

120. The Book of Romans—15:17-16:27

(4/15/26)

In our study in Romans we have entered into the last main section of the book: **VII. The Conclusion—15:17–16:27**

Romans 15:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. ¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God...

When Paul says, “**I have written,**” he’s referring to this Epistle to the Romans.

He is saying, “*I don’t mean to offend any of you by my boldness, but as an apostle called by the grace of God to the Gentiles—I am authorized by Him to speak His truth boldly.*”

Romans 15:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul likened himself to a priest at the altar, offering up the Gentiles he had won to God as *‘living sacrifices.’*

Paul saw his ministry of winning Gentiles to God as a form of both service and worship—

Romans 12:1 (NASB95)

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.*

All believers are priests—which Peter confirmed when he said,

1 Peter 2:5 (NKJV)

⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And John,

Revelation 1:6 (NLT)

⁶ He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Romans 15:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ **Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain to God*. ¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient...**

So, Paul is saying that he only ‘*glories*’ in the work God has done through *his* ministry—he won’t glory or try to take credit for the work of the Holy Spirit in another man’s ministry.

Romans 15:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—¹⁹ **in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.**

One of the things that authenticated a man’s ministry back then as an apostle was the ability to work miracles.

This is what Paul was referring to when he said, “**in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God...**” (v.19)

Paul’s apostleship was always being challenged by some in the Church because Paul was not one of the original twelve that Jesus called to be His apostles.

And because of it, Paul was always having to defend his apostleship causing him to say, “*Are not the works (miracles) of an apostle done through me.*” And “*I’m an apostle born out of due*

season (I came later than the other apostles but I was called by the Lord Jesus Himself to be an apostle)”—

2 Corinthians 12:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.
¹² Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

The Spirit of God empowered Paul to share the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit to reach the Gentiles for Christ—it was **“by word and deed”** that the apostle shared the Good News. Miracles *by themselves* can never save the lost—*“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”* (Romans 10:17)

The purpose of miracles was to *‘arouse wonder’* in people’s hearts to open the way for the preaching of the Gospel.

“...so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (v.19)

Paul said that he had preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way **‘to Illyricum’**—which was a province of the Roman Empire next to Italy, the region that roughly corresponds to the former European country of Yugoslavia.

(Jerusalem to Illyricum was a span of some 1,400 miles)

Romans 15:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ **And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation,** ²¹ **but as it is written: “*To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.*”**

Paul cited Isaiah 52:15 as the basis for his conviction not to preach where any other apostle had ministered.

(This is one evidence that Peter had not founded the churches in Rome, or had been to Rome; for this would have prevented Paul from going there.)

Romans 15:22–24 (NKJV)

22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while.

Paul tells them that for years he had wanted to visit Rome but the work he was doing in Asia Minor (Turkey) kept him so busy that he was hindered from coming to them.

When he said, “**But now no longer having a place in these parts...**” was his way of saying he had preached the gospel, established churches, laid a solid spiritual foundation from teaching the Word and raised up leaders who could continue the work Paul had begun so much so—that he finally felt he could visit them on his way to Spain.

Romans 15:25–27 (NKJV)

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

Paul and those on his missionary team had collected a special offering from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia (Greece) for the suffering Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (details about this collection are recorded in 2 Corinthians 8–9).

The purpose of this offering was 3-fold:

1. *It was an expression of love on the part of the Gentiles toward their Jewish brethren.*
2. *It meant practical relief at a time when the poor Jewish believers needed it the most.*
3. *It helped to unite Jews and Gentiles in the church. It was a bond that brought them closer together.*

One author said with regard to this—

“Paul looked on this offering as the paying of a debt. The Gentiles had received spiritual wealth from the Jews. They now returned material wealth, paying their debt. Paul considered himself a “debtor” to the whole world (Rom. 1:14). He also considered the Gentile Christians debtors to the Jews, for it was the Jews who gave to the Gentiles the Word of God and the Son of

God. We Christians ought to feel an obligation to Israel, and to pay that debt by praying for Israel, sharing the Gospel, and helping in a material way. Anti-Semitism has no place in the life of a dedicated Christian.”

Romans 15:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. ²⁹ But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

The question is: Did Paul ever go to Spain?

I personally believe that Paul did go to Spain and to the rest of the Roman Empire.

Why do I believe that? Because at the end of his life. He said, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* (2 Tim. 4:7).

Paul said he had *finished* his course (ministry) and I don’t think he would have said that if he had not been to Spain, because Spain was on his itinerary.

