

Subject: *Final Greetings and Blessing*

Scripture: *Romans 16:21-27*

We come to the end of Paul's letter to the church at Rome. It is one of the richest books in the Bible. It is for the most part a doctrinal letter, but it has a personal touch, especially in the last chapter. We should understand that while Paul was God's chosen apostle and writer of Scripture, he was just a man saved by grace. And as a man, he needed helpers and friends just like we do.

1. GREETINGS FROM FRIENDS (vs. 21-24)

Paul was blessed to have so many associates and fellow servants who were faithful to the Lord and to him. He already mentioned several of them in verses 1-15. He mentions eight more of them in verses 21-24.

- A. Timothy – his right-hand man (work-fellow); his name means “one who honors God”; Paul considered him a fellow-worker, and in Phil. 2:20 says this about his faithful son in the ministry: “I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.” Timothy had a mind like Paul. They shared the same thoughts plans, concerns, and priorities in life and ministry. In Phil. 2:22, Paul says this about Timothy: “You know his proven worth, that as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel.”
- B. Lucius, Jason, Sosipater – this can mean fellow Jews, but probably means relatives who were also believers; we don't know anything about their testimony, but it's likely that Paul led them to Christ. In reaching the world for Christ, Paul didn't overlook his own family.
- C. Tertius – wrote the epistle to the Romans (he was Paul's personal secretary); he wanted the believers in Rome to know of his personal faith in Christ (“in the Lord”)
- D. Gaius – was a host for Paul and the whole church (probably a wealthy man)
- E. Erastus – a civil servant who was the city treasurer, a prominent official
- F. Quartus – a brother in Christ

These are not well known names, but they were faithful men whose lives counted for Christ. *1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

2. GLORY FOR GOD (vs. 25-27)

Paul ends the letter with a resounding word of praise and blessing for God. This is called a doxology or word that ascribes glory to God. The NT has many such doxologies, for example, at the birth of Christ, (Lk. 2) “there was a multitude of the heavenly host were praising God, saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest.’” When Christ made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the multitude said, (Lk. 19) “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” At the end of the book of Hebrews, the writer says: “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).

As Paul closes he is mindful of God's power and His wisdom to establish the believers at Rome. The word “stablish (establish)” is *sterizai*, to strengthen, secure, make stable, or make firm. In this context it refers to being mentally settled and firmly rooted in the truth of the gospel. Paul knows their stability depends on the Gospel, the very truths he wrote about in

this letter. Unbelievers don't have any certainty about God or the way of salvation, and most people don't even have an interest in finding the true God.

A. Believers are established by the gospel

Paul didn't mean that he was the author or creator of the gospel. He was not talking about his own personal view of the gospel. His gospel was the same as Peter's gospel, John's gospel, and the gospel preached by the other apostles. He was just the messenger and the ambassador, but it was dear to his heart and soul. Paul had received the gospel by revelation from Jesus Christ Himself (Gal. 1). This statement about the gospel refers to Romans 1-3 and the man's desperate need for the gospel, which Paul summed up in **Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

B. Believers are established by the preaching of Jesus Christ

Paul refers to the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of Christ was Paul's main commitment and passion. **1 Corinthians 1:23-24** ²³ *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;* ²⁴ *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* He and others preached the truth about Christ. This was the solid foundation and strength of believers everywhere. This would include everything Paul wrote in Romans 4-8. In Christ we are justified. In Christ we are sanctified. In Christ we will be glorified. We are united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Christ is our Advocate and Intercessor with the Father. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

C. Believers are established by the revelation of the mystery

Paul refers to the gospel as God's revelation of the mystery that had been kept hidden from the beginning of history, but now God had made known. Our word "mystery" is associated with a mystery movie or mystery novel in which there is suspense to find out something, but the Bible word "mystery" means something that God has previously hidden, but now He has made known. It is truth that man could never discover by himself. In 1 Cor. 4:1, Paul spoke of the apostles and prophets (including himself) as "stewards of the mysteries of God." There are many mysteries mentioned in the NT, but the most common one is the truth that God provided salvation for Jews and Gentiles and brought them together in the church.

This mystery had been predicted in the scriptures of the OT prophets. Isaiah promised "the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify many, as He will bear their iniquities." Jeremiah and Ezekiel wrote about God writing His law on the hearts of His people and giving them hearts of flesh in place of their hearts of stone. Most Jews always thought of those prophecies applied only to them as God's chosen people, but this mystery was fully revealed by NT prophets and apostles that this gospel was given to all nations for the obedience of faith. God wants all people to know the gospel so they will obey the gospel (repent and believe). The gospel is not a message to admire or consider. It is a message to obey. This aspect of the gospel was Paul's theme in Romans 9-16. For example, he writes in **Romans 10:11-12** ¹¹ *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* ¹² *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

D. God is glorified through the gospel of Christ

We glorify God for His infinite wisdom in the person and work of Christ. This reminds us of Paul's statement of praise in chapter 11.

Romans 11:33-36 ³³ *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* ³⁴ *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?* ³⁵ *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* ³⁶ *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

He is the only wise God. He is the only one who could ever planned and accomplished such a plan of redemption, and for that reason He deserves glory now and forever.