

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon

Wednesday, July 3, 2024

Romans 16:1–2

¹ I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, ² 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.

Standing Together in Sainly Service

Main idea: Believers have been consecrated by God to serve Him and each other.

Introduction: Standing with a woman named Phoebe

1. **Our Sister**

1. Paul's sister, and theirs. And ours. God has made us family.
2. You take care of your sisters.

2. **A Servant**

1. Example: they should be like Phoebe. a believer should be able to go under the title "a servant" (cf. "service" in v31 to describe "fruit" in v28).
2. Incentive: they should serve Phoebe. Taking advantage of the opportunity to serve those who have served well. (and giving that opportunity to others when Providence dictates)
3. To make this an ordained office doesn't just contradict the biblical doctrine of ordination. It also misses the point the apostle is making.

3. **In the Savior**

1. She is in the Lord, and they are in the Lord
2. Paul writes in the Lord, and they are to do the welcoming in the Lord
3. The latter is probably the gist of the word here, but the fact that it could be any or all of these demonstrates just how much Christ is at the center of His people's lives and interactions.

4. **A Saint**

1. All saints are worthy of the welcome that she receives. (There is a special honor or deference given to ordained office, so this mitigates against the idea that she is a "female deacon"). By saying this, the apostle reminds you to give this welcome to all believers.
2. All saints ought to give such welcome and help. We have been consecrated in the Servant to be servants (cf. Lk 22:24–27).

5. **To Supply**

1. "stand alongside her in whichever pragmatics she needs from you"
2. Her need is a providential assignment.
3. Their ability to meet it is a providential assignment.

4. Neediness of another saint, and ability to meet it, is a providential assignment

6. Repaying her for the Same

1. She has stood by many, and even Paul (and therefore, transitively, them)
2. As we pay each other back and forth we accumulate a lifetime of service for which to keep paying back one another.

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 chapter 16, verses 1 and 2. These are God's words. I commend to you. Phoebe our sister. Who is a servant of the church in kankaya. 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. Amen, that sends this reading of God's inspired and and erring twerked. Is a lot of standing. In verses 1 and 2 of Romans chapter 16 doesn't come at it.

So much in our English translation. Because there are prefixes on the verb for standing that indicates, it's being used in different ways. The word commend here is stand with I stand with Phoebe unto you. And then, And when he calls them to Assist her. And he is calling them.

Uh, Stand alongside her. Uh, the prefix there meaning alongside and then when he says, she has been a helper. He says. She has stood by. And me also, And so, There's a lot of standing here. And it's wonderful. It's just what he has shown us in chapters 4 chapter 14 and into chapter 15 for he is Paul, he's using of course.

Uh, Greek name. He's originally, Saul, isn't he? That's his Hebrew name, but he's happy now to be known by his Greek name. He is no longer a Hebrew of Hebrews. Counted that as rubbish, by comparison to having the Lord Jesus Christ. And this woman, Is named Phoebe. Uh, which was Apollos.

Um, sorry, Apollos. Maternal grandmother's name. Uh and of Apollo himself went by the, the nickname Phoebus among some of the Greek speakers. It was kind of a diminutive nickname for him and yet. Praise God most of you just found out. That Apollo the Greek mythology Idol. In. Uh, in the Roman Pantheon actually in this Greek name.

Uh, most of you just found out that he has this other name Phoebus and where it comes from Because this lady, Who was? A servant in her church and now was traveling from conqueria to Rome, probably the carrier of the letter as she is introduced here at the beginning of this concluding chapter.

She has been made much more famous. Uh, than the idol. Of the pagans. Just as you might know the name shifra and Pua but even Scholars have a hard time guessing at who the Pharaoh is in Exodus chapter 2. For such has got done with some and such, will God do with all of his Saints?

And so, Paul is making this Phoebe famous. To the Roman Church. She is unknown to them. So far, but she's carrying a letter. From the Apostle. And in that letter, Paul says, I commend her to you and he uses this form of the word that says it is as if I am standing there, holding the letter treat her.

