

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Romans 16:3–16

³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. ⁶ Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 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.

⁸ Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

¹² Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

Expressing Delight in One Another

Main idea: Believers are to delight in one another and take opportunities to show it.

Introduction: taking an opportunity to express delight in a brother or sister

1. Expressing delight in the brethren

1. Some of the biggest “Psalm 8 moments” are “Psalm 16 moments”
2. We help one another delight in the brethren by sending greetings through each other

2. Acknowledge their labors

1. Prisca and Aquila (v3), Mary (v6), Urbanus (v9), Tryphena and Tryphosa (v12), and Persis (v12).
2. Real labor deserves real thanks (cf. 13:7)
3. Labor that comes by grace, should produce thanks to the God of grace

3. Acknowledge their honors

1. Redemptive historical honor (Epaphroditus, v5)
2. Sanctifying/employing honor (Andronicus and Junia, v7)
3. Tested honor (Apelles, v10)
4. Elective honor (Rufus, v13)

4. Express affection

1. Ethnic closeness. Countrymen (cf. 9:3) Andronicus and Junia (v7) and Herodion (v11)
2. Relational closeness. “My beloved” Amplias (v8) and Stachys (v9).

3. Redemptive closeness. The “holy kiss” of v16 is a call to treat your congregation as family.

5. **Conformed to the Lord’s (covenantal!) mind**

1. Households—Aristobulus (v10), Narcissus (v11), Rufus and Mother (v13). Each should be a little church (n.b. Prisca and Aquila, v3).

2. Congregations—one to the other in v16.

Conclusion: working out the life of Christ in our lives individually, and in our corporate life together.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 16 verses 3 through 16. These are God's words. Greet Priscilla and quella my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. Who risked their own necks for my life. To him, not only, I give thanks but also all the churches of the Gentiles Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved apinatus. Who was the first fruits of Ikea to Christ. Great Mary who labored much for us. Greet andronicus and Junia. My countrymen and my fellow prisoners. Who are of not among the apostles. Who also were in Christ before me. Greet amplius my beloved in the Lord.

Greater badness, our fellow worker in Christ and stackies my beloved. Agree to Palace. Proved in Christ. Greet, those who are of the household of aristovulus. Greet herodian my countrymen. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Great trophina and Trafoza. Have labored in the Lord.

Greet the Beloved persons. Who labored much in the Lord. Greek. Rufus chosen in the Lord. And his mother, and Greet asyncratist, flagen, Hermes, atrobus Hermes and the Brethren who are with them. Great phylogus and Julia nereas, and his sister and Olympus. And all the saints who are with them.

Greet one, another. With the Holy kiss. The. Of Christ. Greet you. Amen. So far the reading of gods inspired And Aaron twerk. We are to be busy and not idle. In our lives. But there is something that We must not be too busy for. And that is to stop to take opportunity.

To express Delight. And a brother or sister. I suspect none of us were as busy as the Apostle Paul. And none of us have ever written anything where there was as necessary and economy of words. As scripture, let alone this letter to the Romans, which in which the Lord has given us?

One of the most thorough systems of the Gospel systems of Doctrine, even in all of scripture, And yet in this very economical book written by this very busy Apostle, Uh, he spends 14 verses here. Uh, sending greetings. Uh, he doesn't just give the introduction to Phoebe. Who is probably the one carrying the letter.

And the first two verses of Romans 16, he spends another 14 verses, he's covered some great doctrines. In the space of 14 verses in this letter. But he takes this time. To express Delight.

And the brothers and the sisters that are. And so are we as well to take time to express Delight in one another?

This is better. Uh then any neighborhood or club or even that which sometimes goes by the name of church, but is little more than the neighborhood or a club in which people say there is a sense of Praise God. There ought to be a sense of community in every true.

And yet. The Delight that we take in one another is to be one especially by the grace of God, especially conformed. To what we see the Lord, having produced. The Apostle. As he addresses, the Roman. And so we learned something here. Not only as we've already said in the introduction about greeting.

