

Greeting the Saints at Rome

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: Rom. 16:1-23

- A. There are 35 names mentioned in Romans 16, addressing two different households and three churches meeting in homes.
 - 1. Many read this list and conclude that there is nothing important here. But, the truth is very different.
 - 2. I have presented six sermons on nine persons mentioned there. Today we will consider the remaining lessons that can be learned from his personal greetings. There are six more lists of greetings in his epistles, all of which teach good lessons.
 - 3. Paul acknowledges them because they have had an impact for good on him and his ministry. Perhaps we should do the same for those who have helped us
 - 4. He includes "all the saints that are with them" so that no one is left out, but some are special to Paul as dear friends and exceptional workers.
 - 5. Everyone has a story; all faithful Christians have a story worth hearing

I. THEY WERE DESERVING SAINTS

- A. Paul loved all the saints of God - 1John 3:14. But these were special to him.
- B. Paul spent a great deal of time in prayer for them - Rom. 1:9.
 - 1. Being one in Christ is more than just words - John 17:11, 21-23
 - 2. They become part of our lives - Gal. 6:2, 10.
- C. Paul spend a great deal of time thinking about fellow Christians - 2Cor. 11:28
 - 1. Not an unhealthy form of worry - Phil. 4:6; 1Peter 5:7
 - 2. But it is feeling the struggles of our fellow saints - 1Cor. 12:25-26.
 - 3. It is the opposite of apathy: "the absence of any wish to do anything; emotional emptiness: inability to feel normal or passionate human feelings or to respond emotionally"
 - 4. Illustration: a man who stumbles and falls into a ditch. Apathy, Sympathy, and Empathy walk by and see him lying there. Apathy says, "I don't care!" Sympathy says, "I am sorry that you have fallen and that you are hurting. I hope you get help from somewhere" Empathy says, "I fell into a ditch myself once and I will help you get out."
 - 5. Christians need to know that they are loved - 1John 3:18.

II. THEY WERE DIVERSE SAINTS

- A. Men and women, Jews, Romans, and Greeks, wealthy and poor, slaves and free, a very diverse group
 - 1. True, some Christians seem as odd to us as a screen door on a submarine, but they have a place and a purpose in the Kingdom of God
- B. Diverse in humanity - Rom. 16:16. Greeting one another affectionately as Christians makes all of our other differences irrelevant

1. Rom. 16:5 - Epaenetus - "Praiseworthy" - He was the first one saved in Achaia. Paul was arrested and tried there; Apollos preached there; Achaia was an impoverished congregation that gave liberally
2. Rom. 16:6 - Mary - "the wished for child, rebellion against oppression" - She worked hard to help Paul.
3. Rom. 16:7 - Andronicus - "Man of Victory" and Junia "Youthful" - Relatives of Paul who were saved before him. They may have been the only family he had left or the only family he had in the church. We can assume that his parents ostracized him after he obeyed the Gospel. Often the family of God becomes closer than one's natural family,
4. Rom. 16:8 - Amplias - "growing larger" - a sister in Christ that was beloved by Paul
5. Rom. 16:9 - Urbanus and Stachys - Opposites attract - Urbanus means "of the city" while Stachys means "head of grain." Here the sophisticated city dweller paired with Stachys the earthy farmer. In Jesus, these differences mean very little.
6. Rom. 16:10 - Appelles - "the called" - A dedicated saint who had proven himself faithful in such a way as to stand out among other faithful ones.
7. Rom. 16:10 - Aristobulus - "The best counselor" - A man who leads his family and others in worship God.
8. Rom. 16:11 - Herodion - "Heroic" - perhaps a cousin of Paul.
9. Rom. 16:11 - Narcissus - "flower, daffodil, one who was in love with himself" - He was an evil slave holder who was assassinated for political reasons. His household refers to his slaves who had converted. That they managed to serve the Lord under Narcissus is to their credit
10. Rom. 16:12 - Tryphena - "Delicate" and Tryphosa - "Dainty" - Probably twin sisters. They were young ladies noteworthy for their work in Christ.
11. Rom. 16:12 - Persis - "A woman of Persia" - She was a foreigner who converted to the Lord and worked hard for Him
12. Rom. 16:13 - Rufus - "Red" - This may have been the son of Simon the Cyrenaic, an African. (Mark 15:21). If true, the his father had helped Jesus carry the cross to Calvary. His mother is unnamed, but she became an adopted mother of Paul in his heart
13. Rom. 16:14 - Asyncritus - "Incomparable"; Phlegon - "Burning"; Hermas - "Mercury"; Patrobas - "Paternal"; Hermes - "The herald of the gods"; and other unnamed brethren. Greek names indicating Gentile or Hellenistic births. Origins have no bearing on fellowship in Christ
14. Rom. 16:15 - Philologus - "Lover of words"; Julia - "Soft haired"; Nereus - "water" and his sister; Olympas - "Heavenly", and other unnamed disciples. These are very secular names, typically belonging to educated and affluent people. Origins have no bearing on fellowship in Christ, nor on the Christian's ability to serve the Lord
15. Paul sends greetings from others in verses 21-23, people were with him as he wrote Romans: Timothy, Luke, Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, and Quartus. His preaching companions were just as diverse in origin and background as the church at Rome

16. These people were as different as possible, but they were brought together in Jesus Christ and made one family for the glory of God.
17. These differences enrich us; consider the diversity in the eldership here; the diversity in backgrounds and styles of our teachers. It doesn't just work; it makes us richer than if we were all the same
18. God doesn't make people as duplicates, but as originals
19. That is why we should accept and embrace our differences - Gal. 3:28

III. THEY WERE DEDICATED SAINTS

- A. Seen in their service - workers, v. 3, 21; laborers, v. 6; writers, v. 22; givers, v. 23; and administrators, v. 23.
 1. They all served in various capacities, but they served - 1Cor. 12:11-18
- B. Seen in their sacrifice - Rom. 16:3-4 - Aquila and Pricilla
 1. David, Gad, and Araunah - 2Sam. 24:18-25
- C. Seen in their steadfastness - Rom. 16:10 - Apelles - 1Cor. 15:58

Conclusion:

- A. These faithful saints were named in the inspired book of Romans, as well as others named in Paul's inspired epistles. They will be remembered for their services to the Lord in this world and in the world to come.
- B. Are you aware that if you are a faithful Christian, your name is also inscribed in a book that will be remembered eternally? - Rev. 20:11-15