

Series: Unlikely Heroes

PHEBE A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH

ROMANS 16:1-2

Text: Romans 16:1

Romans 16:1

¹ I commend unto you **Phebe** our sister, which is **a servant of the church** which is at Cenchrea:

Introduction:

This lady is mentioned in Romans, chapter 16, which is a fascinating chapter containing some names which are very difficult to pronounce! Her name means, "The shining one", and she certainly appears to have lived up to it.

Not all those of whom Paul wrote were like Phebe; for example, note Rom. 16:17:

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Some people can be a hindrance in the church; but others, like Phebe, what a blessing they can be!

Note:

1. PAUL'S COMMAND TO THE CHURCH (VS. 1-2)

Paul was writing to the church in Rome.

Paul, in his letter of commendation asked the Christians in Rome to receive her.

He mentioned three ways in which they were to do this, for there are different ways of receiving a person.

A. They Were To Receive He "In the Lord"

Romans 16:2

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.

This means that they were to receive her because, like them, she was "in the Lord", that is, a believer.

But it also meant that they were to receive her as they would receive the Lord Himself.

If the Lord Jesus came to your church or your home, how would you receive Him?

Note:

Luke 10:38

³⁸ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

B. They Were To Receive Her “As Becometh Saints”

Romans 16:2

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.

They were to receive her in a worthy manner; as believers should receive one another at all times into their hearts, into their homes and into their churches.

I’ll say more about this in a moment.

C. They Were To Receiver Her With Assistance

Romans 16:2

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.

She would be a stranger in a strange city, and Paul wanted the believers in Rome to give her all the help she needed.

All this is very practical in its application to ourselves. Here is a picture of what is required in our churches, of real Christian friendship and fellowship.

Ephesians 4:25

²⁵ *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: **for we are members one of another.***

Paul was very concerned that Phebe would be well received, loved and cared for, so he gave this lady a special word of commendation, and thus gave the believers in Rome special reasons for receiving her.

Note the Reasons For Receiving Her through:

2. PAUL'S COMMENDATION OF PHEBE

Paul commended Phebe by mentioning three important things about her.

A. He Described Her as "Our Sister" (vs. 1)

Romans 16:1

¹ *I commend unto you **Phebe our sister**, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*

Note:

- Her Relationship With the Father

The word sister indicates that this woman is in a father/daughter relationship with God. Now, her name, Phebe, means "radiant or bright".

- Her Relationship With the Family

Not only is she in a relationship with the Heavenly Father, she is also in a relationship with all the other redeemed children of God.

It is on the basis of her relationship to the Christian family that Paul encourages the Roman Christians to receive her.

B. He Described Her as a “Servant of the Church”

Romans 16:1

¹ *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is **a** **servant of the church** which is at Cenchrea:*

She was a servant.

"Thank God for the godly, active women of this church.

You fill a place here that would be vacant if it were left up to the men to do what you do."

Note:

- Her Position

Paul says that Phebe is a "servant".

Thank God for those people who will humble themselves and serve the church! Thank God for those women who will willingly do those things that need to be done around the house of God, often without thanks and most of the time without compensation.

They do it because they truly love the Lord and His church and sincerely want to be a blessing!

Note also:

- Her Praise (vs. 2)

Romans 16:2

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.

He lets them know that by her life and her work she has demonstrated the fact that she is a saint of God.

She is worthy to be honored because of her dedication to the Lord.

What a blessing it is when people's lives match their professions!

- Her Partners (vs. 2)

Romans 16:2

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.

Paul challenges the Romans to fall in line with Phebe and help her with her work. The word "assist" means "to take one's place beside another to offer help." They were not to hinder Phebe, but they were to help her as she ministered for the Lord.

There is a lesson in that for us this evening!

When people are ministering, the rest of us should come along side of them and help.

Let's give them our prayers, our encouragement, our support and our resources. Let's help them in every way they need our help.

Not only is she described as a “Sister and Servant” but also note

C. She Is Called a Succourer (vs. 2)

Romans 16:2

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.

This is an old word that means "to come to another's assistance."

She gave much to the work of the Lord. Let me just touch on a few gifts she gave as a servant of the Lord

- She Gave of Her Talent

Whatever it was that Phebe was good at, she dedicated that to the Lord and used it to be a blessing to the church.

She helped Paul and she helped others. She was unselfish and not self-centered.

She placed the needs of others first and made a difference in their lives for the glory of God.

She took her life and placed it all on the altar for Jesus.

She did what she could.

This was what was said concerning Mary when she anointed the feet of Jesus.

Mark 14:6-8

⁶ *And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.* ⁷ *For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.* ⁸ **She hath done what she could:** *she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

Not only did she give of her talent but also:

She Gave of Her Time

Paul says that Phebe was a blessing to him and to many others as well.

A ministry like that takes a lot of time! She was willing to spend her life on behalf of the church and for the glory of her redeemer.

She gave everything she had for God.

Your time may just be the most valuable asset you have?

If you give money, you can always earn that back.

If you give of your property, you may be able to buy more. But, when you give of your time, you have given something that you can never get back again!

However, in the light of eternity, what is the investment of time for the glory of God?

I'm grateful for those people in the church who are willing to give of their time!

Time to pray for others, to visit a sick one, to minister to the bereaved, to make that phone call, to prepare that meal, to do what needs to be done so that others might be blessed

- She Gave of Her Tenderness

In giving of her talent and her time, she was, in effect, opening up her heart to the believers around her.

1 John 3:17-18

¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Phebe knew that love for the saints was something you said, it was something you showed! She proved her love for Jesus by loving the church.

I thank God for everyone who shows their love for the Lord and the church by opening their heart and giving in the name of the Lord. Those who do this are a rare commodity!

Close:

May we too be will to be a servant of the Lord.