

**Message #75****I Corinthians 16:19-24**

Of all the ways that Paul could have ended it, he wanted the church to realize that they were loved and cared for. He wanted them to think about all of the other churches and people who truly cared for them. His hope was that this realization would prompt them to faithfulness.

**THE REALIZATION THAT A CHURCH IS LOVED AND CARED FOR BY GOD AND OTHER BELIEVERS SHOULD MOTIVATE THE CHURCH TO PROPERLY RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND PROPERLY FUNCTION AS A TRUE CHURCH OF GOD.**

**MESSAGE #1** – The greeting from others. **16:19-20a**

One cannot help but notice that a key word of these two verses is the word “greet.” According to Gerhard Kittel, this was a greeting which usually was demonstrated by something physical, such as an embrace, a kiss, a handshake or some reverential gesture of homage, which basically says to a person “I welcome you,” “I care about you,” “I embrace you” and “I honor you.”

**Greeting #1** - The greeting from the churches of Asia. **16:19a**

We know of many key churches that existed in Asia. For example, we know of the seven churches of Asia in Revelation (1:11): Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. We also know of Colossae, which was also in Asia. We also know of churches in Miletus, Troas, and Nicea, which became very famous in church history.

When Paul writes “the churches of Asia greet you,” what he is saying is even though you have had some serious problems, you are still welcomed, embraced and honored by these other churches.

**Greeting #2** - The greeting from Aquila and Priscilla. **16:19b**

They were the first to respond to Paul when he first arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3). When he left Corinth, years later (Acts 18:11, 18), Aquila and Priscilla left with Paul and personally cared for him (Rom. 16:3-5), risking their own lives.

These two became known to all of Christianity as two people of God who used their business and finances for the Lord’s work. God prospered them because everywhere they went, whether Ephesus or Rome, they had a home large enough to house a church. These were two highly respected names in Christianity.

**Greeting #3** - The greeting from all the brethren. **16:20a**

In the early days of Christianity, there was an ecclesiastical unity in which people from various churches respected and cared for each other and were accountable to each other.

Problems were discussed and addressed among the brethren, and the fact that we still discuss the problems of the Corinthian church and other churches is proof that this type of thing exists to this very day.

**MESSAGE #2** – The greeting to each other. **16:20b**

One reason why Paul stresses that all of these people greet them is because he wanted the Corinthians to embrace each other.

A “holy kiss” was a literal, physical kiss usually given on the cheek or forehead that was a healthy, God-honoring, clean demonstration of Christian love and unity. It was practiced by both men and women and was not limited to the same gender until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.

There are two types of kisses that are found in the Bible:

- 1) The erotic kiss (Prov. 7:13; Song of Solomon 4:11).
- 2) The holy kiss (I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; Rom. 16:16; I Thess. 5:25; I Pet. 5:14).

From my understanding of the Bible, there are three differences between an erotic kiss and a holy kiss:

**Difference #1** - The location of the kiss – erotic on the mouth, holy on the cheek or forehead.

**Difference #2** - The purpose of the kiss – erotic to arouse fleshly passion, holy to acknowledge a Christian person.

**Difference #3** - The result of the kiss – erotic to stimulate physical intimacy, holy to stimulate spiritual intimacy.

**MESSAGE #3** – The conclusion of Paul **16:21-24**

**Concept #1** - This church has received a letter personally signed by Paul. **16:21**

Most believe that Paul had an eyesight problem (II Cor. 12:7-9). He wanted the Corinthians to realize that this letter was personally written by him. In doing this he was showing the Corinthian church that he was personally for the church and personally took responsibility for everything in the letter.

**Concept #2** - This church was to identify and warn certain people. **16:22**

The word for “love” here is not agape; it is “phileo,” which speaks of a tender affection for Jesus Christ. If there is no tender affection for the Lord, for His Word or for His people, the church is to let such one be anathema, maranatha.

The word “anathema” is one that means to curse to damnation. The word “maranatha” is one that means “our Lord comes.” So Paul is telling this church that if they spot one who does not have a tender affection for Jesus Christ, they are to be warned that they will be cursed to damnation when the Lord returns. Just as the church was to give a holy kiss, so also it is to warn of a holy curse.

**Concept #3** - This church has God’s grace with them. **16:23**

Lots of sin and failure abounded in Corinth, but where sin abounds, grace abounds more. The theme of Pauline ministry was the grace of God.

**Concept #4** - This church has apostolic love. **16:24**

Notice carefully Paul’s unconditional love was given in the context of one’s relationship with Jesus Christ.

Are you “in Christ” today? Are you functioning as a God-honoring church member? If you do not have God’s grace, you will get God’s wrath.