

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- Practical: 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

The Letter of Romans reviews the basics of the faith.

Slide # 2

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For I am not ashamed of **the gospel** of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who **believes**, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from **faith to faith**; as it is written, “The just shall live **by faith**.”

For Paul, it was all about the GOSPEL. We are saved by believing the gospel and then once we are saved, we need to share the gospel. Everyone needs Jesus – everyone needs to know the gospel. As believers our great goal in life should be to KNOW Christ and to make Him KNOWN.

Paul clearly saw the great work of making Christ KNOWN was a TEAM effort. This is clearly seen at the end of Romans where in Romans 16:1-16 he mentions about 35 people in his commending and greeting section of the letter. We might call this “***ministry networking***”. Paul was all about building relationships with fellow believers to the end that we might function in concert in reaching the lost.

For never having been to Rome it is amazing how many people he personally knew there. This speaks to the Pax Romana (the period of Roman Peace), and the road system Rome built that allowed free travel. Paul, in his travels, intersected with many people who either lived in Rome or ended up there. And, of course, Rome was the capital of the empire, so it was a magnet that drew many people there for many reasons.

As the apostle to the Gentiles, Rome was a special destination in the mind of Paul as it was the center of the known Gentile world. In the time of Paul the city of Rome had a population of about one million people. But for Christians, there is an ever-developing network of fellow believers.

If you talk to a fellow Christian from another part of the country – very likely you will have connections if you talk very long. We often look at each other and say, ***“It is a small world.”*** Paul knew people who knew people, and there were lots of connections in Rome.

Paul addressed many people in Romans 16 by name as a means of greeting and encouragement. Last time I emphasized how important names are and encouraged us to work at knowing people by name.

Well, over the holidays I received a card in the mail. It had a picture of a family by the last name of Zilinkeies. On the card it said: *“Dear Oswalds, you have done so much for our family! We enjoy talking with you each Sunday and hearing about how you and your family are doing. Even little Willy has enjoyed your preaching and said, ‘when can we see the bald man talk again?’ We hope the New Year brings many blessings! From: the Zilinkeies”*

Immediately I began to rack my brain – thinking who are these people? They talk to me every Sunday and I can remember a single one of them. I asked my wife about it – she didn’t know them either. I asked others. No one knew them. I came to think this is a prank card but had no idea who might be behind it. Then at a family gathering I mentioned this card and it eventually came out that one of my granddaughters had pranked me. There, for a moment, I thought I was really failing at this name thing!

Names are important – a personal touch is important. People need to be affirmed and encouraged. Paul was great at this! He was great at networking. Today we continue on in our study, picking it up right in the middle of the “greeting section” of Romans 16. We pick it up at Romans 16:8.

Romans 16:8–16 (NKJV)**8 Greet Amplias, [am·plee·as] my beloved in the Lord.**

When Paul greets someone as beloved – in this case “beloved in the Lord” he is affirming a special love he has for them as a Christian. It denotes warm/personal affection. It communicates depth of special relationship.

9 Greet Urbanus, [oor·ban·os] our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, [stakh·oos] my beloved.

The name “**Urbanus**” means “*belonging to the urbs or city*” which in context would refer to the city of Rome. Evidently, he was a Roman from the city of Rome.

Somewhere along the way he became a “**fellow worker in Christ**”. What exactly his role was is not mentioned.

Stachys is also called “my beloved” – denoting a special love bond.

We are to love all God’s people but there are some that we have a special bond with. Even Jesus had the inner circle of Peter, James, and John and then of those three John is called the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (Jn. 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Of course, Jesus loved them all (Jn. 13:1) but He had a special love bond with John. Indeed, there are those we will have a special relationship with. That was true even of Jesus and of Paul.

The names **Amplias, [am·plee·as], Urbanus, and Stachys** were common slave names. The gospel puts everyone on the same level spiritually.

Slide # 3**Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)**

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.**

As believers we are all slaves of Christ serving the same Master – that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Slide # 4**1 Corinthians 7:22 (NKJV)**

22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free **is Christ’s slave.**

Colossians 4:1 (NASB)

1 MASTERS, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

Amazingly, a slave in the Roman Empire could potentially have been an overseer in the Church and in that role serve over his earthly master. The master would have been in submission to him in the assembly, but outside of the assembly the believing slave would be subject to his believing master. Being in Christ changes everything. We are now all spiritual equals – although we have differing roles.

