

Salt Church
Romans 16
“The Nature of Love”
June 28, 2026
The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy

- Thank you to those of you who gave to the repairs of the bus in Honduras. (You are so generous!)

Today is a day of closure for this church.

- We will close out today's service with a couple of farewells.
 - 1st to this wonderful book that we call Romans.
 - 2nd to our brother Kenric who will begin the process of moving back home to Florida.
 - We say goodbye to Romans as chapter 16 is farewell through Paul's greetings and final instructions.
 - As for Kenric we invite you to join us as we celebrate his time with us in a final luncheon together.

Romans 16

16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. ² Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

- Phoebe is one of the few people mentioned in this final chapter that is not already in Rome.

- Everything that we know about her is found right here in Chapter 16.
- Here is what we know about this precious woman
 - She is a child of God for she is called “our sister Phoebe”.
 - She is a servant of the Lord and the church in Corinth.
(Cenchrea is a sea port in Corinth)
 - She is a “deacon” or server within the church.
 - Deacon is a gender-neutral word.
 - But it is clear that she holds some type of position within the church at Cenchrea.
- Verse 2 tells us that she is arriving in Rome and has been given a task by Paul.
 - Since she is the only one arriving, most scholars believe that she was delivering this letter that we call the book of Romans.
 - What an amazing honor for her!
 - And what does this say about who she is and the incredible amount of faith and trust the Apostle Paul has in her.
 - Think about what had been entrusted to her
 - This incredible letter that so much Christian theology is based upon.
 - And there is only one copy.
- It is also important to note that people generally did not stay in hotels in their day.
 - Those types of places were unsafe and often used as brothels.
 - So, Paul send a letter of commendation with her so that the faithful would take her in and help her in her assigned task.

- ***“for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.”***

- The word that has been translated helpful is from the Greek word “patroness”.
 - A patron is someone who has supported someone financially while they do their work.
 - This was common for philosophers, artist, and missionaries.
 - “Patroness” is the feminine of patron and it tells us that Phoebe was a woman with wealth.
 - Like Lydia in Acts, she had supported Paul in his missionary work and it is clear that Paul had found a faithful co-worker in Christ who was happy to assist in any way she could.
 - It also seems likely that she does not have a husband as there is no mention of one.
 - This would explain her freedom to make the journey from Corinth to Rome. (740 miles, 3 to 4 weeks’ worth of travel)

3 Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus.

- In the Greek it is “Prisca” not Priscilla.
 - Not to worry for Priscilla is used by Paul and Luke as they are mentioned at least six more times in Paul’s letters and the book of Acts.
 - It is also interesting to me that Priscilla’s name comes 1st.
 - Aquilla’s name is 1st in other accounts.

- I'm guessing Priscilla was most likely the dominant personality of the two.
- They are already living in Rome and my guess is that they were sent by Paul as part of his plan to eventually make his way to Spain.
- They are very dear to him for it is clear that they have been through some very difficult times together.

⁴In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. ⁵Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.

- In the Greek it says they “risked their necks” for Paul.
- This couple finds their names written in the most important book in the world because **they made the glory of God the focus of their lives.**
- They were moved by God to various locations to assist in the establishment of churches.
 - Especially the Gentile churches!
 - And we find them already hosting a church in their home in Rome.
- They were workers, meaning they were like Paul in that they were bi-vocational.
 - They were also like Paul in that they were tent makers.
 - There is no doubt that Paul is especially fond of these fellow missionaries of the faith.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ.

- ***It's good to remember.***

- In the Greek, Epenetus is Paul's beloved.
- He is the firstfruit of all that had been saved in Asia.
 - This tells us that Epenetus had shared his faith and that others had come to Christ through his testimony.

⁶Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit.

- There are a lot of Mary's in the Bible.
- We don't know anything about this Mary other than she is a fellow worker in Christ and that Paul loves her.
 - In the Greek she "labored unto suffering"

⁷Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.

- This is all that we have about Andronicus and Junia.
 - They could be a couple for Junia is sometimes translated Julie.
 - Or Junia could be the masculine form of the name.
 - Whoever they are, they had the respect of the Apostles because of their faithfulness to the cause of Christ.
 - Their faithfulness led them to imprisonment with Paul in which their relationship grew stronger because of their mutual suffering.

- It is also possible that they are related to Paul as in the Greek it says that they are his kinsmen, at the very least they were Jewish.

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

- I believe at this point we see the 1st thing that comes to mind when Paul thinks about these wonderful servants of Christ.
- Ampliatus was a dear friend to the Apostle.

⁹ Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

- These were hard working friends in the Lord of Paul's.
 - He is loving them and missing them from Corinth.
 - (Side note) Stachys is the Greek word of “ear of corn”.

¹⁰ Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves.

- In the Greek it is “approved of by Christ”
 - What a great compliment!

And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus.

- Paul had found encouragement from a family that had come to Christ and was no doubt having an impact for the cause of Christ in Rome.

¹¹ Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

- Again the Greek uses the word “kinsman” leading us to believe that this may have been one of Paul's relatives.

- No doubt he loves him and is thankful for him.

Greet the Lord's people from the household of **Narcissus**.

- Yet another family that had sold out for the cause of Christ in Rome.
- This encouraged the faithful Apostle.

¹² Give my greetings to **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, the Lord's workers,

- “Toiling, working hard to the point of suffering” in the Greek.
 - The reason Paul mentions these guys is that he understands the hard foundational work it takes to get this new church started.
- Thus we can agree with Paul as we are in the early stages of a new work here in Foley and so many have given so much just to get us to where we are.
 - I am so encouraged by your love, your generosity, and your commitment to the hard work of the cause of Christ.

and to dear **Persis**, who has worked so hard for the Lord.

