**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 16*

 ***Gospel for All the World***

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

Third Sunday ~ In the Year of Our Lord 2020 ~ January 19th

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

Today, we go back and read Paul’s letter beginning in verse 15:30, thereby, giving us a lead into chapter 16.

Romans 15:30-33

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

 31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

 32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

We have the word “Amen” in verse 33. “Amen” in English has been presented with a meaning that we are all in agreement in the ending of prayers. What was the meaning of the word in context of the New Testament? Paul is witnessing that what has been said is a true and faithful witness of the Message from God.

Amen: Strong’s **281- Greek: ἀμήν** *amen*

**Meaning:** *truly* **Origin:** adv. of Heb. or. 543

**Usage:** Amen (30), truly (99).

**Notes:** Romans 11:36

Amen in Fausset’s Bible Dictionary in Bible Works version 10

214.01 (firm, faithful, else verily).

Jesus is "the Amen, the, faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14).

Revelation 3:14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Compare 2 Cor. 1:20; John 1:14,17; 14:6. "The God of Amen" (Heb. for "truth") (Isa. 65:16).

Jesus alone introduces His authoritative declarations with Amen in the beginning; in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, singly, in John (John 3:3,5,11; 10:1) always doubled.

It is most marked how the apostles and others avoid the use of it in the beginning, which is His divine prerogative.

Jeremiah 28:6 is not an exception; it is praying for the divine ratification of what preceded.

In oaths, those who pronounce the "Amen" bind themselves by the oath (Numbers 5:22; Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

God alone can seal all His declarations of promise or threat with the "Amen," verily, in its fullest sense; our assertions mostly need some qualification.

As John records Christ's discourses on the deeper things of God, which man is slow to believe, the double Amen is appropriately found at the beginning of such discourses 25 times.

Amen was the proper response to a prayer, an oath, or a solemn promise (1 Kings 1:30; Nehemiah 5:13; 8:6; 1 Chronicles 16:36; Jeremiah 11:5); the God of Amen witnesses our covenants.

Jewish tradition states that the people responded to the priest's prayer not "Amen," but, "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever."

But in synagogues, as in the Christian assemblies, and in family and private prayers, Amen was the response (Matthew 6:13; 1 Corinthians 14:16).

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Amen defined in Easton’s Bible Dictionary -Bible Works version 10

This Hebrew word means firm, or faithful (Revelation 3:14)

In Isaiah 65:16 the Authorized Version has "the God of truth," which in Hebrew is "the God of Amen."

It is frequently used by our Savior to give emphasis to his words, where it is translated "verily." Sometimes, only, however, in John's Gospel, it is repeated, "Verily, verily."

It is used as an epithet (description) of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 3:14).

It is found singly and sometimes doubly at the end of prayers in Psalm 41:13, 72:19, 89:52 to confirm the words and invoke the fulfilment of them.

It is used in token of being bound by an oath. Numbers 5:22, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, Nehemiah 5:13 8:6, 1 Chronicles 16:36

In the primitive churches, it was common for the general audience to say "Amen" at the close of the prayer. 1Co 14:16

The promises of God are Amen;

i.e., they are all true and sure. 2 Corinthians 1:20

So, as with Jesus, Paul is declaring that all things he wrote in the letter to the Roman Believers is a true, faithful, authoritative witness from the Lord that are to be fulfilled. Thus, all who read are bound by their declarations as to a covenant with God. This was Paul’s intent or why would he write such a letter? We are held responsible by God for what we know.

**Romans 16:1**

Word study:

**Phoebe**

**Strong’s 5402 Φοίβη** *Phoibe* **Meaning:** Phoebe, a deaconess

**Origin:** fem. of **φοῖβος** *phoibos (bright)*

**Usage:** Phoebe N**otes:** *deaconess,* 2 Corinthians 3:1, Acts 18:18

Servant: literally - bond servant/slave, attendant

Paul assigns this title to himself in 1 Corinthians 19:9

**Servant/ Deacon Greek: Diakonos**

**Strong’s 1249 διάκονος** *diakonos* **Meaning:** *a servant, minister*

**Origin:** of uncertain origin.

**Usage:** deacons(3), minister(7), servant(10), servants(9).

**Notes:** Or *deaconess,* 2 Corinthians 3:1, Acts 18:18

An attendant in the service of someone, as Joshua was the "servant/minister" of Moses (Numbers 11:28).

Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant . . .

(Hebrew: Sharath; servant/minister to)

. . . .of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them."

 With the backdrop of Joshua being assigned the same designation in relation to Moses, Paul is placing Phoebe in high esteem. Note that Phoebe is listed before the “greetings” that identify numerous other Believers who are also servants. Phoebe must be of great importance and her recognition is vital in carrying-out the work Paul has been assigned by the Lord. Scholars believe that Phoebe actually carried Paul’s letter to the Romans from Cenchrea, a city near Corinth. It is believed that Paul wrote the letter to the Roman Believers from Corinth.

 It is revealing that Paul greets so many people in Rome. Paul had not been to Rome. It is obvious that Paul had established relationships with them during his missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor, Southeastern Europe and Judea. It is noted by scholars that the names are a mixture of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew names. But it is also agreed that people often changed their names in the 1st century depending on the culture they found themselves. These names are found to be common names of the era and even names that have been found in burial records for servants of Emperors Claudius and Nero. Not to say that some of these are the same found in Paul’s Roman list, but we do have the record in Philippians 4:22, “All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household”, as a possible link to these names.

We do take note, with accuracy, the number of women who are greeted in Paul’s letter, giving us a witness that the spread of the Gospel was abundantly carried by women. We can see the instrumental service of Prisca/Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, as they call Apollos aside at Ephesus to correct his teaching. In the Greek, “take aside” *is in the third person plural* meaning they both addressed Apollos.

