



Taylor Seminary

NT 513A 1 Corinthians:

*An Expository, Integrative and Applicable Exploration
of its Pastoral and Theological Themes*

March 31 – April 4, 2014

INSTRUCTOR: Ed Stuckey, D.Min.
PHONE: 780-463-2161
E-MAIL: estuckey@shaw.ca
COURSE WEIGHT: 3 credit hours
CLASS TIMES: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm (March 31 – April 4, 2014)

I. Course Description

While Paul's first letter to the believers in Corinth is often associated simply with addressing disorders in the church, including factionalism, immorality, philosophical elitism, distorted spirituality, and arrogant "charismania," this letter offers profound and relevant insights for the practice of pastoral leadership, all the while grounding these insights in high theology at the heart of the Christian message. The course explores Paul's letter as not simply a somewhat hurried response to issues in a first century church, but as a universal challenge to THE church offering one of the finest examples in Scripture of how theological realities drive not only the mindset we profess, the message we proclaim and the methods we practice in public ministry, but the spirituality and service we live out in personal walk. Finally, the course includes numerous suggestions toward preaching and teaching this remarkable book among Christian believers today

II. Course Objectives

This course aims to help the student:

- A. To grasp the structure and content of 1 Corinthians through recognition of its central theological themes.
- B. To understand the circumstances of its writing, including both the culture and worldview of the recipients as well as the apostle Paul's interactions with the church, exploring their implications for interpretation and application.
- C. To reflect critically on the apostle's purposes and methods in writing, noting both his literary methods as well as his forms of argument
- D. To interpret this book contextually, theologically, and perceptively with clear awareness of these larger purposes and methods.
- E. To respond personally as a Christ-follower and Christian leader to both the theology and the challenge of this book, because of embracing in one's own life the indivisibility of theological understanding, mindset and life-practice. (orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy).

- F. To develop fresh appreciation for the theological and practical contribution of a book sometimes regarded as “difficult” or “controversial.”
- G. To develop confidence and skill in preaching and teaching this book, indeed the whole of God’s Word.

III. **Required Texts**

- A. *The Bible*, ideally both NIV (or TNIV) and NASB.
- B. Garland, David E. *1 Corinthians. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. (In my estimation, the finest current commentary on 1 Cor)
- C. (Helpful to have but not required) Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.
- D. (Helpful to have but not required) Furnish, V. P. *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*, NTT. Cambridge: CUP, 1999.
- E. (Thought-provoking to consult but not to be taken too seriously) Bailey, Kenneth E. *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*. IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL: 2011.

IV. **Course Requirements**

- A. Reading (Value 10%): (Due the first day, March 31)
Although Bible reading does not count toward the fulfillment of this task, the student is expected to read all of Garland (775 pages); the student should write a one page report declaring how much of Garland you read, and identifying the three most significant insights to which he lead you, and why you chose them.
- B. Personal Journal (Value 20%): (submit as email attachment, by 12:00 midnight, each day Mar 31-Apr 4)
In a course such as this, we should be not only exploring what people have written about the Bible book, but also be seeking to “hear from God.” Over the week-long duration of the “face-on” portion of the course, write a daily journal entry (five entries, about 200-300 words for each) summarizing,
#1 What fresh insight did I learn?
#2 What does this mean for my own spiritual journey?
#3 What are the implications of this for ministry and my involvement in the cause of Christ?
- C. Final Exam (Value 20%) (April 4 – 1:30-4:30)
On the Friday afternoon of the course, each student will write a final exam, in which you will be required to synthesize your understanding of 1 Corinthians. The exam is “open book” in the sense that you will be able to use a Bible but not a computer or “smart” phone with internet access.

- D. Book review (Value 20%): (Due the first day, March 31)
The review should reflect your reading of a significant book (300 + pages) on 1 Corinthians, such as Furnish or Bailey listed above. Other possibilities are major commentaries such as Gordon Fee (a large book, so you can be selective), Ciampa and Rosner (an even larger volume), Craig Blomberg, Ben Witherington, C.K. Barrett, Leon Morris, F. F. Bruce. D. A. Carson's *The Cross and Christian Ministry* (on chaps 1-4, + 9) and *Showing the Spirit* (on chaps 12-14), and Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation* (on chaps 1-4). The review should be about 5-7 pages (1000-1500 words), including a summary of the content and essential argument of the book, along with your evaluation of the contribution of this book toward both accurately interpreting 1 Corinthians and understanding its significance for life and ministry. (Check www.bookreviews.org for examples, but also be sure to personalize your review)

As the final assignment, you may EITHER prepare a sermon or teaching series OR write an exegetical research paper. (Submit a topic proposal and rough outline for approval and input by April 11, with the final project due April 25)

Note: Do EITHER "E" or "F" not both.

