
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 16

Romans 16:1-27

Grace Notes

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The Epistle to the Romans

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Chapter 16

INTRODUCTION:

On Wednesday night we looked at the closing verses of Romans 15 as Paul states in v 23 that there is no place else to go and he is now led by the Spirit to go to Rome...but by way of Jerusalem.

Romans 16:1-16

In verses 1 through 16 Paul sends personal greeting to twenty-six people.

Phoebe is the one who will take this epistle to Rome. She is sent as Paul's personal representative.

Paul asks that the believers of Rome afford her very special hospitality

2. He greets Priscilla and Aquila who he first met in Corinth on his second missionary journey. As Jews they had been expelled from Rome during the persecutions of Claudius but now had returned.

Of all the people mentioned this husband and wife are the only ones who are mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures for certain.

In v 5 we see that one of the churches in Rome meets in their home

3. At verse 7 we have a greeting given to Andronicus and Junias (husband and wife?) who were related to Paul and at one time in prison with him.

4. In verse 10 we have the mention of church #2 which meets with Aristobulus, perhaps in his home. Some suppose he could have been the grandson of Herod the Great.

5. v 11 Herodian is also mentioned as a relative of Paul's. And in that verse we see that church #3 meets either under the leadership of Narcissus or in his home.

6. Rufus in v 13 may be the son of Simon of Cyrene who was the one who the Romans enlisted to bear Jesus' cross.

7. In verse 14 we have the mention of church #4...the brethren with them.

8. In verse 15 we have a greeting to church #5...the saints who are with them.

9. This section ends with the charge in v 16 to greet one another with a holy kiss...much like a warm and genuine handshake or embrace today. And that the churches Paul has personally visited greet the church in Rome.

Romans 16:17

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

The verb tenses would indicate that Paul is giving a warning of what could happen, not what is happening.

In the preceding section, Romans 16:1-16, Paul has given greetings to at least five different churches and 26 individuals and the congregations of the local churches in Rome.

He ended this with a strong statement of unity: Greet one another with a holy kiss.

And then sent greetings to them from all the churches of Christ.

Paul has noted their unity and stressed that this unity must continue.

So now he tells them what can interrupt and disrupt this unity.

Those who cause dissension and hindrances...

PAUL URGES THEM to keep your eye on those who:

This would be better stated, Watch out for those who.

Paul has had a lot of experience seeing those who cause disruptions find their way into local churches.

In Galatians Paul dealt with the legalistic Judaizers who came in after he left.

He also encountered some of them in Jerusalem at the first Jerusalem council:

Acts 15:5 But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying,

"It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.

In Galatians he speaks of them also: Galatians 2:3-6 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

THREE ARE THREE TYPES OF ERROR that causes dissension:

1. Legalism: There are only two systems for living the Christ Centered Life: Works or Faith.

Works do not work. The entire book of Galatians deals with that as does much of Romans.

In the OT economy we have a vivid illustration of the legalism of works.

Romans 9:30-32 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at {that} law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Israel tried it by works and failed. They could not fulfill the requirement of the Law: Be holy as I am holy.

2. The second error is philosophy. The first epistle of John was written to challenge the error of Cerinthus who lived in Ephesus and who denied the deity of Christ.

This teaching laid the ground work for Gnosticism which was the major error of the Second Century AD.

Today errors of Philosophy creep into the church and divide.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men,

according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form...

Today's philosophical errors leave the Word of God for the thinking of man.

3. The third error is false moral teaching: We see this as a problem in I Corinthians and later in the history of the church it became the major area of dissension.

In the dark ages the Roman Church and the Eastern Church also sought solutions through expediency and as a result, immorality flourished.

Priests and bishops would sell dispensations and indulgences for the recipients to sin and absolved even prior to the sin.

If a person gave enough of his money or land he could do whatever he pleased.

The church extorted money from people by telling them their departed love ones could not enter heaven until more and more was given.

At other times in Church History morality was used to replace spirituality and a false moral standard replaced grace.

Satan will use either moral or immoral arrogance to divide the church.

These errors that developed historically are all with us today and are the things we must look our for.

v 17 Continued: The DISSENSIONS and HINDRANCES are plural while the TEACHING (doctrine) is singular.

By wording this in this manner Paul establishes our doctrine as a single unit...and that unit is expressed in a single person, Jesus Christ.

Doctrine is the divine facts, reality, and results of our salvation.

The apostles agreed on this doctrine because they focused upon Jesus Christ.

Yet even they had to discuss, hammer some of these issues out. Hence the Jerusalem Council.

In this also we must recognize where God has been very clear and where God has not been clear

and know that all His revelation, even its clearness or vagueness, is for a reason.

We recognize there are essentials and non-essentials and we recognize where we do and where we do not have the liberty to make decisions regarding our own lives and the life of our own church.

We can be rigid about what is clear and flexible about what is not clear.

