

A house not made with hands

Notes on the Bible readings

- Corinth was a fine and wealthy city rebuilt by the Romans in 44 BC with huge statues and elaborate buildings to honour the gods and important people. Symbols of Roman political power were visible everywhere, and the idea of an unseen God would have been an alien idea in this pagan culture. Although the new Christians in Corinth live in this culture, Paul is telling them that as Christians, they now live by different values.

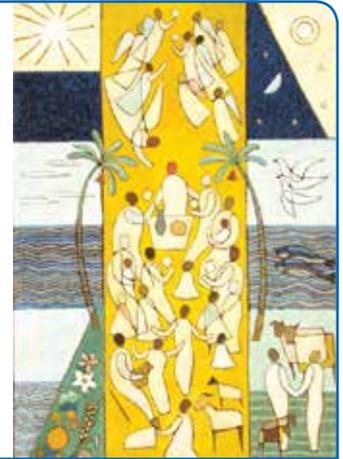
- The Temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time Paul is writing and remained a significant focal point for these new believers. In choosing to follow Jesus Christ, Paul is telling them that they need to let go of this image of the house of God. He says that God's house is 'a house not made with hands' (5.1); it is inward and invisible and, unlike human buildings, will last for ever.

- Paul also refers to the human body and our physical lifespan. Bodies naturally wear out and fail, but the most important part of every person – the soul or spirit – cannot be seen. Even when the body is getting weaker, the soul of a believer is growing stronger and is continually being renewed (v.16).

- Paul encourages his listeners to stand firm, even when it's difficult, remembering that God has brought them together. Whatever suffering they are going through now is temporary, and what is to come is far more glorious and eternal.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What do you think is going on in the picture?
- ▶ What is visible and temporary in this picture?
- ▶ What is eternal and may be invisible in this picture?



A prayer of approach

*You are not boxed beyond sight, eternal God,
yet we sometimes dare not look.
You are not invisible, eternal God,
and yet often we cannot see.
You are not bound within one place, eternal God,
and yet we sometimes wish you were.
You cannot be destroyed by wind or fire, by age or death,
eternal God, and yet we do so often lose you.
Bring us now, eternal God,
to see your ever-present presence with us.
Amen.*

A prayer of adoration

*Lord our God, our rock on which we live: we praise you.
You give us meaning and purpose: we thank you.
You give structure and integrity to our being: we adore you.
You are our way, you are our 'sat nav' in life, we marvel at your
existence.
For all you are, have been and will be, we worship and adore you,
and bless your holy name.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*I have waited, I do wait and I will wait, Lord. But help me, while I
wait, to do your will, to be active for the eternal truths that are of
you. Amen.*

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.



Live your faith

Look for opportunities this week to demonstrate/use and talk about, as appropriate, 'real but invisible' gifts.