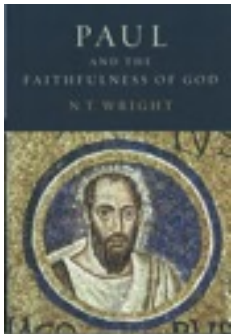


Issue: Building our lives carefully on the gospel

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so critical that we build carefully on the gospel just as it was delivered by Paul to the churches?
2. What will happen if we do not take care to build on that foundation?
3. Why is the resurrection such an important part of building on that foundation?
4. Why is it critical that we are in a movement of churches in building on that foundation?

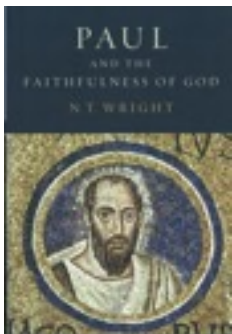


Paul's Early Epistles

The key work and author carrying the conversation is

The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth by Gerd Theissen, (Fortress, 1982)

Like Malherbe's *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophical Tradition of Pastoral Care*, usually one author brings it down to the churches.

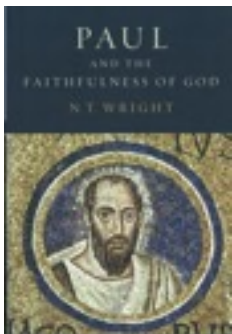


Paul's Early Epistles

Another book I mentioned contributes to getting on top of the conversation:

Beginning from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making, Volume 2, by James D. G. Dunn
(Eerdman, 2009)

This contains a summary of almost all the current research on the “quest for the historical church.” See these sections on the Corinthian churches: “The Founding of the Church at Corinth” pages 692–702 and the 4 Corinthian letters, pages 780–857.

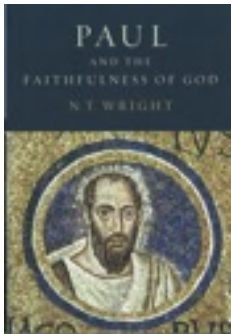


I am again using Dunn heavily in this section.

Paul's Early Epistles

This series is very important in filling out our understanding of how Paul laid the foundation of the gospel for unity in his churches.

We will see its application to both unity in the Corinthian churches and unity in the network he was building, along with the tremendous cost he paid personally for laying that foundation.



Paul's Early Epistles

The Early Letters

Book 1: The Early Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches in the Gospel

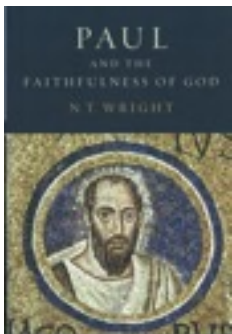
Book 2: Galatians: So Quickly Leaving the Gospel

Book 3: The Thessalonian Correspondence: Conversion to the Gospel

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Book 6: Romans: Complete Treatise of Paul's Gospel



Paul's Early Epistles

Book 4: The Corinthian Letters: Fragmentation of the Gospel

Session 1: The Fragmentation of the Gospel

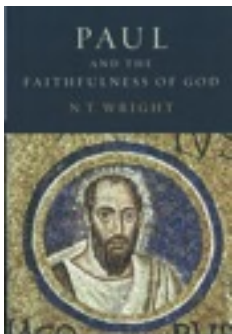
Session 2: Building on One Foundation: The Traditions

Session 3: Divisions in Their Community Life

Session 4: Divisions in Their Community Gatherings

Session 5: Back to the Gospel Foundations

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry



Paul's Early Epistles

Book 5: The Corinthian Letters: Progressing the Gospel Through Multiplying Churches

Session 1: The Pressure of Leading Church Networks

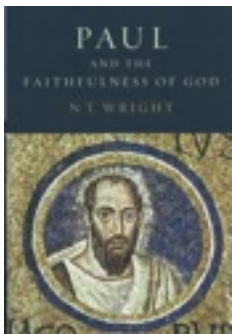
Session 2: The Ministry of the Gospel: Conflicts Without and Fears Within

Session 3: Sacrificing Network to Network for the Progress of the Gospel

Session 4: The Importance of Apostolic Teams

Session 5: The Appeal to the Corinthian Churches

Session 6: Use in Life and Ministry

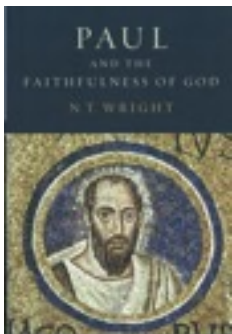


Paul's Early Epistles

In Session 1, we attempted to discover Paul's intent in writing all the Corinthian letters.

In Session 2 we turned our focus to 1 Corinthians 1–6 to see how Paul laid the foundation for dealing with their disunity by returning to the gospel.

