

Romans 16:1-16, 21-24

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Let me invite you to take your copy of God's Word and join me in Romans chapter 16. Romans chapter 16.

Romans chapter 16. Our text for today is Romans 16 verses 1 through 16 and verses 21 through 24. As we begin to consider chapter 16, we find ourselves coming to the beginning of the end of this glorious letter.

I find in myself a bit of joy. It is always nice to complete a large task, and I am anticipating our next study. And I find in myself a bit of sadness, as I have really enjoyed preaching and hearing preached and studying and preparation this wonderful text.

I have chose today to lead us in thinking about the first 16 verses of chapter 16 and those additional three verses, four verses, 21, 22, 23, and 24, because they contain all of Paul's concluding remarks concerning Christian people.

He has a following warning as well as a doxology at the end, but this is all of that Christian people address found in these verses.

[1 : 29] These 19 or maybe 20, if my count was wrong there, verses mention 35 people by name, as well as the mention of groups of Christians in households and companions to people mentioned by name.

This text is the longest such list in the New Testament, and it begs the question, what do we do with these kinds of verses?

Often we read right past them as we're coming to the close or even in the opening sometimes of epistles. What do we do with them when we're given the task of preaching verse by verse through a text of Scripture?

When I preach before the reading of the text for the sermon, I say, Beloved, this is God's Word to us, written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

I do so as a means of drawing your attention to the weightiness of the task before us and to remind us of what we intend to accomplish together.

[2 : 44] It's no small deal to open up the Bible together and consider it each Lord's Day. However, we do not see any clearly expressed promises in today's verses.

Neither do we see any clearly expressed commands. So what do we do with it? We do believe that this is an inspired text.

It has God as its author. However, the inspiration of the Bible does not mean that God didn't use the culture and language and experience and personality of the human author of the text.

Today's text is the place that we see this most readily. Paul was a real man, carried along by the Spirit in the writing of this letter to real people.

There's a real context in which he's writing. That doesn't minimize the fact that it is God's Word for us today, but it needs to be understood in that light.

[3 : 53] Paul, in this closing chapter, who we see as giving dictation to a man named Tertius, expresses his affection and the affections of his companions for the Christians in Rome.

I love these verses and names that are in these verses. So let's read together. Romans 16, verses 1-16, and then I'll jump to 21-24.

But before I do, let me remind you, beloved, that this is God's Word to us, written for His glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

I'm going to let you know before I read that the way I pronounce all of these names is not the official pronunciation, and you should not quote me. In fact, they're probably wrong the way I pronounce

them, but I'm going to do my very best.

So here we go. Romans 16, verse 1. I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Kincrea, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

[5 : 09] Greet Prissa and Akilah, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.

Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epinetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

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

Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Appellus, yep, not Apples, Appellus, let's try that, who is approved in Christ.

Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsmen, Herodian. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.

[6 : 10] Greet those workers in the Lord, Trephana and Trephosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

Greet Asencritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Petrobos, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. Greet Philologus, perhaps, Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympus, and all the saints who are with them.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you. So do Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother, Cordus, greet you.

Most of these people's names are found only in this place, and we know very little about them. We know Prissa, or Priscilla, and Achilla in verse 3.

[7 : 22] We read about them in Acts 18, and know that they were tent makers that Paul stayed with in Corinth. They now find themselves in Rome. We can be fairly certain that the Rufus of verse 13 is the one mentioned in Mark 15 and verse 21.

There it says, and they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

So the one who carried the cross of Christ, it's most probable that this is his son. Otherwise, why would Mark have mentioned him being the father of Alexander and Rufus?

Of course, we know the Timothy of verse 21. So Cepater, whose name is also mentioned in verse 21, is likely the Sopater of Acts 20, who meets Paul at Troas after he left Ephesus.

If so, he was one of the Bereans who were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so, many of whom believed.

[8 : 38] That's found in Acts 17. But the rest of these names are unknown elsewhere. So no mention anywhere else in the text.

There is some evidence based on the actual names themselves that some of them may have been related to Paul, that some served in a noble's house, that others were slaves, but none of this is sure.

It's on some level just some conjecture. What we can be sure of, though, is that Paul loved them. And that's what's so cool about this list of names.

