

Paul: Apostle and Theologian

The Core of Paul's Theology

‘...Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then he appeared to over five hundred brothers’ (I Corinthians 15:3-6).

A crucified and risen Christ: according to the Jewish law Jesus was accursed because he ‘hung on a tree’ (see Galatians 3:13). This was a ‘stumbling block for the Jews’ (I Corinthians 1:23).

Paul’s call-vision prompted him to reassess his convictions about God and the Jewish Law: he views Christ as the only path to salvation.

Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is a vindication (he is ‘justified’ by God). Justification of believers rests on this act.

Justification by Faith: The Kerygma

Sin and Salvation

All human beings are sinful because they exist 'in Adam'. The solution is found in Christ's death; it cleanses humankind of its sinfulness (Romans 3:24-26).

God sent his Son into the world to be united with humankind.

Death and Resurrection

Christ was vindicated in/through the resurrection and was pronounced Son of God.

Through baptism human beings can share in his death and resurrection by living 'in Christ'.

Believers are transformed and can address God as 'Abba, Father' (cf. Galatians 4:6-7).

The Body of Christ

Communion exists between Christ and believers, and between believers and each other: 'Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (1 Corinthians 12:27). This unity is created from within; believers are to stand united, although there is room for diversity.

Ethical Conduct

1. Not a religion free of moral codes (not 'all things are lawful for me' (1 Cor. 6:12)).
2. Obedience to Christ (not to the Law) is the path to be followed.
3. Being 'in Christ' involves partaking in the attributes that characterized his own life: goodness, holiness, wisdom, joy, love.
4. Christ died as their representative, not in their stead: 'we have died with Christ', 'we have been raised with Christ', 'we are glorified with Christ'.

Ethic of Love

- When love is actualised other demands of God are fulfilled.
- Not selfish, but slaves to one another in love (Gal. 5:13-14; 1 Cor. 9:19).
- New motivation, understanding and power.
- A standard of righteous living.