

The Point

relationships in the ministry
dedication & devotion to one another
Koinonia

Rom 16:1-27 – Hearts Bound for Ministry

Today – we find ourselves at the end of what many have called the **greatest theological** book in the N.T.

After covering most every **foundational doctrine** in Christianity

Paul's going to "**wrap up**" his incredible discourse by focusing on the **PEOPLE** who minister with him

& we are going to see "**Hearts Bound Together For Ministry**" in the 1st Century Church

& I pray we would **catch the fire** that Paul has here

not only for these great theological **truths** conveyed in Romans

But also the fire Paul has to be "**Bound Together**" with all those **who minister** for the Kingdom with him

Let's Pray

Certainly these people - whose hearts are "**Bound Together** "
CANNOT come **before** the great Theology of the book

& **they Haven't** - but Paul makes it clear

That **furthering** the great truths of **the Gospel**
CANNOT happen **WITHOUT** the people we **Co-labor** with

In **last week's** message - We learned 3 critical lessons
about being a minister of Christ

& those **3 lessons** - all had to do with
our **Vertical relationship** w/ God

This week – Paul's going to teach us – *by example*

How important our **Horizontal relationships** are
for the Furthering of God's Kingdom

Ch 16 starts w/ a long **list of names** & greetings

that show that Paul is "**BOUND TOGETHER**"
with the people he **ministered** with

In this first section Paul mentions **26 people** by name
all of who were in Rome

& one of the 1st things **that's amazing** about that
is that Paul **had never been** to Rome

These are people **Paul had met** & ministered with
during his travels – & who were **now in Rome**

but **remember** - the modes of communication
were a little more "**Difficult**" in the 1st Century

No **cell phone**, No **fax**, No **mail**, No **email**,
No **MySpace**, No **Facebook** - - None of it

Paul had to keep up with those he cared for
by constantly **asking about them**

Whenever he met another brother or sister – He'd say
*"Have you heard how **Priscilla & Aquilla** are doing?"*
*"How about **Andronicus & Junia**,"*
*"what's **Urbanas** up to"*
*"**Stachys, Apelles, Herodian**"*
*"& what about the twins **Tryphena & Tryphosa**"*
*"& I've got to know about **Rufus** & his mom"*

THAT was the only way to keep
their Hearts **BOUND TOGETHER** for ministry

The **Greatest Apostle** - The **Greatest Intellect** of the N.T.

Knew, that his **love & concern** for the people he ministered w/
was **Critically Important**

& in **Paul's example**
we have something very important to learn

OUR Hearts must be **BOUND TOGETHER** for Ministry
& we've got to **WORK AT IT** - just like Paul did

Every one of these names
has a **story** behind it for Paul

& Paul's Heart was **BOUND TO**
every one of these people - **BECAUSE OF** the Ministry

In **Rom 16** Paul begins w/ **Phoebe**
who **probably** carried this letter from Corinth to Rome

Rom 16:1-2 - ESV

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (dee-**ak**-on-os
[probably deaconess]) **of the church at Cenchreae** (sen-kree-uh),
**2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the
saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she
has been a patron of many and of myself as well.**

Phoebe was a servant (**Deaconess**) of her church
& notice - "**A Patron of many, & of Paul**"

This word "**PATRON**" means - **to give aide & assistance**
it's caring for both **Practical & FINANCIAL** Needs

a **number** of people Paul is **BOUND TO** in this list
are those that **gave of their Resources** for the Ministry

& **Phoebe** leads the list - for her **service** - & for her **giving**

& notice - Paul says (**V.2**) ***HELP her in whatever she needs***
because she has helped so many

Next - is Prisca (Priscilla) & Aquila

Who risked their lives for Paul
& who had a church in their house

Rom 16:3-5(A) - ESV

3 Greet Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.

5 Greet also the church in their house. . .

**Priscilla & Aquila were "Tent Makers" with Paul in Corinth
& they travelled to Ephesus with Paul**

Which is where they might have risked their lives for Paul
because he had a very close call there

Which is possibly WHY
all the Gentile churches give thanks for them

Interestingly - Priscilla & Aquila had a "House Church" in Ephesus
& now they have another "House Church" in Rome

& Paul says - ***Greet their church***

Next - Paul says Hi - to HIS **VERY FIRST CONVERT** in Asia

Rom 16:5(B) - ESV

Greet my beloved Epaenetus (ep-aa-net-us), who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

It seems incredible - That Paul would remember his **very first convert** in all of Asia

But **Actually** - I can name the **very first couple** that made a commitment to the Lord in our ministry here

Steve & Margie Surrell - they responded to our **first altar call**, on our **first Sunday**, & I'll never forget them

In fact - I remember **the Truck** Driver that responded to our **first altar call**, on **our first Sunday**, at **the first church** we started in **Menifee**

