



ROMANS

The Gospel of God

The Gospel Servants

Romans 16:1-27

Message #33 of 33 – S1164

Sermon given on September 7, 2025



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel Servants

Romans 16:1-27

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 16**
- Today, we conclude the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel Servants**
- When there is a need in the church and we need someone to help, we will ask for volunteers.
- A volunteer is someone who helps on a temporary basis until a need is fulfilled.
- Volunteers are important to the church, but what the church needs more than volunteers are servants.
- The word servant has morphed into something that discourages many from desiring to be one.
- Culturally, a servant is an inferior who serves a superior.
- If someone associates being inferior with being a servant, they will object to being a servant.
- The church will always need people to help and will use anyone who will volunteer their time, talent, or treasures.
- But what the church really needs is servants.
- Not servants of the pastor, or the church, but servants of God.
- When I first started helping out at church, I was volunteering to help meet a need.
- At some point I realized that I was called to more than that.
- A volunteer is someone who gets a t-shirt after helping clean up the park.
- I was, we all were, made for so much more than that.
- We were all made to serve God.
- Not just to serve Him, we also worship Him, love Him, and pray to Him as our loving heavenly Father.

- Serving God does not demean us, it elevates us.
- In the closing chapter, Paul lists a bunch of people who have one thing in common, they served God.
- Most of the names in this chapter are only listed here.
- We know nothing else about them but what Paul tells us here.
- But their service to God caused Paul to think about them as he is concluding what is probably the most important letter ever written.
- Paul begins with a woman.
- **Romans 16:1-2**
- Men and woman were actively serving in the Christian church in Rome and other parts of the world.
- The word that is translated as ‘servant’ is a sometimes translated as deaconess.
- Paul tells the Roman believers to welcome her and come alongside to help her with whatever project she is working on.
- She has been helpful to others so help her, probably to help others.
- The next ones are described in other places, primarily in Acts.
- **Romans 16:3-5a**
- At some point Priscilla and Aquila risked their necks.
- To serve or protect Paul, they exposed themselves to the risk of execution.
- Priscilla and Aquila are Jewish believers.
- Priscilla and Aquila had a tentmaking business which Paul sometimes worked at to provide for himself and others in the ministry.
- Next is one we know little about.
- **Romans 16:5b**
- Achaia is a province of Greece.
- We know a couple of things about Epaenetus.
- First, Paul loved him.
- Second, he was probably the first person in that province to come to faith in Christ, possibly by Paul’s preaching of the gospel.
- These are all people in Rome that Paul knows and is thinking about.
- **Romans 16:6**
- Mary was a very common name.

- All we know for certain about her is that she worked hard to help Paul in his ministry.
- One of the things I have discovered after a couple of decades of ministry is that there is always more ministry to do than the minister can accomplish.
- I am always thankful to those who come alongside to take some of those things off my to do list.
- Mary was one of those people to Paul and the church.
- Not everyone is moved that way by the Holy Spirit.
- I have grown more comfortable that we can't get everything done we might like to.
- We will do what we can and what can't get done is for God to figure out.
- Paul continues his list of greetings.
- **Romans 16:7-15**
- 'of note' could mean well known or notorious.
- 'Rufus' could be the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried Christ's cross after He couldn't any longer.
- 'his mother and mine' – probably not Paul's biological mother, probably means she treated him like a son.
- Paul concludes this section of greetings.
- **Romans 16:16**
- Paul is the only writer to use this phrase, and he used in the conclusion of and three others of his letters; 1 & 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians.
- Peter used the phrase kiss of love at the end of his first epistle.
- Culturally, it was not strange for a man to kiss another man on the cheek in greeting. This still happens in many cultures.
- It is less common for a man to kiss a woman on the cheek during greeting, but it happens.
- In our culture, men kissing men, is not common.
- Instead, we usually shake hands.
- It is not appropriate for men to be kissing women they are not related to. Rather than kissing, we hug.

