

Introduction to the Bible: Session V: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Texts to spark interest:

Value in encountering Paul amid the difficulties

Background on Corinth in the ancient world and on the community Paul addresses:

1. Corinth itself: some parallels to Baltimore
2. The community there: its practices, issues, and concerns

Structure of the Letter:

Paul's greeting and thanksgiving (1:1-9)

Challenges within the community (1:10—6:20)

1. Factionalism in the community (1:10-17)
2. Attack on the core message of the gospel: the cross of Jesus (1:18—2:16)
3. Disunity over leadership (3:1-23)
[Biographical Insert 4:1-5]
4. Excessive pride (4:6-21)
5. A case of incest (5:1-13)
6. A case of disputes before a secular court (6:1-11)
7. A case of temple prostitution (6:12-23)

Specific questions posed by the community and Paul's responses (7:1—11:34)

1. Regarding sexuality for the married and the unmarried (7:1-40)
2. Regarding eating idol meat and progressivism vs. deference: (8:1-13; 10:23-30)
3. Regarding Paul's authority as a true apostle (9:1-27)
4. Regarding temptation (10:1-13)
5. Regarding the Eucharist: its nature and proper behavior (10:14-22, 31—11:1, 17-34)
6. Regarding the status of women and men (11:2-16)

Reflection on the Nature of Christian Community (12:1—14:40)

1. Variety of personal and spiritual gifts in the one Church (12:1-11)
2. Metaphor of the human body to illustrate issues of variety and unity (12:12-31)
3. Pre-eminence of Christian love (13:1-13)
4. Concern over specific charisms: prophecy, tongues (14:1-40)

Clarification and reaffirmation of the resurrection of the Lord (15:1-58)

Conclusion: collection for the Church and personal notes (16:1-24)