



# MEN WORTHY OF OUR SALUTE

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*This is part 2 of the Worthy Of Our Salute sermon series.*

### SUMMARY

When Christ came into our world, He did so with a two-fold purpose: (1) to prepare the way of salvation and (2) to establish the catalyst that would be used to be the pillar and ground of truth and that would be tasked with the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to every generation. That institution is the church, and it is made up of those who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. While we are to recognize that the victory of the church is the of God, there are individuals within the church that are worthy of our salute.

### REVIEW

In a previous message, we considered this same portion of Scripture and in that message, I attempted to accomplish two things: I gave an **INTRODUCTION** to the passage and then we started to **INSPECT** the individuals in the passage. Let me highlight just a few things that we covered:

#### (1) INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul had an intense desire to take the gospel to those in Rome, but, at the writing of this letter, Paul's desire had not been allowed by God to become a reality. And so, when Paul heard that Phebe was making a trip to Rome, he saw an opportunity to accomplish a few of things:

- (1) He wanted to **INTRODUCE** himself to the believers in Rome that did not know him,
- (2) He wanted to **INSTRUCT** the believers in Rome about the essentials of the Christian faith,
- (3) He wanted to **INSPIRE** the believers in Rome to live boldly for the Lord,
- (4) He wanted to **ENCOURAGE** those who were faithfully serving the Lord in Rome to keep up the good work.

You see, many of the people that Paul led to the Lord and that he had ministered to during his missionary journeys they had either joined with the Apostle Paul as he traveled, or they had gone to other places (including Rome) in the spirit of the Apostle Paul. They **WENT** with the Gospel, they **WORKED** to further the gospel, and they **REACHED** people with the Gospel. Here's the key truth that we found:

The church does not grow, and the church will not accomplish its purpose of world evangelization solely on the ministry of the preacher. A church grows and fulfills its purpose because of the **SUPPORT**, the **SACRIFICE**, and the **SERVICE** of the members around the pulpit. In other words, a church is only as great as the helpers that are found within it.

That's the significance of this last chapter of the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul had encouraged them to **LEARN** the key truths of the faith and to **LIVE OUT** their faith, but in this last chapter, Paul identifies at least twenty-eight individuals in the church at Rome who were living out their faith and who were worthy of being saluted because of their **CONDUCT**, because of their **COURAGE**, and because of their **CHARACTER**.

## (2) **INSPECTION**

On Mother's Day, we highlighted the ten women that are identified in this last chapter and through their example we discovered a few things:

- 1) We are to salute those that **LOVE** well

It was evident in the lives of these ladies that they had more than just a religion. They had a personal, intimate, growing relationship with the Lord.

A) They were passionate about **CHRIST**

B) They were passionate about the **WORD OF GOD**.

C) They were passionate about the **CHURCH**

- 2) We are to salute those that **LABOR** well

These ladies put action to their words. Sure, they couldn't do everything, but they could do something and by the grace of God they weren't just going to sit around and do nothing.

3) We are to salute those that **LIVE** well

They allowed their faith to dictate the impact of their influence in the **HOME** (wife, mother, grandmother, etc.), their influence in the **CHURCH** (teacher, worker, etc.), and their influence in the **COMMUNITY** (neighbor, worker, leader).

## MESSAGE

Romans 16:1-20 says, *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 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. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 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. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention to verse 16 where the Bible says, *"...The churches of Christ salute you."*

For a few moments, I want to consider this thought: **MEN WORTHY OF OUR SALUTE.**

Again, I emphasize the fact that here in this passage, we have a list of names, individuals at every stage of life who the Apostle Paul and the churches identified as worthy of their salute. There are at least ten ladies in Rome that Paul identified in this last chapter. We learned from

them on Mother's Day. This morning, on Father's Day, I want us to glean some more truths from the men that we find in the passage.

The Apostle Paul identifies at least 17 men in Rome that was worthy of the churches salute: **Aquila** (3); **Epaenetus** (5); **Adronicus** (7); **Amplias** (8); **Urbane** and **Stachys** (9); **Apelles** (10); **Herodian** (11); **Rufus** (13); **Asyncritus**, **Phlegon**, **Hermas**, **Patrobas**, and **Hermes** (14); **Philologus**, **Nereus**, and **Olympas** (15).

The Apostle Paul then identified at least 8 other men whom I think that Paul also saluted – **Timotheus**, **Lucius**, **Jason**, and **Sosipater** (21); **Tertius** (22); **Gaius**, **Erastus**, and **Quartus** (23).

Now obviously, I don't have the time this morning to consider all twenty-five of these men individually. So, I'm going to do the same thing that I did on Mother's Day. I want to consider these men collectively and draw out some practical principles that really should be true of all of us.

What was it about these men that caused the Apostle Paul and the churches to take notice of and even salute them?

#### 1) We are to salute those that **LOVE** well

Now, I know that we already covered this thought, but the reality is that this should be just as true of the men as it is of the ladies.

Romans 16:5 says, *"...Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."*

Romans 16:8 says, *"Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord."*

Romans 16:9 says, *"Salute...Stachys my beloved."*

As a matter of fact, the word that Paul uses to describe these men is the exact same word that he uses to described the lady, Persis, in verse 12.

