

## **Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church**

### **Wednesday Sermon**

**Date: January 5, 2022**

**Text: Romans 16:1-16**

**Scripture Reading: Romans 16:1-16**

**Subject: Paul Sends Greetings to the Saints in Rome**

In verses 22 through 33 of this 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, we considered these things:

1. The fact that Paul's work in the gospel had not allowed him to visit the saints in Rome as he wrote in 15:22-23:
  - a. **Romans 15:22-23 (KJV)** *For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. **23** But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;*
2. We saw Paul's plan to go to Spain and see the saints in Rome on his way there. He had hoped they would be brought on his way by them after having fellowship with them for a time.
3. Paul explained (being then at Corinth) that he was going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints with the offering of the churches in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor saints in Judaea.
4. He explained that his plan was that after he had sealed the fruit (the offering) to the saints in Jerusalem, he would come to them at Rome.
5. He asked the Roman Saints to pray for him that he might be delivered from those who did not believe in Judaea when he went there. He knew there was a chance that he would be violently opposed.

Now, we come to chapter 16, verses 1 through 16 which relate Paul's greetings to several individuals in Rome.

**Romans 16:1-2 (KJV)** *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*

***I commend unto you Phebe our sister,*** -- Phebe is recommended as a sister, "our sister"; not in a natural relation, but in a spiritual relation; one that was a member of the church at Cenchrea; for as it was usual to call the men brethren, it was common to call the women sisters. Elderly men were called fathers, younger men brethren; elderly women were called mothers, and younger women sisters, who were partakers of the grace of God, and enjoyed the fellowship of the saints.

***Which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*** -- Phebe was a servant (diakonos – the Greek word which is commonly translated as "Deacon." Cenchrea was a seaport of the Corinthians, about seventy furlongs from Corinth, (eight or nine miles): it was on one side of the Isthmus, as Lechea was on the other; in Cenchrea itself was the temple of Venus, and a wooden image; But now, in this place, was a church of Jesus Christ; and since it was so near to Corinth, it shows that churches in those early times were not national, or provincial, but congregational. (This is an important fact). Of this church Phebe was a servant, or, as the word signifies, a minister or deacon; not that she was a teacher of the word, or preacher of the Gospel, for that was not allowed of by the apostle in the church at Corinth, that a woman should teach.

**1 Corinthians 14:34 (KJV)** *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

and therefore would never have been allowed at Cenchrea. I believe Phebe was one who supported the saints by her means as the women did who followed Jesus and the other women who helped Paul in the ministry. What do I mean? Consider this – there can be no doubt that these women were of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price to our God. They were not preachers, but they were servants; giving themselves and their substance to help with the material needs of the LORD. This is what Phebe did for the saints.

**Luke 8:2-3 (KJV)** *And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, **3** And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.*

***That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints,--*** That you acknowledge her as being in the Lord, or as being a servant of the Lord; that is, as a baptized believing church member.

***and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you:*** -- Help Phebe in whatever business she has need of you. Be a blessing to her as she has been to so many.

***For she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*** – What does the word “succourer” mean? A succourer is especially a female guardian, protectress, patroness, who cares for the affairs of others and aids them with her resources or substance. She had done so to the Apostle Paul also.

**Romans 16:3 (KJV)** ***Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:***

Priscilla is the wife of Aquila. She is sometimes called “Prisca” in the scriptures:

**2 Timothy 4:19 (KJV)** *Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.*

Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, and was with Priscilla, his wife driven out of Rome by Claudius Caesar, when with her he went to Corinth, where he met with the Apostle Paul; and they being of the same craft, abode and worked together at their trade of tent making. When Paul left Corinth, they went with him, and were with him at Ephesus; where, meeting with Apollos, who, though an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet being in some things deficient these two took him unto them, in a private way, and taught him the way of God's salvation more perfectly,

**Acts 18:24-26 (KJV)** *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

where Aquila and Priscilla left the Apostle Paul is not revealed in the New Testament.

**Romans 16:4 (KJV)** *Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

**Who have for my life laid down their own necks:** -- That is, exposed themselves to great danger to save the apostle's life: the insinuation is to the manner of executions by beheading, and to one person's laying down his head, and offering his neck to the executioner the room of another: this we are not to suppose was

literally done; but the design of the expression is, that in some shape or another they risked their own lives for the apostle's; which might be done either at the insurrection in Corinth against Paul, when the Jews dragged him to the judgment seat of Gallio, and beat Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue before him; or the uproar in Ephesus by Demetrius and the craftsmen, when Paul and his companions were in great danger; at both which times and places these two persons were, and being very zealous, were no doubt active to preserve the apostle, and which he acknowledges with thankfulness.

***Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*** – Paul gave thanks for the care they took of him, and the danger they exposed themselves to on his account; which the apostle expresses his sense of gratitude for, and which all the Gentile churches were under obligations to do likewise, since they had a common share in his labors and usefulness, he was the apostle of them all; and also for their help and assistance in carrying on the work of the Lord in all the churches of the Gentiles.

