

Closing Words

Romans 15:14 – 16:27



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

Previously in Romans



Previously in Romans



This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul ...

– Martin Luther

Previously in Romans



We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

– Martin Luther

Previously in Romans

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Previously in Romans

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.

Previously in Romans

- Key concept: God's grace
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Previously in Romans

- Paul's goals:
 - To introduce himself to the Roman church in preparation for later mission work.
 - To encourage unity among Jewish and Gentile believers.
 - To thoroughly explain the gospel he preaches as the means to both of the above.

Previously in Romans

“Big Deal” Lessons:

1. Not everything related to our faith needs to be a big deal.
2. Things that are not a big deal can become a big deal if they lead to disunity in the church.
3. In things that are not a big deal (*adiaphora*), love is the guiding principle.

Closing Words Introduction

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Paul's sustained argument about the nature and implications of the gospel is at an end. So he returns to where he began, speaking of the Roman Christians and of his own ministry and plans.

*– Douglas Moo,
Wheaton Graduate School*

Closing Words Introduction

- The length of Paul's closing may have a point, especially with all the greetings at the end.
- He has not visited this church, so it is a way of illustrating the many connections he already has to it.

Closing Words Introduction

Paul ends the body of his letter in 15:13 with a prayer for the church in Rome. Unlike his other letters, this letter has a very lengthy conclusion, perhaps because he has never visited the Roman church.

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian
University of the Congo*



Closing Words Introduction

Today's Passage:

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33
2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23
3. Doxology 16:25-27

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33



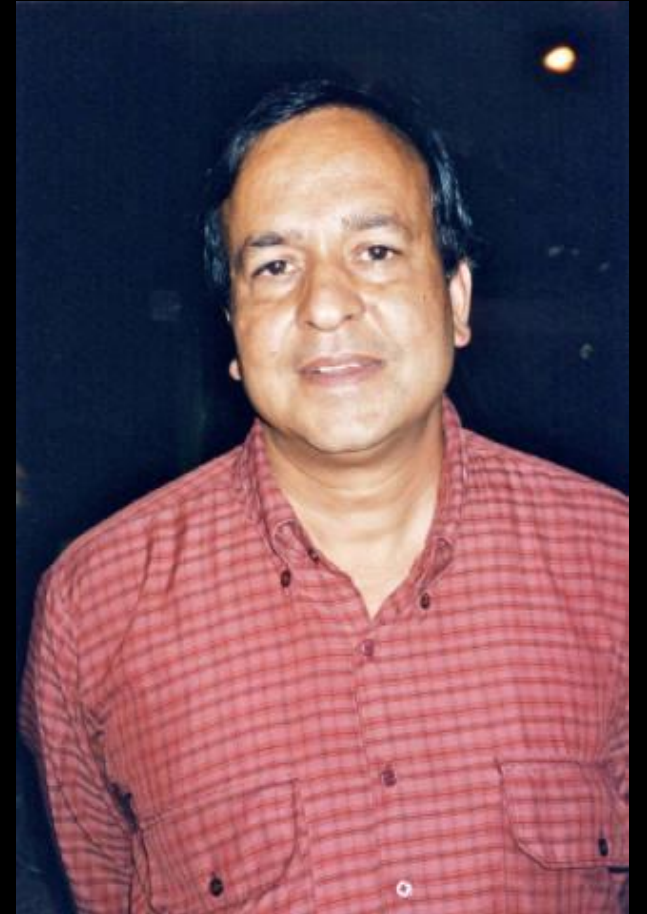
1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

- 15:14-21 Paul can be very satisfied with his ministry.
- He was called to take the gospel to the nations – the various Gentile people groups.
- He did so with zeal and perseverance.

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

In his service to God, Paul glories in Christ Jesus (15: 17) ... God has greatly honoured him by calling him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and giving him such success ... His words and actions have led many Gentiles to obey God.

– Ramesh Khatri, Association of Theological Education in Nepal



1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

- 15:14-21 The gospel – and Paul – began in Jerusalem.
- Through Paul the gospel made it all the way to Illyricum, across the Adriatic from Italy.
- He now wants to see Rome and tells that church of his plans.

