

ROMANS

16:1-27

Romans 16:1-27

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 11th June 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Galatians 1:6-9

Introduction

This morning is our final study in the book of Romans, at least for now. Over the last 17 weeks we've looked at the first 15 chapters of this magnificent book in which Paul gives the most comprehensive of statements of Christian faith and doctrine; explaining not only what we believe, and why, but also how that should make a tangible, practical difference in our lives.

Indeed, if we can read Romans without being changed, we either have a problem with our eyes, or a problem with our heart.

Chapter overview of Romans

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- **Chapters 1-8:** Christian doctrine
 - Sin (1-3), Salvation (4-5), Sanctification (6-8)
- **Chapters 9-11:** Israel
 - Israel - Past (9), Present (10), Future (11)

- **Chapters 12-16:** Practical Christian living
 - Practical Christianity

As we look back over this letter, written to the Christians in Rome, we first saw Paul write about the problem of sin - how that all of mankind was under *condemnation*. He then explained *justification* - that we can be justified by faith in Christ (that we would be seen just as if we had never sinned), and then he wrote about *sanctification* — that positionally we might be set apart for Christ, *and* that we may grow *in* Christ. And as he reached chapter 8, he showed that it is the *Holy Spirit* that brings us to the place where sin no longer reigns in our lives. Where we yield to *God*, and *not* to temptation.

However, for the Jew and Gentile alike, that raised questions about what that meant for Israel. And in chapters 9-11 Paul explained that God has *not* finished with Israel, that He still has a plan and purpose for them, and that He has and always will be faithful despite their fickleness. And that's not only wonderful news for them, but comfort for us, for we are fickle too. Indeed, Paul would later write to Timothy: "*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*" God does not change. He cannot go against His character or His nature. How good that is for us!

Having explained that, Paul then writes these final 5 chapters that deal with our Christian duty — that is our responsibility in light of the gospel. Not that we would earn our salvation, but that we'd respond to it as it fitting, as is reasonable to do.

In chapter 12, Paul asked us urgently and fervently to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, and to behave like a Christian. And as he continued into chapter 13 he wrote how that should result in our submission to Government, in loving one another, and walking properly — making no provision for the flesh. These things are Biblical instruction.

Then, in chapters 14 and 15, he dealt with matters of conscience and conviction; how we are neither to trample over the conscience of those who have personal convictions stricter than our own, nor judge others who do what we personally choose *not* to. But in both cases, we are not to go beyond what the Bible permits; neither using our liberty to sin, nor suggesting that the Bible requires keeping of the ideas, commandments or doctrines of men where no such instruction is given or demand is made by it. Ultimately, we are to accommodate each other and receive each other in love — Christ as our example.

However, does that mean we are to accept everyone into our midst? And to accept what every person says? Not at all. And this morning, as we study chapter 16, we'll see some very clear instruction from Paul that there is indeed a time to separate from others. That is, there are people who call themselves Christians that we are not to keep company with. So let's not take chapters 14 & 15 in isolation, thinking we're to receive anyone and everyone, but rather let's consider what we read here too, and ask the Lord for wisdom and discernment in all things.

Overview of chapter sixteen

Overview of chapter sixteen

- **v1-2** — Don't shoot the messenger
- **v3-16** — Greetings to the Christians in Rome
- **v17-20** — Deal decisively with divisive people

- **v21-24** — Greetings from Corinth
- **v25-27** — Glory to our God

Breaking this chapter down then, we see Paul begin by noting one of many notable women in the early church, Phoebe. And she is one of 27 individuals that Paul mentions in the opening 16 verses; 4 of whom he mentions with terms of endearment, and a further 11 of which he commends in some way. He also mentions 4 groups of people. Of the individuals he mentions, at least 9 are women (most of those being ones he commends for serving God and the church), and 23 or 24 of these individuals are mentioned only here in Romans. Only Priscilla, Aquila, Rufus (and possibly Mary) are noted elsewhere.

Later, in verses 21-24, Paul *sends* greetings from 8 individuals, 5 of whom are mentioned elsewhere in scripture too. And through all this we get a wonderful picture of how the early church was made up of many individuals, and these many parts were doing their share as they served both God and one another. We can see the love and affection between believers in individual churches *and* between those in the wider church. And, that should serve as a reminder of how the love between *us* should be palpable too.

