

“One In Christ”
Romans 16:8-16

Introduction:

1. One Of The Great Things About:
 - Thanksgiving:
 - Is How It Brings So Many Together:
 - For A Common Purpose!
 - Not Just:
 - To Eat Turkey!
 - Not Just:
 - To Watch Football!
 - And Not Just:
 - To Find The Best Shopping Deals!
 - Even Though:
 - A Lot Of That Happens:
 - Around Thanksgiving!
 - But - It Really Does:
 - Give Us As A Nation:
 - The Opportunity To Pause:
 - And Give Thanks:
 - For All Of Our Many Blessings!
2. But - Sadly:
 - Unity Like That:
 - In A Nation Like Ours:
 - Is Short-Lived!
 - And That Is Why:
 - As Christians:
 - We Need To Be Especially Thankful For:
 - The Unity That Christ Himself Brings:
 - To All Of His People!
 - Even As We Are Told:
 - By The Apostle Paul:
 - In Galatians 3:26-28 - “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. / For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. / There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus!”
3. As We Return In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To The Last Chapter Of Romans:
 - Romans 16 - We Will See How:
 - This Christian Unity:
 - Was On Full Display:
 - In The Churches Of Rome!
 - Now - Even Though:
 - Those Churches - Like All Churches:
 - Were Not Entirely Free:
 - From Impurity & Imperfection:
 - Yet - The Foundation Of Unity:
 - Had Already Been Laid Among Them:
 - Through The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
4. And This Is Why:
 - In Verses We Will Look At Today:
 - The Apostle Paul Could Write To:
 - And Send Greetings To:
 - So Many Different & Diverse People:
 - As He Did!
 - Because - The Unity Of Christians:
 - Is Always Based On:
 - Our Union With Christ!

- As We Read Through 16:8-16:
 - I Want You To Notice How Many Times:
 - The Word “In” Is Used:
 - To Connect Christians:
 - With Christ Himself!
 - “Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. / Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. / Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household. / Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. / Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. / Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. / Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. / Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. / Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you!”

5. Even Through This List Of Greetings:

- We Can See How:
 - The Unity Of Christians:
 - Is & Always Ought To Be:
 - Based On Our Union With Christ!
- This Morning:
 - We Will Discover:
 - 4 Ways How The Gospel Can Change:
 - Our Relationships:
 - In True Unity:
 - Through Christ!

* First - The Gospel Can Bring About:

1. ***True Friendship In Christ!***

- Which We Can See In:
 - Paul’s Greetings To 4 Different Men:
 - In 16:8-10a - Amplias / Urbane / Stachys / Apelles!
 - And The Way Paul Describe These Men:
 - Helps Us See The Kind Of Friendship:
 - Only The Gospel Can Provide!
 - In Paul’s Greeting To Amplias:
 - We Learn That The Gospel Can Change:
 - Our Sympathies:
 - Toward Each Other!
 - Amplias Was Called By Paul:
 - “My Beloved In The Lord!”
 - “Beloved” Is A Favorite Word Of Paul:
 - To Describe His Affection For & His Attachment To:
 - Other Believers!
 - And This Loving Relationship:
 - May Never Have Existed:
 - If It Hadn’t Been:
 - For Their Connection To Each Other Through Their Connection To The Lord!
 - You See - Amplias Was Likely:
 - A Fairly Well-To-Do Roman Christian:
 - Who Was Well-Beloved:
 - By Many!
 - Within The Last Century:
 - A Catacomb Beneath The Streets Of Rome:
 - Was Uncovered - Which Was Painted With Beautiful Frescoes:
 - And Which Bore This Man’s Name!
 - Was It The Same Amplias:
 - Paul Greeted Here In Romans?
 - It Seems Very Likely!
 - But It Shows How “In The Lord” There Can Be A Bond Of Love:

