

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 18TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

WE ARE FAMILY (ROMANS 16:1-16) NO LONGER LIMITED TO ONE NATION...

In the OT, God's people were primarily based on ethnic issues: were you a descendent of Abraham? But in the NT, the wonderful truth of the gospel tells us that membership in God's family is by grace through faith!

- As Paul closes his letter to the Romans, his greetings remind us that **God's family is diverse and multicultural.**

28 DIVERSE PEOPLE MENTIONED IN CH.16

- 17 men, 9 women
- 2 couples and 2 households
- 5 slaves
- Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great
- Narcissus, an influencer to the emperor
- Rufus, the son of Simon the Cyrene
- 3 Jews, 2 witnesses of the resurrected Christ

AND THERE'S WOMEN!

In today's culture, we take for granted the role of women (not that we're perfect!). In the time of Jesus and Paul, women weren't much more than property. But both Jesus and Paul elevated the role of women, and we should continue to do so today.

- While their roles may be different, **women are of equal value with men to God.**

PHEOBE, A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH OF CENCHREAE

It's widely agreed that Phoebe was the carrier of Paul's letter and a very successful woman. She was also a "servant" and deacon in a church on the eastern coast of Corinth.

- Phoebe being mentioned is important because we learn that **women had (and still have) a prominent role in the development of the church.**

SO, WE MUST WORK TOWARDS THIS

The church must intentionally build national, cultural, and ethnic diversity. We must also do this with integrity and sensitivity.

- **Diversity begins when we build relationships and ask questions. We have no reason to be offensive or be easily offended.** We must learn to be **empathetic and inquisitive.**

WE NEED ONE ANOTHER!

Even the most gifted man in the NT, other than Jesus, needed help. Paul knew that if his ministry was to be of any true importance, he had to look beyond himself. As is seen in these greetings, Paul poured into others so that his ministry would outlast him.

- **Who are you pouring into right now in preparation for the day you're gone?**

OVERCOMING DIVISION (ROMANS 16:17-23)

"THE GATES OF HELL WILL NOT PREVAIL..."

Doing the work of Jesus comes with its own set of troubles. While we will always have enemies outside the church, divisive people can sometimes be found within the church. Some divisive people don't know any better but can be taught a better way. Others know exactly the division they are causing and are intentionally misleading people.

THEY DON'T SERVE JESUS.

Jesus prayed for the unity of His church in John 17. False teachers love to destroy the church by teaching contrary to the Bible, causing people to doubt the church and the clear teachings of the Word.

- **Instead of serving as under-shepherds to Jesus, they want to build up their own following and reputations.**

PROTECTING OURSELVES AND OUR CHURCH

We've got to know the truth and be obedient to that truth if we are to recognize false teaching/teachers. When we identify false teaching/teachers, we avoid them. We ask God for His wisdom and discernment so that **we can promote what builds up His kingdom** and stay innocent of anything that might tear down His kingdom.

GOD IS THE ULTIMATE DIVISION SMASHER!

Since Adam and Eve rebelled against God and brought sin and death to creation, God has been at work to restore creation and bring peace. And that day is closer than we think. What started with His death and resurrection will finish when Jesus finally crushes Satan under our (OUR!) feet! **All divisions will be gone, and His peace will reign forever!**

GOSPEL GLORY (ROMANS 16:25-27)

DOXOLOGY

Paul closes out his letter with a doxology, words of praise to God for His glory. As Jeremy shared a few weeks ago, theology should always lead to doxology. After, perhaps, the most amazing book in the whole Bible, even Paul realizes that the only thing left is to praise the One who makes everything possible.

"NOW TO HIM..."

For eternity we will never tire of the benefits of all God has accomplished for us in Jesus. But we get to experience many of them here and now. We are strengthened by the gospel, which means when the storms of life come, and they will, our hope is in all Christ has accomplished for us, not in what we've done for Him.

BE A JESUS FREAK

The revelation of the gospel has been progressively revealed, meaning the gospel has always been preached, but in the OT, it was proclaimed in shadow and type. With the coming of Jesus, what was shadow and type is now gloriously revealed which, means, like the NT, we have **the great privilege to proclaim this gospel in all we say and do!**

"TO ADVANCE THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH"

We're given clear direction and expectations from the Word so we can live in a way that not only honors God but blesses us and those around us.

- **God wants us to follow His lead because He loves all kinds of people and knows what is best for us.** We see this love demonstrated through Jesus Christ.

THE GIVER, NOT THE GIFT

When we see all Jesus has accomplished for us, it's easy to only see the benefits and forget the Benefactor. The gospel isn't the ultimate gift; Jesus is!

- The glory of God (the display of His attributes and gifts) should only make us marvel at how awesome He must be, **which should make us desire Him more!**

"AMEN!"

Paul closes with the word "amen," which means "may it be so" or "truth." Truth is truth whether we believe it or not. Truth will be so whether we receive it or reject it. The question for people isn't the truthfulness of Paul's letter but what's our response to that truth.

- **The greatest question you need to answer is how will you respond?**

A CLEAR AND BETTER PATH

- Romans is a book that presents the raw and unfiltered truth about God, His ways, and His desire to have a relationship with His greatest creation: us.
- If we will search for the truth, it will lead us in a direction that yields far better results than the culture of the world, both in the present and for eternity.

DO WE LIMIT THE GOSPEL'S POWER?

- **The gospel is for all people, Jews, and Gentiles. Does our church reflect this?**
- Do we recognize that all who have been saved have been empowered by God to serve?
- **Does our fear to tell people the good news of Jesus reveals how we really feel about His power to save?**

MAKING IT ABOUT HIM CHANGES US

- God has nothing to benefit from a relationship with us, but because He loves us, we are blessed when we "seek first the kingdom of God."
- When we objectively seek the truth, we find out how to live abundantly through God's Word. God gives us the wisdom and strength to be what He wants us to be.
- In putting Jesus first, we find **love, peace, security, hope, patience, fulfillment, self-control, contentment, a proper identity, forgiveness of sin, and relief from shame and guilt. We are set free.**
- When we make it about Him, **we become children of God and co-heirs of an eternal paradise with our Creator.**