

A new perspective

Notes on the Bible readings

- It was common practice for preachers to carry letters affirming that they were genuine teachers of the gospel. Paul does not do this – he simply has confidence that he follows God by faith, even when he can't see a way forward. While he is on earth and 'at home in the body' (v.6), Paul feels far from God, but as he approaches death, he knows he will soon be united with God and 'at home with the Lord' (v.8).

- Paul calls on his listeners not to value people according to the claims they make, for only Christ's judgement matters (v.10). The true test of a Christian is a change of heart, from human priorities to God's priorities, and this should be evident in the way they live.

- The idea of a new birth and a new identity is important in the Christian faith and highlights forgiveness. Paul goes even further and sees his life following Jesus Christ as a completely 'new creation' (v.17). He describes it as no longer living for himself, having died to his old way of life, but living for Jesus who was raised from the dead.

- Paul says the change is so momentous that all sense of human judgement of 'us' and 'them' disappears. Christians no longer define themselves in relation to others, but are called to participate in God's plan of love for the world. The multicultural port of Corinth, on an important trade route between Asia and Rome, was a good place to hear this message.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Questions for reflection

- ▶ Why is this an unusual view of planet Earth?
- ▶ How does it challenge your assumptions?
- ▶ How might it change your behaviour?



A prayer of thanksgiving

*How can we thank you, God, for all you have given us?
How can we grasp the enormity of your giving for us?*

We can give you thanks:

that you have given us the risen Christ;

that you have poured out your Holy Spirit;

*that by your being and presence you make all things new;
that in knowing you, our lives are transformed.*

*We give you thanks that with you,
from the smallest word and tiniest seed,
great things will be.*

Amen.

A personal prayer

In Christ, all things are made new. Help me, Christ Jesus, to be made new through my faith in you, my love of you and my trust that you go with me always. Amen.

A prayer for fresh vision

Lord Jesus,

help us to see things as you would see them.

Help us to see more clearly

how you would help the people we meet,

how you would care and love and support them.

Help us to know what to say to people in trouble or need.

Help us to know how to respond to people in crisis.

Help us to think, to love and to do as you would do.

Amen.

Live your faith

Walk quietly down a street, consciously looking and listening for things you had not noticed before. Pray for the people or things you notice.