

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

XI. Paul's Edifying Concluding Remarks, Romans 15:14-16:27

D. The Great Value Of Lesser Known Believers

(Romans 16:3-16)

I. Introduction

- A. After showing how God's righteousness is applied by faith from start to finish (cf. Romans 1:16-17) in Romans 1:18-15:13, the Apostle Paul gave his longest concluding remarks in any of his epistles in Scripture in Romans 15:14-16:27, remarks that apply God's righteousness in the godly believer in various practical ways.
- B. One significant result of God's righteousness applied to the believer is how it produces great practical value in even lesser known believers in the church. We view Romans 16:3-16 that reveals a sampling of this truth for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. The Great Value Of Lesser Known Believers, Romans 16:3-16 KJV.

- A. Paul's concluding remarks contained his greetings to a number of individual believers in Rome, greetings that were accompanied by Paul's mentioning the great value of each one both to him and to the church in general.
- B. We list and categorize the ways these lesser known believers were of such great value (as follows):
 - a. The value of **self-sacrifice**: Priscilla and Aquila had risked their lives to save Paul's life, what caused not only Paul but all the churches of the Gentiles to whom Paul in particular ministered to be grateful, v. 3-4.
 - b. The value of **helping**: Priscilla and Aquila (v. 3) and Urbane (v. 9a) had greatly helped Paul in his work.
 - c. The value of **hosting house churches**: Priscilla and Aquila (v. 3), Aristobulus (v. 10b), Narcissus (v. 11b), Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes and their home (v. 14), and Philologus, Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas (v. 15) hosted house churches so believers could meet together in homes.
 - d. The value of **laboring**: Mary (v. 6), Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12a) and Persis (v. 12b) labored extensively in various ways for the benefit of Paul or of other believers.
 - e. The value of **faithfulness**: Andronicus and Junia, likely tribal kinsmen of Paul in that they were of his tribe of Benjamin in Israel had been in Christ before Paul and who had suffered imprisonment with him (v. 7; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 499), and Epaenetus (v. 5b) was the firstfruits of Achaia, a longtime Christian, believers known for their faithfulness.
 - f. The value of **fellowship**: Epaenetus (v. 5b), Amplias (v. 8), Stachys (v. 9b) and Persis (v. 12b) were beloved by Paul, Rufus' mother was like his mother (v. 13b) and Herodion (v. 11a) was of Paul's tribe.
 - g. The value of **edifying character**: Paul mentioned special edifying qualities of four believers:
 - i. Andronicus and Junia were "of note" among the apostles, and the Greek term *episemoi* literally means "having a mark on them", therefore "illustrious, notable, outstanding," Ibid., p. 499-500; v. 7. "The word 'apostles'" may be used here "in the . . . general sense in which Barnabas, Silas, and others were called apostles (Acts 14:14; 1 Thes. 2:7)" or "it could mean the apostles in the limited sense, referring to the reputation this pair had among the Twelve" apostles of Christ, Ibid., p. 500.
 - ii. Apelles was said to be *ton dokimon*, "the one approved through testing," and the same word is rendered "approved" in Romans 14:18, and in Romans 12:2 the "related infinitive *dokimazein* is translated "to test and approve," Ibid., Romans 16:10a. So, through a significant trial or series of trials, Apelles had come through the ordeal(s) approved of the Lord in character.
 - iii. Rufus was said by Paul to be "chosen in the Lord" (Romans 16:13a), what is theologically true of every believer in Christ (Ephesians 1:4) but in this context, it likely means "'eminent,' since it was given to Rufus as a statement of distinction," Ibid., p. 501.

Lesson: Lesser known believers whom Paul greeted displayed valuable qualities to the spiritual edification of Paul and others in the Church, qualities like self-sacrifice, helping, hosting churches in their homes, laboring, faithfulness, spiritual fellowship and outstanding character in being notable among the apostles, possibly even Christ's original Twelve apostles, approved through the fires of severe trial by testing and eminent in distinction.

Application: (1) May we value fellow believers today who, though lesser known in the body, through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, are known for their self-sacrifice, for helping, for hosting fellow believers, for laboring, for faithfulness, for spiritual fellowship and for the outstanding character qualities of being notable, approved through the fires of severe trials and eminent in distinction due to their lives and works. (2) May we then recognize the work of God to disciple others with us in Christ that we appreciate the value of the entire Church.