

"Closing Remarks"**Part 5****Romans 15:14-16:27**

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of the closing remarks of Romans we are going to step into chapter 16. As the reader enters chapter 16 there is a tendency to skip quickly through the first 16 verses because in these verses Paul will commend some of his fellow laborers. I want you to notice the words of Newell on this 16th chapter:

"The sixteenth chapter is neglected by many to their own loss. It is by far the most extensive, intimate, and particular of all the words of loving greeting in Paul's marvelous letters. No one can afford to miss this wonderful outpouring of the heart of our Apostle toward the saints whom he so loved-which means all the real church of God!"

➤ **Commendation of Fellow Believers**

➤ **Phebe**

Notice Romans 16:1

The first person who Paul recognizes is Phebe. She was a sister in the Lord and a fellow servant. It is believed by many that Phebe was the person who carried this letter to Rome and delivered it to the saints. In the first six verses Paul mentions five people and three of them are women. This tells us that women are not second-class Christians in the body of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Peter tells us women are heirs together of the grace of life. We all serve the very same Savior only in different capacities. Notice the words of Zeller:

"Biblical Christianity, in spite of what its critics say, has always dignified womanhood and allowed believing women to find the full satisfaction and joy of being the persons God would have them to be. It is in societies where Biblical principles are not honored that women are horribly mistreated and held in low esteem."

Now let us get back to Phebe. She was a sister and a servant from the church at Cenchrea. This was the eastern port of Corinth. The word "servant" in this verse is the very same word used for "deacon". For this reason, many have used Phebe to say women held the office of "deaconess" in the early church and many churches even have women who serve

under that title today. I do not believe that Phebe was a deaconess, nor do I believe that there was such an office in the early church. I say this because the office is never directly mentioned nor is there ever a list of qualifications as there is for a deacon.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

⁸ *Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;*

⁹ *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

¹⁰ *And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

¹¹ *Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

¹² *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*

¹³ *For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Most likely the word "servant" is used of Phebe just as a helper and not an official title.

Notice Romans 16:2

We are told in this verse that Phebe had been a "succourer" of many and of Paul.

Let us notice the definition of "succourer":

"A female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources."

When I think of Phebe and the area, she came from I understand that she was living the fulfillment of Ephesians 5:1-4.

Ephesians 5:1-4

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

² *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

³ *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

⁴ Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

Notice Romans 16:2 again.

Paul exhorted the church at Rome to do two things for Phebe.

1. **They were to receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints.**

This means they were to receive her into fellowship with them.

2. **They were to help her with any need she may have had.**

We do not know what Phebe did as far as working. But we do know that she carried one very important letter to Rome to deliver it to the church. She may not have known exactly what she had in her possession for she may not have known the letter was inspired by God and that it was His Word. I am sure she did not know how many lives would be changed by the letter in her hand.

Application:

Let us also be reminded that when we serve the Lord, we have no idea how many lives will be touched by what we do. Our service, just as Phebe's, may have an impact upon the lives of people long after we are gone. Therefore, let us serve the Lord with joy and gladness. Let us put His work first and not ours.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

➤ **Priscilla and Aquila**

Notice Romans 16:3

This husband-and-wife team were Paul's helpers in the Lord. They shared the same occupation with Paul.

Acts 18:1-3

After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

² And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

³ *And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.*

From the time they met they remained really close companions. It started with sharing the same trade and it grew from there. They came to know the Lord and they served God faithfully their entire lives.

Application:

I just need to remind all of us that the people we meet in life are often divine appointments. Let us notice something from the life of Jesus.

John 4:3-7

³ *He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

⁴ *And he must needs go through Samaria.*

⁵ *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

⁶ *Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.*

⁷ *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:*

The Bible tells us that Jesus **MUST NEEDS GO THROUGH SAMARIA** and the reason was because there was a woman whom He would meet at the well. She would get saved and she would then testify before the men in the town and many of them would get saved.

I point this out because there are times when God redirects our paths because there is a divine appointment that we must keep. There may be someone whom God will have us to meet that does not know the Lord, or they may know the Lord and He wants to use them in our lives or use us in their lives.

Notice Romans 16:4

We do not know the details but there was a situation where Pricilla and Aquila risk their own lives to preserve the life of Paul and many people benefitted from it.

1 John 3:16

¹⁶ *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Notice Romans 16:5a

Here we learn a little more about this couple. They were hospitable. They opened their home for the church to meet. The Background Commentary has some interesting insights on the early church.

"Small synagogues sometimes had to meet in homes before they could purchase buildings; many Greek religious associations did the same; churches did so for the first three centuries, using their income to buy slaves' freedom, feed the poor and so forth, rather than to build edifices. In Rome, many well-to-do apartments existed above shops in multistory tenement buildings; Aquila and Priscilla probably lived above their artisan shop.

There is something which really stands out concerning this couple and that is they were surrendered to the Lord.

- ✓ **Their time was given to the Lord.**

Acts 18:18a

¹⁸ And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila;

Here we see they joined with Paul on his second missionary journey.

- ✓ **Their lives were surrendered to the Lord.**

They had "laid down their own necks for Paul".

- ✓ **Their possessions were surrendered to the Lord.**

They used their house as a place to gather.

➤ **Epaenetus**

Notice Romans 16:5

This individual held a special place in the heart of Paul because he was the first convert out of Asia. Paul never forgot Epaenetus. Apparently the two stayed in contact until death.

➤ **Mary**

Notice Romans 16:6

We know nothing of this Mary except what is stated here. We are told she bestowed much labor on Paul and his fellow servants. The meaning of "much labor" is that "she labored to the point of weariness and exhaustion". This Mary reminds me of another companion of Paul's who labored with the same fervor.

Philippians 2:25-30

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

➤ **Andronicus and Junia**

Notice Romans 16:7

This may have been a husband and wife, but we cannot be sure. Whoever they were they were:

1. **Kinsmen** - This could mean they were family members of Paul, or they were Jews.
2. **Fellow-prisoners** - Paul was in prison many times and in one of his prison stays these two were also in prison for their faith.
3. **Note among the apostles** - These two were not apostles but this probably means they were outstanding servants with the apostles and under the apostle's authority.
4. **They were in Christ before Paul** - This is a very important statement because there are many who believe the church started when Paul was saved. But here we see these two were IN CHRIST before Paul was ever saved. The church existed before Paul was saved because the church began at Pentecost.

Conclusion:

From the names that are listed here we see the need for all believers to be available for the Lord to use. We are one body and we need each other.