

THE PERSONAL CHURCH

Romans 16:1-16

INTRODUCTION

- A. You can never have too many friends.
 - 1. Pr. 17:17, “*A friend loves at all times.*”
 - 2. Pr. 18:24, “*There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*”
- B. Marshall Keeble used to say, “I may not have a million dollars, but I have a million friends.” Then with a grin, “And each of those million friends would give me a dollar if I needed it.”
- C. Paul was blessed with friends and he was thankful for each one.
 - 1. In chapter 16, he mentions 35 people by name.
 - 2. They are all important to Paul.

I. PERSONAL GREETINGS.

- A. **Phoebe** – servant of the church at Cenchrea (Corinth), vs. 1.
 - 1. She was the one delivering the letter to the Romans.
 - 2. A helper of many, and of myself.
- B. **Prisca** and **Aquila** [Priscilla and Aquila] – fellow workers in Christ, vs. 3.
 - 1. Risked their necks for his life.
 - 2. Hosted a house church.
- C. **Epaenetus** – first convert to Christ from Asia, my beloved, vs. 5.
- D. **Mary** (?) – has worked hard for you, vs. 6.
- E. **Andronicus** and **Junias** – two men, man and wife, or man and sister, vs. 7.
 - 1. My kinsmen, my fellow prisoners.
 - 2. Well known by the apostles.
 - 3. Baptized into Christ before Paul.
- F. **Ampliatius** – member of the imperial household, vs. 8.
 - 1. Dear friend in the fellowship of the Lord.
- G. **Urbanus** and **Stachys**, vs. 9.
 - 1. “Of the city” and “head or ear (of grain)”.
 - 2. Fellow worker and beloved.
- H. **Apelles** – approved in Christ [implied he had faced a trial of faith], vs. 10.
- I. Household of: [including servants and slaves].
 - 1. **Aristobulus** – brother of Herod Agrippa I (?), vs. 10.
 - 2. **Narcissus** – wealthy freedman, identified with Tiberius Claudius Narcissus, vs. 11.
- J. Herodion – of the family of Herod. Had the gospel reached this family? vs. 11.
- K. **Tryphaena** and **Tryphosa** – workers in the Lord, vs. 12.
 - 1. “Delicate” and “Dainty”.
 - 2. To toil to the point of exhaustion.
- L. **Persis** – worked hard in the Lord, vs. 12.
- M. **Rufus** – a choice man in the Lord, vs. 13.
 - 1. Father had carried the cross of Jesus (Mk. 15:21).
 - 2. His “mother” and mine – a woman who was like a mother to Paul.
- N. **Asyncritus**, **Phlegon**, **Hermes**, **Patrobas** and **Hermas** and the *brethren with them*, v. 14.
- O. **Philologus**, **Julia**, **Nereus** (and *his sister*) and **Olympas** and *all the saints with them*, 15.
 - 1. Possibly reference to house churches.

II. THE PERSONAL CHURCH.

A. Names in the Past.

1. Bill and Barbara Thrasher – Christian education, Tulsa.
2. Randall and Mary McElroy – Bristol.
 - a. Same breath – Donnie and Carol Dixon.
 - b. They will tell you they trained us in preaching.
3. David and Paula Tarbet – fellow workers in the church, Dallas.
4. Dot – lady at camp (Maine).
 - a. Widowed, limbs twisted with age, arthritis.
 - b. Every summer at camp – no frown or discouraging word.
5. Mike – teenager at camp, picture of clouds and coming of Jesus.
6. Bob and Barbara Oberle – neighbors in Agawam.
 - a. Enthusiasm for life, “let’s pray about it”.
 - b. Crossed fingers showing closeness of life with Christ.
7. Steve Dunn – lost arm in accident, wife to cancer.
 - a. Be outgoing, don’t be quiet.
 - b. Look for good in others and in life.
8. Ron and Gail Plumlee – Adoptive parents.
 - a. Always involved in another job.
 - b. Never too busy to host in house and encouraging words.
9. Gail Yates – school secretary.
 - a. Positive, encouraging, never a sour word.

B. Bits and Pieces.

C. Touching Lives.

1. Galatians 6:1-2
2. Ephesians 4:32
3. Ephesians 6:10-17
 - a. The armor does not include protection for the back.
 - b. Trust in brothers and sisters in our family.

D. One in the Spirit.

1. Isn’t it great to be a Christian!
2. John 13:35, “*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*”
3. *We are one in the Spirit,
We are one in the Lord.
And we pray that our unity
may one day be restored,
And they’ll know we are Christians
By our love, by our love.
And they’ll know we are Christians
By our love.*

Bits and Pieces

People. People important to you, people unimportant to you cross your life, touch it with love and carelessness and move on. There are people who leave you and you breathe a sigh of relief and wonder why you ever came into contact with them. There are people who leave you and you breathe a sigh of remorse and wonder why they had to go away and leave such a gaping hole. Children leave parents; friends leave friends. Acquaintances move on. People change homes. People grow apart. Enemies hate and move on. Friends love and move on. You think on the many who have moved into your hazy memory. You look on those present and wonder.

I believe in God's master plan in lives. He moves people in and out of each other's lives, and each leaves his mark on the other. You find you are made up of bits and pieces of all who ever touched your life, and you are more because of it, and you would be less if they had not touched you.

Pray God that you accept the bits and pieces in humility and wonder, and never question, and never regret.

Bits and pieces

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