

Greetings to Good and Godly People (*Part 1*)

Romans 16:1-16

Thought for the Day: God uses ordinary people, good and godly people, who are willing and available to glorify Himself and advance His kingdom.

Paul is bringing his letter to the believers in Rome to a close. At first glance, we may be tempted to skip over this long list of greetings. But tucked away inside this list are some valuable and practical lessons about life and ministry within the body of Christ, the Church. Romans 16 gives us a snapshot of what the church in Rome looked like in Paul's day and it challenges us to be a church that effectively glorifies God and advances His kingdom.

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.

- Paul begins with a note of commendation or introduction for a woman named Phoebe.
- This is the only mention of Phoebe in the Bible and nothing else is known about her.
 - 1) She was a Christian ("our sister") – Do people know without question that you are a Christian?
 - 2) She was a "servant of the church" (from the Greek word from which we get our term "deacon"; Phoebe is often described as a deaconess).
 - In most churches, about 10% of the people can be described as "servants of the church" (they are contributors) while about 90% are better described as "consumers."
 - Be a contributor, not just a consumer. Use your gifts, talents, abilities and resources for the glory of God and the good of His people. Get involved!
 - 3) She was trustworthy – Paul entrusted her with the greatest theological treatise of the Christian faith of all time.
 - God has entrusted the Gospel to us, the truths and teachings of His Word.
 - Can He count on us to faithfully carry His message to others?
 - 4) She was a helper – Are you known as a helper? When people need help in the work of the Lord, can they count on you?

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 5 Greet also the church that meets at their house.

- Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned 5 times in the New Testament, always together. (Cp. 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19)
- They were a husband and wife ministry team, close friends and fellow workers of the Apostle Paul, who worked behind the scenes to glorify God and advance His kingdom.
 - 1) We need more husband and wife ministry teams! Very often, it is the women who do the work of the ministry, while the men hang back.

- 2) Acts 18:1-5 – They were Christian business owners who supported Paul financially so that he could give himself full-time to the work of the ministry.
 - 3) Acts 18:18-19, 24-26 – They went with Paul to Ephesus, where they helped to strengthen the church by discipling Apollos and others.
 - 4) Does God want to use you to disciple others? Are you willing and available?
- It is significant that Priscilla is usually mentioned first, which indicates that she was probably the more dominant personality of the two.
 - 1) She was actively involved in “explaining the way of God more adequately” to Apollos.
 - 2) Ladies, don’t let the fact that you are a woman or that your husband may not take the lead prevent you from ministering to others for the Lord.
 - 3) Men, you need to view your wife as an equal partner in marriage and ministry.
 - Many men hold their wives back out of pride and selfishness.
 - Your role is that of sacrificial love. (Ephesians 5:25-33)
 - It should be your commitment that your wife will have every opportunity to develop to her full potential in the Lord, and be willing to sacrifice in order to make that happen for her.
 - They risked their lives—literally, they “laid down their necks”—they put their necks on the chopping block for Paul. What are you willing to die for?
 - They made their home available as a gathering place for believers.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. 6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

- Mary worked to the point of exhaustion in her service to the church family.
- This is her eternal legacy! What will your legacy be?
 - 1) Revelation 20:12 – “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”
 - 2) Revelation 20:15 – “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”
 - 3) The Book of Life will determine your eternal destiny; the other books will determine your eternal reward.
- Our works are being recorded. We are writing our own eternal legacy today.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

- What price are you willing to pay in your service for the Lord? Imprisonment?

8 Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ.

- 1 Peter 1:6-7 – God has at least two purposes for our trials: 1) To refine our faith; and 2) To prove the genuineness of our faith.
- Trials are a necessary part of our spiritual development.
- We will be tested and approved or tested and disqualified.