One another. And we'll take a few more moments when we get into the sermon to talk about what that is. But also, Uh, what to express about one another, what to focus on? There are many things that we may have in common many things about which we may complement one another.

Uh, but there is a way of talking to one another, that reinforces The pleasure that the Lord takes in his handiwork in believer's life, that ought to be forming the sort of pleasure that we take in one another's lives. This will be, especially true, when we address children. They learn very quickly, the sorts of things that are esteemed recognized acknowledged praised.

By those who greet them. And so we want to express Delight in one another in the church. And even in them and to treat them train them in a way of greeting. One another that will conform. To what the Apostle does here in these 14 verses. So, the first thing that we're going to see, is that greeting is as we've already given away, An expression of delight.

And the second place. That these greetings. Ought. Praise and acknowledge one another's labors in the Lord. Uh, his Almost certainly especially talking about labor for the gospel here. Although The kindnesses and Manual. Physical. Labor or service and Earthly things is not excluded but to acknowledge. One another's laborers to acknowledge one another's honors.

Uh, but not the sort of honors that the world. Focuses or emphasizes nobility in titles and those sorts of things, although certainly there is respect due to those to whom respect is Jew as we learned in chapter 13. In verse, But especially when the Lord bestows special honor. Uh, on a brother or a sister, that is something that we wish to acknowledge and remember And remind one, another of And then expressions of affection and special affection.

Uh, not treating everyone as if we are in the same relation because the Lord has put different people in different places of closeness to us. We know that especially in the family. And especially in marriage. But there are Some different forms of expressing. Personal affection and relational affection here that Helpful informative for us.

And then finally, of course, as we have already been saying doing all of this in a way that is conformed to the Lord's mind and therefore Covenantal. Covenantal with a focus on the household and the focus on the congregation. As institutions of our Lord, Jesus. That stir up. A connection and delight, and honoring and affection.

For one another. So, first expressing Delight in the Brethren and that actually just comes from the word that is repeated throughout. This passage, some passages are not difficult to figure out what the main theme is. And if he uses, A. Uh, some half a dozen or more times, maybe a dozen times in the passage.

I just realized, I didn't take the time to count up the number of uses of this word. That's translated greet, but it means to be delighted to encounter again. And, Here, the Apostle isn't even going to be there, but just the fact that he's putting his pin on. On a piece of paper and that paper is going to travel to Rome and it's going to be opened up.

Gives him an opportunity to communicate to special Delight. This is something that I'm afraid we have lost a lot of, in the age of the email. Uh, but there is A joy in the handwritten letter. And the communication of oneself. Sometimes not in this particular case, tertius is still acting as scribes, but in a couple of letters.

In the New Testament, the Apostle even says, This greeting with my own hand, or even on one occasion, because his eyesight was failing him and he had to make great big letters so that he could make sure he was a great big characters. Um, he said see how big the characters are see with what large letters I write.

Um, with my own hand and communicating himself to them, we have Uh, something like that in the English language, pleased to meet you. Some of you in my house and probably perhaps in some of your houses, know a little Spanish, mucho gusto The pleasure. That we have. Not only in one another's acquaintance but in renewing, it And in having opportunity to connect.

And this is, Uh, this is a pleasure that is a divine pleasure, especially in the context of the book of Romans, which is held before us Sovereign Grace and the Eternal decree to redeem and how God himself in his son, has done everything to give us our righteous standing.

For him. It can only be received through faith through our not doing, but his having done for us on our behalf and even The Sovereign Grace of God, that when it does come time for the works that we have to do are done by his working in us. So this letter is a letter that began.

Condemning all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who did not take note of the work of God in creation. Who saw what God had made knew from? From what the Lord had made his Divine qualities, had the knowledge of God, even in them, by means of creation, but neither glorified him nor gave him.

Thanks. Well, we come to the end of the letter after having had opened up for us, the work of redemption and ought we not, if it was such a great sin to fail, to recognize the glory and give thanks to God for his goodness, and the work of creation.