- That Can Last Even In Death!
- Jesus Said - "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you!"
 - And His Gospel Alone:
 - Has The Power To Unify His People:
 - In Sympathy & Love!
- In Paul's Greeting To Urbane:
 - We Learn That The Gospel Can Change:
 - Our Service:
 - With Each Other!
 - Like Priscilla & Aquila - Urbane - In 16:9 - Was Called:
 - "Our Helper In Christ!"
 - A "Fellow-Laborer" - Who:
 - Sought To Serve Paul & Other Christians:
 - With All His Heart!
 - In Some Of The Ancient Inscriptions:
 - That Have Been Uncovered In Rome:
 - His Name Was Often Found:
 - As A Name Of A Slave!
 - And If This Was True:
 - Of *This* Urbane:
 - The Gospel Had Changed:
 - His Very Attitude Of Service!
 - In Ephesians 6:5-6 - Servants & Slaves:
 - Are Instructed By Paul:
 - To "Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; / Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart!"
 - And - When Urbane Turned To & Trusted In Christ:
 - This Is How He Served!
 - Because - The Gospel Alone:
 - Has The Power To Unify His People:
 - In Service To Christ!
- In Paul's Greeting To Stachys - Also In 16:9:
 - We Learn That The Gospel Can Change:
 - Our Status:
 - In The World!
 - Stachys Was Also Called By Paul:
 - "My Beloved!"
 - Though He Too May Have Been:
 - A Slave In Rome:
 - That Didn't Matter To Paul!
 - Because The Gospel Alone:
 - Has The Power To Unify His People:
 - No Matter What Status You Possess:
 - In The World!
 - In 1 Corinthians 7:22 - Paul Wrote:
 - "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant!"
- But Then - In Paul's Greeting To Apelles - In 16:10:
 - We Can Learn That The Gospel Can Change:
 - Our Suffering:
 - When We Suffer Together!
 - Apelles Is Described As Being:
 - "Approved In Christ!"
 - To Be "Approved" Meant That Something Was Proven To Be Genuine:
 - After Undergoing A Process Of Refinement Or Testing:
 - Like Precious Metals!
 - Though We Don't Know:

- The Kind Of Trials Apelles Faced:
 - He Learned - As Peter Tells Us:
 - That - “The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ!”
- Apelles & His Faith:
 - Was Found To Be Genuine:
 - By God The Father:
 - Because It Was Firmly Placed Upon:
 - The Solid Rock Of Christ - His Son!
 - And This “Approval” In Christ:
 - Connected Him With Paul:
 - In A Special Way:
 - Because Of His Own Suffering & Testing!
- And The New-Found Friendship & Unity:
 - Of These Four Men:
 - Was Based On Their Union With Christ!
 - Is This The Kind Of Friendship:
 - We Have With Others:
 - In Our Own Church?

* But Then - Second - We Learn How The Gospel Can Bring About:

2. True Fruit In Christ!

- Which We Can See In:
 - Paul’s Greetings To Two Groups:
 - Of Unnamed Believers:
 - Along With One Man:
 - Who May Have Been One Of Them!
 - In 16:10b-11 - Paul Writes:
 - “Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household. / Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord!”
- In Paul’s Greetings To:
 - Certain Members Of:
 - The Households Of:
 - Aristobulus & Narcissus:
 - We Learn How The Gospel Can Change & Transform:
 - Our Associations:
 - In This World!
 - Though The Word “Household” Is Not Found:
 - In The Underlying Greek Texts:
 - It Is Implied That:
 - There Were Several Who Belonged To The Two Men Named:
 - As Servants & Slaves:
 - Who Came To Know The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - As Their Savior From Sin!
 - Narcissus Was A Well-Known:
 - And Favorite Servant:
 - To The Roman Emperor, Claudius!
 - So - He Was A Roman - With:
 - Strong Ties To Its Government!
 - And Though - By The Time Paul Wrote This Letter:
 - He Had Died:
 - Yet - His Servants Were Still Connected To & Known By His Name!
 - Aristobulus - However - Is Probably:
 - One Of The Grand-Sons Of Herod The Great:
 - And The Brother Of Herod Agrippa:
 - Who We Learn About In The New Testament!
 - So - He Was A Jew - Living In Rome:

- Likely To Garner Support:
 - For His Own Political Aspirations!
- But - Into The Households Of Both Of These:
 - Influential Roman Officials:
 - The Gospel Had Spread!
 - And - Now - Those Believers Had An Even Greater Identity & Association!
 - As Being “In The Lord!”
- But Also - In Between Those Two - In Paul’s Greeting To:
 - Herodian - We Learn How The Gospel Can Change & Transform:
 - Our Allegiance:
 - In This World!
 - Herodian Was Likely:
 - A Well-Known Servant:
 - To Aristobulus!
 - After All - He Was A Jew:
 - Very Close Personally To Paul - His Own “Kinsman!”
 - And - He Was Given A Name:
 - That Expressed Strong Ties To:
 - The Herods Of Israel!
 - But - No Matter What:
 - His Former Allegiance Or Even Political Associations Were:
 - That Was In The Past!
- And This Is The Kind Of Unity:
 - That Our Union With Christ:
 - Should Bring To The Church!
 - A Unity That Transcends Worldly:
 - Associations & Allegiances!
 - Is This The Kind Of Unity:
 - We Seek To Have:
 - With God’s People?

* But Then - Third - We Learn How The Gospel Can Bring About:

3. ***True Family In Christ!***

- Which We Can See Next In:
 - Paul’s Greetings To A Diverse Group:
 - Of 5 Individuals - Of Four Women & One Man:
 - In 16:12-13 - “Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. / Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine!”
 - Tryphena & Tryphosa:
 - May Have Been Sisters:
 - Quite Possibly Even Twins:
 - With Their Parents Having A Penchant:
 - For Similar-Sounding Names:
 - Even Like Parents Of Twins Even Today!
 - **IE:** Andy & Angie / Pammy & Tammy
 - Their Given Names Mean:
 - “Dainty” & “Delicate!”
 - And So - They Probably Were Born:
 - Into A Well-To-Do, Aristocratic Roman Family:
 - And Were Set For Lives Of Ease!
 - But - When The Gospel Came To Them:
 - It Changed Them & Brought Them:
 - Into Another Family:
 - Which They Sought To Serve:
 - With Diligence!
 - Paul Says That They:
 - “Labor In The Lord!”

- Actively & Passionately!
- They Traded:
 - A Life Of Ease - For:
 - A Life Of Effort:
 - In & For The Lord!
- Persis:
 - Is Another Woman Who Paul Greeted:
 - And May Have Been:
 - An Older, Single Woman:
 - Since Paul Commends Her As One Who “Labored Much In The Lord!”
 - In Contrast With:
 - The Sisters Before Her:
 - Who Were Actively “Laboring” - In:
 - The Present Tense!
 - Here - Paul Points Out:
 - That She Had Served & Labored:
 - Past Tense:
 - With Diligence!
 - But - Paul Wanted Her To Know:
 - That - God Hadn’t Forgotten Her Service:
 - And Neither Had He!
 - And That Is Something:
 - All Of Us Need To Remember:
 - About Christian Service:
 - As A Family!
 - Some Need To:
 - Serve - In The Present Tense:
 - With The Strength & Vigor:
 - Of Youth - That God Has Given!
 - But - We Must Never Forget To Honor:
 - Those Who Served - In The Past Tense:
 - Who Are Past Their Prime:
 - And Still Would If They Could!
 - As We Find In Hebrews 6:10:
 - “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name!”
 - And If God Does Not Forget:
 - Neither Should We!
- Rufus - In 16:13 - Is The Sole Man In This Group:
 - But Not Only Is He Singled Out By Paul:
 - As “Chosen In The Lord” - But:
 - His Mother Is Too:
 - “His Mother & Mine” - Paul Writes!
 - A Son & His Mother:
 - Were Also Part Of This New Christian Family:
 - And Were Noted For:
 - Their Devotion:
 - To The Lord & His People!
 - This Rufus May Very Likely Be:
 - The Same Rufus Mentioned In:
 - Mark 15:21 - Who Was The Son Of:
 - Simon Of Cyrene - Who Was Chosen By The Roman Guards:
 - To Bear The Cross Of Christ In Jerusalem!
 - If This Is The Case:
 - Then Rufus & His Mother:
 - Had Made Their Way To Rome:
 - Carrying Their Heritage With Them!
 - And Paul Wanted Them To Remember:

- How God Had Brought Them & Their Family:
 - To The Foot Of The Cross:
 - Not By Accident:
 - But By The Providential Hand Of God!
- God Chose Rufus:
 - Even As He Chose You:
 - "In The Lord!"
 - So That You Can Live Your Life:
 - In Devotion To Him!
- But - What A Family:
 - God Gave Rufus:
 - His Mother Became A Mother:
 - To Many Others:
 - Including Paul!
 - And What A Testimony This Is:
 - To This Unnamed Mother!
 - She Loved Others:
 - In The Family Of God:
 - Even As She Loved Her Own Sons!
- And This Is The New Kind Of Family:
 - That God Offers:
 - To Every One Who Comes To Him:
 - Through Faith In Jesus Christ!
 - Even Jesus Said:
 - In Mark 10:29-30 - "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, / But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life!"
 - Are You Fostering These Kinds Of Relationships:
 - In The Lord?
 - This Is The Kind Of Unity:
 - That Our Union With Christ:
 - Can Bring!