When William Carey went to India he found an entire culture in bondage to a strict caste system. A caste system is a social structure that divides people into fixed groups based on birth, occupation, or lineage. The hope to improve your lot is in reincarnation. The lowest category in the caste system is a category known as the Dalits (also known as “Untouchables” or “Outcasts”). However, when one comes to Christ in the Church of the living God they now enjoy an equal status in Christ being co-heirs of the grace of life.

The ground at the foot of the cross is level – no one is any higher than anyone else. We are all spiritual equals.

10 Greet Apelles [ap·el·lace], approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

The idea of “approved” it to be tested and proved. It is to be tried and true. We don’t know what he had been through – but evidently, it was a hard time of testing, and he came through it with his faith tested and proven.

There is a sort of testing that takes place in the context of body life that either proves a person or shows them to be disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27).

Slide # 5

1 Corinthians 11:19 (NKJV)

19 For there must also be factions [divisions] among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

The sense is that it will come out for all the body to see as this goes along. Factious controversy has a way of bringing out who is self-serving and who is God-serving/body-serving. Sometimes it is hidden for a while, but in the end, it shakes out. And it shakes out in the context of body life.

Yes, there is such a thing as being approved in the sight of the body of Christ in the here and now, (Rom. 14:18) but the ultimate issue is God's evaluation on the day of the believer's judgment (2 Tim. 2:15). This judgment is not for sin – but the evaluation of our life's work and how we will be rewarded.

Slide # 6

2 Corinthians 10:18 (NKJV)

18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but **whom the Lord commends.**

1 Corinthians 3:14–15 (NKJV)

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will **receive a reward.**

15 If anyone's work is burned, he **will suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The great issue on judgment day for the believer will be this: Is your life's work reward-worthy or not? Only the Lord's evaluation will matter on that day! Live accordingly! Live in light of eternity!

Apelles had been tried and proven but exactly in what way we are not told.

But in a sense, all God's children are being tried and proven in the hardships that we go through. It is God's way of refining us and proving us.

Slide # 7

1 Peter 1:6–7 (NKJV)

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,

Job 23:10 (NKJV)

10 But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

Somehow just knowing God has a purpose in whatever we are going through is a comfort. God uses everything, and as we come through it with faith intact, it demonstrates we are "approved".

Where the NKJV translates “Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus” the word “household” is not in the manuscripts but was added by the translators to make a smooth translation. The same is true of Narcissus.

Most commentators think that Aristobulus was probably the grandson of Herod the Great (c. 73-4 BC) and friend of Emperor Claudius. He was a man who hobnobbed with those in high places. Aristobulus lived in Rome, but the thought is that he had probably died prior to the writing of this letter. Either that or he was not a believer.

Whatever the situation he is not personally addressed by Paul here in Romans, but rather those of Aristobulus are. Therefore, many think this greeting is in reference to slaves who had belonged to Aristobulus but had also become believers, hence why the greeting is translated as being to “***those who are of the household of Aristobulus***”. They belonged to him - their affiliation was with him – although he may have passed on or was an unbeliever.

We should never be reticent to look for believers even in the most unexpected places. The Herod family was one of the most ungodly families in the history of mankind, but God is able to do His wonderful work of grace even within the gates and walls of the most infamous unbelievers. Even in our day it is ironic that the most celebrated and publicized atheist of the last half of the twentieth century [Madalyn Murray O'Hair] had a son who became a Christian, to her utter dismay and disgust! – **George Zellar**

Slide # 8

Philippians 4:22 (NKJV)

22 All the saints greet you, but **especially those who are of Caesar's household.**

I call this the “***spider principle***”. Try as hard as they will, God has a way of saving people in the most unexpected places. Somehow, the Word gets in there, and some of them get saved.

Slide # 9

Proverbs 30:28 (NKJV)

28 The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, **And it is in kings' palaces.**

11 Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

It is thought that Herodion was a Jew who was a part of Herod's household in some capacity. He evidently had become converted at some point. The "***spider principle***" strikes again!

Narcissus is a name connected with Greek mythology. He was supposedly so beautiful that all the girls longed to be his but he rejected all of them. Finally, one of those girls prayed to the gods, "May he who loves not others love himself!" Supposedly the goddess named "Nemesis" granted her request. As Narcissus looked into a clear pool to take a drink he saw there his own reflection and immediately fell in love with it. He so burned with love for himself that he could not stop gazing at the reflection. He stayed there pinning away, until he died.

