

(16:1) - I COMMEND UNTO YOU PHEBE OUR SISTER, WHICH IS A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH WHICH IS AT CENCHREA: -- Paul begins his closing by mentioning a woman named “*Phebe, our sister,*” and “*a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea*” (near Corinth). Godly women are called and equipped to be servants of Christ and His church. Women are not to be pastors, preachers, or hold positions of authority over men, but that does not mean they cannot be used as important servants. Paul dealt with the role of women in the church and in public worship in *1 Corinthians 11:1-16* and *1 Timothy 2:9-15*.

(16:2) - That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. - Paul instructs them to “*receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints.*” The basis of this fellowship is the Gospel that reveals our mutual truth, faith, love, and obedience to Christ and His Word (*2 John 9-11*). We do not know specifically what Phebe had done, but Paul says, “*for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also*” - a comforter and helper of brethren including Paul himself.

(16:3-4) - Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. - “*Priscilla and Aquila*” had helped Paul in the ministry (*Acts 18:1-3*). They had “*laid down their own necks*” to save him from harm. This evidenced their love for Christ and for Paul (*1 John 3:14-16*). Many believers were forced to lay their lives on the line for the cause of Christ. Paul was grateful for their love and care for him. He was also grateful to “*all the churches of the Gentiles.*”

(16:5) - Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. - Paul also sent his greetings to the believers who met in the house of Aquilla and Priscilla. Remember, “*the church*” can refer to a specific group of believers in a local place, but also to all true believers (*Acts 20:28*). Paul mentions a man named “*Epaphroditus*” who was the first one in Achaia to be brought to saving faith in Christ.

(16:6) - Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. - “*Mary*” had helped Paul and his companions in the ministry. “*Much labor*” - This is not legal works aimed at earning God’s favor but works of faith and love God does through His people, not for salvation, but because of salvation freely given in Christ.

(16:7) - Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. - “*Andronicus and Junia*” were probably husband and wife. Paul calls them his “*kinsmen*” in the faith and “*fellowprisoners.*” Paul had been jailed many times for preaching the Gospel. Many of his fellow believers had been jailed with him. They were “*of note among the apostles*” as they had helped the other apostles in the ministry. “*Who also were in Christ before me*” - Andronicus and Junia had been brought to faith in Christ before Paul.

(16:8) - Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. - “*Amplias*” was a common name among the emperor’s household slaves at that time. He may have been one in “*Caesar’s household*” (*Php.*

4:22) who believed in Christ. Paul calls him **“my beloved in the Lord”** signifying Godly love and fellowship. All believers are equal in the eyes of God by His grace and based on the righteousness of Christ (*Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11*).

(16:9) - Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. - Paul describes **“Urbane”** as **“our helper in Christ.”** Paul was grateful for the help he had from other believers. This help can come in many forms such as prayer, provisions, support, encouragement, and even in preaching the Gospel of Christ. **“Stachys”** was also a dear and beloved brother to Paul in Christ.

(16:10) - Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household. - **“Apelles”** is described as **“approved in Christ”** (*cf., 1 Cor. 11:19; 2 Cor. 10:18*). To be **“approved in Christ”** is to have been tested and proved true and faithful to Christ and His people. This means to be **“approved”** by the Lord in the trials of faith that come from God and reveal the genuine faith of His people. Paul also sent greetings to the household, family, of **“Aristobulus.”**

(16:11-15) - 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. - As Paul continues, he expresses his love for them in the Lord. In v. 13 he describes **“Rufus”** as **“chosen in the Lord”** showing confidence that this man was one of God’s elect. God’s elect are those who have been justified in the righteousness of Christ, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called and brought into the kingdom and family of God by the Holy Spirit in the new birth under the preaching of the Gospel of Christ (*2 Thess. 2:13-14*). Paul refers to Rufus’s mother as his own mother, not naturally, but apparently a woman who loved Paul and had treated him as a son due to their fellowship in the faith.

(16:16) - SALUTE ONE ANOTHER WITH AN HOLY KISS. THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU. - Paul concludes his final greetings to them with a common expression of love, fellowship, and mutual faith in Christ - **“Salute one another with an holy kiss.”** In that culture it was common to greet a family member or close friend with a kiss on the forehead, cheeks, or beard. The Jews in the New Testament church carried on this practice, and it became especially precious to new believers who were often outcasts from their own families because of their faith in Christ and identification with Him, His Gospel, and His people. It was also especially precious to Gentile believers as it signified the spiritual love and kinship they had with Jewish believers in Christ. Paul calls it **“an HOLY kiss”** to distinguish it from anything evil or deceptive, such as when Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss (*Matt. 26:49*). Some try to pervert this practice and portray it as something sexual as in the sinful practice of homosexuality. Many of them try to use David’s relationship with Jonathan in this perverted way (*cf. 1 Samuel 20:41*). But it was simply a sign of fellowship and friendship - platonic and brotherly love. Those who hate the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ and who resent the love that true believers have for one another will go to great lengths to justify their own sinful practices and twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. Paul also expressed sincere greetings from all the **“churches of Christ,”** and this signifies the unity of all local congregations as ONE BODY, ONE CHURCH, in the Lord Jesus Christ.