

# Week 14: Overview of the Pauline Epistles

## 1. Introduction: The Significance of Paul's Letters

- 1) 13 of the 27 New Testament books are attributed to Paul.
- 2) They shaped the theology and life of the early church.
- 3) The core of the gospel—"The righteous shall live by faith"—is richly presented.

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## 2. Classification of Paul's Epistles

Category	Epistles	Characteristics
Early Epistles	1 & 2 Thessalonians	Emphasis on hope in Christ's return and holy living
Major Doctrinal Epistles	Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians	Centered on salvation, the church, and the Holy Spirit
Prison Epistles	Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon	Written in prison, Christ-centered theology
Pastoral Epistles	1 & 2 Timothy, Titus	Church order, pastoral qualifications, response to false teachings

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## 3. Summary of Each Epistle

### 1) Romans

- (1) Theme: Righteousness by faith, universal sin, grace through redemption
- (2) Key Verses: Romans 1:17; 3:23–24
- (3) Significance: A doctrinal manifesto of the gospel; essence of Pauline theology

### 2) 1 & 2 Corinthians

- (1) Theme: Church divisions, spiritual gifts, wisdom of the cross
- (2) Notes: Pastoral advice on real-life church issues

### 3) Galatians

- (1) Theme: Law vs. Grace, freedom in Christ
- (2) Warning: Strong condemnation of false gospels (Galatians 1:6–9)

### 4) Ephesians

- (1) Theme: Mystery of the Church, heavenly blessings, unity in Christ
- (2) Key Verses: Ephesians 1:3–14

### 5) Philippians

- (1) Theme: Joy, humility, gospel-centered living
- (2) Key Verses: Philippians 2:5–11

### 6) Colossians

- (1) Theme: Supremacy of Christ, refutation of heresy
- (2) Content: Warnings against philosophy and legalism

#### 7) 1 & 2 Thessalonians

- (1) Theme: Return of Christ, readiness of the saints
- (2) Content: Correct understanding of eschatology

#### 8) 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus

- (1) Theme: Pastoral character, sound doctrine, church order
- (2) Features: Paul's final exhortations, like a spiritual will

#### 9) Philemon

- (1) Theme: Forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ
- (2) Content: Paul's loving intercession for the slave Onesimus

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### 4. Core Themes in Pauline Theology

- 1) Justification & Salvation: By grace through faith, not by the Law
- 2) The Church: Body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit
- 3) Christian Life: Cross-centered, Spirit-led transformation
- 4) Eschatology: Hope in Christ's return, living in watchfulness

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### 5. Application & Conclusion

- 1) Paul's letters are not just theological treatises but life-transforming gospel messages
- 2) They provide timely and practical guidance for today's church and believers
- 3) Through Paul's theology, we are called to live a Christ-centered life of faith and grace