

Studies in Pauls First Epistle to the Corinthians

A section-by-section survey of 1 Corinthians dealing with the issues of the nature of the Church, Christian behavior and social responsibility, sexuality, marriage and divorce, Christian worship, the spiritual gifts, and the resurrection

Course Description

This course will focus on the introduction, background, text, and discourse structure of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Emphasis will be on the conflict between Christ and the culture, especially as applied to Christ/pagan tendencies in missionary situations. Focus will be on the use of primary source material in understanding the Bible, especially the text of the Bible itself. As a sidelight, the use of the text of I Corinthians as it applies to current controversies will be considered.

Course Objectives

1. To provide the student with an in-depth study of the text of the book of I Corinthians.
2. To develop an academic understanding of reading an ancient text such as the Bible, with a focus on the use of primary source material.
3. To study introductory material to the book of I Corinthians.
4. To help the student come face to face in the scripture with the early Christians' experiences in following Jesus, thus providing a faith building experience for the student.

The final grade will be based on your work in the following way:

Introduction and Map

5%

6 Page Researched Paper	10%
10 Page Theology Paper	20%
Pop Quizzes/Homework	10%
Major Tests	40%
Final Exam	15%

2. Research paper

A research paper of 6 pages (12 point, type written, double spaced) will allow the student to

investigate a particular issue of Christian practice/ethics addressed in the epistle; the student is to

explore the topic with respect to its primary historical context, and then in its relevance for the 21

century church. Many examples of topics may be gleaned from the list of class topics. Please

obtain in advance the instructor's approval for the topic you propose to research. Include

documentation and bibliography.

3. Theology paper

A theology paper of 8-10 pages (12 point, type written, double spaced) will give opportunity for

the student to read 1 Corinthians not just as a Christian manual of behavior, but as instructions

for believers based on solid Christian doctrine. For this paper, a particular doctrinal theme may be

traced throughout all or part of the book; or a practical issue may be chosen and investigated

regarding its associated theological implications.

Papers should not merely report the results of research, but should show that the student is

evaluating and processing the material. Be sure that 1) research regarding social/historical

background, 2) exegesis of relevant passages of 1 Corinthians, and 3) application to the present

day, are all evident. Work should be free of grammar and spelling mistakes

Papers are due as identified in the course schedule. Late submissions will be penalized

“For each week late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter

grade.” Extensions will only be considered under valid extenuating circumstances such as long

term sickness, death in family, etc.

Suggested Topics:

The natural man (I Cor. 2:14).

Lawsuits among brethren (I Cor. 6:1-8).

Homosexuality, sinful choice, genetic defect, or other (I Cor. 6:9-11).

The relationship between Paul’s teaching in I Cor. 7 (key verse to discuss is I Cor. 7:12) concerning marriage and that of Jesus in Matthew 19:3-12.

Widows are to marry "only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39).

Women wearing veils (I Cor. 11:2-16).

What happens to the soul at death does it sleep (I Cor. 15:20, 51)?

Baptism for the dead (I Cor. 15:29).

The collection for the saints and authorized uses of the contribution (I Cor. 16:1-2).

Another topic with the instructor's approval.

Bible Map

Draw or trace a map or maps of the second and third missionary journeys of Paul in Asia and Greece and Paul's painful visit to Corinth from Ephesus, showing at least the following: the major bodies of water, all the cities mentioned in the Bible as being visited by Paul, the Roman provinces in which he preached the gospel. The journeys may be presented on one or two maps. Please limit your map size and substance to 8½" x 11" paper. Extra credit may be given for neatness, detail, and good use of color.

Read Textbook

St Chrysostom-Homilies on 1 Corinthians

Introduction

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

Authorship:

Paul is the author and founder of the Church in Corinth (Acts 18:1-11).

Setting:

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and the seat of the proconsul. Corinth was notorious for its corruption and immorality. The word "corinthize" was adopted as referring to engaging in immorality. (Rom 1:26-32)

Paul first visited Corinth on his second missionary journey (April 50 A.D. - Sept. 52 A.D.) and stayed 18 months establishing the Church. The Corinthian Church was mainly Gentile and of a poorer class of people. After Paul's departure a gifted Alexandrian Jewish convert named Apollos came

from Ephesus and preached with notable success. (Acts 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 3:5-9)

Date:

Written from Ephesus around 55 A.D. During Paul's third missionary journey (55 A.D. - 57 A.D.) Acts 19:1- 20:1 - 53-57 AD.

Major Themes:

Communion with God vs. Communion with darkness

II. Paul writes to answer specific problems within the Church

- Factionalism (1:10-3:23)
- Civil Lawsuits (4:1-21; 6:1-8)
- Sexual immorality (5:1-13; 6:9-7:40)
- Meat Sacrificed to idols (8:1-9:27)
- Eucharistic theology and practice (10:1-11:34)
- Spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40)
- Resurrection Life (15:1-16:24)

Background Information

I. Problems at the Church in Corinth:

Church disunity.

Loyalty to the individual - hero worship -

- Paul,
- Apollos
- Peter

- of those “of Christ”
- Doctrinal Speculations
- Issues of immorality
- Dealing with Pagan Religions
- Self-centeredness & Spiritual Gifts

Paul’s Answers to the Problems

The Problems stemmed from an improper understanding of what the Church is and the Kingdom. Paul shows that everything both life within the Church and life in general is sacramental - meant to be an offering to God.

(Orthodox Study Bible)

- The Church is One (Chapts. 1-4)
- The Church is Holy (Chapts. 5-6)
- The Church is Catholic (Chapts. 7-14)
- The Church is Apostolic (Chapts. 15 & 3-4)

Paul’s Steps Towards a Solution at Corinth

Paul wrote a lost letter on Christian morality and Church discipline (5: 9-11)

Paul received two negative reports and sent Timothy (4:17;16:10-11) and wrote another letter 1 Corinthians. Chapters 1-6 reply to the first report (1:11) and Chapters 7-16 reply to the second report (7:1)