BUT ALL THIS, ALL THAT WE TEACH FOCUSES upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

With dissensions and hindrances...there are many: DISSENSION is in the Greek a word meaning to stand apart. To produce or cause a standing apart which is the opposite of the unity Paul has talked about which is unity.

Romans 15:5 Now may the God of perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.

The one who dissents and causes dissension with himself first stand apart. Often this is expressed by having some secret knowledge or superior understanding.

I Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter {and} the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge -- which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

The picture is of one who stands apart and beckons others to come apart with him.

The word for HINDRANCE is SKANDALA (stumbling block) and recall that that word was taken from the bait and trap used to snare an animal and kill it.

This is then a death trap to the spiritual life. The trap is baited, the victim falls in, the result is an end to the abundant spiritual life the Lord desires for us.

I John 2:10 tells us how to avoid being a deathtrap to others: The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

The plural form of these tell us that they are many, there is not way to chart the many forms error might take. As soon as you think you have all the error figured out, a new one will come along.

v 17 Last phrase:...the doctrine which you have learned, turn away from them.

TURN AWAY is a pres, act, imperative. Keep on turning away from them.

Means to avoid and as here turn away: Implies no influence, to ignore.

Galatians 2:4-5 But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

PRINCIPLE: You turn away by not allowing yourself to be influenced by anyone who causes dissension and could be stumbling block, a death trap, to your spiritual life.

PRINCIPLE: Separation is for you, for the preservation of your spiritual life.

Romans 16:18

For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Notice that the issue Paul makes is one of being a slave, a servant.

They, the ones who cause dissension, are not servants of Christ.

Instead they are said to be servants of their own appetites.

Philippians 3:18-19 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

The mind is set on earthly things, how they can gather a following, getting others to agree with them. Finding support for their ideas not in the Word but in numbers.

The Greek word is KOILIA and is used for the womb as well as the belly.

This is in marked contrast to the high loyalty of one who is a slave of Jesus Christ, the One who sits in the heavens with the Father.

Their method: Smooth and flattering speech.

They use communication, speech, which should edify and encourage, to arrive at their goal of dissension.

The speech is not harsh or abrasive, it is smooth and flattering, and it deceives the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Romans 16:19

For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.

Paul had never been to Rome but all the churches had heard of the obedience of these Roman Christians.

An obedience that Paul mentions back in Romans 1:5 that is a result of faith.

Paul's statement here very closely resembles the Lord's statement in Matthew 10:16 Be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves.

The preposition used in v 19 should read Be wise with a view towards that which is divine good (AGAQQOS).

But simple or innocent with a view towards that which is evil.

EVIL is KAKOS and is the very nature of Satan v 20 While verse 19 calls upon these believers to continue to obey and to discern the good from the evil, verse 20 tells us who really is the one who has the victory:

Romans 16:20

And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

This verse written at this point shows us the invisible forces behind the visible conflict.

The conflict as stated in vv 17-19 is between the ones who cause dissensions and hindrances and the ones who are obedient seeking the good.

But that is the visible conflict.

The invisible conflict is between GOD and SATAN

And in while with the visible conflict Satan may seem to win an occasional battle, in the invisible war the victory already is won by God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The WAR is won! And it was won at the Cross. All we have to deal with now are

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

In Romans chapter 16, at verse 21, Paul now comes to the conclusion of Romans, his longest epistle and the epistle that is his most complete statement regarding the Christ Centered Life.

Romans 16:21-24

As he has greeting believers in Rome, he now sends greeting to them from those he is with:

Timothy: Paul's son in the faith (I Timothy 1:2). A distinction shared by Titus

Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, my kinsmen:

These are some of Paul's extended family who are with him in Corinth

Tertius: Paul's stenographer or amanuensis. He is the one who actually wrote the epistle, taking dictation from the Apostle Paul. At this point is permitted to give his own personal greeting.

Gaius: He was Paul's host in Corinth and the church meet in his home. He is mentioned in I Corinthians 1:14 as one of the only two Paul baptized in Corinth.

Erastus: The city treasurer or director of public works in Corinth. Thus a high ranking government official and a believer

Quartus: The brother, perhaps the brother of Erastus

Again we see how important it was for Paul to link believers together. Here the believers of Corinth greeted fellow believers in Rome. This would have been an encouragement to the body of Christ.

v 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

While there is nothing wrong with the statement of this verse, it is not found in the earlier and better manuscripts

Romans 16:25-27

The Doxology of the Letter:

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past...

but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

These are two verses in which Paul, in his final statement in this letter, gets in a whole lot of doctrine:

1. The direction of praise is TO HIM: Everything that Paul has been writing for sixteen chapters points our attention to God and His gracious plan for us.

All the challenges Paul has given are only possible because God is ABLE...

DUNAMIA a present, passive, dative, participle.

It means to have the power to do something

It is passive voice because God had this power in His very essence. It is not acquired. It is present tense because He always has this power.

The Dative looks at advantage. It is advantageous to God to have this power and it is an advantage to us that He had this power and grants it to us.