- Yet another brother in Christ who has worked so hard for the building up of the church.

¹³ Greet **Rufus**, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear **mother**, who has been a mother to me.

- It is interesting to me that Paul thinks of Rufus and his 1st thought is that the Lord picked him to be His own.
 - I wonder if Rufus and Paul had deep conversations about the doctrine of the elect.

- Or was that very doctrine that the Holy Spirit used to draw Rufus to Jesus?
- Whatever the case, it was clear that God had changed Rufus and used not only Rufus but his mother as well to encourage this great Apostle.

¹⁴ Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them.

- Another home church or small group established in Jesus name that was having a real impact on Rome.

¹⁵ Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them.

- Yet another home/small group meeting in the name of Jesus.

¹⁶ Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you, their greetings.

- The sacred kiss was a cultural thing.
- Jesus talked about the power of the sacred kiss.
 - When the lady came to the pharisee's house and washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed his feet with expensive perfume the host of the luncheon criticized Jesus in his mind for allowing her to touch Him.
 - Jesus answered his thoughts by saying:
 - When I entered your house, you did not greet men with a kiss nor did you offer me water to wash my feet. She has done both!

- Then Jesus asked him, who is more grateful those that have had much forgiven or those who have had a little forgiven?
- And we can't forget the most famous kiss in the Bible:
 - Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss and Jesus called him out on it!
 - But Judas' kiss does not make Paul's point.
- The point of all of this was to remind all of us that there should be **genuine holy affection** between the children of God.

Now Paul is going to make a shift in his final instructions:

¹⁷And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. ¹⁸Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

- Think about what has happened by the time the church (in Rome) gets to this point in the letter.
 - Paul has revealed a vast amount of doctrinal truth to them.
 - And Paul knows that there will be those within the church that will disagree and try to teach something that is contrary to what he has said.
- Up to this point this chapter it has been about love and unity and But now Paul warns about those who cause division. ***“Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by***

teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.”

- What is Paul saying?
 - **You have the truth and therefore you have everything that you need to bind you together.**
- Now, in order for the truth to bind all Christians together they must know the truth.
 - And I believe that Paul is not talking about the “debatable things” from chapter 14.
 - This would be the very plain things found in the scripture like:
 - The Holy Trinity
 - Salvation and eternal security
 - Saved by grace alone, through faith alone.
 - As well as inerrant word of God.
 - Those things are not debatable and must be held unto.
 - Watch out for those that teach against those things.
 - **In the end Paul reminds them that these types of people will come and they will be smooth talkers who will prey upon the young, weak, and innocent.**
 - It is also interesting to me that so much time is spent on the unity of the church (in this chapter) that **Paul stresses disunity when it comes to false teachers.** ***“Stay away from them.”***
 - What does this teach us?

▪ ***We are only unified in the truth.***

- This doesn't mean that we should separate over debatable things, it does mean that every church better have doctrinal statements that they absolutely will not compromise.

○ **I was once told by a pastor of a large church that they do not have doctrinal statements because they doctrinal statements divide.**

- What he was saying was that **unity was more important than truth.**

• **I say, unity only comes through truth.**

• **Final thoughts on these smooth talkers:**

- They are very careful in how they present.
- They are very likable because it is impossible to get people to follow you if you are rude and harsh.
- They are the ones that always come with a word from God.

- It matters not if that word contradicts the written word.

- **Joseph Smith** (Mormon Church) was a smooth talker.

- **Charles Russell** (Jehovah Witnesses) was a smooth talker.

- They were slick and spoke with worldly intelligence.

- And people still believe them because

they do not know what the word of God says.

- Both of these groups do not allow their followers to interpret the Bible on their own.

Moving on...

19 But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord.

- **Why would Paul transition this way?**
- **How can you be obedient to the truth if you do not know it?**
- (side note) this is why I teach exegetically; you do not need Bo Smith's philosophy on life.
 - **You need theology that is found verse by verse in God's Word**
 - **Theology is what should shape your philosophy.**

This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. (AMEN)

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

- **What an interesting verse!**
 - We are in the last chapter of what is often called the greatest book ever written and verse 20 **Satan's name appears for the very 1st time.**
 - If I had been writing a book about salvation and doctrinal truths, I don't think I could have written this much content without mentioning Satan.
 - ***What can we learn for this verse?***

- 1st Our focus should be on the Lord and not Satan
- 2nd The victory has already been won
- 3rd We will share in that great day when our King finally puts Satan in his place!
 - Until then God's grace will be with us.

Up until now Paul has mentioned 29 people

- 28 are in Rome
- 1 has just arrived
 - Now Paul sends his final addresses

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

- If we have learned anything in this chapter it is this:
 - God uses all types of people (even people with funny names)
 - God has a plan and purpose for everyone as it relates to the spread of the gospel and the encouragement of the body.
 - Our response must be to His calling on our lives.
 - We all have something to give and do.
 - May we be found faithful the day He calls us home.

We continue...

22 I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord's followers.

- This was very common in the day that a secretary would be writing as his master spoke.
- It is not common that he would put his own greeting within the letter which leads me to believe that perhaps Paul gave him permission.

²³ Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church.

- Hospitality is so important to the unity and growth of the church.

Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

So, how do you close a wonderful book like this?

Doxology: (an expression of praise)

- This is how Paul closes the book of Romans and it is how we shall close it as well.
- The only difference is that we shall use it as our closing prayer.
 - Let's pray:

²⁵ Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. ²⁶ But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. ²⁷ All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.