

“Something For Thee”
Romans 16:1-7

Introduction:

1. All Throughout History:
 - Conflict Has Been:
 - The Rule:
 - Rather Than The Exception!
 - And The Leaders Who Win Those Conflicts:
 - Become The Ones Whose Names:
 - Are Then Recorded For Us:
 - As Making History!
2. But - Even Though:
 - It Is Usually:
 - The King Or General:
 - Who Gets All The Glory & Credit:
 - There Are Many:
 - Unsung Heroes:
 - Who Contributed To Their Success!
 - But Most Of Their Names & Identities:
 - Are Lost In:
 - The Vast Ocean Of Time!
3. And In Some Ways:
 - We See The Same Thing:
 - In The History Of The Church!
 - Of Course - The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - Is The “Captain Of Our Salvation!”
 - And As Such:
 - Deserves All The Glory & Credit:
 - For His Great Victory Over Sin & Satan!
 - But God - In His Grace:
 - Has Called His People:
 - To Contribute To His Work - And Even:
 - To Participate In:
 - His Success!
4. And In The Long History:
 - Of The Church:
 - There Have Been Many:
 - Unsung Heroes:
 - Whose Names & Identities:
 - Have Also Been Lost:
 - In The Ocean Of Time!
 - Forgotten By Men:
 - But Not Forgotten By The Lord, Our Captain!
 - And They Are The Ones Who Now Make Up:
 - The “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses” Mentioned In:
 - Hebrews 12:1!
 - 5. But Every Once In A While:
 - We Get A Glimpse:
 - Of Some Of These Witnesses:
 - And Their Contributions To:
 - The “Service Of The King!”
 - Of Course:
 - We Know About Some:
 - Of The More Notable Witnesses:
 - Like The Apostles:
 - In The Early Church!
 - And Even The Reformers:

- At The Beginning Of:
 - Our Modern Era!
 - But - What About:
 - All The Others:
 - Who Faithfully Served The Lord:
 - In The Communities & The Churches:
 - Where God Placed Them:
 - And Who Have Come & Gone:
 - Without Much Fanfare?
6. I Believe That:
 - They Too Are Notable Witnesses:
 - For The Lord - Because:
 - As We Will See This Morning:
 - From The Last Chapter Of Romans:
 - What May Seem Noteworthy:
 - In Christian Service:
 - Is Actually Pretty Normal!
 - Because Every Christian:
 - Has Something To Give:
 - In Service To The Lord!
 - Including You!
7. In Romans 16:
 - We Will Discover Quite A Few:
 - Of Those Unsung Heroes:
 - Of The Early Church - Who:
 - If Paul Had Never Mentioned Them:
 - We Would Never Have Known Them:
 - This Side Of Heaven!
 - But - Praise The Lord:
 - In Many Cases - He Not Only:
 - Mentions Them - He Even Describes:
 - Their Service:
 - To The Lord & Even To Him!
8. Now - In The First 16 Verses:
 - Paul Sends His Commendation & Greetings:
 - To Those Whom He Had The Privilege:
 - Of Serving With:
 - At One Time Or Another:
 - Outside Of Rome!
 - And I'd Like For Us To Focus On:
 - Just The First 7 Verses Together:
 - 16:1-7 - "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: / That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. / Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: / Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. / Likewise [greet] the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. / Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. / Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me!"
 - More Than Likely:
 - One Of The Reasons He Brings These Believers Up:
 - Is To Show The Churches In Rome:
 - That He Has A Vested Interest:
 - In Their Progress - And So:
 - They Should Listen To What He Has To Say:
 - In This Letter!
9. But I Believe There's More To It Than Just That!

- Because - It Was Through These Members - Who For The Most Part:
 - Were Ordinary Believers - Living Ordinary Lives:
 - And Serving In Ordinary Churches:
 - Who God Was Able To Use:
 - To Further His Work:
 - In Extraordinary Ways!
- And So This Morning:
 - We Are Going To Learn A Little Bit More:
 - About 7 Individuals:
 - Who Each Had Something To Give:
 - In Service For The Lord!

