

Rom 16:1-16

We've all skipped over biblical names:

When we study those biblical names, we learn to appreciate them:

Paul mentions over 30 people in this chapter:

These 30 plus people must have been important to Paul since he mentioned them:

Twenty-four of the people mentioned were in Rome:

Undoubtedly, he's met some on his missionary journeys:

Relationships are important.

The scriptures tell us in Proverbs 18:1 that a man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgement.

Paul didn't isolate himself,

People sometimes have a misconception of ministry.

Sister Phoebe Commended

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.

Greeting Roman Saints

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.

Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the first fruits of Achaia to Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 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.

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

Phoebe means radiant.

And Paul uses 3 words to describe her.

- 1) Sister (referring to a sister in the Lord)
- 2) Servant (deacon)
- 3) Helper (patroness)

Sister Phoebe Commended

1 I commend (vouch for, to present as worthy) to you Phoebe our sister (sister in the Lord), who is a servant (diákonos - deacon) of the church in Cenchrea, (eastern port in Corinth)

We're women deaconesses? Yes, especially at baptisms and prison ministries. It was not acceptable for a man to baptize a woman in that culture.

Phoebe was a deaconess in the informal sense which is the true sense.

This wouldn't be the formal deacon or deaconess

- you'd see in some churches today
- given by a congregational vote.

Deacons were helpers or servants

- to the elders of the church and didn't possess any
- ruling authority as the elders did.

The idea of deacons originated in the book of Acts in chapter 6.

Acts 6:1

1 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution

“Hellenists” were Greek speaking Jews that read the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. They began to complain against the Jews who read the bible in the original Hebrew. Their complaint was that their widows were neglected in the daily contribution of food.

2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

It was then that the 12 decided that they couldn't take care of every issue in the body so they appointed the office of a deacon.

The role of the deacon in the early church was many.

- Minister to the physical needs of the body.
- Cared for the poor
- Visited the sick

The role of a woman serving in that capacity was no different.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

But Paul said for women to be silent in the church, 1 Cor 14:34-35

Was he saying they aren't allowed to speak?

Yes and No! You need to understand everything in context.

Paul said in 1 Cor 11:5,13 that it **was a shame for women to speak or to pray with their head uncovered.**

1 Cor 14:34-35

34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Women were included in many activities in the church.

Acts 1:14

- women were included in prayer.

In acts 16:14

- Paul and Silas stayed at the house of Lydia after she and her household were baptized.

Anna:

- **Widow of 84 years prayed night and day and fasted daily**

Phoebe: delivered letter to the Romans

- Carried letter of recommendation

There were many itinerant people at the time taking advantage of others

Because of this,

- Letters of high importance we're sealed with a letter of recommendation

Paul never received such a letter. So he may have felt he needed to vindicate his ministry because he says in Gal 1-2: Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me,

Fortunately for us Phoebe delivered the letter safely.

2 that you may receive (companionship) her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist (Paristánō) her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Worthy: (weigh as much or worth as much) It's a word that is used only 6 times in the NT. Paul said in Phil 1:27 to let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

If you say you're a Christian then walk like a Christian.

Paul says here in verse 2, love her and receive her as you would a Christian.

At the end of this section he says to greet one another with a holy kiss. Other places the scriptures say to love one another.

Third, Paul says to assist her in whatever business she has need of you:
Assist - (Derived from the Greek word Paristánō)

This is the same word that Paul used in 2 Tim 4:16 & 17.

- Paul is coming to the end of his ministry and facing Caesar Nero.
- He's been arrested on charges of insurrection.

This is Paul's second defense. A preliminary trial preceded the main trial that determined a person's guilt.

One person still with Paul was Luke.

2 Tim 4:16-17

16 At my first defense no one stood (as a friend or advocate) with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

The Lord Is Faithful:

17 But the Lord stood (Paristánō, to stand by and to aid - Same word Paul used in Rom 16:2 when he said to “Assist” Phoebe) with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Greeting Roman Saints

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

Priscilla is mentioned before her husband Aquila.

- Not the norm back then unless the woman was considered
- of a higher superior status in society than her husband.

This couple traveled from Italy to Corinth after

- the Roman Emperor Claudius commanded
- that all Jews depart from Rome.

Why Corinth? Business maybe!

They became very helpful to Paul and accompanied him to Ephesus.

During their stay in Ephesus they met a person named Apollos.

- An eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures.
- Apollos spoke and taught accurately.
- He only knew the baptism of John.
- Aquila and Priscilla explained the way of God more accurately.

This couple became invaluable to Paul

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.

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

OT - Firstfruit is a Jewish term in the OT,

- that which is set apart for God
- before the remainder could be used.

Notice that the early church didn't meet in a designated building. They met in homes.

The **early church taught daily in homes and in the temple** according to Acts 5:42.

At one time the church was **forced to meet in homes because of persecution.**

There was however a danger back then:

- false teachers and false doctrine crept into the church

6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us. (to the point of exhaustion for us.)

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen, (may have been blood relatives, possibly saying they were of the same blood line) and my fellow prisoners (literally means "fellow captive in war") who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

This is another couple that was probably married and in ministry together. They may have been related to Paul, we don't know that for certain. We do know that they were faithful in ministry and obviously spent some time in jail next to Paul.

8 Greet Amplias (large or enlarged) my beloved in the Lord. (Abbreviation for Ampliatus.)

9 Greet Urbanus (of the city, so he was a city boy. Was a common name), our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. (an ear of corn), this name was quite rare back then.

We do know from historians that there was once

- a person in the family of Caesar
- holding an important office with this name.

But this doesn't necessarily mean that Stachys was

- of the household of Caesar.

We know that Paul

- was in a Roman prison, therefore,
- he would have had the opportunity to witness
- to government employees and we know he did that.

10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ.

We've seen this term before, "**approved in Christ**". To be **approved means to be tried and tested**. James 1:2-3 tells us to count it all joy when you fall into various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

2 Tim 2:15 tells us to:

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth

And Finally

1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

And when we're being tested the Lord turns up the heat, not to condemn us but to refine us.

Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus (grandson of Herod the Great. Isn't it interesting how the Lord can take someone that comes from a bad family such as Herod's and save them.)

11 Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus (was a freed man and had influence of the emperor Claudius.) 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.

There is and should be a difference when we interact with someone of the opposite sex.

When Paul wrote in First Timothy 5:1-2 he gave an example of how we are to treat one another. He said:

1 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

13 Greet Rufus (Red, probably a red head), chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

There may have been many people named Rufus. Rufus may have been the son of Simon of Cyrene.

Mark 15:21 21 Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross.

We know that Mark was written in Rome after Paul wrote the book of Romans. Mark would have had no other reason to mention Rufus had he not been known to the church.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus (**lover of the word**)

- Are you a lover of the word?

and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

All Greek names. Probably worshipped idols at one time then got saved. Now they're in Paul's list of names.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

A kiss in the early church was a way of showing you loved your brother. Today most of us give hugs.

Who would you name in your book?

Would anyone name you in their book