

## Hold firmly to the message

### Notes on the Bible readings

- Corinth was a multicultural city with a mixture of new and old ideas, pagans and Jews. Because of this, some contradictory ideas had developed. Pagans didn't believe in resurrection, whereas most Jews did. The Christians in Corinth wanted evidence that Jesus' resurrection was real.
- In order to affirm the validity of the resurrection, Paul refers to Jesus' death, burial and eyewitness accounts of the risen Jesus. First, Jesus appeared to Peter, then the apostles, then 500 people, then James – Jesus' brother – and last, he appeared to Paul on the Damascus road. Paul says of himself that he is 'the least of the apostles' (v.9), referring to his previous role in persecuting Christians. By revisiting this first-hand evidence, and showing how it fulfils Old Testament Scripture, Paul is asking the Corinthians to choose to believe, and hold fast to the truth of Jesus' resurrection.
- In the Luke passage, we see the beginnings of Jesus' public life, when he calls his first three disciples who, in an act of faith, choose to abandon everything and follow him. This story is more to do with Simon Peter than a miraculous catch, though it symbolises the people he will bring to Jesus.
- Isaiah 6 describes a vision of God in imaginative detail and parallels the calling of Simon Peter. Simon's response, 'I am a sinful man' (v.8) echoes Isaiah who describes himself as a 'man of unclean lips'. Both men are called by God and choose to respond.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) and click on PostScript.



### Questions for reflection

- ▶ Who has passed the message on to you?
- ▶ How firmly do you hold on to it?
- ▶ Who will you pass it on to?



### A prayer of approach

*Holding firmly to the message we have heard,  
we approach our living Lord.  
He who perished upon a cross  
now sits enthroned in heaven,  
yet he comes here to meet us.  
As we draw near, confident in the Word  
that has been passed on to us,  
we look to our Lord to lead and encourage us.  
May we grow in knowledge, understanding,  
and the kind of belief that becomes  
a wellspring of action in our lives,  
pouring forth in love for others. Amen.*

### A prayer for others

*Father, today we pray for all who are going through difficulties  
that make belief hard:  
for those who are suffering physical and mental illness, that they  
may feel the comfort of your healing touch;  
for the bereaved, that they may know your presence as they  
walk the valley of the shadow;  
for those who have been hurt, abused or betrayed by people  
they loved and trusted, that they will come to believe in the One  
who rose above all human fallibility and did not sin.  
Ease open all hurting eyes and hearts, Lord.  
Push aside all barriers to belief.  
Shine your light in our darkness, so that faith may flourish even  
in the midst of sorrow. Amen.*

### A personal prayer

*Lord, as others have passed it on to me, help me to share the  
gospel. Let what is in my heart overflow into my life, so that the  
risen Jesus may be seen and known through me. Amen.*

### Live your faith

Talk to someone in your church community during the week about their faith. Find out what the resurrection means to them.