In Sessions 3 and 4 we looked at the specific divisions that occurred in the Corinthian churches.



Intention Statement of 1 Corinthians

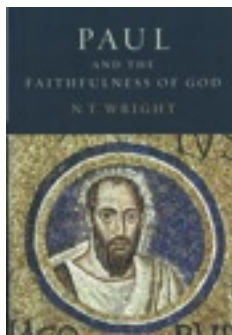
To deal with internal divisions, rooted in differing social statuses fragmenting the Corinthian churches, with the view of the Corinthian churches fully participating with him in the progress of the gospel

by applying the gospel to the core divisions that developed by factions within the churches

by specifically addressing factions in both

- their community life and
- their community gatherings

by appealing to the future resurrection

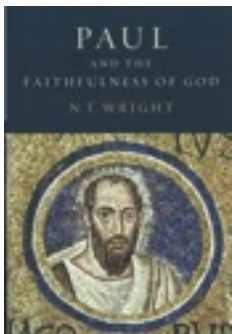


There were 3 types of divisions in their church community:

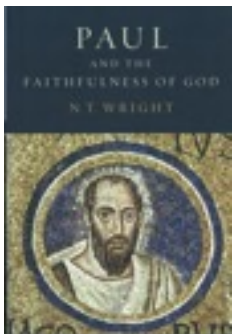
1. Divisions in marriage, chapter 7
2. Divisions in social status/lifestyle, chapters 8–10
3. Divisions in men's and women's roles, chapter 11:1–16

There were 3 types of divisions in their community gatherings:

1. Divisions at the Lord's supper
2. Divisions in the order of gifts
3. Divisions in the meeting itself



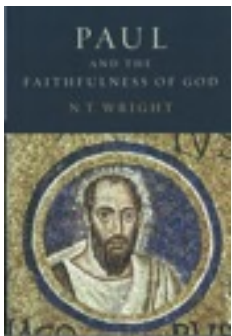
In Session 5, we now return to the gospel and the importance of building carefully on its foundation as proclaimed by Paul.



Paul's Early Epistles

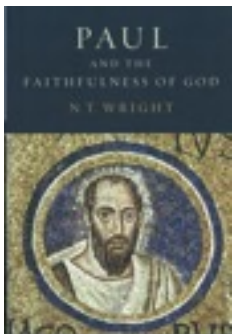
Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Paul left the discussion of the resurrection as his last issue?
2. What two issues were at the heart of the Corinthians' divisions over the resurrection? How does he deal with them?
3. Why does he return to the “formulaic statement” of the gospel—the kerygma—as the foundation for his argument on the resurrection?
4. Why is it critical for the Corinthians to stay clear on the gospel that Paul preached? What was his warning to them?
5. Why does Paul end the letter the way he does in chapter 16? What is its contribution to the intention of his letter?

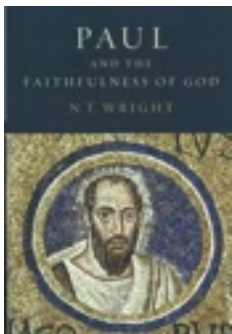


15:1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:1–2



³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

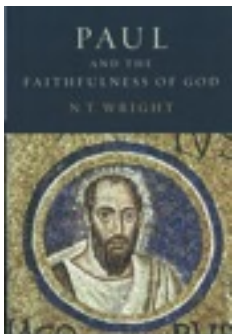


1 Corinthians 15:3–8

Paul's Early Epistles

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

1 Corinthians 15:9–11

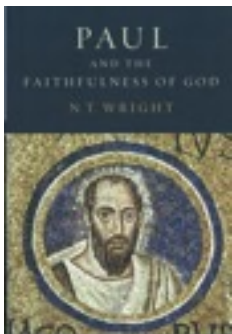


Paul's Early Epistles

Why does Paul start here in dealing with the divisions in the Corinthian churches over the resurrection?

We will understand by the end of the argument, but for now notice these points:

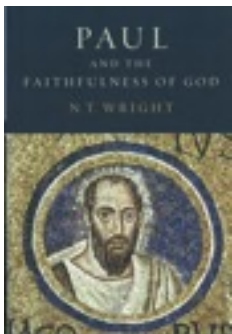
1. He makes the gospel he proclaimed to them clear by stating it in the traditional “formulaic form.”
2. He states they must adhere to it or their belief will be in vain.
3. In his statement, he majors on Jesus appearing and appearing to his followers after His resurrection.
4. He states they are being saved, unless they stop embracing the gospel he delivered. What does that mean?