These 35 people mentioned by name plus some others who were around them. Paul used expensive writing material to send this tome of theological excellence to the church in Rome, and he spared no expense to take the space to mention these beloved Christians by name.

And you might think, well, he had some extra room on the papyrus, so he thought, I might as well greet some others. But they used writing material in this day. He would have been doing them a service to send them extra writing material that he hadn't written on.

[9 : 56] They could cut it up and use it for something else. It was extremely expensive. And so Paul, by the power of the Spirit, thought it important to take the time to write down these people, for them to be commended and greeted.

The Greek word translated greet is a good translation of that word. But it does mean more than just say hi.

Somehow we use the term in that way often. It's so much more than that. It carries with it the meaning of welcoming, enfolding, or embracing.

And so we can imagine that Paul is saying, give so and so a great hug from me. He is affectionate for these people.

Why is it that he is so affectionate? Note what Paul mentions of them. He calls one a sister, others brothers, servants, saints, a patron, fellow workers in the Gospel, the church, the very people that Christ died for, first convert, likely under his ministry, kinsmen, fellow prisoners, beloved, approved in Christ, chosen, and a mother to me.

[11:33] All of these people are dear to Paul because they are all recipients of God's grace and pictures of God's grace as they have supported and labored alongside Paul for the sake of the Gospel.

These are Christocentric relationships that Paul is expressing to us here. I think we can most readily draw application from today's text at this point in two ways.

He asks, what do we do with a text like this? I think right here, on the forefront, let me give to you, I think, two applications of a text like this. First, we, like Paul, ought to know people by name and not just vaguely know them, right, not be able to just run down a list or point at a person and know their name, but know who they are.

Know how God has shown them grace in Christ and how God is using them to love and serve the church and share the Gospel. We should know people and we have a limited capacity for that. We don't have to know all people, but we should know people and I don't think we should think that Paul had some special gift for names as we read a text like this.

[12:57] But he was affectionate towards these people, right? They were in his heart and he wanted the church in Rome to be sure that these people knew that he was thinking about them.

We are a part of a family of faith. That church that is invisible, that we can't see, that's spread across the entirety of the world today and throughout time.

We couldn't possibly know the names of all those people, but we do have a group. We're gathered together this morning that we could start that work of knowing people and knowing how it is that God has been gracious to them and how it is that they are working by His grace in the world in which they live.

This is why Paul encourages greet one another with a holy kiss. It was culturally normative to greet a family member in this day by kissing them on the forehead or the cheek.

And the early church had adopted the practice as many of its members were estranged from their families. They had adopted them into the life of the church.

[14:10] They were saying to one another, we are in Christ. Because of our faith in Christ, we are a family. And this practice had become known as a holy kiss.

I know he's talking about there. Treat each other as family is what Paul is encouraging here. So don't kiss me on the forehead or the cheek next Sunday.

But treat me as family. And there are other ways we do familial things together, are there not? We ought to be thankful for one another and recognize that when we see or think of one another, that we are beholding some measure of God's grace.

Consider that as we gather together. A way that we are served when we gather as a church is to look around at people who as far as we know have been saved by the grace and mercy of our God. What a wonderful thing that we face to face can see people and shake hands and give hugs and be reminded that God is saving a people for his glory.

[15:20] Do you want to be encouraged that our God is kind-hearted toward you? I need that encouragement. Pay attention to how gracious he is to his people.

Stop for a moment and think that maybe the gospel isn't powerful. Well, think about the way the gospel has been powerful in the life of others. There are manifold examples of that in the life of a local church.

So we ought to know people and know how it is that God is working in them and through them. Secondly, we, like Paul, ought to recognize that God is advancing his kingdom through lots of people.

Paul the apostle, right? the apostle to the Gentiles is recognizing that this church in Rome is about this work itself, right?

And that there are people who are carrying it out by the grace of God. If you are a leader in any measure, this should humble you as a reminder that God doesn't need you.

[16 : 32] There's a list of people here in Romans 16 that God is using, right, on top of the ministry of Paul. It should humble us.

God doesn't need us. He's going to accomplish his task with or without us. If you don't know how to fit into the life of a church, you don't feel like you're useful, this should embolden you as a reminder that God uses people of various gifting and means to accomplish his purposes.

seemingly insignificant people doing seemingly insignificant things is most normally the way that God brings about his reign in the hearts of his people.

