divided and how can we develop more unity?