

Appreciation for the Church (Part 2) #54
Romans 16: 1-16; 21-23

I want to continue looking at this final chapter in Romans. Paul has shared much with the church in Rome up to this point regarding salvation and our Christian lives, and as he closes he shares his deep gratitude for many who have walked alongside him, aiding him in ministry.

Other than our relationship with the Lord and our families, the church ought to be next on the list of things we are thankful for. I couldn't imagine life without the church. We share a common bond in faith and have the wonderful opportunity to share our lives and walk with the Lord. I am certainly thankful for the church at large, and for our local congregation in particular. It is no accident that the Lord has brought us together under these circumstances. I am convinced He has added to Fellowship those whom He desired for such a time as this. Our current makeup is no coincidence and we shouldn't take it for granted. There is much that each of us can contribute to the ministries here while being a help and encouragement to one another.

In our last study we considered that:

I. Paul speaks of a Hospitable Lady (1-2)

II. Paul speaks of an Honorable Couple (3-5a)

As we continue to consider the [affirmations](#) of Paul in his [Appreciation for the Church](#), we discover also that:

III. Paul speaks of Helpful Servants (5b-16; 21-23) – Here Paul speaks of many who served alongside him in ministry, greatly contributing to the work in which he was engaged. He spoke of:

- **Epaenetus (5b)** – [Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.](#) He desired the church in Rome to salute the wellbeloved Epaenetus, one of the first converts in Achaia, likely among the church in Corinth. Paul shared a fondness for those who readily received the Gospel and submitted to serving the Lord. There is always something special about the first convert within a particular work or ministry that is unforgettable.
- **Mary (6)** – [Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.](#) Paul doesn't reveal a last name, but apparently she would have been known by those in Rome. Paul appreciated her faithfulness to serve alongside him, laboring faithfully with him.

- **Andronicus and Junia (7)** – *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.* Paul had a deep affection for Andronicus and Junia. It seems apparent these were relatives of Paul, being referred to as kinsmen. They also shared a special position with Paul, having been in bonds for their faith as he had. Paul reveals these were known of the apostles, having come to faith in Christ before Paul was saved on the Damascus Road. Family is certainly special and worthy of gratitude, but there is also something very special about those who share your faith and your burdens. Being able to share all of that with relatives was a great blessing to Paul.

- **Amplias (8)** – *Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.* Little is revealed about Amplias other than he was beloved of Paul through their shared relationship with the Lord. As long as we share a common faith, little else really matters. Our gifts and talents are varied, but we are all part of the same body, serving the same Lord.

- **Urbane (9a)** – *Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ.* Paul doesn't reveal a lot about Urbane either, except that he was a helper in Christ. For many it may have seemed insignificant, but Paul was grateful for the help Urbane contributed to the ministry. We too should be thankful for every contribution made in regard to our work for the Lord.

- **Stachys (9b)** – *and Stachys my beloved.* Like Amplias, Stachys is referred to simply as one beloved of Paul. Again he reveals his affection for all who shared the faith and supported the ministry he sought to perform for the Lord.

- **Apelles (10a)** – *Salute Apelles approved in Christ.* Paul mentions only one attribute regarding Apelles, but nothing could be greater. He had apparently been tested in the faith and was approved in Christ. His faith had been proven by the life he lived before others. Of all that could be said of us, nothing could be greater!

- **Aristobulus' Household (10b)** – *Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.* Paul doesn't speak of Aristobulus, but those of his household. He may have died, stayed behind, or was not a believer, but those of his household were to be received as fellow believers. Some believe these may have well been slaves of Aristobulus who were saved by grace.

- **Herodion (11a)** – *Salute Herodion my kinsman.* It appears Herodion was also a relative of Paul, along with Andronicus and Junia.

- **Narcissus' Household (11b)** – *Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.* Similar to those of Aristobulus' household, Paul encouraged the reception of those within the household of Narcissus as well. These were likely slaves also who had come to faith in Christ.