However, in the middle of those who Paul sends greetings *to*, and those he sends greetings *from*, we find the heart of this chapter which is a warning that we can't just agree to disagree on some topics. Rather, at times we will need to actively decide to *avoid* those who cause divisions and offences in the church. And we'll consider that in some detail later in our study today.

At the end of this letter we find 3 verses in which Paul signs off by pointing us to God — the author and finisher of our faith — and he gives the glory to Him.

Chapter sixteen

So, let's take a look at this chapter and consider these things. We read in the opening 2 verses:

Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

So Paul begins by praising Phoebe, the likely bearer of this letter to the Christians in Rome, and he notes she was part of the church in Cenchrea — a seaport on the Eastern side of the Isthmus of Corinth — less than 10 miles from Corinth itself. And she wasn't merely a churchgoer, but one who was willing to serve. In fact, the term used is one of a Deaconess — one who among other things served the practical needs of the church. And so Paul instructs those in Rome to receive her in a manner worthy of the saints. We can quickly gloss over that, without giving it much thought. But what does it mean to receive someone in a manner worthy of a Christian?

After all we've read in Romans, it has to mean in love. It has to mean with hospitality. And it should definitely be with warmth. So then, how do we greet people who walk in here for the first time? Well, I think the first principle is that we can't hope someone else will go and say hello.

Imagine if Phoebe returned to Paul and he asked "Did you give them the letter? how are they? Were you encouraged by them?" And she said "You know what, it was really weird. I walked in and no-one said hello before the service. And then after the service they all gathered in groups of people I guess they were familiar with, but beyond someone offering me a cuppa, no-one really said hello then either". "Are you sure you got the right church?" asks Paul. "I think so" says Phoebe; "they had the web address on the outside of the building. And they had a dove on the lectern. They sang songs to God where they asked Him to lead them in love to those around them, and the pastor taught a Bible study showing how Christ said we are to love one another. Except, after the service, no-one did." "That is weird" says Paul. "Maybe I'll write to them again and ask why no-one spoke to you." And, I'm not adding to scripture here, but using this as an example, what if Paul did write again, and their response as to why no-one spoke was "well, we all felt nervous talking to someone we didn't know". I hope you find that whole situation implausible. The question is though, is it implausible with us? We should think about that.

But of course, Paul didn't ask only for love and hospitality. He asked them to support Phoebe, for she herself had supported many - including Paul. What a testimony that is to have! Let *us* seek to support not only each other in ministry, but as many as the Lord sends our way. In whatever way we can, in whatever way they need. Whether using our time, our finances, our homes, our vehicles, or more.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying we fail at all these things - I've seen some here host visiting speakers, or Bible college students. I've seen you take people out for dinner, or have them round to your homes. Many have and *do* willingly give lifts to those who otherwise couldn't get to various meetings. But let us not rest on what we've done, but look for what we can yet still do, and especially let us be welcoming and hospitable to *all* who walk through the doors of this church.

Paul continues...

Romans 16:3-5a

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

This Jewish couple were old friends of Paul's. We first hear of them in Acts chapter 18 where Paul had come to Corinth and met Aquila, and his wife Priscilla, who had fled Rome at that time due to persecution, and they invited him into their home to stay with them, and they worked together in their common trade as tentmakers. Then later on, as Paul set sail for Syria, they travelled with him, passing through Cenchrea where Paul had his hair cut off, and perhaps they would have met Phoebe too. After Paul had moved on from Antioch, we find this couple end up in Ephesus, and there they gently instruct Apollos who was full of enthusiasm, and accurate in some teaching, but didn't know all that which he should. We read in Acts 18:26 that "*When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*"

We later find them hosting a church in their home as Paul writes from Philippi to the church in Corinth, and here in Rome we now hear of them doing the same. This was a necessary work, for in the early church there were no special buildings to gather in — the church was the church. That is, the people were the church. And that's how it should still be today — not that we don't meet in buildings, but that we'd remember, as the old song says, "you can't go to church because the church is you."

Some years later Paul asked Timothy to greet them in his second letter to him. And so Aquila and Priscilla were in it for the long haul. And as we read here, they were prepared to risk their lives for the sake of supporting Paul in his ministry.

What wonderful people! What godly and necessary people. They are a picture of the church working as it should, for the work of the pastor is to equip the *saints* for the work of ministry. They were an example of the saints getting on with that ministry! And they aren't the only ones Paul commends in this letter. We read on:

Romans 16:5b

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia to Christ.