Uh, the way that you would treat me. And so this, A an introduction in which he is calling upon them. Uh, to do two things. There are two primary commands here in verse two receive her And assist her. And the word receive is not exactly the same word. As we had back in chapter 15 and verse 7, where he says, receive one another as Christ has received you or welcome one.

Another As Christ has welcomed you, but it does have the same sense or a similar sense. And so he is, uh, he is telling them to practice on her now. Uh, here is a saint. Who is relatively unknown? Both to the Greek background. Believers in Rome and the Hebrew background Believers in Rome.

But he gives at least these. Uh, reasons for receiving her and helping her, receiving her, and assisting her and they are reasons that apply for us with every single believer, All six of these reasons are reasons that you should help one another in the church while you should help one another in your Christian home.

Why if we have a professing believer, Arrive and especially if they are able to tell us what church they are from and And we have, Good reason to. To receive their profession as credible, why we should help them as well, and seize that opportunity that God and his Providence is giving us To help one another to receive to welcome one another.

On the one hand, to assist one another, on the other hand, those being the two great commands that we have. In verse two, the first reason, then he gives them Is that she is our sister. I commend to you, Phoebe our sister.

My family, there are five sisters. Of whom one of my children might say our sister and that means not just your sister but my sister too. Paul is saying that Phoebe is his own sister and their sister, how can that be? Are they all in the same family? And I see some of the children puzzling and thinking.

Yes, and you are correct. Because God has taken us to be his children, as our father. That was one of the great truths that we have. Heard preached in this letter that we have read inscribed in the scripture in this letter in chapter 8, especially that as many as have the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

And that this holy spirit is the one who has trained us to call God, our Abba. And so here's a very practical application of this. Sister is on the way to Rome our sister is on the way to Rome. Make sure you take care of her. Now, I imagine if my children were grown, and we would be quite satisfied.

If they all grew and grew up and got married, and had households by here and attended, all of the various, Hopewell daughter churches that we would have planted by that time. But if perhaps one of them was a long journey away from the other one and they were traveling, they had to travel by themselves.

We might send a note from one to the other. Your sister is on her way. Make sure you receive her. Make sure you assist her. We take care of sisters, we take care of and we do what we can for brothers, as well. But sisters, especially By God's creating.

Men and women differently and laying responsibilities upon us in the way that he creates us. There's a charger, there's a charge here. Your sister is going to be in a strange town by herself. She's not going to be in her hometown. Make sure you receive, her says she has as it were a home there.

So she has protection. So she has company. So she has someone to make introductions for her and to facilitate, to make local recommendations for her to do, whatever they can for her. I think sometimes in the church, we get so accustomed to calling one, another brother. Sister. We lose some of the weight, some of the closeness, some of the obligation, That that puts us under with one another And not obligation in a negative way but in the joyous and glad way of she is our sister.

Because God is our father. He has made us family to himself in Christ. And to one another. Second reason is that she is a servant. This is both for them. An example and an incentive I commend to you Phoebe, our sister who is a servant of the church in kingraya.

Now, he's just spent a couple of chapters, urging them to serve one. Another, to be servants in their own church. That is in Rome, and now he's sending. Letter in the hand of someone that he can say. What I've been talking about in chapters 12 through 15. Of course Sue.

There were not chapter numbers. So, what I've been talking about and the last quarter or so, Of this letter. I'm sending a woman to you, who exemplifies that she serves this way in her church in Kenkria. They should be like Phoebe. A Believer should be able to go under the title servant.

Suppose, one of you was going to go for work or Seminary or for some reason. We're gonna, you were gonna spend A extended period of time in another town and in another How glad we would be to be able to put a letter in your hand that says so and so is a member in good standing.

Of the Hopewell ARP Church in Culioka Tennessee. Please do receive them as an associate member or if they don't have associate memberships, then you would transfer back and forth. So that you you have a good active church membership. Wherever you go, however it is It also less formally but just as gladly and just, as importantly, say please receive.