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

- 15:22-33 Paul further desires to go to Spain.
- Rome would then become a base for further ministry.

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

- 15:22-33 It is not clear whether Paul got to Spain, though he did make it to Rome as a prisoner. (See Acts 28)
- That was the result of the planned trip to Jerusalem that he mentions here (15:25-28).

1. Paul's Apostleship 15:14-33

- **Practical Lesson:** Life doesn't always go as you plan. Trust God anyway.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23



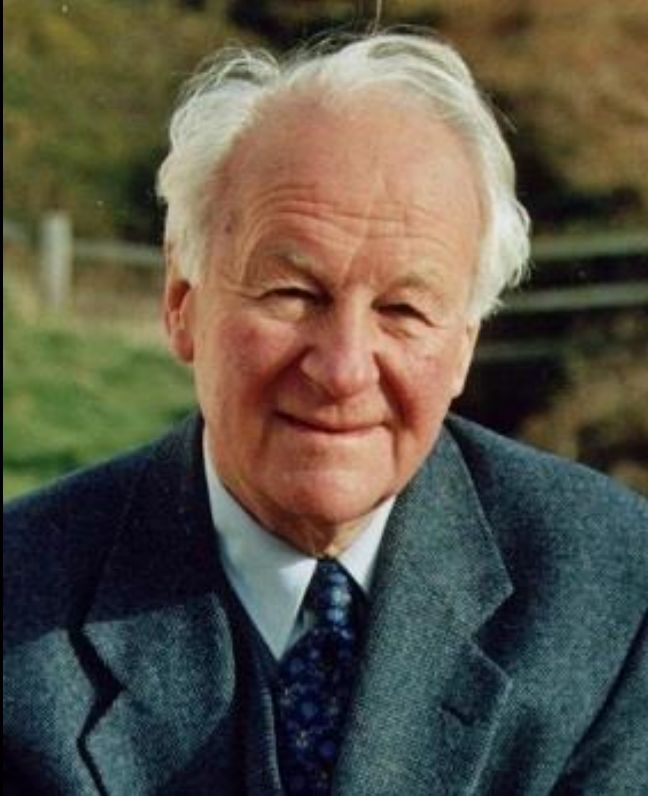
2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

- The Roman Christians were a diverse group.
- There were Jews, like Prisca and Aquila, who we met in the book of Acts.
- Yet no doubt the church was primarily Gentile – made up of Romans, Greeks and others.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

- Some names, such as **Urbanus** and **Hermes**, were common names for slaves.
- On the other hand, John Stott remarks on believers with higher social status.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23



Commentators consider it quite likely that the Aristobulus mentioned (10) was the grandson of Herod the Great and friend of the Emperor Claudius, and that Narcissus (11) was none other than the well-known, rich and powerful freedman who exercised great influence on Claudius.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
All Souls Church, London*

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

A Note on the Bible, Paul and gender:

- It's true that neither Paul nor the Bible as a whole gives us the impression that men and women are interchangeable.
- Still, Paul mentions numerous women, which argues against the popular notion that Paul is a pro-male bigot.
- They obviously played a vital role in the church.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

A Note on the Bible, Paul and gender:

- Phoebe is “a servant of the church at Cenchreae.”
- The word “servant” might also be translated “deacon” or “deaconess,” making this something of a title.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

A Note on the Bible, Paul and gender:

- Also interesting is 16:7 (ESV)

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

A Note on the Bible, Paul and gender:

- The name **Junia** might be **Junias** – female or male.
- The historical record on this particular person is unclear.
- The masculine form is more common.
- Greek grammar makes it hard to tell.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

A Note on the Bible, Paul and gender:

- Perhaps **Andronicus and Junia** were a married couple who were known as missionaries, like **Priscilla and Aquila**.
- Paul says (**1 Cor 9:5**) that “**the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas**” travelled with their wives.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

- **16:13** Finally, **Rufus** might easily be the son of Simon of Cyrene, who was enlisted to carry Christ's cross.
- **Mark 15:21** (ESV)

A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.)

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

- 16:17-19 As he often does, Paul also leaves them with a warning about false teachers.
- Grant Osborne makes an interesting observation.