Epaenetus, like most others in these coming verses, is mentioned by name only here in Romans. But given Paul's description of him being one of the first believers in Achaia (that is in Western Greece), it could well be he was part of the house of Stephanas, whom Paul writes about in his closing chapter of 1 Corinthians, saying:

1 Corinthians 16:15-16

I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints— that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us.

What Paul is saying to the Corinthians, and us, is get behind the ministry of such folks who are willing to arrange their lives around serving God.

But note here that he also calls him *my beloved* Epaenetus — one of a few people he describes in such terms in this passage. There is such warmth in that. And given both these descriptions, I don't think it unreasonable to conclude, as some have, that Paul had led this man to Christ, and so there was a special place in his affections for him. It would certainly be the same type of sentiment we see from *John* in his third letter where he says (also using the term *beloved*), that "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Next, Paul writes:

Romans 16:6

Greet Mary, who laboured much for us.

Now, we don't know which Mary this was out of the 6 that are mention in the New Testament. But this description is worth noting, for the Greek word used for laboured means to feel fatigue, and by implication, to work hard. One commentator suggests she laboured to the point of exhaustion. And if so, she wouldn't be the only one in scripture who did so.

Romans 16:7

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Both these folks are mentioned only here in Romans, and it's generally assumed that they are husband and wife. Paul's note about them is that they were fellow Jews, perhaps specifically of the tribe of Benjamin as he was, and that they too had found themselves in prison for the sake of following Christ — though when and where we don't know. Furthermore, he adds that they knew the Lord before he did — and I think there's often something wonderful about meeting and knowing others who have been Christians for longer than you, and have walked with the Lord for many years.

Romans 16:8-9

Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

These men are also mentioned only here in the Bible, though there are some traditions outside of scripture about them. What is sure, is that Paul had real love for these fellow believers.

Romans 16:10

Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

While these men are also only mentioned here in Romans, I think there are two things worth noting. First, is Paul's commendation of Apelles — who he describes as *approved in Christ*. What could that mean? Well, look at what he later writes to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself **approved to God**, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Second, it's worth considering who Aristobulus was, for historians have suggested he was the grandson of Herod the Great, who had tried to murder Jesus by killing all Jewish boys under 2 years old. A man who also murdered his sons, his wife, and anyone who he considered a threat to him. Yet here we find that not only his grandson, but his grandson's household had come to know the Lord. A good reminder that your relationship with God doesn't depend on who your parents or grandparents are. It matters whether you know Jesus as your Saviour.

Romans 16:11

Greet Herodian, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Paul notes Herodian was a fellow countrymen. While we can be confident that they were both Jewish, and possibly from the same tribe of Benjamin, there is also suggestion that all those he notes in this chapter as his countrymen are indeed relatives of his in some closer way. But that's not certain it seems.

Romans 16:12

Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord.

By this point, we should be getting the idea that so many of these folks served the Lord with real energy and commitment. They didn't turn up, consume, and walk away. But one thing that caught my eye in commentaries on this passage was the suggestion that the meaning of the names of these sisters, Tryphena and Tryphosa, was delicate and dainty, and yet they still rolled up their sleeves and worked. These little notes are good to make us think.

Persis is another woman whom Paul commends. But note a subtle difference in how he does so, for any time he called men in this chapter *beloved*, he called them *my beloved*. Yet, in writing about Persis, he says *the beloved*. Accidental? I doubt so. Rather, there is example from Paul here in that he relates differently to his Christian brothers compared to his Christian sisters. And that is a wise thing to do. Indeed, there needs to be much care by all Christians, and especially those in ministry, to set careful boundaries in friendships with those of the opposite sex. If that were done more consistently, we'd see fewer sad stories of those who have fallen into sin.

Romans 16:13

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

We first hear of this man back in Mark's gospel along with his brother Alexander, for it was their father — Simon the Cyrenian — that was compelled by the Roman soldiers to carry Jesus' cross, and it would seem that had left a lasting impression on this family. And evidently, Rufus' mother had been like a mother to Paul also — and that had made quite some difference to him for him to feel this way and write this.

