

SOME FRIENDS TO GREET

ROMANS 16

Text:

Introduction:

As Paul comes to the end of the book of Romans, he concludes it with a list of names that is rather long. In fact, there are 35 names mentioned in these verses. He also addresses two different households and at least three churches. Many people might read this list and conclude that there is nothing of value contained here. But, the truth is far different.

What we have here is the great Apostle Paul making an effort to thank those who had made an impact on his life and ministry. What a blessing it is when we remember those who have made a difference in our lives! I think it would be a great idea if everyone in this room made a list of those who have helped you along the way. Then you should sit down and write them a note thanking them for their contribution to your life. Maybe you ought to pick up the phone and give them a call. Or perhaps you should just get up and walk across the room and say thanks!

As we do, we will discover that behind every name, there is a special story. In every life, there is a

something that makes that person great in the kingdom of God. This evening we'll look at The Friends to Greet. Next week we'll look at "Some Foes to Avoid." And then two weeks from tonight we'll look at "Some Faithful Servants to Honor."

1. THESE ARE DEFINITE FRIENDS

They each are special to Paul

Romans 1:9

⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

2. THESE ARE DIVERSE FRIENDS

A. Diverse in Their Humanity

1. Phebe – Servant, Succourer

Romans 16:1

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

2. Priscilla and Aquila, Urbane – Helpers

Romans 16:3

³Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Romans 16:9

⁹Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

3. Epaenetus – First converts (praise worthy)

Romans 16:5

⁵ Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

4. Mary, Tryphene, Tryphosa, Persis - Laborers

Romans 16:6

⁶ Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Romans 16:12

¹² Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

5. Apelles

Romans 16:10

¹⁰ Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

He was one of known integrity and sincerity in his religion, one that had been tried; his friends and enemies had tried him, and he was as gold.

B. Diverse In Their Heritage

All of these individuals are from different nationalities, races, and backgrounds.

3. THESE ARE DEDICATED FRIENDS

Here was a group of people who were busy in the things of the Lord. They set an example for the rest of us this evening! They were allowing the Lord to use them for His glory in His work. They were busy, and we should be too.

Notice what Paul tells us about their dedication.

A. It Was Seen in Their Service

Notice the different areas of service mentioned in these verses.

1. Helpers and workers

Romans 16:3

³Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Romans 16:9

⁹Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Romans 16:21

²¹Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

2. Toilers and laborers

Romans 16:6

⁶ Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Romans 16:12

¹² Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

3. Writers

Romans 16:22

²² I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

These all served in different capacities, but they all served.

B. It Was Seen In Their Sacrifice

Romans 16:4

⁴ 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.

Aquila and Priscilla were willing to give their all so that the work of God might go forward.

There is too little of that spirit in the modern church!

People will give, but not until it hurts.

They will come, but not if it becomes an inconvenience.

They will work, but only if it doesn't infringe on their private time.

C. It Was Seen In Their Steadfastness

Romans 16:10

¹⁰ Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.

Here is a man named Apelles. It is said that he is "approved".

He has "stood the test".

This was a word used of verifying coins to prove their authenticity.

Apelles had been put to the test and he had not wavered!

He was part of a crowd that was serving the Lord under the most difficult of circumstances imaginable.

They lived in a time when to be a Christian could cost a person his life.

Yet, they stood!

Close:

Paul's words to these friends are an encouragement and a challenge to my own heart.

I see traits in these people that I want in my own life.

May God use these examples to help us better serve Him.