How much more in the work of redemption? And so we are to greet one another, and take Delight in one another. Psalm 8 is wonderful in how it directs our eyes to the skies, which he stretched out with his own hand and placed the Sun and the moon, and the Stars also, Genesis 1 kind of just adds.

Oh, and by the way, all of those innumerable stars also that he is placed with his fingers and we say Oh Lord. Our Lord. How Majestic is your name? And all the Earth. And we look at creation. But then sometimes this response that we have to God and soulmate that we ought to have, no one should love and enjoy creation so much as the one who knows the Creator and has been reconciled to him in Jesus Christ.

Well, how much more than should we have that Psalm 16 pleasure? Where it's a Psalm especially about how the Lord is our portion and our inheritance and the lines that have enclosed him as a part of our parcel our inheritance have fallen to us in Pleasant places but in the uh towards the beginning of that Psalm also The Godly ones in the land are my delight.

We are having a little conversation about high places and how attractive they were to the Israelites for the creational.

Are understanding God and his purposes and and the greatness of his various Works. There is no high. That should take our breath away so much as someone who has been brought to repentance and faith and is in Union with Jesus Christ and indwelt. By God the Holy Spirit adopted.

By the father, how we should take Delight in. And one of the ways that we can help one another take Delight, is by sending greetings through each other. Every once in a while, run into someone who has recently attended, Um, worship with someone that is a dear brother and Or one of you will have gone and they'll send, greetings back and it reinforces The Christian affection, the Delight that we have, the pleasure that we have and one another when the greeting is sent By one to another.

And here. Since Paul is not there, physically to do it. These are actually all commands. Uh, that the the Roman church is to enter into the pleasure of the Apostle of his writing. And and give these greetings uh, to One another. And so express Delight in the Brethren. Well, what Uh, what should we acknowledge about one, another, and perhaps we should start by the fact that we ought to acknowledge good in one another and not have the The association of pity party.

That is sometimes the case, but to recognize Our Brethren and the fruit of God's grace in them. One, especially is to recognize labors. To recognize. What our brothers and sisters have done. He starts. With a doozy with Priscilla and Aquila. Or prisca and Aquila. And we know about them from acts, we know about them from other letters.

Uh, how useful they were in the church? But they were his fellow workers, they worked together in Christ Jesus and not only that but there is a particular situation. We don't know which it is. It hasn't hasn't been told to us. It's a good reminder, how selective the the spirit has been In what he tells us in the Bible.

But there was a particular situation in which in order to intervene for Paul. Uh, whose wife was at risk, they risked their own necks. And therefore, not only does Paul give thanks to them, but all the churches of the Gentiles should as well. Because instrumentally, in in God's work, using Paul for the gospel, coming to the Nations.

He used Priscilla and Aquila in a way that saved Paul's life and preserved him. For that Ministry. We do not know what the Lord will do. With our diligent work or our acts of Courage. You do not know. Mom or dad what he might do. With one of your children or one of your grandchildren, Uh, or How one of your daughter?

Might be used of God to strengthen and fortify a man who is Whose ministry, the Lord blesses to great effect. Historically unique effect in the church or maybe historically forgotten, but still great in heaven. Diligence among Believers, ought to be recognized and so not just Priscilla and Aquila. But also, this Mary in verse 6, Mary who labored much For us.

And then Urbanis in verse 9 Greet Urbanis, our fellow worker trafina and Trafosa in verse 12. He noted notes that they have labored in the Lord, And persus. Uh, also in verse 12 who labored much In the Lord. Uh, how we encourage one another by working hard and how we encourage those who work hard By greeting them by expressing Delight in them and acknowledging that part of our pleasure in them is the work that God has done through them.

They don't need church office to do this. There's ought to be something that is part of the warp and woof. Of our Christian. Affection. And our interaction in the church, sometimes I hear

Disturbing arguments. Um, That, you know, the women work so hard in the church, we ought to ordain them to the office of Deacon so that they can receive some recognition.