This serves as a strong reminder to receive all who are in Christ, regardless of their social or economic status.

- **Tryphena and Tryphosa (12a)** – Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. The ladies were known for their labor for the Lord and the work of ministry. Some observe they may have been twins or sisters due to the similarity in their names. Many believe they too were enslaved and yet served the Lord faithfully.
- **Persis (12b)** – Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Paul refers to another lady who was beloved of him in the faith for her much labor in the Lord. He was surrounded by men and women who faithfully and consistently served the Lord.
- **Rufus (13)** – Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Rufus was also dear to Paul, a brother chosen of the Lord. Many scholars think Rufus was the son of Simon who carried the cross of our Lord. Mark 15:21 – And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. His mother continued to live with Rufus and Paul shared a great affection for her as well. Apparently she had attended to Paul's needs while in Jerusalem and he considered her as his own mother. Clearly Rufus and his mother were very close and dear to Paul.
- **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the Brethren (14)** – Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. These men were close associates and fellow believers. The Roman church was encouraged to salute their faith and welcome them into the fold. There is something to be said for those who faithfully serve the Lord together, putting aside personal agendas and identities for the good of the Kingdom.
- **Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and the Saints (15)** – Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Here Paul mentions a group of men and women who were saints of the Lord, and others who were among them. Like the others, these were to be saluted and accepted of the church. They had been a blessing to Paul and he knew they would be to the church at Rome also.
- **The Churches of Christ (16)** – Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. Paul wanted the church in Rome to know he was thankful for each of them as well. He exhorted them to salute one another and that the other churches prayed for their wellbeing. Paul desired the Romans to grasp the big picture, receiving and supporting other believers regardless of their location or background. The work of Christ needed every available laborer.

- **Timotheus (21a)** – *Timotheus my workfellow*. Paul was thankful for the association and friendship of Timothy. He had been a great help and support to Paul. Timothy also sent his greetings and well wishes for the church there.
- **Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (21b)** – *and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you*. Along with Timothy, these men sent greetings and warm wishes as well. Sosipater was also a relative of Paul. Although he faced great opposition by many, Paul was blessed with many friends and family who shared his burden and served the Lord alongside him.
- **Tertius (22)** – *I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord*. Tertius had penned this great epistle for Paul, writing each word as Paul dictated them. He too sent greetings to the church at Rome. This was not uncommon. Paul often had someone write for him, but I doubt Tertius grasped the enormity of this task. He likely didn't realize the spiritual impact this letter would have on untold millions, throughout the centuries!
- **Gaius and the Church (23a)** – *Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you*. Paul's appreciation for the hospitality of Gaius is revealed in his mention of him, and he also sent greetings to Rome. The church in Corinth met in the home of Gaius and sent their greetings as well. Paul was certainly surrounded by those who fervently served the Lord and passionately loved Him.
- **Erastus (23b)** – *Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you*, God had worked mightily through Paul in Corinth. He had impacted the life of Erastus, the chamberlain, the treasurer of the city. Paul's influence in the lives of others created a desire to be a help and blessing to the church at large. God worked in the lives of people, great and small, through the obedience and commitment of Paul.
- **Quartus (23c)** – *and Quartus a brother*. Finally Paul mentions Quartus, who is only referred to as a brother, but he is thankful for him nonetheless. He too sends salutations to Rome. Many think Quartus may too have been a slave, but was accepted as brother of the great apostle. Paul saw men differently than most. The only criteria for Paul was salvation in Christ. If one shared that bond with him, they were received and treated as a brother!

Conclusion: This has been a very interesting passage for me. It reveals the great diversity of the church and the value that must be placed on each member. Our Lord is no respecter of persons. All who have received Him by faith are welcomed into the body of Christ. Each is valuable and needed for the church to function. Like Paul we must share an appreciation and deep affection for the church. If you have yet to receive Christ, you are outside the body, not a part of the church. Your eternal destiny and current blessing hangs in the balance. Receive Christ and be saved!