

**Anglican Church Noosa**  
**ROMANS – From Grace to Glory**  
**Week 1 - Unashamed of the Gospel - Romans 1:1-32**  
**Rev'd Chris Johnson – May 31, 2026**

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Have you heard of the Johari Window?  
 It is a psychological tool to help people grow in self awareness.

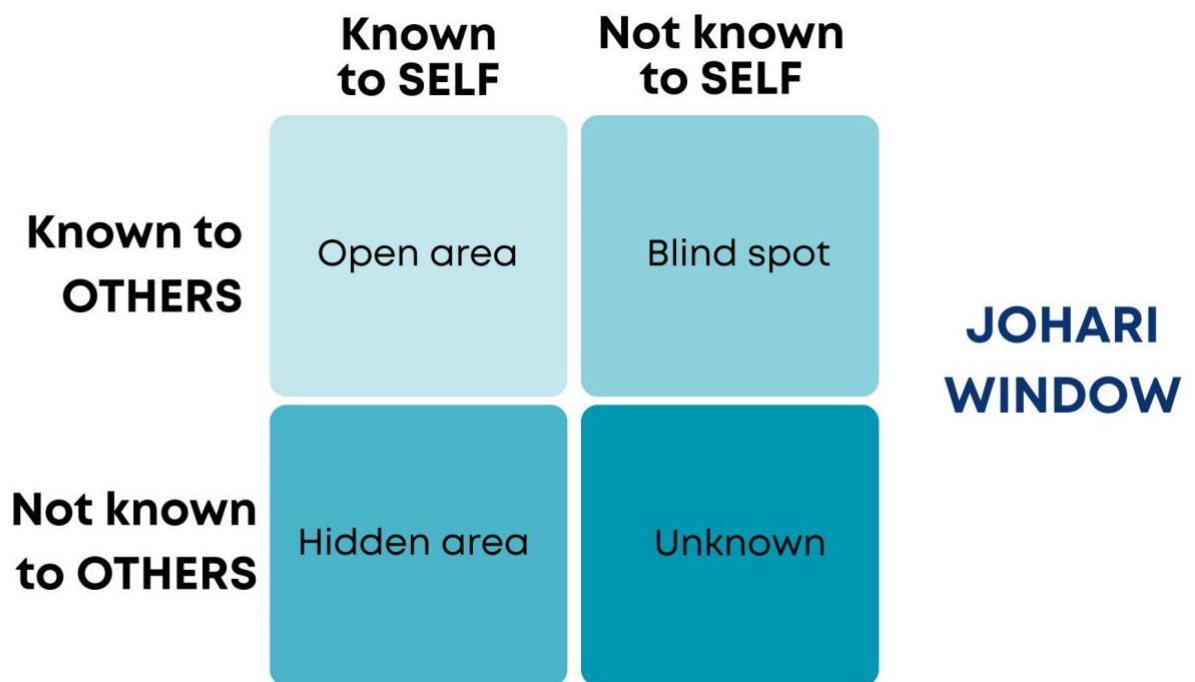
Along the top is Self, Down the side is Others  
 Each has two options – known and not known.

**SELF** (Horizontal)

Every person has qualities, gifts, attributes, that are known to themselves and some that are not known.

**OTHERS** (Vertical)

Other people when they look at you can see your qualities and attributes but some of them they won't see.



**OPEN BOX**

So what is known to Self and known to others is in the Open box.

**HIDDEN BOX**

What you know, but keep hidden from others is in the hidden box.

**BLIND SPOT (Your)**

What others know about you but you are unaware of, is your blind spot.

**UNKNOWN BOX**

What is not known to you or to others is simply unknown. Except from our Christian perspective, of course, God knows what's in this box. God knows us through and through, God knows us better than any other person might know us and God knows us better than we know ourselves.

What I want to talk about this morning is the blind spot, but not in psychological terms, rather in spiritual terms. There is a blind spot that everyone has. A blind spot that is common to all humanity. Some experience the gracious intervention of God filling this blind spot with the Gospel of Jesus. But in our natural condition we all have this blind spot.

You could argue that the Book of Romans is about putting its finger on this blind spot. Romans if you let it get into you, can reveal this blind spot, and then offer you the gospel which brings sight. The Gospel in fact has the power to open your eyes to a whole new life. It can open up - new dimensions of thinking, of personality, of direction in life.

The key versus v's are 16 and 17.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

*V17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: the righteous shall live by faith.”*

So v16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel.”*

What is the gospel? When Paul uses this word he is not particularly thinking about Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Most scholars would agree the Gospels weren't written yet. And he is not just talking about being religious. When Paul talks about the Gospel he's talking about a certain understanding, a particular message that is to be preached.

Let's look back to the opening paragraph to see what that message is.

v1 Paul says he is set apart for *‘the gospel of God’*.

v3 It is the gospel regarding his Son, ie Jesus

He is descended from King David, the greatest of Israel's Kings.

v4 He is the Son of God, he is raised from the dead, he is Lord.

So here are just a few key teachings about Christ. He is the Gospel.

Paul is not ashamed of this gospel, not ashamed of proclaiming Christ; because the Gospel of Christ has the power to bring salvation to everyone who believes.

V17 Goes on to talk about how the Gospel works.

So what does it mean when it says,

*“the righteousness of God which is by faith from first to last?”* and that *“The righteous will live by faith?”*

Well to understand the 'righteousness of God', we have to understand it's opposite. The opposite of a God righteousness is a self righteousness. A self-righteousness, simply means you work out your life without reference to God. You make decisions using your own wit and wisdom rather than looking to God. I'm not using the term self-righteous here with the sense of you're a bit stuck up and you think your opinion is the only one that counts.