* Then - Fourth - We Learn How The Gospel Can Bring About:

4. True Fellowship In Christ!

- Which We See In 16:14-15 - Where:
 - The Apostle Paul Sends His Greetings To:
 - To Two Groups Of Five Individuals Each:
 - Which May Have Been:
 - Some Members Of Two Separate Congregations:
 - There In Rome!
 - One Congregation:
 - Seems To Have Been Made Up Primarily With:
 - Servants & Slaves:
 - Who Were Not Originally From Rome!
 - In 16:14 - Most Of The Names:
 - Are Greek Names:
 - To Whom Paul Sends His Greetings:
 - "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them!"
 - For Whatever Reason:
 - God Brought These Men Together:
 - Along With The Rest Of Their Congregation:
 - To Form:
 - New Relationships:
 - In Christ!
 - They May Even Have Been:

- Forcibly Taken:
 - From Their Family & Friends & Homes!
 - But Now - In Christ:
 - They Could Enjoy A New Fellowship - A True Fellowship:
 - As Brethren!
- And Now - They Would Work Together:
 - To “Love As Brethren!” (1 Peter 3:8)
- Another Congregation:
 - Seems To Have Been Made Up Primarily With:
 - A Family Household:
 - Who, Likely, Were Romans:
 - With Some Influence!
 - In 16:15 - Some Of The Names Mentioned:
 - Are Even Known To “Denote Members Of The Imperial Court!”
 - But - Paul Sends His Greetings To Them As Well!
 - “Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them!”
 - This Verse Shows Us That:
 - An Entire Household:
 - With Natural Relationships:
 - May Have Been Part Of:
 - The Church Of Rome!
 - Philologus & Julia:
 - May Have Been Husband & Wife!
 - Nereus & His Sister:
 - May Have Been Their Children!
 - If So - Then Olympas:
 - May Have Been One Of Their Servants!
 - And The Gospel:
 - Would Have Changed:
 - The Very Fabric & Dynamics:
 - Of That Family!
 - No Matter What Their Former Relationships Had Been:
 - With Each Other:
 - The Gospel Brought Them All Together:
 - As Brethren & As The Saints:
 - Of God!
 - Because - The Unity Of Christians:
 - Is Always Based On:
 - Union With Christ!

Conclusion:

1. When We Come To 16:16:
 - Paul Didn't Want Anyone In Rome To Be Left Out:
 - Of His Greetings - So He Adds:
 - “Salute one another with an holy kiss!”
 - The “Holy Kiss” Became:
 - In The Early Church:
 - A Special Way - According To Their Custom:
 - To Welcome Each Other & Worship With Each Other:
 - In The Church:
 - With The Warmth Of Love & Affection!
 - And - It Was Always Done:
 - With Great Purity & Propriety:
 - Men With Men - And:
 - Women With Women!
 - It Was A Sign:
 - Of Christian Unity:

- Based On Union With Christ!
- 2. But - At Times:
 - This Kind Of Greeting Was Not Possible!
 - So - Paul Adds:
 - 16:16b - "The churches of Christ salute you!"
 - This Is The Kind Of:
 - Friendship & Fellowship:
 - There Can Be:
 - Among All True:
 - Churches Of Christ:
 - Of Like Faith & Practice!
- 3. Because - Our Union With Christ:
 - Makes True Unity:
 - Among The Followers Of Christ:
 - Possible!
 - "For Ye Are All One In Christ Jesus!"
 - Paul Wrote In Galatians 3:28!
 - Let's Learn From The Church Of Rome:
 - How To Foster This Kind Of Unity:
 - For The Glory Of God - And:
 - For The Good Of His People!

***Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com***