* First - We Learn About:

1. The Service Of Phebe:

- In 16:1-2 - Where It Is Clear That:
 - She Was Not A Member Of Any Of The Churches:
 - In The City Of Rome!
 - Instead - She Was Visiting Rome:
 - And May Have Even Been:
 - The One Who Brought The Letter Of Romans:
 - To Them!
 - What An Assignment! And What An Honor!
 - But If Paul Hadn't Written These Verses:
 - We Would Still Know Nothing About Her!
 - But - Since He Did:
 - Now We Do!
 - And We Know That:
 - Phebe Had Something To Give:
 - To The Lord!
- In 16:1 - We Learn About Her Special Calling:
 - Because Paul "Commends" Her:
 - As A Sister In Christ:
 - To The Church As A Whole:
 - In Rome!
 - Now - In Those Days:
 - "Commendations" Were A Fairly Common:
 - But Important Protocol:
 - To Introduce People From One Church To Another:
 - Especially When They Came From Far Away!
 - It Might Be Like:
 - The Letter Of Recommendation:
 - I Provided For One Of Our Members Who Recently Moved Away:
 - And Joined Another Church!
 - But In This Commendation:
 - Paul Makes Note Of Her Special Place:
 - In Her Home Church!
 - She Was "A Servant Of The Church Which Is At Cenchrea!"
 - The City Of Cenchrea:
 - Was A Main Port City:
 - Just A Few Miles From:
 - The City Of Corinth!
 - And So - Phebe Was Likely Saved:
 - Through The Ministry Of The Church:
 - In Corinth - After Being Founded:
 - By Paul!
 - And She Was A Noteworthy:
 - "Servant" In Her Home Church!
 - The Word Translated "Servant" Is "Deacon" - Only In A Feminine Form!

- This Likely Meant That:
 - She Probably Had A Specific Ministry:
 - In Her Church:
 - That She Was Responsible For!
 - Of Course - It Would Have Been Under The Oversight Of:
 - The Elders & Deacons Of The Church:
 - But - Whatever Ministry She Was Involved In - And Maybe Even Multiple Ministries - She Took Ownership Of Them And Gave Them Her All! But Then:
- In 16:1 - We Learn About Her Special Care:
 - Because Paul Tells On Her:
 - And How “She Hath Been A Succourer - Helper / Patron - Of Many, And Of Myself Also!”
 - So - Phebe Was Probably Not Only A Prominent Member:
 - Of Her Church - More Than Likely:
 - She Was Also A Prominent Member:
 - Of Her Community!
 - And She Would Have Used:
 - “Her Resources And Influence To Assist Christians Like Paul!”
- So Here We Have:
 - A Single Woman - Possibly Even:
 - A Widow Woman:
 - Who Used What She Had:
 - To Serve The Lord & His People:
 - And She Gave Her All!
 - And Through This Commendation:
 - Paul Wanted To Honor & Thank Her:
 - Probably In The Only Way That He Could!
 - I Would Imagine Phebe:
 - Had No Idea Paul Was Going To Write These Words About Her!
 - And Since He Saved It For The Very End:
 - She Would Have Heard It:
 - Only When It Was Read Aloud & She Heard It With Her Own Ears!
 - What An Honor This Would Have Been For Phebe!
 - And Yet - How Humbling Too!
 - For She Only Did:
 - What She Could:
 - In Her Service To The Lord!

* Then - Second - We Learn About:

2. ***The Service Of Priscilla And Aquila:***

- In 16:3-5a - To Whom Paul Begins His Greetings:
 - Again - “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house!”
 - Of Course - This Married Couple:
 - Is No Stranger To You:
 - If You’ve Spent Any Time:
 - Reading Through The New Testament!
 - They First Met Paul:
 - When He Traveled To The City Of Corinth:
 - On His Second Missionary Journey!
 - And Because They Were Not Only Fellow Jews:
 - But Also Fellow Tent-Makers & Leather-Workers:
 - They Lived & Worked & Served Together:
 - In The Church!
 - Later - When Paul Traveled To:
 - The City Of Ephesus - They Went With Him:
 - And Then Stayed:
 - Because Of The Door Of Opportunity God Placed There:

- For Them!
 - Eventually - God Called Them Back To:
 - The City Of Rome:
 - From Which They Were Banished:
 - Years Earlier:
 - And They Continued To Serve The Lord:
 - As A Team - In Marriage & In Ministry!
 - And So Paul - Through This Greeting:
 - Of His Long-Time Friends:
 - Wanted To Thank Them For:
 - Their Example Of Sacrificial Service To The Lord!
 - He Thanked Them For:
- The Great Effort:
 - Of Their Service!
 - He Called Them Here:
 - His “Helpers In Christ Jesus!”
 - At Some Point:
 - In Their Busy Lives:
 - God Touched & Opened Their Hearts:
 - To The Truths Of The Gospel!
 - And That No Matter How Successful:
 - They Were In Their Business:
 - As Jesus Said In Matthew 16:26:
 - “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
 - Perhaps When They First Met Paul:
 - He Told Them That Jesus:
 - Was The Messiah:
 - They Were Looking For:
 - As Jews!
 - And That Jesus Was:
 - The Lamb Of God:
 - “Which Taketh Away The Sin Of The World!”
 - And Even Their Sin!
 - And - If They Would Just “Confess With Their Mouths The Lord Jesus, And Believe In Their Hearts That God Hath Raised Him From The Dead, They Would Be Saved!” (Romans 10:9)
 - And The Moment They Turned To & Trusted In Jesus To Be Their Savior:
 - They Both Became New Creatures In Christ!
 - Their “Old Things Were Passed Away” & “All Things Became New” In Them & For Them! (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - And From That Time Forward:
 - Everywhere They Went - And:
 - Everything They Did:
 - Was In Service To Their Savior!
 - They Had Something:
 - To Give Back To Him!
 - And So - As Helpers & Co-Laborers:
 - With Paul - They Were Also:
 - “Laborers Together With God!” (1 Corinthians 3:9)
 - What An Honor & Privilege:
 - To Serve The Lord!
 - Paul Also Wanted To Thank Them For:
- The Great Extent:
 - Of Their Service!
 - In 16:4 - He Even Says That They:
 - “Laid Down Their Own Necks!”
 - For His Life & For His Soul!
 - This May Have Taken Place:

