

Romans 16

“a new family”

So good morning, so good to see all of you today. What an incredible time we had last Sunday, the baptisms and the celebration of camp week, wow, what a day.

So this morning we are going to look at the last chapter of Romans and discuss a fairly mis understood passage of the bible, this new family.

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 Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits 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.
Romans 16:1-16***

Now there are some things we know about Paul and some things we do not, except for one reference to his sister and her son, in Acts 23, we don't know if he was married, if he had kids, if his parents were still around, we just don't know.

But if you read this passage we just put up there, that all the time he was giving everything he had to spread the word, God had given him this rich family, this large group of people that he was obviously very close too...

In Mathew 10 Jesus reminds us that there is a cost to follow Him, we don't like to hear it, but there is a cost, and sometimes the cost is our families don't follow us or like it!

***Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'* ³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.
Matthew 10:34-39**

1. What Jesus is not saying.

First He is not telling us to stop loving or caring for our families, some take this out of context and try to make it say we are to turn our backs, build walls, nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus never turned His back on His mother or His brothers, our loyalty to them does not end even if Jesus sends us off to the distant lands, even if they turn on you, you never turn on them...

He is not giving you permission to treat your family terribly and then claim you are just building “boundaries”.

But what He is saying is that you cannot let these familial or emotional ties keep you from following Jesus, your eternity and the eternity of others is far to important!

2. His promises.

Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”

²⁹ So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, ³⁰ who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Mark 10:28-31

The reality is that God sees the sacrifices we may make for Him and He does not just let it go, He returns to us in this life and in eternity what we have lost. My responsibility, when it comes to my relationships, is to make sure that I am responding to others the way Jesus would respond.

Jesus promise is to repay a hundred-fold in this age, right here and then in the age to come! Heaven may be waiting, but God intends to provide for us in this life. And I want to remind you of something, whenever God does something, it is in abundance and beyond what I could even imagine!

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, Ephesians 3:20

- **Two other promises**

A man who has friends must himself be friendly,

But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24

***A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows,
Is God in His holy habitation.***

***⁶ God sets the solitary in families;
He brings out those who are bound into prosperity;
But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Psalms 68:5-6***

3. Meet the family.

Paul is writing to people in a city he has never visited, and here he greeting people, name by name and you hear him telling to them with deep affection.

By now, Paul has been ministering for 25 years and he has preached in every city and town where no church already existed. He has gone completely around the Mediterranean, ending up in what is today Croatia.

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. 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 Romans 15:19-20

so just think for a moment what this man has seen and done. Think of the people he has had to leave behind, the days in jail, the travels, and not in first class...

but also think of the people who he has met and led to Jesus. Now think of the people he will see in heaven, who will run up to him...

Is there anybody in this room here today that is not going to go up to him and thank him? Thank him for the sacrifices he made for us to have the parts of the New Testament that he penned.

Is it any wonder why Paul thinks so fondly for the people who he traveled with, ministered with, cried with, saw them come to Jesus...

Some of us have families that we are praying for, we are encouraging them and yes we are forgiving them. They are joy for us, we get along with them, active with them...

But others do not. They have been estranged from, they have been abandoned, their faith is mocked, they are kept at a distance, their flaws and sins are gladly pointed out and discussed.

In some cases financial help or inheritance is cut off and they are shunned.

When people come to Jesus, it doesn't mean your family of birth is no longer important, they are, but we are also born into a new family and in some cases that family will be closer to us than our birth families.

Maybe that is what happened to Paul. Maybe his family "disowned" him.

Whenever someone says yes to Jesus, they are also saying yes to a new family and some of those new brothers and sisters will stick closer than a brother or sister...

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13