

## **LOVE FOR THE SAINTS.**

### **ROMANS 16:1-23.**

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

Think of those people who have influenced you, guided you, ministered to you, or with you, in your life so far. What words do you use to describe them?

Most of the people mentioned in Romans 16 are just ordinary Christians, real people, doing real work, and putting in to practice the teaching of chapters 12-15.

#### **1. SAY G'DAY.**

Romans 16:1-16.

**I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cencreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.**

Phoebe was the one who carried this letter to Rome. Paul trusted her for this important task.

**3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house.**

Acts 18:1-3.

**5 Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ.**

Here is Paul's first son in Christ and he doesn't forget that fact. Notice that he is still going strong, he's still in the church, he hasn't given up.

**6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you.**

What a simple statement but so full of meaning. How often do we meet unassuming, behind the scenes type people, who just get in and get the job done without any fanfare or recognition.

**7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.**

They were fellow prisoners because of Jesus not because they had done anything wrong. Prominent messengers of the gospel.

**8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.**

**9 Greet Urbanus, our co-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 relative 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; and greet his mother--a mother to me also.**

**14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters 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.**

Paul is a people person. He cares about people, he remembers them, he loves them and he wants them to know it. Christianity is a family affair, these are brothers and sisters together.

How many of those statements can you apply to the person or persons you thought of earlier, those who have influenced you, guided you, helped shape you?

How many could other people apply to you?????

What sort of influence are we having on other people? Are we putting into practice the lessons of Chapters 12-15 of this letter?

#### **2. BEWARE.**

Romans 16:17-20.

**I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offenses, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.**

**For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil. The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**

What is the greatest danger for believers? Anything that undermines God's truth.

Love is ready to forgive all evil, but it does not condone or ignore evil, especially in the church. This passage is so relevant to the church today with so many wanting to change what the Bible teaches to suit their own sinful lifestyles and to impose those lifestyles on the true church. We need to sit up and take note of what Paul wrote so long ago.

Anything that is opposite to what God's Word teaches is to be avoided.

There is so much talk today of how we need to debate, discuss and dialogue with one another about the differing interpretations of Scripture regarding homosexuality and gender and other issues. The right response of believers to false teachers, especially those who teach their heresy under the guise of Christianity, is not debate or dialogue. Paul says avoid them. We are to turn away from them, to reject what they teach and to protect fellow believers, especially new Christians, from being deceived, confused, and misled.

These people are not to be debated but denounced.

Matthew 7:15-16. Matthew 24:24.

Paul says those who teach these things are not working for Christ but against him.

Philippians 3:18-9.

Here he says they are serving their own appetites - they are self serving not God serving, and their desire is to deceive and distort the minds of the simple minded.

What makes people “simple-minded” “naive” or “unsuspecting”?

**Ignorance of the truth.**

If you don't know the truth in the first place when someone comes along with something else how would you ever know?

We need to know God's truth and we need to stick to it or we will be led astray.

We should not be surprised that there are false teachers in the church today.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

What should our response be?

Part of their protection against false teachers was their obedience to Christ which was known to all.

What does he want for them?

**“I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil”**

Matthew 10:16.

Romans 12:9.

To be guileless or innocent in what is evil is not to be ignorant of it or to disregard it. We cannot hate evil if we don't know what it is. The only reliable way to recognise evil is to be thoroughly familiar with the good, and the only reliable way to learn what is good is to learn God's Word.

God doesn't want us to be gullible - he wants us to be people of discernment.

Paul assures these faithful believers that they can look forward to the day when their spiritual warfare will be over. These teachers of lies and falsehood are instruments of the devil, and they will be destroyed when the **“God of peace”** crushes Satan.

Romans 15:33.

Here the “God of Peace” is spoken of in relation to His permanent victory over Satan and his minions on our behalf. Only then will we have real peace.

**“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you”.**

A better prayer you could not pray for another, yet, this is more than just a prayer.

When we are obedient to Christ, when we are **“wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil”** God will pour out the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ on us.

We cannot do or be those things without God's grace. Everything we do, everything we are is dependent on God's grace, God's undeserved favour. Our salvation, our justification, our future eternal life - everything is dependent on God's Grace.

### **3. GREETINGS FROM.....**

Romans 16:21-23.

**Timothy, my co-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.**

Different people with different roles and gifts but all co-workers and supporters, partners with Paul in the great gospel proclamation.

### **CONCLUSION.**

What about us?

Are we partners with each other and with Jesus in the great gospel proclamation.

Think through those earlier statements.

Are we - benefactors/helpers in ministry - Fellow workers - risk takers - beloved - hard workers for Christ - beloved in the Lord - Co workers with Christ - approved of Christ - chosen in Christ - mothers or fathers to any new Christians.????

Do we so love the truth that we are constantly on our guard against false teaching and lies?

Do we so love the truth that we know the difference?

How is your walk with Jesus? Are you struggling? When was the last time you spent time just reading God's Word and praying for yourself and for those around you?

We all need the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ - every moment of every day until he comes to take us home with him.

*L Gaulton.*