So and so a servant of the church at Hopewell Just as he says here, I commend to you Phoebe. A servant of the church at Cantrell. So she's uh so her being a servant is an example but it's also an incentive. Who better to serve than someone who has been a servant of others.

I'm sending you someone who's a servant. Make sure you serve her. Well. We should take advantage of the opportunity, we have to serve those who have served. Well, some of you have discovered that with your mama, as you have, gotten to be four and five, and six years old, and maybe older than that even.

And the more that you are able to serve her, who's been serving, you, literally, since before you were born, You hop right to it. You hear her clanking around in the kitchen, doing those dishes and you run in and you grab a towel. You see her outside and she's doing something and sweating in the yard and you have a few moments, or maybe you don't, and you run out and you help your mama.

There is great incentive in someone who has been a servant to serve them. When you get the chance to do it, we'll see that a little bit more in the sixth point. One of the difficulties. Of seeing this or reading into this, the ordained office of Deacon, is that it completely messes the point.

That the Apostle is making. That we all are to be servants in this way as we'll come. And a couple of points to see. She is to be, she is to be received in a manner, worthy of the Saints. And so, the Apostle actually tells us in verse 2, what office Phoebe has In the church at kenkria.

She has the office of Saint. There are other places where he talks about the respect that is to be given to those who are in ordained office. And certainly the letters that he's written about ordained office qualification and the work, That is Dawn and what is earned by doing that work.

Well, those are, those are things that belong to ordained office. And so this would violate the biblical doctrine of ordination if she was ordained to the office of Deacon, which does come from the same word, and it would make her Uh, not only the only female Deacon In the New Testament.

But in direct violation, of course, of First Timothy 3, Where she is to be a man. A deaconess to be a man who has ruled his household. Well, And so, she can't be those things. But in addition to Making a mess of all of that. Those who, in the wake of Feminism want to make this?

Ordained office and not perhaps the Widow's role, although it seems unlikely that if she was over 60, years old and alone and had met all the conditions for the Widow's role that she would be. Sent by herself to Rome with Paul's letter to the Roman Church. Um, much more likely that.

She is a young and wealthy. Have some means that she is able to travel and then how much more glorious than That she who is great in the eyes of others. Would be a servant would be glad to take the the place. Of a servant. Uh, it would miss the point.

Uh, that he has been making the last several chapters that he is making to the Roman Church here that he is making to us. That she is a servant. The third place, she is in the Savior. That you may receive her in the Lord. This could be saying that she is in the Lord.

Or that they are in the Lord. Or that Paul is giving the instruction in the Lord. Or and this is the most likely grammatically that they're receiving, or they're welcoming is to be done in the Lord. And not only do all of those things, make grammatical sense. They all make theological sense and practical sense as well.

Because we are united to Christ and other believers are united to Christ and it is Christ who has addressed Us by his Apostle here in this letter. And whatever we do, we must do by the grace of Christ. Working out the the Life of Christ being worked out in.

By the work of his holy, And so, although it almost certainly means that the welcoming itself is to be done in the Lord, not in the flesh. Not Not from oneself because what comes out of the flesh, we heard the end of chapter seven in the first half of chapter eight, what comes out of our flesh.

Not welcoming one another but sin. And even if we were welcoming one another in the flesh, we would be doing so with ulterior motives for our own Glory, our own benefit to feel good about ourselves or maybe to be praised by others. But everything we do, we are to do in the Lord.

Jesus Christ by faith in him. There's nothing at all. From when you wake up in the morning, To, when you go to bed at night and even while you sleep, There's nothing at all in the Christian Life. That is to be done except by faith in Jesus Christ. It is to be done.

In the Lord in the Savior and how he is glorified, then when we do things by his life in us, according to his character, So that both the power of his grace and the goodness of his character are displayed in the Christian's life. When we do good to one another In the Lord.

