

**December 19, 2021**

**Romans 16:1-24**

**SCRIPTURE**

**16**I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchreae. **2**So you should welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many—and of me also.

**3**Give my greetings to Priscaand Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, **4**who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. **5**Greet also the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epaenetus, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. **6**Greet Mary,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2016%3A1-24&version=CSB#fen-CSB-28327e)] who has worked very hard for you.[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2016%3A1-24&version=CSB#fen-CSB-28327f)] **7**Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2016%3A1-24&version=CSB#fen-CSB-28328g)] and fellow prisoners. They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles, and they were also in Christ before me. **8**Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. **9**Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. **10**Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. **11**Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet those who belong to the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. **12**Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard in the Lord. **13**Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother—and mine. **14**Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters 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. All the churches of Christ send you greetings.

**17**Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. Avoid them, **18**because such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites. They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words.

**19**The report of your obedience has reached everyone. Therefore, I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise about what is good, and yet innocent about what is evil. **20**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

**21**Timothy, my coworker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow countrymen, greet you.

**22**I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

**23**Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you.

**24**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**COMMENTARY**

**16:1-2**. Before Paul begins his greetings to his friends in the church in Rome, he commends to them a fellow believer, Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. It is widely agreed that Phoebe was likely the carrier of Paul’s letter to Rome. Her designation as a servant probably implies a position of responsibility in the church at Cenchrea, perhaps that of deaconess. Paul’s request that she be given any help she may need is doubtless a response to the great help she had been to many. Paul’s reference to Phoebe as a great help is probably more than just physical assistance, meaning that Phoebe was possibly a woman of means who had helped to support the Cenchrean church and possibly Paul himself.

**16:3-16**. Next, Paul enters into a lengthy list of greetings to acquaintances in Rome. Immediately coming to mind is the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd of His sheep (John 10:3). As a shepherd of the church in Rome, Paul obviously knows many of the sheep there by name. Yet another side of the apostle Paul is seen in his conveyance of personal greetings and expressions of well-being to so many by name. Two final words from Paul in verse 16 add additional insights into the state, or the need, of the church at Rome. First, for the fourth time in his letters, Paul urges the believers to greet one another with a holy kiss (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; see also 1 Pet. 5:14). Was this exhortation because they were lacking affection for one another or because they were being encouraged to continue it? Either way, it is a good word for the church today. Second, all the churches of Christ send greetings to the church in Rome. These greetings most likely came from the members of Paul’s entourage who were about to leave with him on the journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). They would represent churches in Macedonia and Achaia as well as Asia Minor (Galatia). Paul worked hard at doing whatever might increase the unity of the body of Christ.

**16:17-18.** Paul considered it necessary to insert into his greetings of love this caution against harmful teachings and practices that undermine the truth of Christianity and are its greatest threat. Genuine love will be ready to forgive evil, but it will not condone or ignore it. Those such as Paul, who truly love other believers who are dear to them, will warn them about sin and harm.(1 Cor. 13:6)

**16:19-20**. In the midst of his warnings, Paul reaffirms his joy, first mentioned in Romans 1:8, over their faith and obedience. But he does not want them to be naive about their faith. His wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil parallels Jesus’ words to His disciples when He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God (Matt. 10:16). The life of faith must be received with the innocence and purity of faith of a child (Mark 10:15) but lived in the maturity and reality of an adult who knows there is a war going on. The harshness of Paul’s words—will soon crush—is cast in stark contrast to the backdrop of his earlier declaration—I am full of joy. Both are true in the Christian life—joy in the midst of war. The joy comes from knowing that the war has been and will be won. Our part (the Roman church’s part) is to be alert and vigilant until the final armistice. It is the grace of God that empowers us to understand, and stand in, the conflict.

**MAIN POINT**

Gospel partnerships are beneficial and productive for all.

**INTRODUCTION**

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

**In your career, and in life in general, what have you found to be the greatest benefit of working with others toward a shared goal?**

**Why do you think God designed the work of gospel ministry to be a shared responsibility among Christians? What benefit comes from working with others to advance the gospel?**

One way Paul stayed in touch with Christians he met and churches he was invested in was by writing letters. Remarkably, he knew by name a number of Christians living in Rome, even though he had never been there. In the last chapter of Romans, we will see in Paul’s conclusion the value of partnering with others in ministry and in the Christian life as a whole.

**UNDERSTANDING**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

* HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 16:1-16.

**What kinds of things does Paul commend in the people mentioned in verses 1-16?**

**Does anything surprise you about this list? If so, what?**

At the start of Romans 16, Paul greeted some of the Roman Christians by name. When we look at all the people Paul greeted here, we discover many Christian women were named and obviously were active in the church. Further, it is wonderful to find a mix of both Jewish and Gentile believers named in these greetings. They had all served faithfully.

**In your opinion, how close did Paul let people get to him? What does this tell us about ministry, and how does it compare to your relationships?**

**Why is it important that we have coworkers in gospel ministry? What purpose do they serve? What do we miss out on when we try to go it alone?**

* HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 16:17-20.

**Paul included a brief, but grave warning against harmful teachings and practices. What specific instruction does he give?**

**Paul’s words in verses 19-20 were aimed at encouraging his readers to continue in their faith and their ministry. What do you think would happen in our church if we truly encouraged one another?**

**Why is verse 20 particularly encouraging to the Christians in Rome and to us today? Read James 4:7 for additional insight.**

Verse 20 is a blessing or benediction. Paul desired the God of peace would pour out His favor. (This contrasts with Satan’s servants, who bring dissension.) Such blessings were to come even in the midst of spiritual warfare against an evil opponent Paul used vivid imagery that goes all the way back to Genesis 3:15. The final defeat of the Devil waits for Christ’s return, but believers are promised spiritual victory over him in the present (Luke 10:19; Jas. 4:7). Only by the grace of our Lord Jesus, however, could they experience such a conquest of evil. Note that grace is found at the beginning and end of all the letters in which Paul’s name is found. Grace is the “spiritual bookend” for the substance of all Pauline letters.

* HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 16:21-24.

Paul sends greetings to the church at Rome on behalf of his companions, men who were known by some of the believers in that city.

The first is Timothy, a fellow worker and protégé of Paul. Next is Lucius who may be a native of Cyrene who was one of the prophets and teachers in Antioch who first commissioned Paul and Barnabas. Paul then refers to Jason and Sosipater as my kinsmen, probably indicating simply that they were fellow Jews, not necessarily relatives. Tertius was Paul’s secretary who penned this letter that Paul dictated to him, and here inserts his own greeting.

Gaius was a host to Paul as well as to the whole church, probably referring to a congregation that met in his house. Because the book of Romans was written from Corinth, this Gaius almost certainly was among the many believers who came to faith through the ministry of Paul and was one of the two men in that church whom Paul baptized personally.

Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth and therefore a man of prominence and high political office.

Quartus was the last of Paul’s companions on whose behalf he sent greetings. He is identified only as the brother, which could mean he was the biological brother of Erastus, who has just been mentioned, or more probably that he was a brother in Christ.

**APPLICATION**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**How does studying Romans 16 help you know how to relate to other Christians?**

**Can you think of any changes in attitude or action you might need to take as a result of this study?**

**What can you and our group as a whole do to increase our participation in God’s plan to lead all nations to believe and obey Him?**

**PRAYER**

In a time of group prayer, ask the Father to give us endurance and encouragement to love one another sacrificially. Pray that our mutual love and dedication to one another would be so beautiful that those outside the faith might see it and be drawn to salvation in Christ.