

2009-2010 *Lutheran Woman Today* Bible study

“To God’s Beloved: Paul’s Letter to the Romans”

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Session 1: Be Mutually Encouraged

Welcome to the first session of our study of Paul’s letter to the Romans. In this session, we’ll begin the letter at the real beginning, trying to figure out how ancient people actually wrote letters to each other so that they would know what to listen for and what to hear. There are many clues just in the structure of Romans, and you’ll learn them quickly this evening.

In the beginning there’s a greeting from Paul where he says many things about himself and about his God that will be important for the Romans to hear him. Also in this letter, Paul in the thanksgiving includes a thematic statement. When you read Romans 1:16–17, you will have a sense of what that theme is very quickly. And Paul will follow it through in many variations and combinations all the way to the end.

One thing I should say about this is that you will also be working on this evening and through the letter as a whole, is that sometimes Paul uses vocabulary and words that are not really familiar to us. The word *righteousness* might be one of those. The word *reveal* might be another. You’ll have a chance to explore the vocabulary that Paul uses, and imagine how it was literally heard by the people who found his letter to be good news for them. I hope you enjoy this session tonight and learn many things about ancient letters, Paul’s letters, and what the theme of Romans will be.