- When They Were Together In Ephesus:
 - And When The Riot Broke Out:
 - Over Their Famous But False Goddess - Diana!
- And In Some Way:
 - They Risked Their Own Lives:
 - For Paul!
- And The Memories Of:
 - Their Sacrificial Service:
 - Caused Paul's Feelings For Them:
 - To Well Up In His Heart!
 - So He Could Do Nothing Less Than:
 - Thank Them For Their Service!
 - "Unto Whom . . . I Give Thanks!"
- It Is An Appropriate Thing:
 - To Thank Each Other:
 - For The Service Rendered:
 - For Christ!
 - Especially When You Think About:
- The Great Effect:
 - Of Their Service!
 - It Is Clear That The Ministries Of Priscilla & Aquila:
 - Went Far Beyond:
 - Their Own Local Church!
 - Because - As Paul Wrote:
 - "Not Only I Give Thanks, But Also All The Churches Of The Gentiles!"
 - Was This An Exaggeration?
 - Not If Paul Had Anything To Do With It!
 - Even If Another Church:
 - Hadn't Directly Experienced Their Service:
 - They Would Have:
 - Indirectly - Through Paul!
 - Paul Would Have Told Them:
 - About His Dear Friends And Fellow-Laborers:
 - Of The Lord - And Their Sacrificial Service!
- What An Amazing Couple:
 - Who Used What They Had:
 - In Service To The Lord & His People!
 - They Even Used Their Home:
 - To Bring Together God's People:
 - For Worship & Fellowship:
 - And So Paul Sent His Greetings To "The Church That Is In Their House!"
 - What An Honor It Would Have Been:
 - For These Partners In Ministry:
 - To Hear These Words:
 - From The Apostle Paul!
 - And - How Humbling Too!
 - For They Only Did:
 - What They Could:
 - In Service To The Lord!

* At The End Of 16:5 - We Hear About:

3. The Service Of Epaenetus:

- "Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ!"
 - Some Manuscripts Indicate That This Man:
 - Was The "Firstfruits Of Asia!"
 - But - Either Way - He Made His Way To Rome:
 - And Paul Sends His Greeting!
 - But Epaenetus Was Likely:

- A Single Man Who Paul Had:
 - A Special Love & Affection For!
 - His Name Means "Praise-Worthy!"
 - And May Even Have Been The Nickname Given To Him By Paul!
- If So - This Would Mean:
 - He Probably Exhibited:
 - Many Of The Same Traits In His Service:
 - As Did Phebe & Priscilla & Aquila!
 - And Whatever He Did For The Lord:
- He Gave His Best:
 - To The Lord!
 - The Love That Paul Had For Him:
 - Was Just A Reflection Of:
 - The Love That The Lord Had For Him!
 - And "The Love Of Christ" Constrained Him:
 - To Tell Others About Him:
 - Even If It Meant:
 - He Would Move All The Way:
 - From Home To The Capital City Of Rome!
 - He Just Wanted To:
 - "Give Of His Best To His Master!"
 - But We Can Also See From This Greeting:
 - That He Was "The Firstfruits Of Achaia Or Asia Unto Christ!"
 - Now - This Phrase:
 - Can Be Taken In One Of Two Ways:
 - Either He Was One Of The First:
 - To Have Been Saved:
 - In Those Regions! Or:
 - He Was One Of The First:
 - To Have Been **Sent**:
 - From Those Regions:
 - Even As A Missionary:
 - To Rome!
 - I Think This Is Probably What Paul Meant:
 - Because This Man Was Like:
 - The First-Fruit Offering:
 - From The Gentile Churches:
 - "Unto Christ!"
 - And In This Way:
 - They Gave Their Best:
 - To The Lord!
 - And This Is What The Church Has Always Done!
 - We Are Not To:
 - Hold Onto One Another So Tightly:
 - So As To Keep Each Other:
 - Here!
 - No - We Are To Be Willing:
 - To Give Of Our Best Servants:
 - To The Lord:
 - To Even Go Out From This Place:
 - To Bring Help & Hope:
 - To The Lost!
 - And This Would Have Been Hard For Those Young Churches!
 - To "Lose" Someone So Beloved & So Gifted!
 - But - In Truth:
 - It Was No Loss - But An Investment That Would Yield:
 - Eternal Gain!
 - We Need To See Ourselves As:

