

Hello everyone

When we think of church, I'm sure most of us bring to mind a particular place. Maybe the East church or maybe the church we grew up in or a place that was special at a particular time.

All churches seem the same but as you take part in one, small or large differences appear. For one thing, Communion is not the same in any two Church of Scotland churches it seems to me.

But as we read the New Testament and think church, maybe you think about the Christian communities Paul established on his journeys. We think of them really because in our New Testament we have the letters Paul wrote to them. Whether that be at Corinth or Ephesus or Thessalonica or Rome. We know the stories from the letters he wrote, and the story Luke tells in his second book. The book of Acts.

For the last few Wednesday's we've looked at some aspects about Paul, his church communities and his beliefs. We've touched on a few of his comments in his letter to the Galatians. Last Sunday I spoke about Paul's conversion, but let's not forget that there

were other Christian communities in the Early church. Paul was not the first community.

Christianity began as a series of responses to the life and teaching of Jesus and there were a number of ways that happened. Some people remembered saying and parables of Jesus and applied them to their own lives. Another way was to tell the stories about Jesus and what he did and yet another way was to continue living his lifestyle. All this comes together in our New Testament as the traditions, interpretations and newly created stories were told and preserved for us through a number of groups of Jesus' followers. Traditions like the Lord's supper and baptism, Saying like the parables stories like the miracle stories and Christ centred hymns. Not all Christians accepted them all. Many appear in our gospels and Paul seems to have taken up others and preserved them for us.

Today I'd like to think a little bit about the time between Paul's conversion and the start of his successful missionary journeys to the Gentiles.

How did Paul come to know the traditions? Did Paul just go out on the road with his own thoughts or was

there some kind of structure possibly even leadership structure that early in the church. Luke and some of Paul's letters give us insights into the working of the Early church. Let's walk once more this week with Paul as companions alongside his friends, Barnabas and Timothy and Titus as together we worship God

Let us pray.

Gracious God

Open our eyes and minds to what we can learn from your early Christian church.

Give us the boldness they had

The desire for debate and discussion

And the tingle of excitement that working for you in our world of today still gives each one of us.

For your son, Jesus said:

I am the light of the world.

No follower of mine shall walk in darkness.

They will have the light of life.

Amen