Now, again, we don't know much about many of these individuals, and I'll not belabor the point again, but these men were just as passionate as, if not more passionate, in the love for **CHRIST**, in their love for the **WORD OF GOD**, and in their love for the **CHURCH** as the ladies were.

I mean they too loved the Lord with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength.

The Bible was their **DELIGHT**, and the Bible is where they received their **DIRECTION**. Just like the ladies did.

They too were present in the meetings of the church, and they participated in the worship and in the work of the church.

2) We are to salute those that **LABOR** well

Romans 16:3 says, *"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus."*

Romans 16:9 says, *"Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ..."*

Romans 16:21 says, *"Timotheus my workfellow..."*

These men too put action behind their words. They couldn't do everything, but they could do something and by the grace of God they weren't just going to sit around and do nothing. And by the way, the words *helper* and *workfellow* both have the idea of individuals that worked hard together. They knew that they could get more accomplished when they were on the same page and when they worked together.

And by the way, they didn't work to be seen; they worked to serve the Lord. There are always people in the church who have the "look-at-me" syndrome. This is a condition where somebody serves the Lord for the sake of notoriety. Now, before we start to picture in our minds eye those we feel are dealing with the "look-at-me" syndrome, be sure to put yourself in that category. Now, why do I say that? Because the reality is that we all have an ego and we all like to be applauded for what we do. It's amazing the number of people who say something like this, "Now, Preacher, I don't want to be recognized for what I've done," and then, they get really mad because somebody didn't recognize what they had done.

These men labored because they loved the Lord.

3) We are to salute those that **LIVE** well

Romans 16:10 says, *"Salute Apelles approved in Christ..."*

The word *approved* means "to have a good reputation; to be tried and found to be one of excellence." 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 Jesus 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!

The Apostle Paul had just taught about this back in chapter 14 and now he provides them with an example of one that was acceptable and approved.

Romans 14:17-18 says, *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."*

These too were men who allowed their faith to dictate the impact of their influence to everyone that was around them.

Alright, now, let's glean some truths that we haven't already highlighted.

4) We are to salute those that **LEARN** well

A) They were willing to **GROW**.

Romans 16:17 says, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."*

B) They were willing to **GUARD**

Romans 16:17-18 says, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."*

Romans 16:20 says, *"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."*

C) They were willing to be **GUIDED**.

Romans 16:19 says, *"For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."*

I'll not point them out again, but several of the men in this passage Paul calls them helpers, not hinderers. They were servants in the church, not stirrer-uppers (problem-makers) Servants don't do as they please (want); they simply do whatever needed to be done.

"Well, Preacher, I'd like to see the church get..." or "I'd like to see the church do...", or I'd like to see the church build..." And perhaps one day we will, but for now...

Can we find and fix the water-leak?

Can we dig up and replace some flower beds so that we can find and fix the water leak?

Can we put fresh coats of paint on some walls that desperately need?

Can we do some maintenance and some managing of various things around the church building and on the church property?

Can we send some more missionaries to the field before Jesus returns?

God has brought us together to preach the gospel both to our community and around the world. Here's the reality: the church needs leaders, and the church needs followers. Not everybody can be or should be a leader, but everybody can be and should be a follower.

Romans 16:1-2 says, *"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 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."*

D) They were willing to **GIVE**

Romans 16:23 says, "*Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.*"

The word *host* means "one that entertains another at his own house, at his own expense, and without the anticipation of repayment or reward."

The word *chamberlain* means "treasurer" and is translated ten times in our Bible as *steward*.

E) They were willing to **GO**.

I remind you that Paul is writing to a church where many of the members were converts of the Apostle Paul in various other place, but who had left their homes to take the gospel, to help establish and to strengthen the church and the Christians in Rome.

5) We are to salute those that **LEAD** well

Romans 16:13 says, "*Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*"

The word *chosen* means "one of choice." He's the real thing, the real deal. His faith is genuine and his service is sincere. On Mother's Day, we highlighted Rufus' mother (though we don't know who she is was her faith impacted her family and the lives of those around her), but what about Rufus' father. Do we know who Rufus' father was? Well, while we can't say with absolute certainty, it appears that Rufus' father was the man who was compelled to carry the cross of Christ.

Mark 15:21 says, "*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.*"

If this is the same Rufus, then the reality is that his father met Jesus at the cross and it not only changed his life, but it also changed his wife and it changed at least one of his son's lives.

6) We are to salute those that **LASTED** well

Romans 16:4 says, "*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.*"

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

Let me begin by pointing out the fact that there are more men highlighted in Romans chapter 16 then there are women. Now, that is not a statement against the ladies, and yes, I do understand that there is a big difference in how women are considered today compared

to how they were when Paul was writing this letter, but that doesn't change the fact that there are more men than women highlighted (25 men and only 10 women). Now, why do I mention that? Well, because over time there were many that simply stopped. They stopped serving the Lord, they stopped singing, they stopped showing up. And the reality is that it seems to get worse as time went on.

2 Timothy 4:9-11 says, *"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me..."*

In Romans chapter 16, Paul can't wait to get to Rome, and he points out some eighteen men and at least ten women that already there serving the Lord, but when Paul is getting ready to die for his faith he does so practically all alone. By the way, the same is true in across churches today.