Thus, narcissism has become a term that refers to intensive SELF-LOVE demonstrated in excessive fixation with one's appearance or self-interest. The Bible says "self-love" will be one of the defining characteristics of the last days. Can anyone say "social media"?

Slide # 10

2 Timothy 3:1–2 (NKJV)

1 But know this, that in the **last days perilous times** will come:

2 For men will be **lovers of themselves**, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

The very first thing mentioned in a long list of vices is "lovers of themselves". In verse 4 Paul goes on to say, "***lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God***". This defines the times in which we live. Lovers of self – lovers of pleasure. We are a society of NARCISSITS!

Many scholars believe that the Narcissus here in Romans 16:11 was closely connected to the Emperor Claudius perhaps serving as his secretary. As Nero assumed the throne he committed suicide (A.D. 54) – meaning that by the time Romans was written he was already dead.

If indeed Aristobulus was a close friend of Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-45) and Narcissus served as his secretary, then this means that at least two

household within the palace had believers within them. The **spider principle** was getting out of control!

Once again, it is thought that those in the household of Narcissus were very possibly slaves who had an affiliation with Narcissus and, therefore, still maintained this identity – although, at this point, he himself was dead.

But note the qualifier here:

Slide # 11

Romans 16:11 (NKJV)

11 ... Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

This would indicate that not all in the household were saved and that Paul is greeting only the believers in the house.

12 Greet Tryphena [troo·fahee·nah] and Tryphosa [troo·fo·sah] , who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis [per·sece], who labored much in the Lord.

The names Tryphena and Tryphosa are similar names, leading many to think they were sisters and perhaps even twins but we don't know for certain. Perhaps they came from a wealthy family because their names come from a root word (tryphao) meaning "to live luxuriously" or "to live a life of ease". Their names literally mean "Delicate" and "Dainty".

Paul is perhaps using some gentle irony when he commends two ladies called "Delicate" and "Danity" for the fact that they work hard.

– **Leon Morris**

As someone said, they "certainly did not live up to their names!" The word "labored" means to work strenuously to the point of exhaustion. There was nothing DELICATE or DAINTY about their intense service for the Lord.

The name Persis means "a woman of Persia," indicating the land of her heritage. Once again, Paul uses the word "beloved" to define her. But note how careful he is to avoid any idea of impropriety.

When speaking of the men Paul uses the personal possessive "my" as in "**my beloved**" but when speaking to the woman he simply says "**the beloved**".

Slide # 12

- v. 5 “**my** beloved Epaenetus”
- v. 8 “Amplias, [**am·plee·as**] **my** beloved”
- v. 9 “Stachys, **my** beloved”
- v. 12 “**the** beloved Persis”

Four times in this chapter Paul refers to very specific people as “beloved” - meaning those he had a special love for.

Note that Tryphena and Tryphosa labored in the Lord, but the beloved Persis “labored much in the Lord.” That is a distinction!

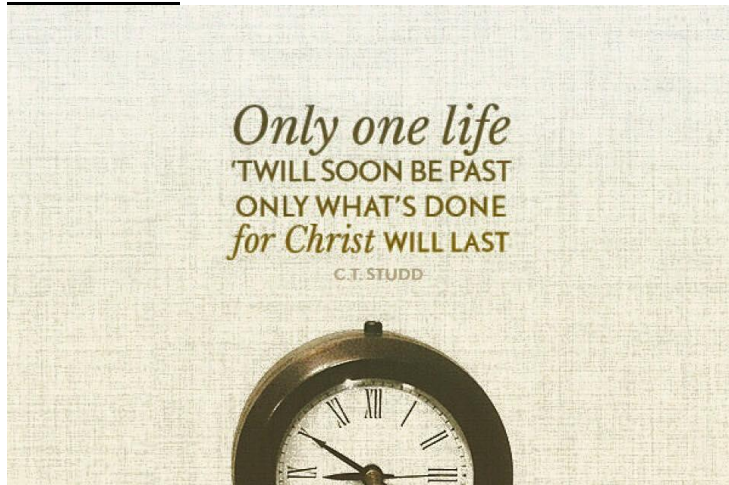
In a sense, we have a little glimpse of what the judgment of believers will look like. It will be very personal and individual. Some will have labored, and some will have labored more. Each will be rewarded according to their own labors. Paul was generous in his compliments, which were both sincere and accurate.

