

MONDAY
6 SEPTEMBER
Colossians 1:24
 – 2:3

Psalm 62:1-7
Luke 6:6-11

TUESDAY
7 SEPTEMBER
Colossians 2:6-15
Psalm 8
Luke 6:12-19

WEDNESDAY
8 SEPTEMBER
Colossians 3:1-11
Psalm 15
Luke 6:20-26

THURSDAY
9 SEPTEMBER
Colossians 3:12-17
Psalm 149:1-5
Luke 6:27-38

FRIDAY
10 SEPTEMBER
1 Timothy 1:1-2. 12-14
Psalm 16
Luke 6:39-42

SATURDAY
11 SEPTEMBER
1 Timothy 1:15-17
Psalm 113
Luke 6:43-end

REFLECTION

This week's Gospel readings offer us a sort of manifesto for the kingdom of God. We see what can happen there. Sick people are healed and those taken over by their personal demons are freed. The power of Jesus restores withered lives and his authority quells his enemies.



We hear the promises Jesus gives about his kingdom: the needs of those who experience poverty and hunger are met, and weeping gives way to laughter. And if we want to be part of that kingdom we can learn how to live according to its values, but that's quite a challenge.

On Thursday let's try reading each of the verses slowly, several times, then pause and reflect on what it would be like to follow each commandment fully. Then on Friday we could read back over those verses and reflect, honestly, on how we need to change and grow to become more mature "children of the Most High".

On Saturday let's look back over the week, read again the Kingdom's Manifesto and resolve to check the foundations on which we are living our lives. Is there too much sand or are we already living on a good, strong and solid rock?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us to learn how to live more fully in your kingdom.
 Bring us back to your paths of righteousness when we go astray.
 Show us how to love and forgive others, as you always love and forgive us, because we are your children.

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THE THEOLOGY OF ST PAUL

PART III – THE LETTERS OF PAUL

Becky Mynett continues her series about the life and theology of St Paul.

Paul's letters were written to specific groups of people for specific reasons. Usually he was writing in response to news about some sort of problem within an early Christian community. He did not intend to write either scripture or a theological treatise. As a result, reading Paul's letters is like reading someone else's post or listening to one end of a telephone conversation – we sometimes have to think carefully in order to work out what is going on. We also have to remember that Paul lived in a society that in many ways was very different from our own.

So what can we learn about Paul's theology from his letters?

Firstly, his understanding of God and Jesus was based on his experience of meeting the risen Christ. Having been a persecutor of the Church, he became convinced that Jesus had been sent by God. As a Pharisee, Paul already believed that when God rescued Israel from bondage, the dead would be resurrected. He saw Jesus' resurrection as proof that he was from God and he expected Jesus to return soon to raise all who were faithful to God. In 1 Corinthians he explains that everyone, whether still alive or already dead, would have a new spiritual body. In his earlier letters, especially 1 Thessalonians, Paul clearly assumes that this will happen in his lifetime.

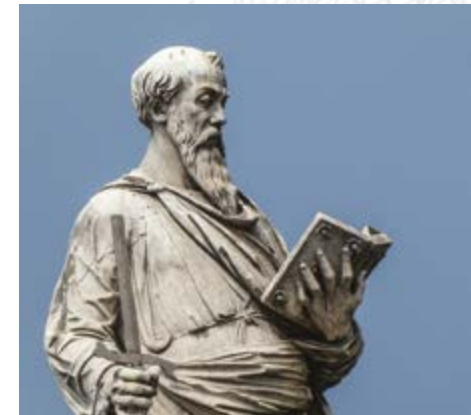
Secondly, we learn that there was a controversy about how Gentiles should follow Jesus. Did they need to become Jewish, be circumcised and obey the Law? In Galatians, Paul is clear that this is not necessary. Faith in Jesus (rather than adherence to the Law) puts you right with God and enables you to participate in the resurrection of the dead. As Christians, Jews and Gentiles are equals and the whole Law is summed up in loving your neighbour as yourself.

Although Paul did not set out to write theology, his most theological letter is that to the Romans, and we will look at that next week.

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Statue of St Paul by Paolo Romano. Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome

Fourteenth week
 after Trinity

Monday 6 September
 to Saturday
 11 September 2021

WEEK