**Acts 18:26** and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

 This account is challenging to accommodate Paul’s note to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

Also, we have Philip’s four daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:9). I guess only women listen to them? Back to Prisca; I see that if women were never to instruct a man then why was that not made clear in the passage. It if was that hard and binding of a rule, then I see that a stipulation should have been made here. This does not mean that women should push the point and force their way. God is the one who calls all of us to ministry. God’s Holy Spirit is the only one who endows us with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11).

And then there is Anna, the prophetess, who spoke to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Receiving 1 Timothy 2:11-12 literally leaves us the picture that women were the only ones who paid attention to her. You be the judge.

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage,

 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

 38 At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. (Lk. 2:36-38 NAU)

Including Phoebe, there are ten women named of the 27 people listed in Romans 16. Two people are not named, and numerous others are referenced when Paul greets the “household or church.”

**Romans 16**

**Verse 1** I commend to you our sister Phoebe,

who is a servant (Greek: diakonos)

of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you **receive** her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

Paul instructs the Romans to Greet the following. By doing this, he gives all these saints credibility and trust.

**Great Cloud of Greetings**

 3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, (Acts 18:1,2)

my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

5 also greet the church that is in their house.

Greet Epaenetus, my beloved,

who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

 6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

 7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

 8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

 10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ.

Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

 11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman.

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

 12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord.

Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

 13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren 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.

All the churches of Christ greet you.

 17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances **contrary** to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

 19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore,

I am rejoicing over you,

but I want you to be wise in what is good

and innocent in what is evil.

 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

 In the last few verses, Paul identifies those **Saints** that are with him as he wrote the letter to the Roman congregation.

 21 **Timothy** my fellow worker greets you,

and so do **Lucius** and **Jason** and **Sosipater**, my kinsmen.

 Then the person who assists Paul in actually physically writing the letter to the Roman congregation is allowed by Paul to identify himself. It was common to have a secretary as it is today. It is a great witness that we use the individual gifts we have to accomplish the same goal. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

12 For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

(1 Cor. 12:12)

22 I, **Tertius**, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 **Gaius**, host to me and to the whole church, greets you.

**Erastus**, the city treasurer greets you, and **Quartus**, the brother.

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

 Paul brings to a close his great theological statement with a salute and acknowledgement to God’s accomplishment. God’s goal through the Incarnation is to establish in us the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. His Good News had already been preached by the prophets and stated in the Scriptures. The mystery that had been secret is the incarnation itself. No one knew when God would come to be one of us, but God did manifest himself as one of us and became flesh. The primary reason God did this was to defeat sin and death as a person Himself. By the incarnation, God as Jesus modeled the life Adam could have chosen. God as Jesus lived the life that He has called us to live. This demonstrates that we (individual people) too can have victory (have power) over sin and death in our lives. So, how is this possible? Paul witnesses this power in Galatians 2:20.

 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

 Just as Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3, this takes place by the rebirth of spirit: to be saved, to experience salvation, to be born-again by surrendering to the conviction of God’s Holy Spirit (John 16:8).

 Paul makes it clear that all the nations have been included in God’s plan. This statement is consistent with Romans 1:18ff, witnessing that God has revealed himself through the creation to all people from the beginning.

**Romans 16 Continue. . .**

 **25** 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**

which has **been kept secret** for long ages past,

 **26** but **now is manifested,**

and **by the Scriptures of the prophets,**

according to the commandment of the eternal God,

**has been made known to all the nations,**

leading to obedience of faith;

 **27** to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

 What do we receive from Paul’s closing words in Romans? We see that the **Gospel of God** Paul is talking about in the first sentence of the letter to the Romans is “his” Gospel (verse 25), one and the same. The Gospel of God became Paul’s Gospel. Do not be confused. Paul would not have a Gospel, if God had not given it to him.

 Romans 1:1, like the closing verses, establishes who Jesus Christ is. Also, the opening sentence establishes Paul as an Apostle who has been set apart by God for the specific tasks of spreading the Gospel. That this Gospel existed beforehand and was promised by God through the declarations of the prophets in the Scriptures. The Gospel was established in Paul, so the Gospel can be established in you. This is why Paul says “according to my gospel” in verse 25.

 **Romans 1:1-6**

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle,

 set apart for the **gospel of God,**

 2 which He promised beforehand

through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,

 3 concerning His Son,

who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,

 4 who was declared the Son of God

with power by the resurrection from the dead,

according to the Spirit of holiness,

 Jesus Christ our Lord,

 5 through whom

**we** have received grace and apostleship

to bring about the obedience of faith

among all the **Gentiles**

for His name's sake,

 6 among whom **you also** are the called

of Jesus Christ;

 From Romans 1:1 to 16:27, we have the same message. God desires and is able to establish in people, in us, in you. . . His Gospel to receive His grace to bring about a life that lives in the practice of His will in our lives. Paul calls this “obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5 and 16:26). Also, in verse 16:26, as in verses 1:5,6, Paul is clear that he, the Hebrew and the gentiles and “you also” are called of Jesus Christ. We see this in the Latin, Hebrew and Greek names Paul greets. We see this in the women and the men who are named by Paul. In the 1st century Roman world, God accomplished, He established an anchor in the hearts of people that had previously been divided and separated from His love and grace. God loved us first. God made the first move toward us through His Holy Spirit knocking on our heart’s door asking to come into our lives.

The Gospel unites people irrespective of their language, nationality, culture, race, gender or traditions. The Gospel of God works in the hearts and minds of people to bring about a unity of faith. Through this process, humanity moves forward in the unison of life under God.

AMEN