Romans 16:14-15

Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

As Paul concludes his list of those he sends greetings to — including Philologus, who has a great name meaning *Lover of the Word* or *Lover of reading* — there is one who is notable, not by his inclusion, but by his absence. And that is Peter. For if Peter was the first Pope, as the Catholic church teaches, you would anticipate that he would have been in Rome pontificating, and would therefore have been first on Paul's list, rather than absent from it. As Finnis Dake puts it; *"It is, therefore, a waste of time to consider further such a groundless theory. It is very likely that Peter never saw the city of Rome in all his life."*

Paul writes on...

Romans 16:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

Affection is a good thing. Indeed, you may recall that back in Romans 12:10 Paul wrote: *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;"*.

But what does it mean to greet one another with a holy kiss? First, that this was the custom of the time for those that had genuine care for one another. Other cultures have handshakes or hugs. Some have a kiss on both cheeks, some have 3 kisses on alternating cheeks. But in the Roman empire, a single kiss would suffice — and to not do so would no doubt have been a sign of coldness in your friendship, which I presume is why Paul says a similar thing in both 1 & 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians, and why Peter does so in his first letter.

But the key is a *holy* kiss. This is not an opportunity to take advantage of others. If I stand at the door of the church expecting a kiss from every woman that walks in, that doesn't mean I'm showing Christian affection, it means I'm not fit to be a pastor. We are to do nothing that would call into question our walk with the Lord, or worse cause others to question *Him*.

Romans 16:17-18

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

So Paul moves from a list of greetings, to both warning and instruction. And in contrast to chapters 14 & 15 where he told the Christians in Rome to receive each other, and to be accommodating of personal convictions (so long as within the boundaries the Bible sets), he now says that there are times to keep well clear of some others who call themselves Christians.

And those times are not when we have differences over days and diets, but differences in *doctrine*. And let me be very clear on this point — those who are divisive are *not* those who stand on the Bible, who teach what it says, who believe all that it claims, and seek to apply it to their lives — rather, those that are divisive are those who teach contrary to it, and who not only live outside of it's teaching, but seek to justify their actions by telling or teaching others that what they are doing is actually *permitted* by the Bible.

It would be great if we didn't *need* to be wary of such things, but right now we *must*, as Peter writes in his first letter, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*". Right from the start Satan has called God's Word into question, saying to Eve "*Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?*"

And Paul's concern was not only shown in writing to those in Rome, but also to those in Galatia as we saw in our reading this morning from Galatians chapter 1. Furthermore, in Acts 20, Paul's words to the Ephesians elders are recorded:

Acts 20:25-31

"And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

And those savage wolves exist today. There are men and women like Steve Chalke, Brian McLaren, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Joyce Meyer and so on, that teach things fundamentally opposed to the gospel that Paul shared, and the doctrine that we find throughout scripture. These are not merely people with different points of view. They are those such as the Bible warns us of. And it warns us to keep no company with them, because the damage they can do is considerable. As I've said before, there are pastors and ministers standing behind pulpits in *this* country that are not even Christians. The test of a faithful teacher of God's word is not how nice they seem to be, how bright their smile is, nor how many followers they have on Instagram, or how many people they have in their church. The one test is whether they are faithful to the Word of God.

Indeed, Paul warns here that such false teachers will use flattering words that make people feel good about themselves. And they will deceive those who are unsuspecting of them.

So then, there *are* times to separate from others. 1 Corinthians 5 is one example of that. And we all need to be prepared for the reality that there may come a time where an individual comes along to *this* church, whom we have to put out of the church because they are divisive over doctrine. Practically that means not letting them come to meetings, or remain in our WhatsApp group. And it also means ALL of us withdrawing from fellowship with them.

Consider how damaging it is not only to a church family, but to an individual, if the church leadership act as *instructed* and put someone out the church, but someone in the church says "oh, it's OK, come round to mine for a Bible study", and someone else says "come round for dinner — we still love you". Look, it's not a question of a lack of love, but precisely because of love that these things are to be done. Those that are willing to divide a church over Christian doctrine or Christian conduct are not to be part of it. Not only is that healthy for the church (so that the cancer does not spread) but it is also healthy for the individual, so that they may come to their senses.

Now, Paul further writes:

Romans 16:19-20

For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

So he commends the Christians in Rome for how they *have* lived obediently to God and His Word, *however* Paul underlines what he just said by warning them to be wise concerning spiritual matters, but innocent concerning evil. That is, neither they or we need to experience or have a knowledge of every wicked thing that this world has to offer so that we can be culturally relevant. We simply need to obey the Lord, and to patiently endure these difficulties — for in the light of eternity it will be but a moment until Satan is thrown into the lake of fire from which he will never emerge.