- A Sending Agency For Christ!
 - Because - We Never Know:
 - Where God Might Lead:
 - One Of Our Own Members!
- And So - We Need To:
 - Encourage Each Other & Equip Each Other:
 - For Whatever Service:
 - God Might Have For Us In The Future!
- And Be Ready & Willing:
 - To Send Forth:
 - And Never Hold Back!
- And This Single Man:
 - Did Whatever He Could:
 - In Service To The Lord!

* We Then See - In 16:6:

4. The Service Of Mary:

- “Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us!”
 - Mary Was Likely A Jewish Woman:
 - Who May Also Have Been:
 - A Single Woman!
 - There Really Isn’t Much We Know About This Mary!
 - But What We Do Know:
 - Is That She Possessed:
 - A Great Willingness:
 - To Serve!
 - Here - Paul Tells Us That:
 - She Didn’t Just Serve Him:
 - She Served Many Others:
 - Including Him!
 - She “Bestowed Much Labor On *Us!*”
 - At Some Point In His Ministries:
 - Paul Met This Mary:
 - And She Did Whatever She Could:
 - To Help Meet His Practical Needs!
 - This Mary Might Have Been:
 - A Bit Like The Martha:
 - We Find In The Gospels!
 - But What She Did & What She Gave:
 - She Did So Willingly & With All Her Heart!
 - Because Her Service Displayed:
 - A Great Weariness!
 - She “Labored” For The People Of God!
 - They Were Her Priority!
 - And She “Bestowed Much Labor”
 - On Them!
 - So - More Than Likely:
 - She Was A Single Woman:
 - With Only One Care In The World!
 - Serving The Lord!
 - So - She Had Something To Give!
 - And Whether She Labored:
 - Early In The Morning - Or:
 - Late Into The Night:
 - She Did What She Could:
 - For The Lord & His People!

* And Then - In 16:7 - We Read About:

5. ***The Service Of Andronicus & Junia:***

- “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me!
 - Some Think These Two Individuals:
 - Made Up Another Husband & Wife Team:
 - Since The Name “Junia” Can Be Taken:
 - As A Feminine Name!
 - Others Take Them As:
 - A Team Of Two:
 - Who Functioned As Traveling Evangelists:
 - In Service To The Lord!
 - That Is How I Take Them:
 - And As Jews - They Might Have Even Been:
 - Related To Paul:
 - In Some Way - Cousins Perhaps!
 - And So - They All Probably Knew Each Other:
 - Before They Knew Christ:
 - And May Have Even Grown Up Together!
 - But Now - They Had A Closer Bond:
 - Than Just Their Family Bond!
 - They Had A Spiritual Bond!
 - They Were “In Christ!”
 - And Through This Brief Greeting:
 - We Can See The:
- Great Dedication:
 - In Their Service:
 - To The Lord!
 - Here - Paul Calls Them:
 - “My Fellowprisoners!”
 - This Could Be Taken Either Figuratively Or Literally!
 - But - Since He Adds That They Were “Of Note Among The Apostles!”
 - I Think That At Some Point In Their Ministries:
 - They Were Arrested & Thrown Into Jail:
 - As Paul Had Been On Several Occasions!
 - Perhaps That Is Even How They Met!
 - But Even Though They Suffered:
 - In Their Service For The Lord:
 - That Did Not Stop Them - And:
 - That Did Not Silence Them!
 - Instead - They Continued To Serve With:
- Great Devotion:
 - To The Lord!
 - Paul Notes That They Were “In Christ” Even Before He Was!
 - And It Seems Like Paul Even Admired Them For This!
 - They Might Have Been Servants He Looked Up To:
 - As Examples!
- But - They Both Just Did:
 - What They Could:
 - Out Of Their Love For & Devotion To:
 - The Lord!

Conclusion:

1. But - Even Though:
 - Paul Highlights The Service:
 - Of These Seven Brothers & Sisters In Christ:
 - What May Sound Noteworthy:
 - Is Actually Normal:
 - In The History Of The Church!

2. Think About Your Own Service:
 - To & For The Lord Today!
 - How Would Paul Or Someone Else:
 - Describe Your Service?
 - Each Of Us:
 - Has Something To Give:
 - To The Lord!
 - What Will You Give?
 - Even Today!

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