“So there are distinctions and degrees in honor among believers, and these are graduated by the scale of service done. It is an honor to labor for Christ, it is a still greater honor to labor much.”

– Charles Spurgeon

Slide # 13**1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)**

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

Slide # 14

It is interesting that Paul mentions the labor of Tryphena and Tryphosa in the present tense while that of Persis is in the past tense, indicating that while she had served MUCH in the past, but perhaps now, because of age or circumstances, she was not able to continue as she once did.

However, her intense labors have not been forgotten.

Slide # 15

Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV)

10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

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

Rufus is a Latin name meaning “**Red**”. Evidently, he was a red-head.

And evidently, he was well known to the saints in Rome. It is commonly understood that Mark wrote his gospel with Rome in mind. And in his gospel, he mentions Rufus as the son of Simon, the man who bore the cross of Christ (cf. Mt. 27:32).

Slide # 16

Mark 15:21 (NKJV)

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

Only Mark mentioned Simon’s sons, **Alexander and Rufus**, suggesting that they were disciples known to his readers in Rome (cf. Rom. 16:13). – ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

Some surmise that Simon mentioned in Mark 15 is the same Simon named in Acts 13:1.

Slide # 17

Acts 13:1 (NKJV)

1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

This is possible, but we can't say this is true for certain! But remember, out here in Christendom, it is a "***small world***" with a definite network.

Note that Rufus is described as "chosen in the Lord". What does this mean? After all – all the saved are "chosen in the Lord". But here, it seems that Paul is singling him out and not putting him in the same category as everyone else.

It is true that the word "chosen" is the word commonly used in reference to "elect". The elect are the chosen in the Lord. However, it is also pointed out that the word can mean "choice" in the sense of excellent, precious, eminent, or outstanding. Therefore, many think the sense here is that Rufus was known for his outstanding character and service as a Christian. But again, we are not given details.

The word translated "chosen" may mean "eminent," since it was given to Rufus as a statement of distinction.

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

Others think that it should be understood in the normal sense of being elect in the Lord but that Paul made special mention of it because of his unique family story that resulted in his conversion, or perhaps because of his own unique conversion story that we are not specifically told about.

Perhaps he was seeking to encourage the heart of Rufus by reminding him of the glorious fact of his election, a fact which should bring forth much thanksgiving from the heart of every believer (2 Thess. 2:13). Perhaps Rufus was saved in a remarkable way, having been a person who seemed very unlikely to ever come to Christ. We all know people who, from a human point of view, seem to be impossible candidates for salvation: "That man will never get saved!" But the God who converted Saul of Tarsus can wonderfully surprise us. "Rufus, never forget God's wonderful work of calling you and choosing you and bringing you to Himself! You are a trophy of God's sovereign, saving grace!" – ***George Zellar***

There is a lot of "perhaps" in the commentary regarding Rufus. Undoubtedly Rufus knew the exact nuance that Paul had in view, but we wrestle with various possibilities. It will be great to get to heaven where we will know fully instead of in part (1 Cor. 13:12).

Finally, Paul references the mother of Rufus as also being his mother.

There is pretty much agreement here that this unnamed “mother” was not Paul’s actual mother but rather showed maternal kindness to Paul and, in effect, came alongside him as a mother.

Again, we don’t know when this happened but some suggest that possibly it was when Paul spent a year in Antioch of Syria after his conversion. Perhaps he lived as a guest in their home and she “mothered” him there (cf. Acts 11:25-26). But again, this is simply a guess.

Upon his conversion, very possibly most of Paul’s family wanted nothing to do with him. But this is where the promise of Christ comes in.

Slide # 18

Mark 10:29–30 (NKJV)

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.

In salvation, one does not lose out on family – even if one’s physical family totally abandons them – rather, they now have a whole new ENLARGED spiritual family. Paul knew this reality!

Actually, Romans 16 is one long testament to this reality as Paul warmly addresses person after person as part of his new family! We, as believers, truly are the FAMILY of God!

Paul now mentions 5 people in a cluster and then adds “and the brethren who are with them.” Perhaps this was another “house church,” but again, Paul is short on details.