Two issues about the resurrection:

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? 1 Corinthians 15:12

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”
1 Corinthians 15:35



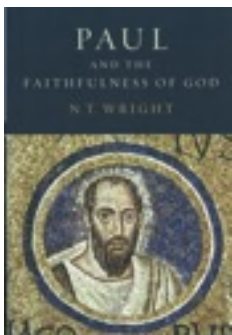
The division in the Corinthian churches centered on those who were teaching there was no resurrection from the dead.

Part of their argument was it is not logical that the body that died would be brought back to life—what kind would it be? Why?

Paul then unfolds a 2-part carefully reasoned argument:

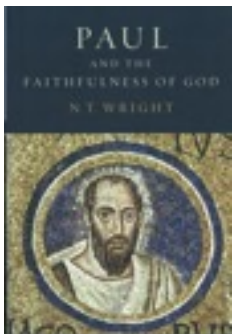
1. If we are not raised from the dead like Jesus, we are to be most pitied and might just as well live for pleasure in this life.
2. We are going to be raised after our death, when Christ returns, just as a seed is sown and then grows new life.

Paul's Early Epistles



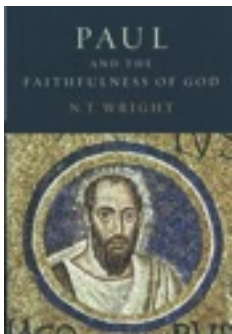
Argument 1: 1 Corinthians 15:12–34

1. If Christ was raised from the dead, then there is such a thing as the resurrection of the body.
2. If Christ was not raised from the dead, then we are the most to be pitied of all people, since we work hard and suffer and die for our faith. Paul “dies every day.” 15:31
3. If Christ was not raised from the dead, then we might as well just eat and drink and live for our pleasures.



Argument 2: 1 Corinthians 15:35–58

1. When we die, we are like a seed sown in the ground, which will produce new life.
2. Our first body was made from the dust of the ground, but our resurrected body will be made in heaven.
3. Therefore be steadfast in the work of the Lord so your labor is not in vain.



Theology of the Kerygma (resurrection is expanded)

1. We will put on a heavenly body after we die and are resurrected.
2. There is an order to the future resurrections:
First will be those who have died as Christians.
Second, Christians who are alive when Christ returns—that will be instantaneous
3. We will be raised with a new body
sown—————raised
perishable vs. imperishable
dishonor vs. glory
weakness vs. power
physical body vs. spiritual body
from dust vs. from heaven
image of man of dust vs. image of man of heaven

Theology of the Kerygma (resurrection is expanded)

4. The resurrection has an order to it:

Christ's resurrection was the "first fruits."

Then those who died will be resurrected.

Then those alive at His return will be transformed on the spot.

Then He will set up the kingdom, defeating all enemies.

Then He will hand over the kingdom to God, who then will be in everything.

Paul's main point:

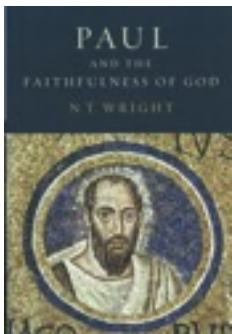
“Your labor is not in vain” 15:58

Same point at the beginning of the chapter

“unless you have come to believe in vain” 15:2

Paul's main point:

If they do not hold to the gospel as it was proclaimed to them, then their labor will be in vain. They must remain firm in their belief in the gospel as it was handed down from the Apostles.



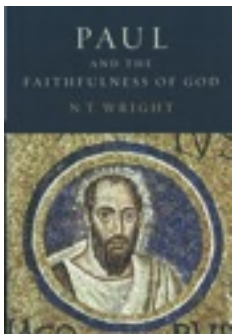
This takes us back to chapter 3.

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—¹³ the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. ¹⁴ If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:10–15

Paul's line of argument is this:

If you build on another foundation other than the one Paul laid—the kerygma, the gospel he proclaimed—you will labor in vain and your works will not be rewarded at the return of Christ.

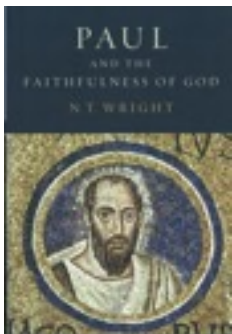


Paul's Early Epistles

Earlier Paul stated:

¹ When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

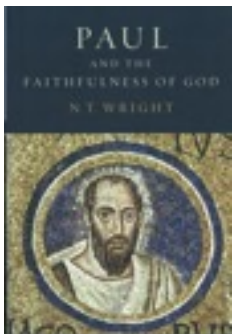
Again, if our faith rests on a faulty gospel, then our labor in this life will be in vain because it will not count for eternity!



Paul's Early Epistles

Now Paul turns his attention to what work he expects of them and the context of that work in the complex apostolic network he is building.

He is keeping the churches in the network and building on the right foundation.

