

A little help from my friends
... and watch out for those who create division.

(Romans 16)

Big Idea: God put us together to accomplish his work; so, watch out for divisiveness and focus on grace.

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 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.

³ Greet Prisca 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. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. ⁶ Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

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.

⁸ Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, who is

approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.

¹¹ Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. ¹² Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and

Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.

¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a

mother to me as well. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas,

Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus, Julia,

Nereus 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.

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

Big Idea: God put us together to accomplish his work; so, watch out for divisiveness and focus on grace.

A little help from my friends

1. Work together for Jesus (vv. 1-16).
2. Watchout for bad teachers (vv. 17-18).
3. Be known for your faithfulness (v. 19).

1. Work together for Jesus (vv. 1-16).

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These Christians worked as:

- i. Servants and financial supporters (vv. 1-2).
- ii. Fellow workers in Christ Jesus (v. 3, 9, 12).
- iii. People who risked their necks for my life (v. 4).
- iv. Some used their home for a church (v. 5).
- v. Hard workers (v. 6).
- vi. Kinsmen, prisoners, maybe mentors (v. 7).
- vii. Dear friends and friends (vv. 8-11).
- viii. Friends that are like family (vv. 13-14).

33 *different* people (vv. 1-23) with *various* roles worked *together* to move the gospel forward.

Diversity in
the body.

Connection to
the body.

Importance of
members in
the body.

1. Diversity

1. Jews, gentiles, middle east, asia ... Paul didn't suggest a church for each group, he admonished them towards unity.
2. Rich/poor – holy kiss == equality
3. Women are called out. This is shocking for the time it was written.

2. Connection

1. Paul feels personally connected to the people.
2. They are his family.
3. He cannot survive without the body.

3. Ordinary people do extraordinary things

1. Not only does Paul need the body to survive, he needs the body to do what God has called him to do.
2. Each of us works in cooperation with all the rest of us.

Where does God want you to use your gifts/abilities for his kingdom?

Every person has a place.

2. Watch out for bad teachers (vv. 17-18).

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. 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.

These are not the 'weaker brothers' (Rom 14),
but people seeking to destroy the church.

The enemy does 3 things:

- i. Causes divisions.
- ii. Creates stumbling blocks (cf. Rom 14:13).
- iii. Corrupts the truth (1st & 2nd tier issues).

3 Characteristics to notice:

- i. Serve their own appetites (Phil 3:18-19).
- ii. Use smooth talk and flattery (2Co 11:13-15).
- iii. Deceive the hearts of the naïve (v. 18).

“Just take two examples from history: Arius (d. 336) and Socinus (d. 1604)—both of whom denied the deity of Christ. Parker Williamson describes Arius like this:

Here was a bright, energetic, attractive fellow, the kind of citizen whom any Rotary Club would welcome. Singing sea chanties in dockside pubs and teaching Bible stories to the Wednesday night faithful, this was an immensely popular man. His story reminds us that heresy does not bludgeon us into belief. We are seduced. (Parker T. Williamson, *Standing Firm: Reclaiming the Chastain Faith in Times of Controversy* [Lenoir, North Carolina: PLC Publications, 1996], p. 31.)

And another writer describes Socinus like this:

He was a gentleman. His morals were above reproach and he distinguished himself by his unflinching courtesy. Unflinching courtesy was remarkable in an age when even the great Protestant leaders, Luther and Calvin would use vile street language when arguing with their opponents.”

From Piper -- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/watch-out-for-those-who-lead-you-away-from-the-truth>

Watch out for the enemy!

- i. Mark them (cf. Mt 7:20; Phil 3:2).
- ii. Avoid them (cf. Rom 12:14, 18).
- iii. Protect the naïve from them.

Avoid them --- Truth-based division for the sake of truth-based unity. – Piper

But --- Romans 12 “Bless those who curse you” (v. 12:14),
“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (v. 12:18).

3. Be known for your faithfulness (v. 19).

¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but [I want to see you experts in good, and not even beginners in evil]. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

J. B. Phillips paraphrase of Rom 16:19

Strive to master the good, not even begin to know evil, and trust God to crush Satan under your feet.

Today, decide to work together to accomplish
God's work here in Albuquerque.

Watch out for divisiveness and focus on grace.