So she's our sister. She's a servant. She's In the Savior there and the Savior, the welcoming is to be done in the Savior. Also, she is a saint. That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy. Of the Saints. Perhaps, you know, or have heard perhaps, you know, a Roman Catholic or have had a friend that is Roman Catholic or may, or maybe Eastern Orthodox or something like that, or maybe you've just heard of it and you've heard them talk about the Saints.

And they talk about them like they are these. Uh, super Christians. That you do things for and they do crazy things like they'll make up stories about. Furniture that they had, or Or something like that and they'll go and they'll they'll pay homage to or do some kind of what they think is service for the furniture of some 500 year, old dead guy and they think that that is spiritual because they are holy ones.

That's what saint means. Ones. Now sometimes in God's word, he uses the words, holy ones, even to talk about about powerful angels, Great beings like that, but here is a wonderful thing. Uh, that he does in his word, he calls all believers Saints. She's just a servant, she's just a member of the church in Cancrea who has been a servant in her home.

And yet, every believer is made. Holy Uh, Union with Christ by being set apart in Christ's holy. And so All Saints are worthy of the welcome that she receives when we receive this and it says That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner, worthy of and we're waiting to hear.

What is it about her? That makes her worthy of this reception in the Lord that makes her worthy of the assistance that he's about to command. Well, she's a saint. She's a Believer. God has set her apart to himself. In the world. You know who else the Bible says as holy children?

The children of just one believing parent. So, even if you just had one parent, just your mom according to First Corinthians 7. If just your mom was a Believer, and even if your dad was not, You would be holy. That's what First Corinthians 7 says about you. That's why you must be baptized.

We don't bring you for baptism because we we want to, although we do want to, we don't bring you uh for baptism because we want you to be the Lord. So we definitely want you to be the Lord's. We bring you for baptism because God by giving you a believing parent has made you holy and he's commanded that you be baptized because he's the one who added you to his church and called you.

Holy who set you apart from the rest of the world. Well, it means a lot of things, but just now, in Romans 16 verse 2, it means that you are worthy to be received. By the other believers. That you are worthy to be assistant. By the other believers. Now.

You know that everyone else in the church is worthy for you to serve them too. And this is one of the many reasons why you learn to sit still and pay good attention, and listen and sing. When we sing and pray in your heart, when we pray, because everyone else in the church is, worship is helped by the worship of every other member of the church, even the little ones.

But sometimes it's hard for you. And yet, God has called you, holy And he's told us now, in Romans 16 verse 2, what we're supposed to do with Saints, what we're supposed to do with holy ones, We're to welcome them. And receive them. And help them. However, we can And so All Saints are worthy of the welcome that she receives.

And by saying it this way, the Apostle reminds us that we are to give this welcome to all believers. And of course, not only is she a saint, but they also are Saints. And this is one of the ways that we are, especially saintly. Remember, in Luke chapter 22.

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to be executed. And what are the disciples doing as they walk along? They are arguing about which one of them is the greatest. Isn't that amazing that Jesus saved such Sinners as that and uses such Sinners as that? But in Luke 22, when they have had this argument, As to which of them should be considered the greatest.

It says, beginning in verse 25 and he said to them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. And those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you. On the contrary. He who is greatest among you let him be as the younger. And he who governs as he who serves.

And he uses the same word. Or at least different forms different conjugations. In this case, it's all verbs and servant in verse 1 was a noun. But it's the same root. And he who governs as he, who serves for, who is greater. He who sits at the table, or he, who serves.

Is it not he who sits at the table yet? I Jesus says, I am among you. As the. Who serves? And so one of the ways and the way that the word is being used here, the word Saint the word, holy or consecrated one is being used. Here is those who are in the church who are not like the Nations.

And one of the great ways that Jesus says, those in the church are not like those who are outside of the church, one of the great marks that Jesus highlights of his holy ones. Is that they serve others? Even if they have great position, even if they have great Authority.