Romans 15:30–32 (NKJV)

³⁰ Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, ³¹ that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³² that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.

The word translated “**strive**” is a Greek word we get the English word “*agonize*” from.

One commentator breaks it down:

*“Paul was asking for passionate, fervent prayer for 4 specific requests:
First, Paul asks for prayer that he will be **delivered from the unbelieving Jewish zealots in Judea who were fanatically opposed to the gospel, just as he himself had once been.**
Second, he wants the Romans to pray that **the Jewish saints will accept the relief funds in good grace.** Strong religious prejudices remained against Gentile believers and against those who preached to the Gentiles. Then there is always the possibility of people being offended at the idea*

of receiving “charity.” It often takes more grace to be on the receiving end than on the giving end!

The third request was that the Lord might see fit to make the visit to Rome **a joyful one**. The words **‘by the will of God’** express Paul’s desire to be led by the Lord in all things.

Last of all, he asks that his visit might be one in which he may be **refreshed** in the midst of a tumultuous and fatiguing ministry.

This is the conclusion of Paul’s prayer request. The prayer was answered: his life was spared, the church in Jerusalem accepted the gift, he did come with joy to Rome—in spite of the fact that he spent two years in jail at Caesarea, was shipwrecked on-the way, and when he arrived in Rome he was in chains. Yet Paul came in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Oh, how all of us need that kind of joy in our lives!”

Romans 15:33 (NKJV)

³³ Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

This officially ends Paul’s letter to the Romans—**chapter 16** contains his farewell and personal greetings to the Christians there.

One author said,

“What a remarkable chapter Romans 16 is! In it Paul greeted at least twenty-six people by name, as well as two unnamed saints; and he also greeted several churches that were meeting in homes. He closed with greetings from nine believers who were with him in Corinth when he wrote the letter. What is the significance of this? It shows that Paul was a friend maker as well as a soul winner. He did not try to live an isolated life; he had friends in the Lord, and he appreciated them. They were a help to him personally and to his ministry.”

Romans 16:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, 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.

He began with Phebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, and the lady who carried the letter to the saints at Rome (did she even realize what a treasure she was carrying with her as she made her way to Rome!).

Cenchrea was the seaport of Corinth, so Phebe was probably won to Christ during Paul’s year and a half of ministry in Corinth.

The word “**servant**” is the feminine of *deacon*, causing some Christians believe she was a “deaconess” in the church.

Phebe was an incredible servant and women have always been some of the most selfless servants in the Church visiting the sick, assisting the young women, teaching the children and helping the poor.

But the office of pastors/elders and deacons in the Church are reserved for men (1Tim.3)

Romans 16:3–5a (NKJV)

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...

When Paul first came to Corinth, he was introduced to Aquila and his wife, Priscilla—who were tentmakers, like himself.

Paul seems to have led them to Christ, and when Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him as his companions and co-workers.

As Paul made his way yet farther north, Aquila and Priscilla remained in Ephesus, where they were influential in the salvation of Apollos, one of the most powerful preachers of the early church (Acts 18:26).

They eventually ended up in Rome (possibly sent on ahead by Paul to make preparations for his visit to Rome)—and once there they hosted a house church which Paul mentions in verse 5.

Romans 16:5b (NKJV)

⁵ ...Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

Epaenetus means “praiseworthy”—he was Paul’s first convert to Christ in the province of Achaia (Southern Greece) and as such held a special place in Paul’s heart so much so that Paul speaks of him as **my beloved**.

Romans 16:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Greet Mary, who labored much for us.

Mary is identified simply as one **who worked very hard**.

Some Greek manuscripts read ‘Mariam’ (the Hebrew form)—which probably identifies this woman as a Jew.

Romans 16:7 (NKJV)

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.

Andronicus is a Greek name, and the name has been identified with a slave. **Junia** is a Roman name and can be either masculine or feminine.

Paul calls them “**my fellow countrymen,**” which may mean that they belonged to the tribe of Benjamin as did Paul (but not necessarily blood relatives).

Paul says, they were “**my fellow prisoners**”—evidently meaning that Paul had met them in one of the numerous prisons of the Roman Empire.

When Paul says of these two women that they were “**of note among the apostles**”—he’s not calling *them* apostles but that they were well-known *among* the apostles for their dedication to the Lord and service to the Body of Christ.

Romans 16:8–12 (NKJV)

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.

We would never have known these people existed if Paul hadn’t mention them by name as fellow workers for the Kingdom of God (likewise with Anna in Luke 2:36-37).

Our names might not ever be famous on earth, but God knows who we are and will proclaim us His children and reward all that we did for His name someday in heaven.

