

Message #58**Romans 16:20-27**

This book of Romans has been an amazing book. This letter that Paul wrote and that God inspired is like no other. So you do have to wonder, how are you going to end a letter as amazing as this one?

There are two points of communication Paul states to bring Romans to a conclusion:

- 1) He gives a series of final greetings. 16:21-23
- 2) He gives a final praise and prayer to God. **16:24-27**

PAUL BRINGS ROMANS TO A CONCLUSION AND AS HE DOES IT, ONCE AGAIN HE DOUBLES DOWN ON THE THEME OF GRACE.

We may observe that two times in this final text Paul stresses: “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” (**16:20, 24**). We would expect that in a book that stresses grace.

There are two main final points that Paul communicates as he brings this letter to a conclusion:

POINT OF COMMUNICATION #1 – Paul’s final greetings to the Romans. **16:21-23**

What Paul does is to sign off this letter by giving a series of final greetings to the Romans from the people who were with him and had been intimately connected to him and his ministry.

The first series of Greetings in Romans 16:1-16, were people who were in the Church of Rome. The second series of Greetings in **Romans 16:21-23** were people in Corinth with Paul.

There are six greetings Paul gives here:

Greeting #1 - The greeting from Timothy. **16:21a**

Paul mentions Timothy in multiple letters and usually when he mentions him, he does so in the first verse or the first two verses (II Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy). So a question is why does Paul wait until the end of Romans to include Timothy? **The most obvious answer is that Timothy arrived in Corinth after Paul had started writing the letter.**

Timothy was Paul’s son in the faith. He was a handpicked man by Paul. He was his fellow worker and Paul had selected him to be his successor. By naming Timothy first, he is establishing the importance of his companionship and ministry.

Paul was very particular who he allowed to get close to him and Timothy was one he did. When Paul signed off this letter to the Romans, he wanted them to know that Timothy was right there with him. After Paul was gone, he would become a main herald and defender for the grace of God.

Greeting #2 - The greeting from Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. **16:21b**

What we learn about these three is that they were Paul's "kinsmen." We may conclude they were Jewish. Even though Paul's Gentile ministry was stressed and operating at full speed, there were still those with him who were Jewish believers. They embraced the grace of God and they supported Paul and his grace teaching.

Lucius was from Cyrene and had been a key leader in the church of Antioch who first commissioned Paul for ministry (Acts 13:1-3). He had known Paul for a long time. Many have speculated that Lucius was a different spelling for Luke. We don't believe that because Luke was a Gentile and not a Jew.

Jason was one of the first converts of Thessalonica, who housed Paul and helped send him to Berea (Acts 17:5-10).

Sosipater was from Berea (Acts 20:4), a real student of the word of God. He was one of those who received the word of God and eagerly took it in and carefully examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:10-12). His reputation was one of being a serious minded student of Pauline doctrine.

It is interesting that these three men loved God's word so much and the teaching of the Apostle Paul that they followed him and went to where he was. When you think about it, there can be no greater reason to relocate than to go somewhere where you know you will be fed the truth of God.

Greeting #3 - The greeting of Tertius. **16:22**

Tertius was the secretary or the amanuensis that Paul used to actually write Romans. **It may be that Paul wrote the initial document and Tertius was making the identical copy that would go to Rome.** In any case, Paul permitted him to give a greeting here.

The truth is, when one is dedicated to the written Scriptures, it does mean a great deal to God and to others.

Greeting #4 - The greeting from Gaius. **16:23a**

Paul was actually staying in the home of Gaius when he wrote Romans. Gaius was a man who lived in Corinth and he had a church that met in his home (I Cor. 1:14). Obviously, he was a wealthy man with a very nice and apparently large home that was capable of housing Paul and some of his entourage and also it was large enough to host the entire church. There were people from all walks of life who had been impacted by Paul's grace teaching ministry.

Greeting #5 - The greeting from Erastus. **16:23b**

Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth. He was a public official. So the heathen city of Corinth had a city treasurer who loved Jesus Christ and the word of God and Paul's teaching. You can work for heathen people and have the same focus as Erastus. One may be an elected government official and be highly committed to Jesus Christ and the written word of God. Erastus proves that.

There actually has been found on one of the street stones of the ruins of Corinth, a stone that says "Erastus laid this pavement at his own expense." So apparently he was a wealthy man but he loved the Lord and loved the word of God.

Greeting #6 - The greeting from Quartus. **16:23c**

Quartus is simply identified as "the brother." It is possible he was the brother of Erastus. We certainly know he was a brother in Christ.

It is amazing that in an inspired book like Romans that God permitted these people from Corinth to send their greetings to the believers at home. It does mean something when one church who loves grace and the word of God sends greetings to another church with the same bent.