It doesn't feel like a big deal week in and week out to gather with the church. I'll say to you honestly, it doesn't feel like a big deal week in and week out to prepare and to preach sermons.

I have the stage right now, everything happening in this church in a temporal sense. I'm doing it at the moment and yet I've been doing it for a lot of years.

[17 : 41] This sermon doesn't feel to me to be significant in any way whatsoever. It's just another sermon in a line of sermons, but we have seen the way God uses seemingly insignificant things to accomplish significant things in the hearts of his people.

And so we press on and we do the thing that God has given us to do. So there's this beautiful thing going on that God is building his kingdom and he's doing it with lots and lots and lots of people.

We see an example of that here at the beginning of chapter 16. I want you to notice and pay special attention to the Christ-centered nature of how Paul speaks about these people.

Here are just a handful examples if you look at the text. In verse 2, Paul says, welcome her, speaking of Phoebe, in the Lord.

As a Christian sister. Verse 3, my fellow workers, Prisca and Aquila, in Christ Jesus. Verse 5, the first convert to Christ in the area that's now known as Turkey.

[18 : 56] Verse 7, they were in Christ before me. Verse 8, my beloved in the Lord. Verse 9, my fellow workers in Christ.

Verse 10, a palace who is approved in Christ. Verse 11, greet those in the Lord. Verse 12, greet those workers in the Lord.

Verse 13, Persis who has worked hard in the Lord. Verse 14, Rufus chosen in the Lord.

So we see this layered up language of Christ sinness as Paul speaks about these people. When we feel deeply the realities of the gospel, we will love God's people.

Now I say feel deeply because many of us have a lot of mental knowledge. We can carefully articulate the doctrines of grace.

[20 : 00] Many of you could have taught us through the book of Romans. I am quite sure. But if these doctrines don't permeate our hearts and inform our every thought and action and emotion, then we have failed to understand them rightly.

Jesus tells us, in John 13 and verse 35, by this all people will know you are my disciples.

We ought to be really paying attention to what Jesus is saying. By this thing I'm about to tell you, all people will know you are my disciples. If you can articulate the doctrines of grace, it's not what follows that statement.

It's not what he says. I'm not saying it's not important, for one another. So all of that doctrine that is so incredibly important should be leading us to this place.

And I love chapter 16 because Paul expresses this great affection and love for the church and then it ends with the doxology, his praise of God. It's where all of it should lead.

[21 : 12] Recall that Paul spent the first 11 chapters of this letter carefully outlining how it is that we are accepted by God. We are justified by grace alone through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

And now having been accepted by God what a life of faith looks like and what the doctrine of justification means for the nations. That's where we end chapter 11. The beginning in chapter 12 he gives specific application with a particular emphasis on Christian love.

He makes statements like Romans 13 verse 8 no one anything except to love each other for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

I love these verses chapter 16 and names therein because Paul is not just telling us how we ought to feel toward one another but he is modeling it for us.

Here he's not just saying you ought to love others he's actually showing us that he loves others. It's so good to see it on display in this way.

[22 : 25] All of the things that Paul is taught in this letter lead him to these affections and ought to do the very same for us. So I want to do something a bit different at this point.

If you're interested I would encourage you to read some of it. There's some good guesses about who these people actually were. The character of each of them is pretty plain.

You can read through there and see the way Paul is showing us. These are people worth emulating for what we can know about them. We could spend some time talking about Phoebe and the nature of what Paul means and calling her a servant of the church.

But I think that's best for another time. I have given to you the application. First we ought to know God's people by name and be thankful God's grace.

And secondly we ought to recognize that God uses people many of them for the advance of his kingdom. So what are we to do with the rest of our time?

[23 : 43] I think we could stop at that point. I think the text has been lead us through a reading of Paul's letter to the Romans. I have made this case that this is his conclusion how did he get here doctrinally?

As we prepare ourselves to finish our study of Romans in the coming weeks let's be reminded of the glories that it contains. Let's consider what Paul lays out that builds the foundation for his affectionate closing words.

Now to read this letter in its entirety would take about an hour and we're not going to do that. So I have abridged it for our remaining time. I made choices.