2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

I was once asked ... why it is that the cults seem to draw so many of their followers from evangelical churches. I discovered two reasons: one, the lack of true fellowship ... the other, the lack of ... theological awareness ... When [Christians] hear these cult leaders twisting Scripture, they cannot tell that truth is being compromised ...

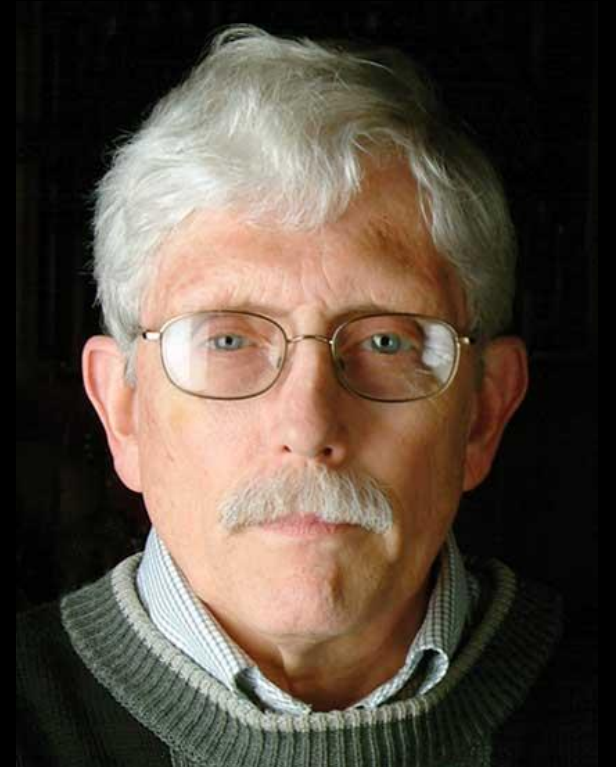
*– Grant Osborne,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

We must develop Berean Christians who “search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are true” (Acts 17:11). We need to stress theological truth and help our believers learn how to study the Bible for themselves and so know when God’s Word is being misused.

*– Grant Osborne,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



2. Diverse Greetings 16:1-23

- **Practical Lesson:** The church is made up of individuals, but it is never individualistic.
- It is a community united by both the Spirit and the Word.

3. Doxology 16:25-27



3. Doxology 16:25-27

- A doxology is a fitting end to this rich and instructive letter.
- Without worship, all thought and action can remain overly earthbound.

3. Doxology 16:25-27

- Key phrase: “the obedience of faith” (1:5, 16:26)
- Faith and obedience are *related* – *not rival* ideas.
- The gospel brings about **faith** which leads to **obedience**.

3. Doxology 16:25-27



The purpose of the revelation of the mystery of the gospel, Paul states, was so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith.

*– Colin Kruse,
Melbourne School of Theology*

3. Doxology 16:25-27

- **Practical Lesson:** Faith and obedience, when properly connected, lead to worship.

Closing Words **Conclusions**



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This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel ... We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.

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Closing Words **Conclusions**

- When Paul wrote this letter, he knew he had still not completed his ministry.
- He planned to go to Jerusalem, then desired to go to Rome and then on to Spain.
- He had once been zealous for the law, but now was zealous to proclaim God's grace.

Closing Words **Conclusions**

- Key concept in Romans: **God's grace**
 - Unmerited favor, freely given to penitent sinners.
 - God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.

Closing Words **Conclusions**

- Yet we know that faith needs to lead to obedience.
- Right doctrine, right living and a heart full of praise can sum up the message of Romans and much of the Christian life.

Closing Words Conclusions

In revealing this mystery, this only wise God wanted all the nations to believe and obey him. This is why both Jews and Gentiles are worshipping together in the church. Paul's response to the greatness and wisdom of God is to glorify him for ever through Jesus, his Son (16:27).

*– David M. Kasali, Bilingual Christian
University of the Congo*



Closing Words **Conclusions**

Practical Lessons:

1. Life doesn't always go as you plan. Trust God anyway.
2. The church is made up of individuals, but it is never individualistic. It is a community united by both the Spirit and the Word.
3. Faith and obedience, when properly connected, result in worship.

Closing Words **Conclusions**

- Key verses: **Romans 1:16-17** (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”