They already have the office of sister and if they're working so hard, they have the honor of sister who has labored much and we are told we are Taught in this passage to recognize that labor to speak of it. And to commend it. The real work deserves real. Thanks we don't pretend as if God is the only one working?

No, he made man in His Image. And one of the things that man does in his images work and yes, Christian labor in the Lord is only done by grace. There is still, thanks and honor that is due to the instrument in whom God has worked by grace. And so give thanks to both give, thanks four and two other.

Other believers who labor in the Lord in a manner? That is worthy of other believers. In whom God has worked and through whom God is producing fruit. But do of course, recognize that that labor comes by Grace. And give thanks to God with the sort of, thanks that is appropriate for the god of Grace.

Who has worked in. So, we ought to acknowledge their labors, one of the ways we hear that sometimes don't we is, when when you children have recited a long, catechism question, And whatever Elder is up front. Will sometimes say, I know that there was a lot of hard work there and maybe not even just for the child but for the older siblings.

So the parents Who are involved. It is good for us to commend hard work in the Lord. In both spiritual and temporal things. We want our children to know we want ourselves even to be reminded Uh, that these are both the fruit of Grace and by the Lord's employing and attending them by his Sovereign and superintending.

Power, he makes them fruitful in his work of Grace as well. Well, we're to not only to acknowledge one another's labors. We are to acknowledge, one another's honors, there are various sorts of Honor here. Uh, that That. Especially pointed out, note apinatus, who has given this Redemptive historical, honor of being the first fruits of Ikea to Christ.

In fact, it seems to be that Because he was the the first convert in Corinth. Probably Corinth was the principal City and at least he was there. When Paul wrote First Corinthians that he was given a Christian name, a nickname stefanus, Named after that. That wonderful servant of the Lord that first martyr Stephen And he's called the first fruits of Ikea also in First Corinthians, 16.

And he's the one whose household you remember in First Corinthians chapter 1 was the only one that Paul himself could remember. Having baptized? Whenever? The Lord gives someone. An honor like that. For instance, one of you. Have a daughter. Who was our first baptism and she still sometimes tells me about when I got her wet in church.

I think it's been Uh, almost a year since the last one. But these honors that the the Lord gives us and his Redemptive historical work. Recognizing. Uh, recognizing things like firsts and And anniversaries. Of things that. Has done. Remembering that God's work in Believers is intended as a sort of trophy unto his grace and unto his glory.

And then, there are honors. His sanctifying work in people and in his employing them, and this andronicus and Junia. In verse 7 who are of note among the apostles. Now grammatically, this can be Calling them Apostles or Uh, it can be that they are of note among those who are Apostles.

If it's calling them Apostles, it's just using the word and it's generic sense of sent ones. Just as Phoebe earlier. Uh, the word for servant is being used of her. Uh, in the ordinary use and not referring to the office. We know, of course, That there are only the 12 and that Paul's final apostleship came as one, who was born.

Out of time. It was, it was Late and extraordinary for the timing of it. Uh, but this andronicus and Junior. And are of note, either among those who have been sent by various churches to various places or more probably That even the apostles. Have taken note of what the Lord has done in this andronicus, what the Lord has done in this junia, they too were very early converts.

Just like we just saw that pinatus was the first fruits of Ikea, well, they were such early converts. That pulled notes of them that they were in Christ even before him in verse 7. And that's an honor. Uh, when when people have A notable Christian character. It is good to recognize them and not just to themselves.

But even to others that we build up this this If you'll forgive the buzzword this culture or this climate in the congregation of recognizing one another's, work to one another, recognizing one another's, honors to one another. Um, not just in the way that the Lord has used them or worked in them.

Um, verse 7 with adronicus and Jr. But also Those whom the Lord has brought through difficult situations. There are a couple of these here. One is this appellas greet. A palace? Who is approved in Christ? The word having the idea of approved or tested. As the Lord brought him through something.