- Instead of a holy kiss we do a holy handshake or a holy hug.
- Paul includes one last exhortation before he closes this radical letter.
- **Romans 16:17**
- Division of any kind in the body of Christ, in the church, is sin.
- That doesn't mean we are always going to agree about everything, but we are going to be very careful about how we disagree.
- Unity is our goal and love is our motivation.
- Paul is speaking to the whole church in Rome.
- If there is someone causing division, avoid them.
- To the leaders of the church, Paul would call them to confront those causing division. **1 Peter 5:2a**
- ² **Shepherd the flock of God which is among you...**
- It is not healthy for the flock if there are sheep (people) who are causing division.
- In love those causing division should be encouraged to change.
- Paul addresses the root cause of their behavior.
- **Romans 16:18**
- They are doing to satisfy some base need they have.
- It is selfish and self-centered and rooted in pride.
- And the ones who tend to be hurt by them are 'the simple'
- That word means innocent, naïve, or unsuspecting.
- In the church this would be those who are new to the faith and those whose faith has not matured enough to discern the danger.
- The leaders of the church ought to be protecting them from those people.
- And warning those who are doing it. **Mark 9:42**
- ⁴² **But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.**
- Little ones speaks literally of children but the principle applies to anyone with young or immature faith.
- Paul is confident they will do what he is exhorting them to do.
- **Romans 16:19**
- Obedience to God and His Word is evidence that we are true Christ-followers. **Luke 6:46**

⁴⁶ But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?

- If you don’t do what Jesus says, if you don’t obey, you can’t honestly say that Jesus is your Lord.
- Paul says, ‘be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil’.
- Before I was saved, my heart decided what was good versus evil.
- It wasn’t until I was saved that I came to learn that my heart is not a good judge of those things. **Jeremiah 17:9**

⁹ The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

- We should have a master’s degree in what is good and a kindergarten certificate in evil.
- We should know enough to identify it and stay away from it, but we don’t need to understand it.
- I know a rattlesnake is dangerous and can kill me.
- I don’t need to understand its motivation or how the venom works.
- [PSD rattlesnake training].
- Paul then gives them a promise for their faith and obedience.

- **Romans 16:20**

- Any church that is being faithful to God and doing it best to walk in faith and obedience should expect spiritual attack.
- Satan doesn’t want any church to flourish.
- As believers, we don’t fight against Satan.
- Our responsibility is to be faithful to God and obey Him.
- He will crush, completely overcome, Satan on our behalf. **Ephesians 6:11-13**

¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- We stand in faith and obedience – God fights.
- Paul started chapter sending greetings to the people in Rome, now he sends greetings from the people with him.

- **Romans 16:21-23**

- Tertius acted as a secretary to Paul.
- The letter ends with a doxology.

Doxology: a hymn or form of words containing an ascription of praise to God.

- This is very common in many of the letters in the New Testament.
- **Romans 16:24-27**
- Paul preached the gospel of salvation through Christ Jesus.
- By believing they understood the mystery, the divine secret, of God's plan to save people from their sins through faith in Christ.
- This was God's plan from the beginning of the world.
- We, Christ-followers, God's children, Christ's body, now have the privilege of picking up the torch that men like Paul and the men and women he mentions in this letter carried and taking it out into the world.
- The world is in darkness and people are lost in the darkness and hopelessly wandering through this life.
- The gospel of Jesus is hope and light.
- Some people like Paul carried the light directly to people.
- Many others, like those listed in this letter, helped him to do it.
- Paul was a servant of God empowered by the Spirit of God to proclaim the Word of God to draw people to the Son of God.
- And so were every person who helped Paul do what God was calling him to do.
- As we prepare to end this study, I would challenge you to examine your heart.
- God is calling every believer to serve Him.
- Have you heard God's call to serve.
- Today would be a good day to answer.
- Pray for me as I start preparing to teach the gospel of Mark on Sunday mornings and Revelation on Thursday evenings.
- Make sure to give someone a holy hug before you leave.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us serve God.
- **Pray! Last Song!**