

Week 1: Introduction to Pauline Theology

Course Title:

Introduction to Pauline Theology

Target Audience:

First-year theology students, beginners in Pauline studies

Objective:

To understand the background, significance, and key themes of Pauline theology.

1. Definition and Importance of Pauline Theology

1) Definition:

Pauline theology is the study of the gospel and doctrinal system proclaimed by the Apostle Paul.

2) Importance:

- (1) Paul authored 13 or 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament (including or excluding Hebrews).
- (2) He laid the theological foundation for early Christianity (e.g., soteriology, grace, faith, the Holy Spirit, ecclesiology).

2. Background of Pauline Theology

1) Life of Paul:

- (1) A Pharisee in Judaism → Conversion on the road to Damascus → Called as Apostle to the Gentiles
- (2) Undertook three missionary journeys, held Roman citizenship

2) Formative Elements:

- (1) Jewish Law education + Hellenistic philosophical background
- (2) Revelatory encounter with Jesus Christ
- (3) Practical pastoral experiences with church communities

3. Central Themes in Pauline Theology

1) Justification (Righteousness by Faith)

Justified by faith, not works (Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16)

2) Grace and Faith

Salvation by grace, not law (Ephesians 2:8–9)

3) Christ-Centeredness

“Christ in me” (Galatians 2:20)

4) Work of the Holy Spirit

Led by the Spirit, not by the law (Romans 8)

5) The Church as the Body of Christ

The Church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)

6) New Creation and Eschatology

Eschatological salvation, new self, new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

4. Contemporary Relevance of Pauline Theology

- 1) Restores the essence of the gospel beyond denominational traditions
- 2) Provides discernment against legalism, antinomianism, and prosperity theology
- 3) Lays the foundation for biblical church renewal and sound Christian education

5. Key Scripture References

- 1) Romans 1:16–17
- 2) Galatians 2:20
- 3) Ephesians 2:8–10
- 4) 1 Corinthians 1:18–25
- 5) Philippians 3:8–9

6. Assignment

- 1) Summarize in one page how Paul's gospel differs from the modern church's gospel.
- 2) Memorize Romans 1:16–17 and explain its meaning.