14 Greet Asyncritus [as·oong·kree·tos], Phlegon [fleg·one], Hermas, Patrobas [pat·rob·as], Hermes [her·mace], and the brethren who are with them.

Some of these names were names commonly applied to slaves such as Phlegon and Hermes. Throughout, we have hinted at that many of these converts either came from a slave background or were currently slaves. Yes, there are also those tied to royalty on the list, but there is a strong emphasis on slaves. Christianity gives HOPE to those in the lowest position in society. It provides a HOPE beyond this life. It is a HOPE offered to all!

15 Greet Philologus [fil·ol·og·os] and Julia [ee·oo·lee·ah], Nereus [nare·yoos] and his sister, and Olympas [ol·oom·pas], and all the saints who are with them.

Here again, we have 5 individuals listed with the add-on **“and all the saints who are with them.”** Once again, this may suggest yet another “house church”. Rome was a large city and the saints would have been scattered throughout which may be reflected in the various groups of people mentioned – which in effect may have been separate house churches.

Philologus and Julia are thought by most commentators to have been husband and wife probably. Certainly Priscilla and Aquilla in verse 5 were a husband wife team; also in verse 7 Andronicus and Junia may well have been a married couple; and then here in verse 15 Philologus and Julia. If so, that would make for 3 married couples in the list.

Nereus [Nare-yoos] may have been instrumental in the salvation of two famous Romans. In 95 A.D. Rome was shocked when two distinguished Roman citizens were condemned for being Christian believers: **Flavius Clemens and his wife Domatilla** (she was the granddaughter of Vespasian, a former Emperor and the niece of Domitian, the reigning Emperor). **Flavius was executed and his wife was banished to an island.** Flavius and his wife had a household servant named **Nereus** (see verse 15). Nereus was a common name, but if the household servant of Flavius was the same man Paul referred to, then it seems likely that Nereus was influential in the salvation of these two prominent people (see William Barclay’s discussion of this in his *Letters to the Romans*, also cited by MacArthur in *Romans 9-16*). – **George Zellar**

If true, the “spider principle” strikes again!

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

The word “hermeneutics” means “principles of interpretation”. We interpret the Bible literally (normally), grammatically, and historically. And the historical comes into play here.

In the culture of Paul’s day it was common for people with a special love bond to greet one another with a kiss. It was a cultural thing. It expressed deep affection and care.

Note Paul here defines this as a “holy kiss”. There was nothing sensual about it. It was often on the cheek or the forehead and communicated honor, respect, and affection. Several times in the gospels we find this custom emphasized in regard to the culture of the day.

Slide # 19

Luke 7:45 (NKJV)

45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

Luke 15:20 (NKJV)

20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

Slide # 20

Luke 22:48 (NKJV)

48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Acts 20:37 (NKJV)

37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him,

Four times in the NT Paul refers to this “holy kiss” (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26); and Peter once, but he calls it “a kiss of love” (1 Pet. 5:14). So this was a common thing in this culture and understood that it communicated Christian love and affection.

As time went along there were some problems that developed with the “holy kiss”. Clement of Alexandria in the second century said that some “make the churches resound” with kissing and points out “the shameless use of a kiss...occasions foul suspicions and evil reports”.

Because of this, the church eventually saw this as counterproductive and stopped it. There are certain places in the world today where an appropriate kiss is a commonly accepted cultural expression of love. But in our culture that generally is not true.

I think this is a case where the spirit of the matter trumps the literal letter.

There are times when believers try to obey the "letter of the law," and in doing so actually disobey the "spirit of the law." This could happen with "the holy kiss." There are some churches in America that seek to practice this custom, believing it to be Biblical. However, those who have witnessed this report that such a greeting is anything but warm and affectionate. Kissing fellow believers is so foreign to our custom that we go through the motions of it but it loses all warmth and affection. Thus in keeping to the letter of the law we have lost the spirit of the law. Far better to lose the letter of the law by substituting the kiss for a more comfortable handshake, and thus be able to fulfill the spirit of the law (a warm and affectionate greeting). Those believers who live in countries where this kind of kissing is still practiced are better able to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of this command. – **George Zellar**

Certainly, in our greeting of one another, we want to be intentional in communicating the warmth of Christian love and not merely that which is cold and formal. However, in our culture, the most natural and normal way to do this is with a warm handshake.