They serve others. Jesus said, even of himself and he is the Holy One of God. But he was Among Us. As one who serves. So serve her. She's our sister. She's a servant. She's in the Savior. She's a saint. And then, Because she has needs. Because she has needs on our outline, we said to supply so that we might put an s in each of these headings.

But it's really because she has needs 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. Very literally. Remember that stand word stand alongside her in whichever And then the word that's translated business.

Here is the one from which we get our word pragmatic. Whatever, pragmatic things, whatever necessary things in order to do, what she's gone there to do whatever business, Stand alongside her in whichever pragmatic she needs from you. You hear what the Apostle is saying here? The Lord has given her things to do.

And when she gets there in his Providence, there are going to be things. That she needs. And in his Providence, the Lord has put you there. And so, she doesn't just Have a need generically. She has a need of them. Or as he's writing to them, she has need of you.

Her need is a providential assignment to them to help her and their presence and ability to meet it. Is a providential assignment from God, that they should help her. The neediness of

another Saint. Whom God sends to us whom he puts in proximity to us and our ability to meet it.

Is a providential assignment from God. He says, whatever business she has need of you. The Holy Spirit applying this to the minds and the hearts of the Roman Believers. You know, perhaps at first it was kind of little things. But perhaps something comes up and it would be fairly costly or fairly inconvenient or undesirable in some other way.

And they would remember by the Holy Spirit bringing to mind the scripture. No, the Apostle said, whatever business. She has need of you. And so to supply because it's been providentially assigned and in the last place, Serve her as repayment for the same. So he says, I stand with her now, you stand alongside her because she has stood by. Indeed, she has been a helper is how our English version translates.

It of And of myself also. So, she has served so many people that there is. There are these All these reasons. Uh, to repay her in kind to repay, or for the same all of these as the Apostle has a couple of times used In the letter, the language of obligations, all these debts to pay that they would pay her back as it were All these other people that she served and they have not had perhaps sufficient opportunity to pay her back but God is giving you now the opportunity.

To pay back the one who has done all these things. And not only has she served others, she served Paul Paul now who is serving the Roman Church in a great way. Not only by this letter that he's sending them, which is a great service unto them and unto us.

But even as he's been saying for the last half a chapter or so, how urgently he wants to come there and how soon he plans to be there to minister. As Believers serve. And as we get opportunities to pay one another back in kind, we pay each other back and forth.

We accumulate a lifetime of serving one another We create this Bond. Uh between or rather we make application of the bond that we have had already in Christ but we increase it and strengthen it. Because of all that the Lord has given us to do for them and all the opportunities that the Lord has created for them to do for us.

And to do for our brothers and our sisters. That we might do for them. As well. And so, in these six ways, He commends Phoebe to them and he gives them the command. Receive her. And the command. Assist her. And what he's really describing is the Life of Christ.

Being worked out in each of these believers life individually. The Life of Christ has been much worked out in Phoebe's life. The Life of Christ has been much worked out. All of these other, Roman Believers lives. And now they have more opportunity to do and to see the same But the Life of Christ is not only worked out and displayed and glorified in each individual believer.

What Christ is like and his life in us who were came into this world. Dead. Is displayed in the way his church functions as a whole corporately. With one another. Even tonight. As we have gathered together to call upon the Lord's name, To make use of the relationship that he has given us with himself, to heed the spirit's work in our heart, that makes us to call upon him Abba.

Father To obey the command of Jesus. When he teaches us to pray, Our Father teaching us, that we should not only pray for one another. But with one another Even tonight are we not serving one another? Is Christ not being glorified by the difference. He has made not only in each of your lives individually.

But in the display of his character in the life of the congregation, Corporately. While praying together and hearing preaching together. Is one form of service. But there are going to be and there often are, and there already have been needs in the lives. Of different ones in the congregation and different Believers that the Lord has brought near.

These two will be providential assignments. And so we should desire them and be on the lookout for them. Having been instructed from this passage, and then when they arise, Let us seize those opportunities that Christ would be glorified. Not only in each of us. But in his church corporately, Amen.