Having made this warning, Paul now sends greetings from those present with him in Corinth:

Romans 16:21

Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

Timothy should need almost no introduction, for not only was he one of Paul's travel companions, but he was also mentored by him — and we have the Bible books of 1 & 2 Timothy written to him.

Lucius is first mentioned in Acts chapter 13, as one of the prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch. And Jason is first mentioned in Acts 17 where, following Paul teaching in Thessalonica, the Jews (who were not persuaded) became envious, set the city in uproar, and attacked the house of Jason. And when they didn't find Paul there, they dragged Jason and others before the rulers saying *"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harboured them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus."* A couple of verses later we read that Jason was quickly let go.

The only one of these four men mentioned in this verse that is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible is Sosipater, so we don't know as much about him - though it's suggested that he had been the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. Verse 22...

Romans 16:22

I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

Hang on, didn't *Paul* write Romans?! Yes, he did. But he did so by dictating to Tertius who acted as a scribe or amanuensis to write this letter. In fact, all Paul's letters were dictated, with the exception of Galatians in which he says "see how large a letter I have written with my own hand". It's believed Paul had problems with his eyesight.

Romans 16:23

Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.

Originally from Derbe, Gaius was one of Paul's travel companions, whom he had noted in 1 Corinthians as one of the few, along with Crispus, that he had baptised himself. He was also among those dragged in front of the riotous mob in Ephesus, and known for his hospitality, with John writing his third letter to him, likely before Paul wrote Romans, saying *"you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church."* And now here we see he hosted both Paul and the whole church in Corinth. A great example.

Erastus travelled with Paul and Timothy as noted in Acts 19, and he was later noted in 2 Timothy for staying in Corinth. He was another man well known to them both.

Quartus, we only find here in Romans. But like Tertius in the prior verse, his name tells us something. For as Tertius means "third", Quartus means "fourth" - likely the numbers they were given as slaves. I like the point Jon Courson makes about this. He said:

So, too, you might feel like a number, like no one cares about you, like no one takes notice of you. But the Lord has a plan for you. He's got your number. And as you give yourself to Him and walk with Him, you'll find significance.

Jon Courson

Now, as we reach verse 24 we find ourselves at the end of Paul's letter. "The end?!" you might think, for there's still 3 more verses after this. Well, we're both right. Let me explain. First, Paul closes this letter, pointing to Christ and the message of the gospel — God's riches at Christ's expense — saying (as he does in many of his letters):

Romans 16:24

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

There is nothing better than the grace of God, which Paul so wonderfully explained throughout this letter to the Christians in Rome. A letter that is here in the Bible for our benefit too. And so, that is what already seems a fitting conclusion. But there's more, for at this moment it seems Paul takes over the pen from Tertius and writes a short PS, as he did in his other letters too (a habit he notes in 1 Thessalonians). And he writes:

Romans 16:25-27

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 kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

The short version is that Paul says "Now to Him... ..to God... ..be glory through Jesus Christ forever." But in the middle of this he says that our God is able to establish you according to, or as stated by the gospel Paul preached. And He is able to establish you as stated by the preaching of Jesus Christ. And He is able to establish you as stated by the mystery that is now revealed, that all along God planned for Jesus to die in our place for our sin. And God is able to establish you as stated by prophecy, and as stated by His commandments. Why? For what purpose? That we might be obedient to the faith.

Conclusion

As we wrap up this chapter, I encourage you to think of the examples we see of the believers noted in it. But also, don't miss the heart — that we have to hold fast to the Bible, and we are to avoid those who teach anything contrary to it. This warning is not unique to Romans, and it is not unique to Paul. Time and again, we are told to be faithful to God's Word. In Jude we read this:

Jude 1:3-4

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us not go against Jesus and His Word in any way whatsoever.

Now, we have come to the end of not only this chapter, but our study of the book of Romans. And as I said a week or two ago, I hope that we'll never be the same having gone through it. It is a literary masterpiece, but more importantly it is the Word of God, and as we read in Hebrews, God is "a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" - so don't let it be a matter of years before you read and study it yourself. Read your Bibles daily, and visit Romans frequently. Not because I suggest so, but because it would be crazy not to.

Application questions

As you go home today, consider these two things:

- Are you known for serving God as these men and women in Rome were?
 - Do you know your Bible enough to spot those who teach contrary to it?
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