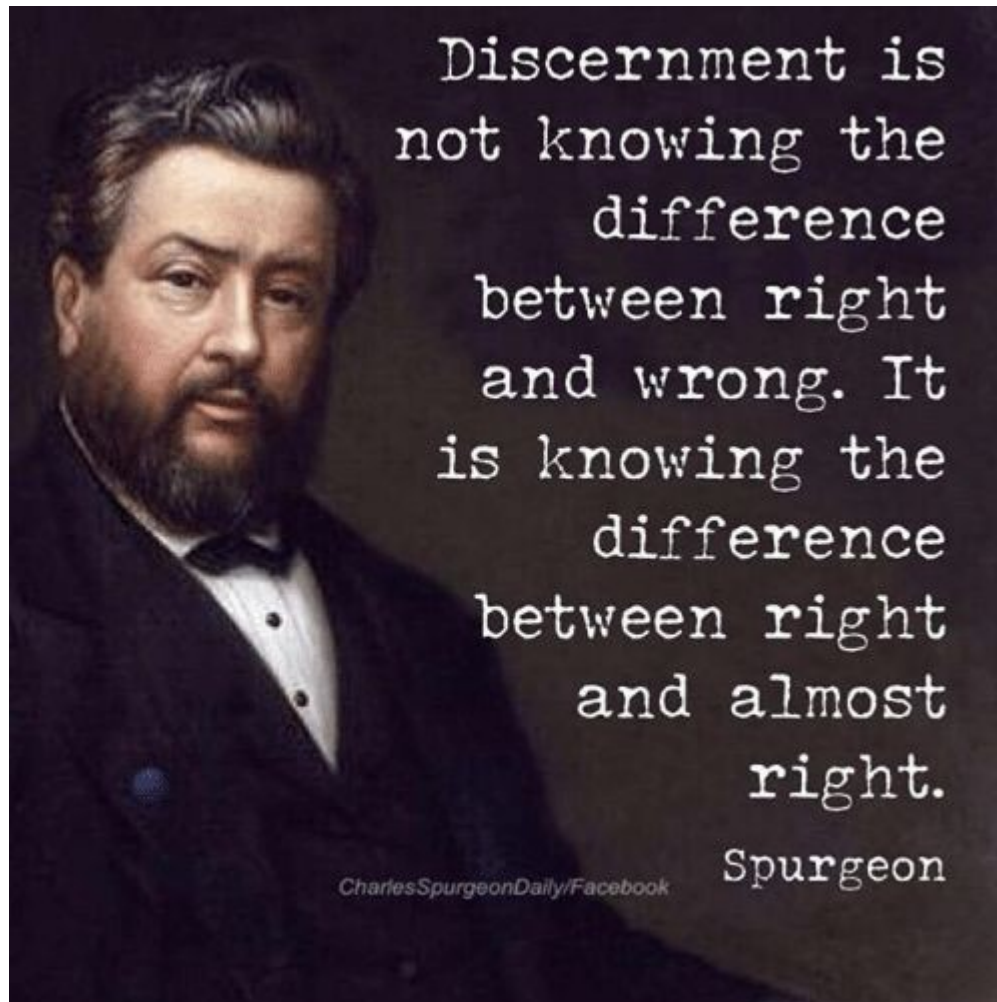


Romans Chapter 16



Dear Friends and Family,

As we close out the book of Romans, I want to take this opportunity to remind us of the context of this Epistle. Paul wrote Romans to the church at Rome most likely, while he stayed with Gaius. Gaius is mentioned in Acts 19:29 and again in 20:4. Most scholars believe it is during this time, specifically the 3 month interlude that Paul spent in Greece (Acts 20:3), that he wrote the book of Romans.

The entirety of this Epistle was written to show the church at Rome, and those of us who would come after, that we must use our most cunning discernment in matters of doctrine. Christ taught us to be "as shrewd as serpents" because we were "as sheep among wolves" (Matthew 10:16). Satan doesn't work his way into the church with great lies and amazing deceit. Instead, he uses small, almost truths.



Paul uses the entirety of his closing paragraphs to greet, thank, and encourage his companions and friends. Paul thought very highly of his fellow laborers in Christ.

Romans 16:1-2

Note Paul's commendation of Phoebe.

Some, especially today, would argue that Paul was a misogynist and had little regard for women, due to some of his writings. But we must remember that the Bible was written to specific people in specific times.

The context of a text is key to understanding it properly.

Here in verse 1 Paul commends Phoebe as a servant or '*deaconess*'

This keeps with his teachings in 1 Timothy 3 where Paul makes certain to point out the qualifications of male and female deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

The entire context of these verses is the qualifications of deacons. Paul differentiates between men and women, not to illustrate that women can't serve, but to reinforce what the whole Bible teaches. Men and women are different. Created different, for different purposes.