Because every time you see someone pass from **DEATH** to **LIFE** it **changes us** - & it **drives us** to see it happen again

Next - is **Mary** - who had **served tirelessly** for the Body of Christ & Paul **remembers her** hard work

Rom 16:6 - ESV

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

& then - in V.7 is an interesting pair

Rom 16:7 - ESV

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

This was probably a Husband & Wife TEAM of ministers

fellow **Jewish Christians** with Paul
had also **been in Prison** for the Ministry
were **well-known** to the Apostles
were **in Christ before** Paul (so more than 25 yrs)

That's a **VERY POWERFUL** Husband & Wife Team

Now comes **4 Co-Laborers**

& each one Paul has a title for

Rom 16:8-10(A) - ESV

8 Greet Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys (one of the 70 sent by Jesus).

10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. . .

That's MY Favorite title - **approved in Christ**

the phrase means LIT - ***He has been "tried" or "refined" in Christ***

& then Paul says at the end of V.10

. . . Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.

Some believe this Aristobulus is actually

the **GRANDSON** of Herod the Great, & **BROTHER** of Herod Agrippa

Rom 16:11 - ESV

11 Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus (Narkissos).

Herodian is another Jewish Christian

& this **Narcissus**(some believe) was also a **very wealthy man** who served the **Emperor Claudius**

Rom 16:12 - ESV

12 Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa (sisters). Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.

Do you notice the **THEME of WORK** as Paul greets these that his heart is **BOUND TO** in the Ministry ??

Guys - The Ministry is **HARD** - & it involves **HARD WORK**

But as we **PAY THE PRICE** together
as we stand in the trenches **SIDE-BY-SIDE**

It is **DURING THAT TIME** - that our Hearts are bound together

& **that's exactly** what bound Paul's heart together
with these believers

This next one - in V.13 - is very COOL

Rom 16:13 - ESV

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

Check **THIS** out - **RUFUS** was the **SON** of Simon of Cyrene
Who carried the Cross for Jesus (Mk 15:21)

& so **his MOTHER** who had also been a mother to Paul
was **the WIFE** of Simon of Cyrene

is **THAT COOL ??**

I wonder if Simon of Cyrene **KNEW** just **HOW** involved
God had called he & his family to be in the work of Christ

Or is it - that once they experienced
that incredible event on the Path to the Cross

that **this family** was Radically **changed forever**
& served God wholeheartedly?

Then **Paul finishes** his Greetings in **Vs. 14-16**

Rom 16:14-16 - ESV

14 Greet Asyncritus (a-soong-kree-tos), Phlegon (fleg-on), Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus (fil-ol-o-gos), Julia, Nereus (nare-yoos) 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 greet you.

Guys – this is **not just a list of names** to be skipped over
We can learn **SO MUCH** from Paul here

We have got to **cling to & protect**
the **relationships** that God gives us - for the good of the Ministry !

We must **care for & be concerned about** one another
instead of ourselves

Because God is **USING** our relationships with each other
to **ACCOMPLISH** an Eternal Work **THRU US**

We **MUST** genuinely & sincerely - **care for** & be **concerned for**
those that we are **servicing with**

& **when I see** you guys - **looking out** for each other
holding each other up, **ministering** to each another

THAT is when **I KNOW** - that God is going to do
GREAT THINGS thru this ministry

When our Hearts are **BOUND TOGETHER**
to **serve the Lord** together

We become a **SPIRITUAL FORCE** can bring true Eternal Change
to those around us

Which is **exactly why** (I believe)

that **Paul** goes straight from
Greetings to those that he cared so much about

RIGHT INTO a very **serious** & **stern WARNING**

It's as if **Paul senses**
the **most dangerous poison possible** for a church

& he immediately issues a **loving, protective,**
& yet - **VERY STERN warning**

Rom 16:17 - ESV

17 I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

Right in **the Middle** of Paul's loving Greetings - he says
Those who Cause Divisions & Create Obstacles - AVOID THEM!

This is like **the yellow flag** in a motorcycle race

CAUTION - CAUTION - AVOID this area
STAY AWAY from these area

Because someone's **had an accident** here

& **if you go** into that area
you're going to **get TAKEN OUT** of the Race too

Guys - if you want to **stay in the race**
AVOID people who **cause divisions and create obstacles**

Because they actually **PREVENT** hearts being
BOUND TOGETHER for the good of ministry

In **V.18** - Paul **doesn't LET UP**
He goes *deeper* into the problem

Rom 16:18 - ESV

18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

Paul is **NOT** on a **TANGENT** here

Why would he **switch so ABRUPTLY**
from the loving greetings of the brethren

to such a **STERN WARNING**
about those who cause division in the church

BECAUSE of his **love** for the brethren

& because **he KNOWS** (1st hand) the destruction caused
by those who **bring division** into the church (see **2 Cor**)

