The Book of Romans

Epilogue

The Mission: God’s righteousness is revealed as His grace is proclaimed to all nations. (Romans 15:13–16:37)

***The Passion of the Gospel in God’s Servants. . . Or, It takes the Church. Romans 16:1-23***

Terms like “networking” and “connecting” and “social media” dot contemporary conversations, but while the terms are relatively new, the ideas they represent are not. These verses form a fitting end to this amazing book, for through them we can see the thinking, methods, and teamwork the Gospel inspires in the Apostle Paul. He was no loner, for while his calling and ministry were unique, he was constantly cooperating with others (both leaders and churches) in sharing the faith. He sought out colleagues with whom to work and new recruits to mentor so that even more teams could go to those who have never heard. He loved existing churches, too, praying and planning for their growth in grace. Here is a testimony to his zeal and an example for us.

***We should commend God’s proven disciples*** 16:1-16

Here begins a “Who’s Who” in first century church planting. Written commendations were important for churches, and Paul was quick to identify and praise faithful co-workers. We know few specifics, but each name represents a life and a partnership in the Gospel. Note the family language (brothers, sisters, beloved, family), churches, references to working hard, and the risks (death, imprisonment). In all, 30 people are named or referenced. 1 Corinthians 16:15-18

***21st Century Takeaway: If someone were writing a letter and mentioned you, would he mention your service for Jesus?***

***We should warn against the divisive deceivers*** 16:17-20

We must not be lulled into a false sense of security by just anyone who claims to represent Christ. Paul often warns the churches about false apostles, false teachers, and false doctrines. Notice that he has no time for them, and does not suggest accommodating them in any way. Far from it, he says to name them and avoid them. While we must be careful and not jump to conclusions on minor issues or disagreements, we do well to remember that false professors exist in our day as well. As Paul says, however, their defeat is sure because of Jesus. Acts 20:28-32; 2 Cor. 11:12-15; Galatians 2:4, 5; Philippians 3:17-19

***21st Century Takeaway: Are you familiar enough with God’s Word that you can identify false doctrine and false teachers?***

***We should be team builders.*** 16:21-23

The Apostle usually has a small, close group of fellow-workers with him, although the number and names often change. Paul was not “cliquish,” working exclusively with his favorites, but rather associated with many as his rotating inner circle. Still, he valued teamwork and trust, and demonstrated them in his methods. Gal. 1:1-3; Phil. 4:21, 22

***21st Century Takeaway: Do you have a close group of associates with whom you serve Jesus and live life?***

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***1. Churches can have independence without isolation, and can network without compromise.***

The best safeguard is mutual accountability. Acts 15:1, 2, 30, 31

***2. Even the most gifted people need networking.***

Each does something; none does everything. Rom. 12:3-8

***3. Every church must confront troublemakers.***

 We must be loving, but, false teaching and divisiveness cannot be tolerated. 1 Tim. 1:3-7, 18-20; 4:1-7;

 6:3-6; Titus 3:9, 10