Well, the Lord brought him into something and then the Lord brought him through it and it continues to be The the way. The way that the Lord Sanctified the trial to him, the The way that the Lord showed his Christian character by means of whatever that testing was, Has is an honor upon him and so he calls him approved in Christ.

Seems likely with Rufus in verse 13. He says, Rufus chosen in the Lord. And, His mother and m. Uh, that this Rufus is apparently from a household in which not everyone ended up being converted, whether they were a pagan household and only Rufus and his mother Came to Faith or whether the others apostatized, we don't know anything else about him or his mother except for what's in this verse.

But that these highlight it as this chosen one And, That does give us an idea, doesn't it of one of the One of the brotherly biblical ways of interacting with a dear Saint. Whose family are not in the Lord. Uh who's uh whose relatives have apostatized to have what is one of the greatest griefs possible?

In this world in this life. Uh, and Uh, Remember with them that God in his Mercy, has chosen them has saved them. Has given them himself. As a consolation and a comfort has made them his own in Christ. And certainly, If this was, The case. In rufus's family, what a pain it would have been to his mother as well and how sweet, then the affection where he says not just his mother.

But my mother. Uh, there has been something that Paul and Rufus, and his mom have gone through together. That has resulted in his addressing her. Uh, with A great affection similar to Um, that affection and connection to which God to which Christ commended His mother. The Apostle, John. And the Apostle John to his mother knowing that he was about to depart the world.

And thinking of his mother even from his cross. And and giving them as it were this adoptive affection. And whatever it was. Uh, through which he came to think of Rufus as mother. As a second mother on Earth and to love her with the affection of even, A biological and also a Christian biological son.

It need not have been more than the situation that is implied here. By calling Rufus. This Chosen one. Perhaps. She has lost. Eternally. Some children. And this is a great grief. Well children, if you will not out of love for your own soul, Turn from your sin and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you not as God? So often in Proverbs talks about the joy of having Godly children, the joy that he gives parents, very Godly children, nor the grief. Comes to parents by foolish or Wicked children. Will you not even out of love for your parents? Come to the Lord.

And seek from him repentance and And find that he teaches you. Also, of course to love your own soul. It's not like you are going to be Saved out of just that one. Motivation. But perhaps that is why in this case, he says his mother and mine, reminding her That she has other family now.

In the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus said of his own family, Um, when they came They were outside and someone says your mother and your brothers are outside and he looks around to those who are his through faith and listening. Um, to him, preach to them.

He says Or my mother and my brothers. And so that takes us from acknowledging honors to expressing affection, certainly, Uh, there was that. Whatever that occasion was. That led to this expression of affection. And we also ought to recognize. Those relationships that the Lord has. Given us with those through whom with whom we have gone through.

Uh, difficult things. You know, one of the most painful things. In not just the ministry in in church membership is when people with whom you have been through some things and you thought you had gone through it together as Christians. When they turn away from the Lord, when they reject the When they reject you.

There is a closeness that the Lord gives. By taking us through things together. There's also ethnic closeness when he says countrymen about andronicus and Junior in verse seven and herodian in verse 11 literally, it means those with common ancestry. And that's the same language that he uses in chapter 9 and verse 3, when he talks about his desire Um, for the Jews to be saved, wishing even that he could be accursed for their sake for their salvation, And so even within the church, there are those with whom we have a closer connection.

Through common ancestry. It does not take away from the closeness. Of our Relationship with With other Christians and then there are Relations with those who are not necessarily of common ancestry, but God and some other Providence has brought us near to one another Uh, and this is apparently the case with amplius in verse 8, and stackies, in verse 9, to whom he of whom, he does not just say, beloved as in, they are beloved to the church generally in their very lovable Christians.

Although, each of us, I think know, some Christians that are more lovable. And certainly, because of the sinfulness of our flesh, we are very quick to notice the Christians that are not so lovable. But he doesn't just say beloved amplius and beloved stackies but my beloved Sometimes those possessive pronouns are very sweet.

