

Romans – Let's Do This!

68-“God Uses People Like Us”

Romans 16:1-27

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / June 5, 2016

Romans 16:1-27 brings into view the juxtaposition of little people just like us bumped up against God's sovereign, glorious, unending, almighty power and wisdom!

This chapter was designed to settle and assure us that even though the Church of Jesus Christ is filled with some of the most ordinary people, that it's through these same kind of people that God is going to accomplish His purposes, defeat our greatest enemy and display His own glory – for all to see!

I. Don't Ever Underestimate What God Can Do Through Little People Just Like You

Romans 16:1-16 is like the movie credits at the end of an epic story of the glory of God and the power of the Gospel in the face of our sin! Mixed in with that glory and power are little, ordinary, often overlooked people who are not especially gifted but they do have something necessary.

God can do what He does without us, but He's chosen to use us. That's what the Bible's all about – a great big God, working through little people to accomplish His purposes so that He gets the glory!

You don't have to be the most gifted for God to use you, because giftedness is not how any of these people made it onto this list.

A. These Were People that Were Willing to Work Hard!

They may not have been super gifted, but they were all in. They gave it their all! They weren't holding back and they certainly weren't just playing church.

Paul used the Greek word 'kopia' 3x in this list of names! It means to work to the point of exhaustion. They kept on serving long past the point they felt like quitting and after the thrill had worn off.

You don't have to be the most gifted, but you do have to be someone who just won't quit easily.

Jesus and the Gospel are worthy of our best efforts and worthy of our not quitting the first moment we get a little tired, when someone hurts our feelings or when ministry becomes inconvenient.

There's also no greater joy and no better curriculum for becoming more like Jesus than serving in the trenches of ministry, no matter how simple and unspectacular it looks.

B. These Were People that Were Willing to Risk

Romans 16:3-4 “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life...”

Paul doesn't give us any details about what happened, but it's clear that they risked their own lives for his sake! Notice they did it as a couple and they were in it together.

C. These Were People that Were Scattered Across Rome and Were Willing Relocate

The Church at Rome had not tried to cram into one huge building, but they were scattered across the city in different locations.

- **V. 5** refers to Priscilla and Aquila, and says, "Greet also the church in their house."
- **V. 14** "Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them." That probably means: the church that meets with these brothers.
- **V. 15** "Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them."

The people in this list of Romans 16 were not just living in different parts of the city; some of them had been willing to radically relocate altogether for the sake of the Gospel.

Priscilla and Aquila spent half their lives moving from place to place as they went where the church needed them most. It wasn't an easy life, but a good one because everywhere they went it seems they had a church in their house.

II. Don't Ever Lose Sight of Who's Ultimately in Control and Where All of this is Headed

Romans 16:20 "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

Up until now in Romans Paul hadn't mentioned the devil except indirectly in Romans 8:38 where he said that neither "angels nor rulers" can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

In all 369 verses in the book of Romans we have only one direct mention of Satan that says he's doomed- you will crush him under your feet.

Paul's getting you to lift your head up and to remember that despite the evil all around right now, since Christ cancelled the record of your sin debt, along with all its legal demands that were against you, your biggest problem has been solved and your greatest enemy has been defeated. When Christ took our sins to the cross, he disarmed Satan and took all his condemning weapons away from him so that now he can rage against us but he cannot condemn us, because it is God who justifies!

Paul's silence about Satan until now does not mean that he's insignificant or should be trifled with, but it does mean that we deal with Satan mainly indirectly rather than keeping him in our mind constantly and going toe to toe with him.

III. Don't Ever Move On from the Power of the Gospel Not Only to Save You But to Keep You and Strengthen You for Whatever You're Facing Today

Romans 16:25-26 “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”

Paul comes back to the Gospel and reminds us that God doesn't just use the Gospel to save us, He also uses that same Gospel to establish us and strengthen us for whatever we're facing.

The word 'establish' in the original language means to strengthen, to make firm or to steadfastly set in place.

The Word assumes that as Christians in this present evil age, we will be under assault, feeling uncertain, shaken, and destabilized in so much confusion and the swirl of rhetoric around us.

The Gospel is an anchor that keeps you upright in the midst of the churning waters and howling winds of life.