POINT OF COMMUNICATION #2 – Paul's final praise and prayer to God. **16:24-27**

The final words of the Epistle begin with "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all Amen." So he starts this by saying Truly God's grace is with you all and that grace is from our "Lord" meaning from our God; Jesus meaning from our Savior and Christ, meaning from our Messiah.

We may observe that three times in **verses 25-26** we read the prepositional phrase "**according to.**" **The basic meaning of the preposition (kata) is down upon.** **What Paul wants to stress by using this preposition three times is that God, in His High, Heavenly, Holy, Majestic and Glorious position, reached down and out to sinful humanity by this glorious gospel that will save any sinner from any sin and establish him forever.**

In fact, the word "establish" is a word that means to straighten out something and strengthen something to the point that it can stand on its own. It was used in secular Greek of an older man who could hardly stand and someone would give him a cane so he could stand on his own.

What Paul wants to drive home is the fact that God looked down on us and saw us as crippled and sinful people who could not stand before Him because we have been mangled by sin. So in amazing grace, He provided Jesus Christ so that we would have the righteousness necessary to have a relationship with God. Through His shed blood and stripes we may be completely healed in our relationship with God and to Him be glory and honor.

Now there are three revealed keys to being established in grace before God:

Revealed Key #1 - One will be established by a specific gospel. **16:25a**

The gospel message that will establish people in a relationship with God is the gospel taught by Paul. It is not taught by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or even fully by John. It is not taught by James nor is it fully taught by Peter. THE GOSPEL OF GRACE IS FULLY TAUGHT AND DEVELOPED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL. He calls it "MY GOSPEL."

God gave Paul the responsibility to write the gospel that shows up in Romans. Paul's Romans is the only fully developed Gospel of God that is found in the Bible. Other books in the Bible will substantiate this Gospel and reinforce its doctrine, but the Gospel of God is fully developed in Romans. This is why we have gone through this carefully.

Paul developed the fact that all are sinners and that justification is by faith alone apart from any works and apart from the O.T. law.

One is only made righteous in the sight of God by judicial declaration and imputed righteousness the moment one believes in Jesus Christ.

What must be taught in the church for people to be established in the faith is Paul's grace gospel.

Revealed Key #2 - One will be established by specific preaching. **16:25b**

This is God's system of development. It demands preaching and it demands preaching that is centered on the work of Jesus Christ.

The idea of preaching is being replaced today by non-traditional methods that some churches think are a better way to go. They remove the pulpit and promote entertainment and sermonettes in which a guy walks around with a lapel microphone, wearing jeans and a shirt and just shares from his heart.

The idea that we will preach straight through a book of the Bible like Romans is nowhere to be found in most churches. The books of the O.T. that reveal so much about Jesus Christ and the books of the N.T. that develop Him even more are neglected because preaching is no longer deemed relevant.

Do not miss what Paul is saying here. **People are established and developed in the grace of God and developed in the faith by preaching. Not sharing, not talking, not singing, but by careful, accurate preaching.**

Revealed Key #3 - One will be established by understanding Scriptures. **16:25c**

The Bible is not a simple book. To understand the deep mysteries God has revealed that come from His mind takes a great deal of very serious study.

We are living in the Grace Age and in this age, God has given us all 66 books of the Bible that reveal the depths of the program of God.

To take the Scriptures and understand the O.T. books and the prophets and then be able to dissect it so that it is accurate, is the unraveling of a major mystery.

Notice carefully from **verse 25** that preaching the word about Jesus Christ is called a “revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.”

What this means is that God decided to uncover and reveal the grace gospel through Paul. Until God did this, the theology of God’s grace in saving a sinner through faith in Jesus Christ was a mystery.

But according to **verse 25**, “but now” the eternal God has revealed His grace gospel to the whole world.

It is an understanding of this grace Gospel that will stabilize people in the faith and cause them to grow. It is this that will bring people to maturity.

There are four observations to make here about being established in the faith:

(Observation #1) - Being established in the faith comes by the Scriptures.

(Observation #2) - Being established in the faith comes by God’s commandment.

This is a critical point, had not the Eternal God commanded that His grace Gospel be revealed, the whole world would be lost.

(Observation #3) - Being established in the faith is open to all nations.

Grace salvation is open to all nationalities of people. No matter your ethnicity, your color, or your age or gender, any person now has access to God’s amazing grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

(Observation #4) - Being established in the faith comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now understand this; obedient faith is a faith that believes totally and only in Jesus Christ and the grace of God for salvation. That is the obedient faith of the Gospel of God.

It is this obedient faith in Jesus Christ that will revolutionize your life and lead to a life that will bring glory to God.

In **verse 27**, Paul ends the book to the Romans by saying this:

- 1) There is only One wise God.
- 2) Jesus Christ is the only way to have a relationship with God.
- 3) The glory of God and Jesus Christ will be forever and ever.