Don't be mad at me about my choices. Please don't come ask me why I left one thing out and not another. I did the best I could to work through the letter and give the summary of it. You'll find there will be full chapters read because I can't not read some of these chapters together and some things that will definitely be bounced across.

But my hope, my prayer for us this morning is that we'll see the beauty of all this doctrine and where it leads us. So I'm going to begin in chapter 1 and verse 1.

[25 : 01] So if you'll join me there, chapter 1 and verse 1. and I'm going to conclude at chapter 15 and verse 9 and I will give you instruction as I proceed.

So be ready to jump and skip with me as we move through this. Romans chapter 1 and verse 1. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets and the holy scriptures, concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who were called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all those in Rome, who are loved by God and called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

[26 : 29] For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you, but thus far have been prevented, in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish, so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made.

[27 : 45] So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lust of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator, who was blessed forever.

Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those who were contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

[29 : 15] Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, they give approval to those who practice them. Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges.

For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man, you judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself that you will escape the judgment of God? Skip to verse 12.

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God but the doers of the law who will be justified.

For when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

[30 : 24] On that day when according to my gospel God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. Chapter 3 and verse 10. None is righteous.

No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one.

Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

In their paths are ruin and misery. In the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in a sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

[31 : 30] The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a perpetuation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It would show his righteousness at the present time that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Chapter 4 and verse 4. Now to the one who works his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly his faith is counted as righteousness.

Chapter 5 verse 1. Therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

[32 : 54] Not only that but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one would scarcely die for a righteous person though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us and that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

Since therefore we have been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life.

More than that we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation. Therefore just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin so death spread to all men because all sinned.

For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam who was a type of the one who was to come.

[34 : 12] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

For if because of one man's trespass death reigned through that one man much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Therefore as one trespass led to condemnation for all men so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Now the law came in to increase the trespass but where sin increased grace abounded all the more so that as sin reigned in death grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[35 : 20] What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. death no has dominion over him. For the death he died to sin once for all but the life he lives he lives to God.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Chapter 6 verse 20 When you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness.

[36 : 35] But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed for the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Chapter 7 verse 15 I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate.

If I do what I do not want I agree with the law that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh.

For I have the desire to do what is right but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. If I do what I do not want it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

[37 : 52] Wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself serve the law of God with my mind but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh in the is death but the mind on the spirit is life and peace for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit to God law indeed it cannot those who are in the flesh cannot please God You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you do not receive the Spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

[39 : 51] The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we also may be glorified with Him.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us, objected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who are the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

[41 : 08] And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom He predestined, He also called. And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all. For how will we not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us

from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, For your sake were you being killed all the day long, we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

[42 : 14] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen, according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed, for not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

Verse 16. It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. Chapter 10 and verse 1. Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

[43 : 34] For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. In verse 11. For the scripture says, Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what He has heard from us?

[44 : 36] So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Chapter 11, verse 1. I ask then, Has God rejected His people? By no means.

For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life. But what is God's reply to him? I have kept for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

So too at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.

What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened. As it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see, and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.

[45 : 41] Chapter 11 and verse 19. Then you will say, Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. They were broken off because of their unbelief. But you stand fast through faith, so do not become proud, but fear.

For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God, severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness.

Otherwise, you too will be cut off. And even if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut, for if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers. A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this

way, all Israel will be saved.

As it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins. As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake.

[46 : 59] But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God, but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy.

For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways!

For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him, and through him, and to him are all things.

To him be glory forever. Amen. Justification by grace, through faith, and the personal work of Jesus Christ alone. Chapter 12, verse 1.

I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[48 : 18] For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them, if prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, the one who does evil, hold fast to what is good.

Love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, though be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

[49 : 37] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink, for so by doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Chapter 13, verse 1, Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. And verse 8, O no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is fulfilling the law. Besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

[50 : 46] The night is far gone, the day is at hand, so then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Chapter 14, verse 1, As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

And verse 7, For none of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So that whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

For to this end, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or why do you despise your brother?

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. Chapter 15, and verse 1.

[51 : 50] We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up.

For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. Right? I hope some measure that serves you to see the arc of where Paul is going. Justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

[53 : 01] We're not saved as individuals. We're saved as a people. He means for us to be a people who love one another for our good and for his glory.

Let's pray together. Thank you. Thank you.