I'm using it simply to describe how most people live apart from God. They may establish their own righteousness by being very very good or by being very very bad. But it is a righteousness apart from God.

A God righteousness, on the other hand is about living by faith. What is most important about faith is it's Object. In Romans that is Jesus Christ. It is about faith in Jesus.

Paul is saying living with a God righteousness is living by faith in Jesus from first to last. v17

To understand it better let's look at Paul's argument in the rest of the passage.

In v's 18 – 25 Paul talks about creation, v20 *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen..."* Paul is saying just take one look at the creation and you will know that there has to be a Creator.

- A Watch has a watchmaker
- An Aeroplane has a designer

These things don't fall together by accident. There is an intelligent mind that creates.

And likewise everybody is aware of creation, everybody should be aware there has to be a Creator.

On a similar plain let me just dip into Romans 2 where Paul talks about our conscience. In vv 12-16 Paul says even if people don't know the Law, for example the 10 Commandments, the law is written on their hearts because they have a conscience which makes them aware of it. So you don't need the sixth Commandment, "Thou shall not murder" to know that murder is wrong. You don't need the seventh Commandment – "Thou shall not commit adultery" to know that adultery is wrong. People's conscience should make them aware that there is good behaviour and bad behaviour. Our conscience should make us aware and there is a God who wants us to do right.

However, the problem is that people are in denial.

-They are in denial that there is a Creator. People don't want to acknowledge God.

-People are in denial about their bad behaviour. They are quick to justify their behaviour rather than acknowledge it is morally wrong.

This is what I mean when I say there is a spiritual blind spot.

My friends this has always been the natural human condition, however I would suggest that today there are many people taking it to extremes. Individual autonomy is everything, so people want to define reality the way they would like it, invent their own morality, and just want to be different, always moving the boundaries.

It's what I would call Frank Sinatra's, "I did it my way" on steroids.

In the rest of Chapter 1 Paul goes on to describe some of the practical problems that arise when people choose this Self-defined righteousness and turn away from a God righteousness.

Vv 21-25 Idolatry

So rather than worship the one true creator God people make idols and worship them. V23 *"They became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles."*

Let's face it sometimes the invisible eternal God is a bit hard to grasp, so the temptation is always to produce something that is visible, that is more manageable, a product of human hands.

It may be a culture which sets up totem poles and trinkets and bows down before them. It may be a culture like ours which builds skyscrapers, fancy cars, boats and houses which people are

dazzled by, more than they are dazzled by the majesty of the eternal God. This is just as much idolatry.

But either way, when people stop pursuing God, they start pursuing idols. This is a manifestation of the blind spot. People deny God and pursue idols.

The next paragraph vv26-27 deals with homosexuality. This used to be an issue where our Society's ethical understanding and Christian ethics coincided, but of course that is no longer the case. The topic needs a whole sermon on it's own to be dealt with adequately, but let me say just a couple of things.

The Bible's story of creation is that God created us in the image of God, male and female. His design is that the two should become one flesh in marriage. This is the natural sexual relations Paul is referring to in this passage. And homosexual relations are outside that design.

I am aware that this understanding has significant pastoral implications today if you are a person who is same-sex attracted or someone in your family is.

If this is a matter that affects you personally in some way and you would like to talk it through, I would be very happy to make a time to see you this week.

Sometimes the charge is brought against Paul that he is hung up about homosexuality, however it is just two verses, and then he finishes the chapter with four verses on a lot of other problems which arise, when people pursue a righteousness outside of God.

I hope this brings some perspective. So much more could be said, if this affects you please come and talk to me this week.

So we turn to these last four verses which don't give us a very pretty picture of humanity.

Vv 29-31

*"They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderous, God haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy."*

This doesn't mean everyone exhibits all these sins. It does mean that the more people forsake God, the more we are going to see these problems arising in our society.

If your world view is atheism, ie this is purely a material existence and we are nothing more than the physical matter that makes up our bodies; then you really have no basis for morality, ethics, or doing the right thing. And when the chips are down and the going is hard, if your only reference point is yourself and your material world, then that is when people make bad choices and wrong choices.

You may question God's morality, at times it may seem inconvenient and you may feel it squashes your freedom, but in the end I believe it is for our good and it enhances our freedom. Having a righteousness which is a gift from God is the truth that sets you free.

Now I do want to say something about Bank's baptism.

This morning we have baptised Banks in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How appropriate to have her baptism on Trinity Sunday.

Baptism is a sign that we are totally dependent on the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

I want to remind you of two of the Baptism promises which I think are particularly appropriate this morning.

Firstly, the 3<sup>rd</sup> promise,  
*I reject selfish living.*

That's practical isn't it. It means rejecting doing selfish things, yes.  
But it is also about rejecting a righteousness that is based on my own efforts.  
A righteousness based on self.

And then the first promise is  
*I turn to Christ.*

We turn away from Self to a righteousness that comes from Christ.  
It means looking outside myself, looking to Christ and committing my whole way to him.

Our prayer for Banks is that she will commit her whole way to him. That whatever the future brings she will know God's righteousness and Jesus is always with her. God bless you Banks and her family.

[Sunshine & Tewanin]

So let me summarise this morning's message in this way.

God is obvious

- creation needs to have a Creator
- our conscience reveals a moral nature to the universe that points to God

People ignore the obvious and chase after idols to try and give their life meaning.

People try and work out a righteousness for themselves to guide their lives rather than acknowledge God's righteousness.

Without God people have a giant blind spot, and it is like the blind spot in your car-it causes accidents!

And Paul lists all the potential accidents in the second half of the chapter;

The message of Romans is that God wants to fill your blind spot with the Gospel, the good news of Jesus.

In the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed - a righteousness that is by faith in Jesus Christ from first to last. Amen.