**Romans 16:5 (KJV) *Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.***

***Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*** – The church ... the assembly of baptized believers covenanted together to carry out the commandments of the LORD. To make disciples by teaching and preaching; to baptize those who professed Christ; and to teach them to observe all things which Christ had commanded them. They were to observe the Lord's Supper according to the scriptures; to receive members and discipline unruly members according to the scriptures. Whether the number in this house was two or two thousand mattered not, they were a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, a local visible congregation. It is quite evident that

the church was with them when they went to Corinth the church in their house was there also, showing that the church is not restricted to a place, but to a people of the LORD.

**1 Corinthians 16:19 (KJV)** *The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*

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House churches are well documented in the New Testament. We certainly see this with the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Please notice these passages:

**Colossians 4:15 (KJV)** *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*

**Philemon 1-2 (KJV)** *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:*

Consider this. If, in this age of apostasy, we cannot find a church in which we can keep the great commission of making disciples, baptizing them scripturally, and teaching them to observe all things which the Lord has commanded us; if we cannot keep the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in a scriptural manner, and if we cannot hold in our hands all the words of our God in our English translation of the Bible, then it behooves us to consider a house church.

**Salute my wellbeloved Epanetus,--** Though all the saints were beloved by the apostle, yet there were some, as this good man, for whom he might have, on some account or another, a particular affection; as our Lord, as man, had for his disciple John, though he loved all his disciples. There is one of this name, said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Carthage. (John Gill).

***who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.*** – The firstfruits are the very first ones of the harvest. Epenetus was one of, if not the very one who was the first converted in Achaia in the ministry of Paul. John Gill, one of the most prominent Greek and Hebrew Scholars who every wrote said this: “If he was a Jew, his Jewish name might be Judah, the same with Epaenetus, in Greek.”

**Romans 16:6 (KJV) *Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.***

We do not know anything about this sister named Mary than what we have before us. What a blessing to consider that many people who had helped Paul in his ministry were evidently known only to God as this sister is.

**Romans 16:7 (KJV) *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.***

***Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners,*** -- This is the only mention of Andronicus and Junia in the NT. They are evidently Paul's kindred by natural birth. They were also his fellow prisoners. We do not know the particulars of their imprisonment, but we do know that Paul was well known as a prisoner.

***Who are of note among the apostles,*** -- This, by no means, says that Ancronicus and Junia were apostles, but that they were of note among the apostles. I have heard some claim that they were apostles.

***Who also were in Christ before me.*** – Plainly written. These came to know the LORD before Paul was converted.

**Romans 16:8 (KJV) *Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.***

As with several on this list, Amplias is mentioned only here in the New Testament. He must have had a special place in Paul's life to be considered "my beloved in the Lord."

**Romans 16:9 (KJV) *Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.***

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Urbane and Stachys are mentioned only here in the New Testament. A helper and one beloved. What blessed contemplations for Paul.

**Romans 16:10 (KJV) *Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.***

Mentioned only here. "Apelles approved in Christ." These are the ones God's approves, those in Christ. Aristobulus' household members? We know not who they are. This is a Greek name, but this man may have been a Jew, a Hellenist.

**Romans 16:11 (KJV) *Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.***

**Romans 16:12 (KJV) *Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.***

Tryphena and Tryphosa are female names, so these were women who had a name as laborers in the Lord. Persis also was a woman who labored much in the LORD.

**Romans 16:13 (KJV) *Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.***

Rufus mentioned here in the NT was one of God's elect. There is another Rufus mentioned who was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to bear Jesus' cross after him.

**Mark 15:21 (KJV)** *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.*

How did Paul know that? Can we know the elect of God? We most certainly can when we see a person repent of his sins, turn in faith to Christ, then follow him. We can be certain, by faith, that this one is one of God's elect, as Rufus was.

***And his mother and mine.*** – Rufus' mother must have been, as he was, in Rome and undoubtedly an older woman who was held in high esteem by Paul. It appears that Paul lived by his own spiritual advice to Timothy.

**1 Timothy 5:1-2 (KJV)** *Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.*

**Romans 16:14 (KJV)** *Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.*

Here are five men named who have Greek and Roman names. They are not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament, so Biblically, we know nothing more of them. Somehow, Paul was acquainted with these people who lived in (or were present) in Rome.

**Romans 16:15 (KJV)** *Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.*

***Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas,*** -- The first of these, Philologus, is a Greek name, and the name of a man, and signifies a lover of learning. Like most on this list, the names appear only here in the New Testament.

***And all the saints which are with them.*** -- There were, doubtless, many more baptized believers in the church of Rome,

but either they were of no great note, or else not known to the apostle: and indeed it is matter of admiration, that he, who was never at Rome, should know the name and proper characters of so many there.

**Romans 16:16 (KJV) *Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.***

***Salute one another with an holy kiss.*** – This was evidently a means of greeting at that time, like a handshake or embrace is in our day. There is such a thing as a holy kiss – and there is also such a thing as an unholy kiss. Brothers and Sisters, you and I have the same exhortation. Consider it:

**1 Corinthians 16:20 (KJV) *All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.***

**2 Corinthians 13:12 (KJV) *Greet one another with an holy kiss.***

**1 Thessalonians 5:26 (KJV) *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.***

Peter calls it a kiss of charity.

**1 Peter 5:14 (KJV) *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.***

***The churches of Christ salute you.*** – Evidently the churches of Achaia knew of Paul's writing this letter to the saints in Rome and had mentioned to him their desire to greet the saints in the letter. We know that Paul did not write a falsehood. The churches (at least in that area of the world) salute you.