A part from Him we could not do what Paul states is the purpose of this epistle, which is...

2. TO ESTABLISH YOU: The word is STERIZW and is the feminine form of ISTEMI, to stand.

The feminine form is used because this is something that God does to us, He provides the means and insures the results:

1) Paul opened Romans with this in Romans 1:11 For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established.

Short of being able to see them he writes to them so they may be established by God

2) In I Thessalonians 3:2 Paul wrote of the need to be established in the Faith, both in doctrine and in trust in God

3) I Thessalonians 3:12 Our hearts are to be established as blameless and holy before the LJC

4) In II Thessalonians 2:17 our hearts are to be established in every good work and word

5) Peter uses the word in I Peter 5:8-10 (Turn to) to show how God will establish us through pressure to stand against Satan

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

We also see in these verse that our stand, our being established goes hand in hand with our maturity

6) James and Peter write of the mechanics of our being established:

James 5:8 Patience is needed: You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

II Peter 1:12 Truth is needed: I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

Patience in which God will work His perfect plan in you and truth by which you come to know God and trust Him more and more

7) These are promises of what God will do in establishing us by His power

3. Paul shows us the means of our establishment in this verse also.

According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ...

Paul refers to the Gospel as my gospel three times. Here, back in Romans 2:16, and in II Timothy 2:8

This is not any arrogance on his part. The gospel is his, the salvation it brought to Paul was a gift of

God to him and to every believer who puts faith in Christ.

When we share the Gospel with others we are telling them of what happened to us, what God has given us. Nothing more!

John 9:24-30 The formerly blind man before the Pharisees. He told them what he knew, what had happened to him, he told them his gospel, and then invited them to become Jesus' disciples.

BACK TO Romans 16:25 The preaching here looks at the proclamation of the gospel, what is its content:

And the content of the gospel is regarding or of Jesus Christ.

He is at the center of the Gospel, our proclamation is of Him, His person and His work.

Our faith in Christ begins the work of God establishing us.

4. According to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations...

God's establishing of us will be according to the revelation of the mystery.

This statement looks back at the distinction Paul made in Romans 2 and 3 and Romans 9 through 11 between the nation of Israel and the Church age believer.

We today, as with these believers in Rome, are not established to the OT Law system for Israel.

It is something that has been revealed, it is new.

It was hinted at by the prophets, they spoke of Gentile salvation and they spoke of the one who inaugurates the mystery, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word MYSTERY means that which is known by the ones who are a part of a group. Greek fraternities, their secrets were called musterion.

We are part of a group, the Church, so it is not mystery to us. But in the OT it was a mystery.

Verses on the mystery:

I Corinthians 2:7 We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

Colossians 1:26 The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints,

Colossians 1:27 God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Ephesians 3:8-9 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things.

I Timothy 3:16 And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Unique Characteristics:

- a. No longer a nation but a family out of many nations.
- b. A relationship with Christ the risen Savior, Christianity is a relationship, not a religion.
- c. Universal indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ fellowship.
- d. Universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, creates in us a temple in which the Lord Jesus Christ dwells.
- e. Universal indwelling of God the Father
- f. Universal Priesthood of every believer.
- g. Every believer is an Ambassador for Christ
- h. Filling of the Holy Spirit available and mandated to every Church Age believer
- i. Completed canon of Scripture
- j. A supernatural way of Life in the Spirit and Truth Power Sphere for every C.A. believer
- k. Access to the mystery wisdom reserved for this age

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY? Note this dispensation alone but the one who is at the core of this unique age, the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. When Paul writes: According to the commandment of the eternal God he is reminding his readers and us that although this current age was not revealed in the OT it is not something that came about apart from the direct and express will of God known eternally by God and brought into existence by His commandment.

6. Now notice the last phrase. Paul connects this second to the last verse of Romans to his opening verses in Romans 1.

Romans 1:5 Through whom (Jesus Christ our Lord) we have received grace and apostleship to bring about { the } obedience of faith among all the Gentiles.

And now in Romans 16:26 For (EIS with a view towards or leading to) the faith-obedience for all the nations or gentiles.

In Romans 1:5 Paul used the preposition EV, among all the Gentiles.

Here he uses EIS, directly to all the Gentiles.

WHY THE DIFFERENCE?

Back in his introduction he chose a more mild preposition so as to not begin by offending the Jews.

By the end of Romans he has now taught where the Jews stand and what God is doing with the branch that is grafted in, the Gentiles, so he uses a preposition that implies God direct revelation to the Gentiles.

His boldness came only as a result of a clear teaching of doctrine

NOTICE ALSO THAT WE ARE REMINDED HERE as we were at the start of this epistle that obedience can only result from our faith in God.

Romans 16:27

To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

ONLY WISE are datives descriptive of GOD, He truly is the only source of wisdom, the only One who is wise.

The NIV is better than the NASB here: Be glory forever (unto the ages) through Jesus Christ.

END OF ROMANS STUDY