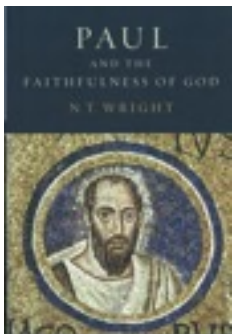


Here are his instructions (getting back to business):

1. Set aside money weekly toward your commitment to the large collection being taken by all the churches for Jerusalem, as well as appointing those who will accompany the gift.
2. Paul plans to spend the winter with them, if the Lord permits, after Ephesus where he has a wide open door for the gospel.
3. If Timothy comes, take care of him as he does his work, and send him on to me.
4. I tried to get Apollos to come but he has not agreed to at this time.
5. Assist the household of Stephanas and everyone who works with them.
6. The churches of Asia send greetings.
7. As do Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in the house who greet you warmly.
8. All the brothers and sisters everywhere.
9. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

We learn a lot about how Paul built his network (movement) of churches:

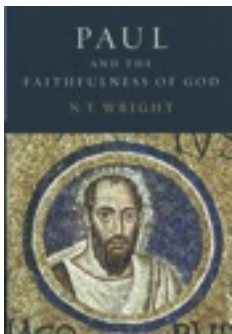
1. He understood that building the foundation correctly meant that they, the Corinthian churches, were to be part of a network of churches progressing the gospel (open door in Ephesus).
2. The churches were expected to give towards the progress of the gospel (supporting Paul's team as needed, giving to other networks of churches in the complex network).
3. Paul's process of establishing churches involved extended personal visits, sending key members of his team, and cooperating with other legitimate teams working amongst his churches.



Paul's Early Epistles

We learn a lot about how Paul built his network (movement) of churches:

4. Paul worked hard at his churches becoming a genuine network that saw themselves as an extended, empire-wide family of families. He did this through giving, serving, hosting, family greetings, etc.
5. Paul also saw the teaching he delivered (the didache, rule of faith, see Galatians) as common authoritative traditions (faith, deposit, sound doctrine)



Paul's Early Epistles

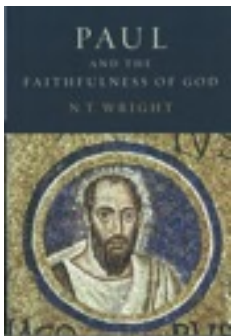
¹⁶ I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. ¹⁸ But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant.

1 Corinthians 4:16–18

Issue: Building our lives carefully on the gospel

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it so critical that we build carefully on the gospel just as it was delivered by Paul to the churches?
2. What will happen if we do not take care to build on that foundation?
3. Why is the resurrection such an important part of building on that foundation?
4. In building on that foundation, why is it critical that we are in a movement of churches?



Paul's Early Epistles

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

1. We must hold fast to the gospel delivered by Paul, and build on that foundation, not any other, if we expect to have our labor count for eternity.
2. Part of that “holding fast” is to labor sacrificially, even including hardship and death, motivated by the reality that regardless of what happens to us we will be resurrected with new, incredible bodies at Christ’s return.
3. Building on that foundation means being part of a network of churches committed to the progress of the gospel; that includes giving, hosting, serving those directly progressing the gospel through building the network of churches, and doing so with an attitude of love, as one would greet an extended family.

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

Hold fast the gospel

“Quest for the Historical Jesus”—theory: 100 years of resurrection did not happen but just Jesus’ ethic; strengthened by the resurrection myth, which grew and grew as Christianity expanded.

Creating a global ethic leading all religions

See my encyclical “From Jesus to the Gospels” for a survey of the movement. N. T. Wright is the 3rd phase.

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

Serve out of a belief in the return of Christ and our resurrection.

Perspective towards growing old and death, or dying for our faith

90,000 Christians killed for their faith in 2016.

“Easter 2017, Christians ‘Most Persecuted Group in the World’” Breitbart

according to a study from the Turin-based Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR)

250 A DAY!!!!!!!!!!

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

Networks of churches as family—giving, hosting, supporting, praying

Giving collection needed

Supporting those shaping network

Michael—matching churches with network partners for prayer, hosting, giving, etc.

New benefactor team

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

Following common “rule of faith” set down for all churches

Community order—the Benedict Option (Robert Lewis conversation)

the Catholic response—in post-Christian culture, we can only truly survive in

Protestantism—one phase the breakdown of Western civilization

“the collapse of religious unity and religious authority in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century”

Tremendous insights into building on the foundation of the gospel in a solid way:

Following common “rule of faith” set down for all churches

Community order—the Benedict Option (Robert Lewis conversation)

Catholic order not the answer

but (see *Churches of the First Century; From Simple Church to Complex Network*)

“small authentic communities”—only answer, as the postChristian generation will not darken the door of a traditional church building.