Um, Trying to have been trying to remember failing in all of a week and a half or so. Since I moved on to this portion of chapter 16 and noted this not just to say brother but my brother Not just to say sister, but my sister. Uh, and then With those who are nearer and dearer.

My beloved. Express affection for one another, but then Don't forget that there is an affection a closeness that all believers have in Christ. Now, this would have been a little bit uncomfortable. Uh, in verse 16, when he says, greet one another with a holy kiss Because it is, although they do have the difficulty between the Gentile, background Christians and the Jewish background, Christians, The Romans did not greet one another with a kiss so often and so consistently.

As the Jews were in the habit of doing. But even among the Jews, you would only kiss a lady if she was your sister or your daughter or your mother. I don't know what all of your ethnic family backgrounds are. Uh in among the Egyptians and especially among the Coptic Egyptians, it's very common.

When you greet someone and especially if If they are family that you give these kisses, or at least air kisses where you kind of get the cheeks aligned. And I have some family who superstitiously. Do it three times. I don't even know if they know why. It's three times but of course, ever since I learned that I've been trying to do two or four.

Just, Rebel against any Superstition. But in a culture like that, where You would have this. This custom of greeting, with a kiss. Um, and especially within the family. When he says greet one another with a Holy kiss, he is not prescribing the choreography of Christian greetings across cultures Until the Lord Jesus returns.

But he is prescribing. That the choreography of how you would greet. Your family. Should be repeated. Uh, in an even holier way, a sweeter way a dearer way with your congregation And so if in your family, For instance. You hug. It should be. It should be done. In a holy manner, of course.

But, Even the way. That we not just the words but the manner, the facial expressions, the familiarity the care for one another. We are all In the church. Finally, then. As we seek to take our cues, Uh, Expressing the Delight that we have one another and forming, of course, first that to lighten the heart by these different ways and expressing it.

We must do. So as those who are being conformed to the Lord's mind, And therefore it ought to be covenantal covenantal. There are these households That are mentioned the word household or the word house. Only appearing in verse 3. But Covenant headship, then being recognized that the way the household of aristobulus is addressed is those who are of Aristobulus The household of narcissus those who are of narcissus making sure to include Rufus and his mother together.

Indeed our God as a covenantal, God, the household is his institution, the, the husband, and father, is the head of the household. There is a covenantal headship, and representation in the way that the house, the family, interacts with God, and this should be reflected. If we are thinking about one another, in a way that is, Reflective of or conformed to The way.

The Lord thinks of us and teaches us to think, then we too should think covenantally about one another. But also, Then the Covenant. The covenantal. Household. As it were of the church here, he does not. He does not talk about the Church of Christ. Uh, The single visible church, that is Over all the Earth.

But the churches of Christ greet you. And so, there's even a corporate greeting from one congregation. In this case, from multiple different particular congregations to another

congregation, our congregations should have a corporate interaction. With one another, when we are. Um, when we have opportunity, there ought to be this covenantal.

Corporate aspect to recognizing as First Corinthians 12 for instance, says that God is the one who has put the members of the body and arranged them as he wishes. And so there are particular congregations. That are Christ's doing. And one part of the body is not allowed to say, I'm not really a member of this church.

I'm an outsider because I'm not like them. And neither is another part allowed to say well they're an outsider because they're not like me. No, we see the congregation as a unit as a body that is given or determined by God instituted. There's the word that we're looking for instituted by the Lord.

Therefore even in our thinking, we should think covenantally both with respect to households and with respect to congregations. So praise God. Uh, indeed, the Apostle does spend. An amazing amount of time on greetings considering uh, the busyness of his life and the economy. Of literature that we have in.

Um, in the Book of Romans, but the Lord teaches us much About taking Delight in one another and expressing our Delight. That Delight to and about one another. Work out. Uh, the Life of Christ, the mind of Christ in our lives individually. And in our corporate life. Together.