

Learning More about the New Testament

Chapter 7: Paul and His Letters Session Five: 2/5-2/11

Reading Assignment Outline

“Apostle to the Gentiles”

rhetoric rather than personality in letters, 7 authentic letters, 6 “Pauline school”

moral dualism: difference between selfishness and altruism

reconciliation

Paul’s Life

first-century Mediterranean culture

Roman citizen, Jewish family, Hellenistic culture, Pharisee

Damascus Road experience of the risen Christ

not a systematic theologian but a congregational pastor

martyred 64-68 CE

1 Corinthians (c.54 CE)

information about earliest Christianity

Corinthian church founded by Paul

“the saints,” primarily Gentiles

conflict arising from disagreement and competition, “strong” vs. “weak”

purpose of empowerment was collaboration in a shared enterprise

conflicts about sex and food

Hymn to Love, Body of Christ, spiritual gifts, moral transformation, “mind of Christ”

Romans (57 CE)

mission to Spain, Phoebe, arrested in Jerusalem, apostleship, Hellenistic diatribe

“Sin is a distorted use of freedom that rejects God’s order and therefore distorts all human relations.”

“Jesus is a new Adam, who displays and exact opposite way of being human.”

empowerment through the Holy Spirit

membership in Israel by promise or election

religious enthusiast, theologian, pastor, writer, moral teacher

Discussion Questions

Paul’s Life

What is your most important learning about Paul?

1 Corinthians

What is your most important learning about the early church, using Corinth as an example?

Romans

What is an example of the connection between what you believe and what Paul preached?

Scripture Passage and Prayer

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

Settle into a comfortable sitting position. Be still and quiet.

With eyes closed, slowly say, “I see and receive the love and joy with which God gazes at me as I gaze at God.”

Remain still and quiet with eyes closed for awhile.

Open eyes and slowly read the Scripture passage, pausing after every verse.

Notice what words or phrases capture your curiosity.

Notice what words or phrases touch your heart.

Notice what words or phrases cause you to consider a specific act of faith.

Close with a sentence of gratitude.