Romans 16:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Whether **Rufus** is the same person mentioned in Mark 15:21 or not is uncertain—but if so, then he, was a son of Simon of Cyrene (a place located in North Africa) who was compelled to carry Jesus' cross. (Matt.27:32)

The greeting included Rufus' **mother** who, as Paul said, had also been a **mother** to him.

Paul obviously did not say she was his *actual* mother, but that by her tender, loving care for him when he was in town she acted like a mother to Paul.

Romans 16:14–16 (NKJV)

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.

This list shows the many people that played a part in Paul's ministry and the ministry of the churches.

Ministry is not a 'one-man' job—it consists of many helpers, laborers, and devoted servants that we may never hear about until we stand before the Lord at His throne.

The **holy kiss** was the common method of an affectionate greeting among the saints back then and is still practiced in some countries today.

It is designated as a **holy** to guard against any impropriety.

The churches in Achaia, where Paul was writing, joined in sending their greetings.

Romans 16:17 (NKJV)

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

False preachers and teachers in the Church have been around from the beginning—the Bible warns they would increase the closer we get to Jesus’ return.

The NT gives us 3 main characteristics of false teachers:

1. *They will try to financially prosper at the expense of God’s people;*
2. *They will teach contrary to the sound doctrine presented in the NT;*
3. *They will sow division in the church.*

Paul gives two instruction with regard to them—**1. Note them** (identify them) and **2. Avoid them** (disfellowship them and have nothing to do with them).

One commentator—

“It is a matter of obedience to the Lord and testimony to others. The issue is not making or keeping friends, but pleasing the Lord and maintaining a consistent testimony. Romans 16:20 suggests that these false teachers really come from Satan, and one day even he shall be completely defeated.”

Romans 16:18 (NKJV)

18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

The word “**simple**” does not mean “*dumb*”—it means “*naïve*” or “*unsuspecting*.”

Mature believers are to be ‘*big brothers and sisters*’ to young Christians and watch out for them protecting them from false shepherds.

One pastor gave this warning:

“What’s being said here is that there are sincere people who are being deceived by those who preach another Jesus Christ. Therefore, in your sincerity to want to learn more about the Lord

or to be students of the Word, don't allow those who teach a different Jesus to come into your home. Don't engage in discussions with them. Don't spend time arguing with them. Mark them and avoid them. Why? I offer two reasons....

One reason is protection. Satan is clever. And many a believer who thought he was strong in theology has succumbed to those who are inspired satanically. The second reason is prioritization. Invest your energy in the fields that are already white and ready for harvest (John 4:35), in the lives of those who are already open to the gospel.”

Romans 16:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰ And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

To conclude this warning Paul added the promise, **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**

The false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18) were under Satan's influence but will eventually be destroyed and God will establish peace in the Kingdom Age (Rev. 20:1-6).

Then Paul gave a final benediction about God's **grace**—

Romans 16:21–24 (NKJV)

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. ²² I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord. ²³ Gaius, my host and *the* host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. ²⁴ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Timothy is mentioned often in the Book of Acts and the Epistles—he was Paul's "*son in the faith*" and labored with Paul in many difficult places (see Phil. 2:19–24).

Tertius was the secretary who wrote the letter as Paul dictated it.

Gaius was the man in whose home Paul was residing at Corinth.

First Corinthians 1:14 told how Paul won Gaius to Christ and baptized him when he founded the church in Corinth.

Apparently, there was an assembly of believers meeting in his house.

Erastus held a high office in the city as the treasurer.

Romans 16:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—

“**My gospel**” doesn’t mean *‘mine exclusively’* (a unique gospel that no one else had) but *‘mine inclusively’*—“*the true gospel of Jesus Christ that I’m privileged to call my own and share with the lost.*”

When Paul said that the gospel he preached had been kept a secret or a ‘**mystery**’ from the OT saints but now has been revealed by God—what was this “**mystery**” he is referring to?

A **mystery**, in the NT is a truth that was previously unknown (a truth which human intellect could never discover)—but one which has now been made known through *‘revelation.’*

It **now has been made manifest** by the writing of the prophets—not the prophets of the OT but those of the NT period.

The particular mystery spoken of here is the truth that believing Jews and believing Gentiles are made fellow heirs, fellow members of the Body of Christ, and fellow partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph. 3:6).

It is the gospel message which God has commanded to be **made known to all nations** in order that people might **obey the faith and be saved.**

Romans 16:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

And so ends the greatest treatise in the Bible—a Mount Everest of spiritual truth!