

Greeting One Another



Romans 16: 1-20

Introduction

- This chapter may appear to be a boring one, but as we read this list of names, we cannot help but be impressed with the fact **that Paul loved people and was interested in them.**

I. Some Saints to Greet

- **Paul closes out his letter to the church at Rome with a whole series of “greetings” to various people who meant a lot to him.**
- **He actually mentioned 26 people by name.**

I. Some Saints to Greet

- **Phoebe** was evidently a deaconess (church of Cenchrea) on her way to Rome, and the bearer of the epistle.
- We meet **Priscilla and Aquila** again. What dear friends they were to Paul! (Acts 18:2–28, 1 Cor. 16:19, and 2 Tim. 4:19).

I. Some Saints to Greet

“Greet also the church in their house.”

- There seems to be as many as five house churches mentioned in this chapter (vv. 5, 10, 11, 14, 15).

“Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia” (v. 5).

- The word *beloved* shows the warm bond between Paul and his first convert in the Roman province of Asia.

I. Some Saints to Greet

- Nine women are mentioned in this chapter: **Phoebe (v.1); Priscilla (v.3); Mary (v.6); Tryphena (v.12); Tryphosa (v.12); Persis (v.12); the mother of Rufus (v.13); Julia (v.15); and the sister of Nereus (v.15).**
- Verse 7 mentions two men (**Andronicus & Junia**) who were saved before Paul was, and were also noted by the apostles.

I. Some Saints to Greet

- “Greet **Ampliatius**, my beloved in the Lord” (v. 8).
- “Greet **Urbanus**, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved **Stachys** ” (v. 9).
- “Greet **Apelles**, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of **Aristobulus**” (v. 10).

I. Some Saints to Greet

- “Greet my kinsman **Herodion**. Greet **those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus**” (v. 11).
- **Rufus** is an interesting man (v. 13).
- Mark 15:21 states that the Simon who carried the cross was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

I. Some Saints to Greet

- “Greet **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas** and **the brothers** who are with them” (v. 14).
- Greet **Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister,** and **Olympas,** and **all the saints** who are with them” (v. 15).
- Again the phrase “*all the saints who are with them*” indicates that Philologus was the pastor of a house church in Rome.

I. Some Saints to Greet

- He told them to “*greet one another with a holy kiss*” (v.16).
- What did Paul mean?
- Does this injunction have any relevance for Christians today?

I. Some Saints to Greet

- A kiss was an act of love and respect in ancient cultures.
- Here the word “*holy*” identifies it as a religious act.
- The reminder that it is a “*holy*” kiss guards it against erotic associations.

I. Some Saints to Greet

- **Bullinger notes that in the ancient world men kissed men [only] and women kissed women [only] in social situations (*Figures of Speech*, p. 62).**

The “Kiss” in Scripture

- **Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss (Matt. 26:48-49);**
- **The father and his prodigal son (Luke 15:20);**
- **The Ephesian elders and Paul (Acts 20:37).**

Function & Form

- We must understand the difference between “absolutes” and “non-absolutes.”
- Understanding the difference between **function** (absolutes) and **form** (non-absolutes), helps solve many problems in biblical interpretation.

Function & Form

- To “*salute or greet one another*” is a function and normative.
- “*The kiss*” represents a form of greeting very common in the culture of the first century.

Function & Form

- **The logic is that our verbal greeting needs to be confirmed by a visible and tangible gesture, although what form the 'kiss' should take will vary according to culture.**

Function & Form

- **Forms vary from culture to culture.**



Function & Form

- **Forms vary from culture to culture.**



Function & Form

- **Whatever forms these functions take in the Christian community, they should never violate biblical values.**



Function & Form

- **Greetings among people tend to be empty and superficial.**
- **Believers should greet one another with pure motives.**
- **It was to be sincere and meaningful, and a true expression of love & concern.**

Application

If the long list of names and greetings in these verses teaches us anything, it is that Paul had a love for people.

Application

- 1) *We must be “people-persons.”*
- 2) *We are to be friendly.*

Note: Not typical of B-P Churches!

II. Some Sinners to Avoid

- This warning sounds foreign in a chapter filled with greetings, but Paul knew the **dangers** in the churches and wanted to warn the saints.
- Christians who cause trouble because of their selfish desires (usually pride) are not to be received into the local fellowship.

II. Some Sinners to Avoid

- The word “mark” means “watch them; keep your eyes on them.”
- It is right for the church to keep an eye on “**church tramps**” who run from one church to another, causing trouble and division.



II. Some Sinners to Avoid

- Paul urges continual watchfulness for the **“religious wolves”** who seek to enter in and devour the sheep.
- The believer must not be gullible but must continually repudiate all **false teachers**.

II. Some Sinners to Avoid

- They may claim to be slaving for the Lord, but they are living for the lusts of their own evil nature.
- With their smooth and honeyed words they deceive the simple, whom Schreiner calls “the unsuspecting” (*Romans*, p. 803).

Application

Two protective measures the church must take against religious charlatans.

- 1. “Watch out for those who cause divisions.”**
- 2. “Keep away from them” (v. 17b).**

Application

- **The connection is clear: When you really love people as much as Paul loved the Romans, you protect them.**
- **We need to love in such a way that we really put it on the line for others and speak the truth in love.**

Challenge

- 1. Make sure you are living in harmony with other believers in Christ.**
- 2. Make every effort to develop sincere interest in others.**
- 3. Mark those (members or visitors) who are trouble-makers.**