

In-House Wednesday Night Bible Study, 6:00 PM

“LOVE OF THE SAINTS” ROMANS CHAPTER 16

July 29, 2026

Romans, chapter 16, is by far the most extensive and intimate expression of love and appreciation to come from the tender heart and inspired mind of the apostle Paul. It is a rich and rewarding section that yields many insights into the life of Paul, into the lives of other early Christians, and into the nature and character of the first-century church. The apostle's comments about these mostly unknown individuals are all the more touching because this great apostle takes time to speak so warmly and appreciatively of these "ordinary" Christians, who were as much his brothers and sisters in Christ as Peter, James, John, and other New Testament notables. He reveals his deep affection for those whom he had served, for those who had served him, and for those who served with him.

Paul continues the personal dialogue that began in 15:14 and reveals still more of his inner thoughts and feelings, not so much as an apostle as a fellow servant of Jesus Christ. In 15:14-33 he focuses on his relationship to the Lord in his ministry. In chapter 16, he focuses on his relationship to other Christians with whom he has been associated in one way or another in his ministry. He specifically identifies, and sometimes briefly comments about, those to whom he felt the closest. He reveals his love for the community of the redeemed, his mutual accountability with them before God, and his dependence on them for his own ministry and for his own well-being. In many ways, this chapter reflects the personal and practical *agapē* love he has beautifully described in 13:8-10 and which, a few years earlier, he had portrayed in chapter 13 of his first letter to the church at Corinth.

In this beautiful account Paul reveals that love in four ways: through his commendation (vv. 1-2), through his cordiality (vv. 3-16), through his caution (vv. 17-20), and through remarks about and greetings from his companions (vv. 21-23), after which he adds a brief benediction (v. 24).

Chapter 16 of Paul's letter to the church at Rome teaches many important points for spiritual living such as:

The Role of Women in Ministry. Phoebe's commendation by Paul highlights the important roles women played in the early church. This serves as a reminder of the value and contributions of women in ministry today.

Servanthood and Leadership. Phoebe is described as a "servant," this indicates a leadership role characterized by service, emphasizing that true leadership in the church

is rooted in serving others.

The Importance of House Churches. Early Christians often met in homes, which fostered close-knit communities. Today, small groups or home Bible studies can provide similar intimacy and support.

The Eternal Glory of God. God's glory is eternal, not bound by time or circumstance. This encourages believers to live with an eternal perspective, focusing on God's glory rather than temporary worldly concerns. Jesus is the means through which God's wisdom and glory are revealed. This underscores the importance of a Christ-centered faith and life.

Proclamation of Jesus Christ. Sharing the gospel is a vital part of Christian life. We are called to proclaim Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

The Importance of Praise. The doxology serves as a reminder of the importance of praise in the believer's life. Regularly acknowledging God's wisdom and glory can strengthen faith and provide comfort.

Commendation and Trust

Paul's commendation of Phoebe underscores the importance of recognizing and affirming the gifts and contributions of others in the church. It encourages believers to support and trust those who serve faithfully. Paul's affectionate mention of Epaphroditus as "my beloved" underscores the importance of personal relationships in ministry. Building strong, loving relationships can enhance the effectiveness of our witness.

Living Out the Doxology. Believers are called to live in a way that reflects God's wisdom and brings Him glory. This involves making choices that honor God and demonstrate His wisdom to the world.

Unity in Diversity. The inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in God's plan demonstrates the unity and diversity of the body of Christ. We should embrace and celebrate this diversity within the church. Guard Against Division. Believers are called to be vigilant and discerning, recognizing those who cause division and disrupt the unity of the church. Christians must exercise discernment in identifying false teachings and take action by turning away from those who promote them.

Adherence to Sound Doctrine. It is crucial to remain steadfast in the teachings of the apostles and reject any teachings that deviate from the truth of the Gospel.