

Paul's Thankfulness for Fellow Servants

Rom 16:1-20 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchræa, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. 10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

Paul in this passage greets and sends greetings to several individuals and families in the church. We may look at this and ask if there is a reason for this other than his personal greetings or is there instruction to be found here that can encourage and guide us in the church.

We hold that the whole of Scripture is God-breathed, and I think that even these salutations and greetings are placed here for a purpose. Partly to instruct us in what our attitude should be toward one another and how great our care, our love and our concern for God's people and His church should be. Since these that Paul greets are those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and called to enjoy Him forever. And since we shall enjoy the fellowship of God's people throughout eternity should we not begin our Sabbath joy in the church now present in our midst. So I really believe there is great value to consider the love Paul expresses for the fellow saints and also the concern for the safety and protection of the church from those who would cause loss and division.

We will consider this Scripture portion under two headings: First, this Sunday we will consider the instruction that is given here for us to follow looking at Paul's example of love toward the saints of God. And he expresses his appreciation for the unity, service and love faithful saints have show toward the church. And then secondly next Sunday, the Lord willing, we will us carefully heed Paul's concern about those who would bring division amongst the people of God.

A. Paul's example of love toward the saints of God; given as a guide to direct us in our care and love for one another.

1. Paul begins by commending Phoebe to the Church at Rome - *receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also*
 - a. There are definitely certain things we can learn from this.
 - b. Fellow believers are to be received with the same kind of love whereby God received them.
 - c. The position of deaconess **was a appointed place of service provided** in the church for women.
 - d. It is not to be considered the same as the office of deacon.

- e. But it is to be noted that although women may not teach (other than teaching children and other ladies in the church) nor have a place of authority in the church they are not to be excluded from serving or laboring in the church. .

1 Tim 2:12-15 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

- f. Although she is called a servant this is not a belittling of her for even our Lord Jesus came not to be served but to serve

Luke 22:27 "For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves.

- g. *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa who labor in the Lord.* — These were also women who labored in the Gospel.
 - h. Women who serve in the church are a great blessing to the cause of Christ and are to be properly commended for their service.
2. He greets Aquila and Pricilla as **fellow laborers** - whether man or woman - office bearer or not
- a. They had risked their own necks - to protect Paul
 - b. They had exhibited a love for the church as a whole
 - c. They had a burden for the proclamation of Truth.
 - (1) They had taken in one by the name of Apollos - - Act 18:24-28
 - (2) They did not fault him - but helped him
 - (3) They instructed him more carefully in the Word of God
 - (4) He became a strong and mighty preacher in the service of the Church.
 - d. But take note how in all Paul's praise - it is not the type that would cause one to be puffed up.
 - e. Rather in each case it is a praise because of the grace of God in them.
 - f. It is thankfulness because of what they have done or suffered for the cause of Christ and His church.
3. He greets and expresses thanks for several other persons, and families.
- a. Some of whom had been named after pagan gods.
 - b. They did not change their names, but they had been made new creatures in Christ.
 - c. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
4. I think it important to note the purposes of his commendations
- a. He commends them for their love for one another.
 - b. For their faithfulness and support of the church
 - c. And finally their faithfulness to the Word of God.

CONCLUSION: We too should express our appreciation to one another, in the same sense -

- 1. Expressing appreciation for the manner in which God has used each other to the glory of God.
- 2. I dare say that at this Thanksgiving season there may be much thanks for material blessings
- 3. But Paul's thanks here is toward the church for God's work in the church.
- 4. Courtesy, love and appreciation toward one another ought to be a common custom in the church of our Lord.