Paul concludes this "greeting section" by saying, "***The churches of Christ greet you.***"

Paul here was undoubtedly speaking representatively of those churches in the East that he had planted and were part of the collection effort for the saints in Jerusalem. They undoubtedly generally knew of his plans and wanted Paul to communicate their greetings and solidarity with the church in Rome (cf. Acts 20:3-5).

Again, we see Paul ever networking – doing what he can to foster the unity of the entire church.

Note that here Paul refers to "The churches of Christ". In other places he refers to "the churches of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 11:16; 2 Thess. 1:4). The point is that the churches of Christ are the churches of God because in fact Christ is God!

Some applications from the greeting section of Romans 16:1-16.

Paul was clearly a "people person" who believed in "networking" for the cause of Christ.

And Paul believed in using everybody. Now not all have the exact same role but everyone can be useable in some fashion. Out of the eight people emphasized in regard to working, laboring or helping – six of the eight are in reference to women.

Slide # 21

- v. 1 **Phoebe**...servant of the church...
- v. 1 **Phoebe**....helper of many...
- v.3 **Pricilla** and Aquila, my fellow workers...
- v. 6 **Mary**, who labored much...
- v. 12 **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa** who have labored...
- v. 12 **Persis**, who labored much

Six separate women are mentioned here. In addition, Aquila as a man is named (v. 3) as a fellow worker, and Urbanus (v. 9) as a man is also named as a fellow worker. But clearly, Paul saw the value of women as fellow workers in the cause of Christ.

In the greeting section of Paul there is a tremendous underlying emphasis on Christian **LOVE, LABOR, and LOYALTY**. In a sense this is a package. This is what should define us as a TEAM as the FAMILY of God. We should be all in – in our love for each other, in our laboring together for the cause of Christ, and in our loyalty both to each other as well as the Lord.

I often say that life is about relationships! In the end, this is the BIG thing in life – our relationship with God and our relationship with one another. The GREATEST commandment is to love God, and the second great command is to love one another.

When you got saved, whether you realized it or not, your salvation came with a HUGE family that instantly became a part of. God has a GREAT work for us to do and He has so orchestrated it that it must be done together. Our mission is a “together mission”. We can’t do it alone! This is what the end of Romans emphasizes – we are in this together. We need each other! We are to value each other! We need to work together.

The people that Paul greeted represented a cross-section of the whole of society. They include men and women, rich and poor, free and slave, old and young, married and single, Gentile and Jew, brothers and sisters, well-known and unknown, distinguished and obscure. But they were all in this together. That is the message Paul is communicating.

The mission is a family endeavor involving everyone! We all have a role to play! And those that refuse to be vitally involved don't end well.

Slide # 22



Being a LONE Christian is foreign to the NT Scriptures. Christianity is a "family thing" – it is a "together thing". It is a "one another thing".

The richest people in the world are those who LOVE the most! They are "people" people! They encourage others. They build into others! They realize it's not just about them – but about others!

If Paul were to send us a letter of greetings and name you – what would he say? In a pithy way, what defines you? **Fellow worker, Laborer in the Lord, Beloved, Servant of the Church? Helper?** Would any of these define you?

At the end of the year, World Magazine has a section on "**Departures**" in which they summarize the lives of people who have died this last year with one sentence. For example:

Joel Belz: Enterprising Christian publisher who founded WORLD Magazine in 1986 and presided over its growth into a multi-media WORLD News Group.

Willie Mays: Era-defining baseball player whose 660 career home runs place him behind only Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron when he retired in 1973.

Kris Kristofferson: Country music icon and songwriter who penned, "Me and Bobby McGee" and "Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down."

Hal Lindsey: Author of best-selling *The Late Great Planet Earth* who popularized premillennial dispensationalism and heightened interest in the fate of Israel.

And on and on...

If you were to die today how might your life be summarized in one sentence?

What ultimately defines your life?

“It is a great thing to go down to history as the man with the open house or as the man with the brotherly heart. Some day people will sum us up in one sentence. What will that sentence be?”

- ***William Barclay***

More compelling: One day we will stand before God and give an account of how we served – what will His verdict be? Approved or Unapproved?

May our lives reflect the love, labor, and loyalty becoming of those in the family of God as exhibited in Romans 16!

We're in this thing together!

God help us to make the most of it.

Only one life to live – twill soon be past – only what's done for Christ will last!