

• LESSON 24 (September 28) •

Romans 16:1-27

# The Grace of Our Lord Be With You

Throughout our study of Paul's letter to the Romans, we've consistently reminded ourselves of the "big picture" formed by this God-breathed revelation. It is a revelation of magnificent scope, framed by two bookends:

...we have received grace and apostleship **to bring about the obedience of faith**... (Rom 1:5)

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, **to bring about the obedience of faith**—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Rom 16:25-27)

At the heart of the letter is this question: Are you willing to "present" your body "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship"? Will you refuse to be "conformed to this world," choosing instead to be "transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect"? (Rom 12:1-2)

The Spirit of God has led Paul to systematically reason throughout his letter that the gospel is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Rom 1:16-17)

In Romans 16, we're provided a brief glimpse of real-life men and women who had been declared "righteous" by their gracious heavenly Father and had subsequently dedicated themselves to living by faith.



Once again, in your own words, what is "the obedience of faith"?

How is the obedience of faith "brought about"?

Thinking back over the scope of this incredible letter, how can it be used—even today—to "bring about the obedience of faith"?

Take your time with the following list. It's a composite of the names listed in Romans 16 and the ways they are described by Paul. What can we learn from these very personal greetings about Paul? About the people mentioned by name? About the gospel and its effect on people's lives?

- ❖ Phoebe – our sister, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well
- ❖ Prisca and Aquila - my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well; greet also the church in their house
- ❖ Epaphroditus – my beloved, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia
- ❖ Mary – has worked hard for you
- ❖ Andronicus and Junia – my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me
- ❖ Ampliatus – my beloved in the Lord
- ❖ Urbanus – our fellow worker in Christ
- ❖ Stachys – my beloved
- ❖ Apelles – approved in Christ

- ❖ The family of Aristobulus – greet them
- ❖ Herodion – my kinsman
- ❖ The family of Narcissus – those in the Lord
- ❖ Tryphaena and Tryphosa – workers in the Lord
- ❖ Persis – the beloved, has worked hard in the Lord
- ❖ Rufus – chosen in the Lord
- ❖ The mother of Rufus – has been a mother to me as well
- ❖ Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them
- ❖ Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them
- ❖ Greet one another with a holy kiss
- ❖ All the churches of Christ greet you

Paul begins to draw his letter to a close with these words:

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (16:17-20)

A few more very personal notes are included:

Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you. (16:21-23)

And finally, the letter of Paul to the Romans is brought to its conclusion with these words:

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (16:24-27)

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** Paul addressed his letter “to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.” His prayer from the outset was, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:7). This letter is a means of that grace and peace being extended to us, even today. Paul ends the letter by addressing “the only wise God.” To him “be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.” May the only wise God continue to use this letter to focus our hearts on our calling and his glory.

Why would Paul find it necessary to include the appeal of Romans 16:17-20?

What will it look like, practically speaking, to be “wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil” (16:19)?

What does Paul mean by the bold statement in the first half of Romans 16:20?

How does the “gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ” continue to strengthen the people of God today?