READ Romans 16:3-16

What can you identify about all of Paul's greetings?

Read Acts 18:1-11

Who were Prisca and Aquila?

Your translation of the Bible may or may not reflect this spelling difference. Paul uses a very slight spelling variation for Priscilla's name in this passage in Romans. Luke, who wrote Acts, uses the less formal and more endearing spelling in Acts 18. However, Paul uses the variant spelling of her name in Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Timothy 4. This shows not only his formality but also his genuine respect for her, not to mention that her name is mentioned before her husband's. We don't know all the details of their relationship but we do know that Paul shared an occupation with Priscilla and Aquila and spent a year and a half with them (Acts 18:1-3 & 11).

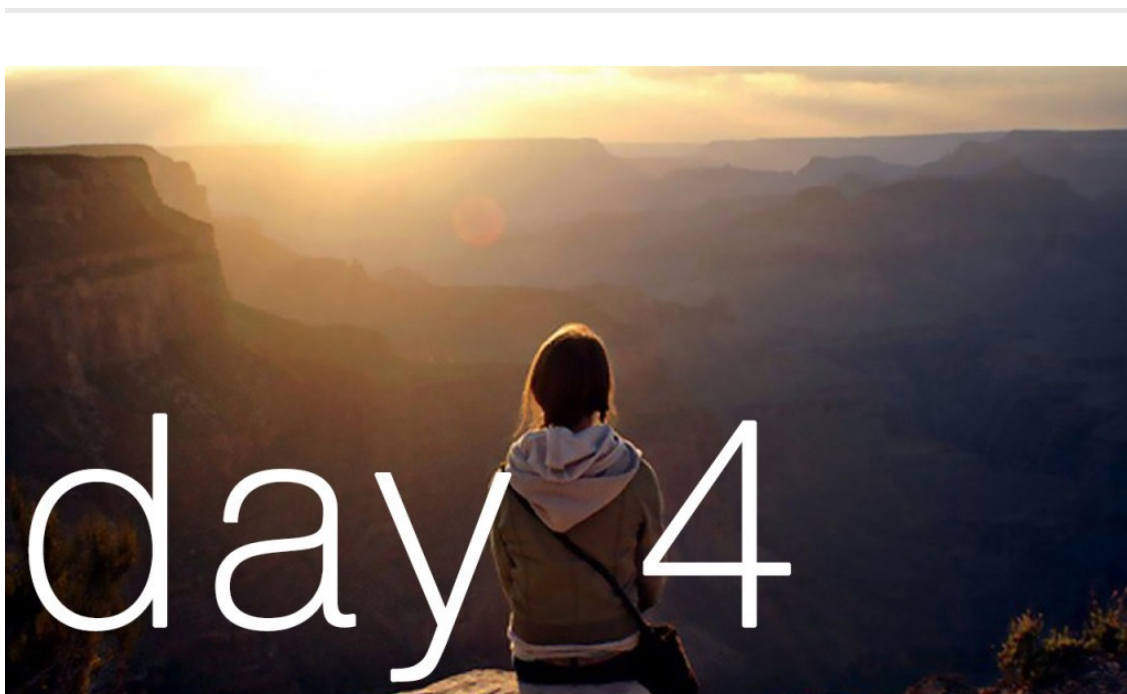


READ Romans 16:17-20

Paul gives one final warning here against dissensions and hindrances. These two words mean to divide and obstruct. Paul is warning that, from within the church, there will be those who seek to divide the body and others who will be a stumbling block to the faith. We must carefully keep watch for this.

What does Paul say is true of them in verse 18?

Finally, what are Paul's desires for them in verse 19 and promise to them in verse 20?



READ Romans 16:21-27

Paul closes the letter with greetings from his closest companions as well as a personal word from his transcriber. We know that Tertius did not write this Epistle because of Romans 1:1. The church readily accepted Paul's authorship of this letter and it has never been reasonably doubted as many authors used scribes in the first century.

Consider the following scriptures alongside Romans 16:25-26

Daniel 2:47

Isaiah 53:1-12

The mystery hidden for long ages past has been revealed!

What rejoicing we should have! The mystery of God, salvation through Christ, is now openly available to all who believe. What joy do we carry?
What is our response to this message?

It is easy to get caught up in our daily stresses, the unknowns of the future, and the world in which we live. But, if we can take a moment and reflect on the decades of history that have come before us, the people who so diligently sought to please God, to offer sacrifices acceptable to him, year in and year out, we will find a place to give thanks. Prior to the coming of Christ on this earth, people were restricted in their access to the Lord.

Yet what freedom we have now! May we guard that freedom carefully, remembering the sacrifice it cost, cherishing our ability to come before a Holy God because of the blood of Christ Jesus. May this remembrance guide you this week in how you live for the Lord. May he find us faithful!

Pastor Matt

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Dr. Matthew Long

Senior Pastor

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*



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