- E. Sermon or Teaching series from 1 Corinthians (Value 30%)
Prepare a 4-6 session preaching or teaching series **from 1 Cor.** including the following (Single-spaced, this will require 4-6 pages in total):
#1 Overall title and theme: Write a paragraph introducing and summarizing the series. This should give potential hearers / participants sound reasons to come.
#2 Titles: These should be engaging, giving people a reason to want to hear the message or be part of the session.
#3 Homiletical challenges for each sermon / session: These should include the topic, (what exactly is the message about?) and challenge (how does the message urge people to change or grow?).
#4 Objectives for each sermon / session: Objectives are typically of three kinds – cognitive (What do I want people to know more fully?) Affective (What do I want people to feel more deeply?), Behavioural (What do I want people to do more faithfully?)
- F. OR Exegetical Research paper (Value 30%)
Write a carefully researched, clearly argued and thoughtfully written research paper of approximately 12-15 pages, using formatted in accord with Taylor Seminary Guidelines. If writing academic papers is at all new to you, be sure to check my sheet entitled "Points to Ponder for Papers." Seek to gather together your key points, in well-organized fashion, into a central argument.

Potential topics include:

- #1 “Paul the Pastor:” What enduring insights can we learn from the 1 Corinthian letter about Paul’s priorities and practices as a “pastoral leader?”
- #2 “The Ecclesiology of 1 Corinthians:” Using only this epistle, expound what Paul says about the nature, purpose, essential values, and ministry practices of the local church.
- #3 “Love as the ‘more excellent’ Way:” What is the place and function of 1 Cor 12:31b - 13:13 in the overall argument of this epistle? What is the relevance of this emphasis in church ministry today?
- #4 “Unity as the ‘sine qua non’ of Church life:” How does the apostle support his call for local church unity in this letter? What is the relevance of this emphasis in church ministry today?
- #5 “The Cross as the Core:” In what ways is the cross at the centre, not only of the Christian message, but of Christian ministry?
- #6 “God’s Wisdom as the Source:” In what ways does God’s wisdom inform and shape all of the Christian message and ministry?
- #7 “1 Corinthians on Women in Ministry:” Taking a “balanced” approach, what does this letter teach about the role of women in ministry?
- #8 “Charismata or Charismania;” Taking a “balanced” approach, what does this letter teach about the exercise of the spiritual gifts?

V. Course Outline (subject to revision)

Session #1 Introductory Issues

- A. Paul’s Coming and ongoing Contacts with the Corinthian Church
- B. Some Characteristics of Corinth – History, Economy, Society, Religion, Philosophy
- C. Some Characteristics of the Corinthian Church
- D. The Occasion and Purposes of the Letter
- E. Stylistic Issues and Rhetorical Devices
- F. Key Themes of 1 Corinthians

Session #2 Theological Themes in 1:1-3:4; How God’s wisdom is displayed in His working

- A. How the grace of God is displayed in the grace of His calling (1:1-9)
- B. How the wisdom of God is displayed in the Cross (1:10-2:5)
- C. How the power of God is displayed through human weakness
- D. How God’s revelation must be grasped through His Spirit (2:6-16)
- E. Reflecting on how to appropriate God’s wisdom in life and spiritual leadership

Session #3 Theological Themes in 3:5-4:21: How God’s wisdom contrasts with human assumptions and must be demonstrated in spiritual development and service.

Session #4 Theological Themes in chaps 5-6: How disorders in the church emerge from replacing God's wisdom (concerning the nature and destiny of the church, and sanctification) with human assumptions and values.

Session #5 Theological Themes in chap 7: How the disputes surrounding marriage and sexuality can be resolved by applying God's wisdom concerning salvation, humanity, and last things.

Session #6 Theological themes in chaps 8-10: How the difficulties regarding believers' liberty can be resolved by applying God's wisdom concerning His own nature, and how that nature is reflected in His ministry leaders and believing followers.

Session #7 Theological themes in chaps 11-14: How the difficulties regarding order in public worship can be resolved by applying God's wisdom concerning the divine source of all capabilities, the implications of diversity within unity, the necessity of mutually respectful serving for the benefit of the other, and all within the all-embracing practice of love.

Session #8 Theological themes in chap 15: How the wisdom of God displayed in Christ crucified, is most powerfully demonstrated in His resurrection, the event central to the gospel and the basis for the believer's future hope.

Session #9 Themes in chap 16: How God's wisdom should be displayed in daily living: – generous giving for mutual sharing, public ministry for mutual encouragement, and final exhortations toward responsible living.

Session #10 Overview and retrospect on the contributions of 1 Corinthians to Scriptural revelation.

VI Policies and Standards

This course will adhere to the standard Taylor Seminary policies on class attendance, academic honesty, incompletes and grading system.