So Paul simply says "**avoid them**"
& then he **shares** some of his reason - in **v.19**

Rom 16:19 - ESV → →

Rom 16:19 - ESV

19 For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

The Church at Rome had a **good reputation**
& Paul **rejoiced** over that

But **Division** & **Discord**
will bring that Reputation **down** in an instant

**& so he says ; be wise as to what is good
and innocent as to what is evil**

Then **v.20** gives an **ominous weight**
to this whole warning

Rom 16:20 - ESV

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Paul is **STILL** in the **context** of the warning - & he says
Don't worry, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet

& I think that **Paul** referring to **Satan**
in the **context** of this warning

implies the **level of damage** done thru
Divisions and **Offenses** in the church

That makes this a very, very **heavy warning**

& Paul finishes his concern here - by saying
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

& now **Paul moves on**
to the Believers that are with him in **Corinth**

Imagine w/ me, the **house church** in Corinth (Gaius' house)
where **Paul** is finishing this letter

His **friends** & **co-laborers** are gathered around him,
& as he **dictates** this long list of saints - his friends chime in

Say hi for me, oh - & **say hi** for me too – **me too** - - and **me**

& so the saints in **Corinth**, & the saints in **Rome**
are **BOUND TOGETHER** by their mutual love & concern
for one another

& **so their names** & greetings are added;

Rom 16:21-24 - ESV

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you (Paul' son in the ministry);
so do Lucius (prophet & teacher in Acts) ***and Jason*** (poss Paul's
cousin) ***and Sosipater, my kinsmen*** (another Jewish Christian).

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
(a wealthy man who housed Paul, & the church in Corinth). ***Erastus,***
the city treasurer (public official, prob in charge of public works in
Corinth - another wealthy man), ***and our brother Quartus, greet you***
(among the 70 disciples).

WOW - that's quite a group in Corinth

& their hearts are **BOUND TOGETHER** with those in **ROME**

Guys - **Strong Relationships** in the Ministry - **ARE CRITICAL**

We must **WORK AT** them - **NURTURE** them - **PROTECT** them

Someone told me once

"Just teach the Bible, & the rest will take care of itself "

& as a matter of **PRIORITY** - that's true

but **IT'S NOT** all that's required for a **FRUITFUL MINISTRY**

The **Strong Relationships** we have with one another
is what **God uses** to FURTHER the ministry

When our hearts are Truly **BOUND TOGETHER**

we become a **MACHINE** to Churn Out Disciples for Jesus Christ

The **bottom Line** is

Strong Relationships are **CRITICAL** for the Ministry

& it's **very clear** at the end of Rom
that Paul's relationships

were **born, strengthened & matured,**
in the **MIDST** of *Serving the Lord*

These hearts are **BOUND TOGETHER**
by their **SERVING TOGETHER**

& so **please hear me** when I say

the **NUMBER ONE** way to **BUILD** these critical relationships
is to **START SERVING** alongside one another

It may not be easy - there may be hiccups & bumps
But **JOIN IN** the ministry

Build these relationships with others
& **God** will use you mightily in the Ministry

START Serving with the Commitment
to be BOUND TOGETHER with others

For the GOOD of the Kingdom

& Absolutely AVOID anyone who SEWS DIVISION &
DROPS OBSTACLES anywhere near you

The Word of God says AVOID THEM
so *let's be* very, very *careful* there

We need to WORK AT our Relationships in the Ministry
we need NURTURE them - we need to PROTECT them

AMEN ??

& now – finally - we come to Paul's **closing benediction**
of the Great book of ROMANS

William Tyndale – The Pioneer English **Bible Translator**
in **1534** - said this in his introduction to Romans

William Tyndale

Forasmuch as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament, and most pure [gospel] ... and also a light and a way unto the whole scripture, I think it right that every Christian not only know it by rote but also exercise himself therein evermore continually as with the daily bread of the soul. No man truly can read it too often, or study it too well: for the more it is studied the easier it is, the more it is searched the more precious things are found in it, so great a treasure of spiritual things lies hid therein.

Guys - please - **continue to study** the Book of **ROMANS**
study it again & again

MANY of the **Heroes** of the Faith
studied the book of Romans **CONTINUALLY**

so it would **probably wouldn't be** a bad idea
for us to **go thru it** over & over again

What a **great experience** it is to study the book of Romans

& now – **Paul closes** w/ the only subject
he would ever consider closing w/

In **2Thes 3:17** Paul says that he closes every epistle
with his **own handwriting**

& so here – **In Gaius' home** – with his trusted
co-laborers & friends around him – ***Paul picks up the pen***

I'm sure he **paused**, for just a moment - & **looked around**
Then he **writes down** the most majestic - & fitting – **benediction**

Rom 16:25-27 - ESV

***25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages
26 but has now been disclosed - and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—***

27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Let's PRAY