

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094 ► Thursday February 12, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 8:28 (NASB95)

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

POINT 2 - PAUL'S GREETINGS CONTINUED

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.

Greet Mary, Paul continues, **who has worked hard for you**. We do not know where **Mary** came from, how or when she was converted, or anything else about her except that she had **worked hard** for the church at Rome. The phrasing of this verse suggests that **Mary** may not have been known to Paul personally and that he knew of her hard work from the reports of others, perhaps Aquila and Priscilla. The context also suggests that she had ministered in the church at Rome for some time, and possibly was a founding member who labored selflessly to establish and develop the fellowship of Christians in the capital of the empire.

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

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Andronicus and Junias had a special and perhaps unique relationship to Paul. Because **Junias** may be a woman's name, these two might have been husband and wife. And because many of the individuals mentioned in this passage were Jews, **kinsmen** indicates not only that they were fellow Jews but probably means also that they, along with Herodion (v. 11) and Jason and Sosipater (v. 21) were Paul's relatives. If that is true, Paul must have felt a special warmth in seeing his **kinsmen** in the flesh become his **kinsmen** in spirit.

Besides being Paul's kinsmen, these two believers were at some time, perhaps even then, his **fellow prisoners**. Because Paul was often in prison (see 2 Cor. 11:23), their shared imprisonment could have been in any number of places. Because they were **outstanding among the apostles**, we can be sure that, like Paul, they were prisoners because of their faith. If they shared the same or adjoining cells, that imprisonment would have deepened and strengthened their personal and spiritual bond with each other.

The phrase **outstanding among the apostles** could have one of several meanings. It obviously does not refer to the office of apostle. The term itself means simply "sent ones," and in that sense refers to any believer whom the Lord sends forth in ministry. It seems likely that the meaning here is that Andronicus and Junias performed **outstanding** service in the Lord's work while working **among**, and possibly under, some of the ordained apostles, such as Paul and Peter. That interpretation is supported by Paul's remark that those two believers **were in Christ before me**, that is, were converted to Christ before he was. At the time of Paul's conversion, most converts were still living in or near Jerusalem, where several of the Twelve were leaders in the church. If, therefore, Paul's two kinsmen

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

were converted before he was, it is likely that they lived in Jerusalem and performed their **outstanding** service among the **apostles** in that city.

Ampliatus is greeted as Paul's **beloved in the Lord**. From history and archaeology we learn that **Ampliatus** was a common name among slaves. And because slaves were not allowed to bear the name of free men, this **beloved** friend of Paul must have been, and possibly still was, a slave. Many slaves in the imperial households of that day had that name, and because **Ampliatus** was then in Rome, it is conceivable that he was among the believers in "Caesar's household" mentioned by Paul in his letter to the church at Philippi (**Phil. 4:22**).

The next two saints to whom Paul sends greetings are **Urbanus** and **Stachys**. **Urbanus** was a common Roman name, suggesting that he may have been a Roman citizen. Paul speaks of him as **our fellow worker in Christ**, but gives no indication of how or where he ministered for **Christ**. **Our** could refer to Paul and any number of other co-workers, or it could refer to Paul and the church at Rome. If the latter, then **Urbanus** would have to have worked with Paul somewhere else before going to Rome and serving the church there.

Unlike **Urbanus**, the name **Stachys**, which means "ear of corn," was Greek and uncommon. Since he is called **beloved**, he would have been closely associated with Paul, but we do not know where or in what relationship. As mentioned above, many of those to whom Paul sends greetings were not outstanding leaders in the early church. That fact reveals the apostle's deep and sincere love for fellow believers and for fellow workers in particular, no matter how little known they were or how insignificant their service was from a purely human perspective.

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

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We know nothing about Paul's relationship to **Apelles**, and cannot be certain how the two were personally acquainted. But whether from his own experience with this man or from reliable reports from others, Paul recognized **Apelles** as being **approved in Christ**. **Approved** carries the idea of being tried and tested, and was used of precious metals, such as gold and silver, that passed tests for purity. Whatever his field of service **in Christ** may have been, **Apelles** performed it well.

Paul's next greeting was to a group of believers whose names and number we do not know. They are simply identified as **those who are of the household of Aristobulus**, who himself is not identified. Because he is not greeted, it seems certain he was not a Christian. The Greek phrase says only "of Aristobulus," the word **household** being implied. How many of his **household** were Christians, and whether they were family members, servants, or both we are not told.

Discussion Questions

- 1. How would you describe a meaningful long-term friendship?**
- 2. What did Paul's list of individuals reveal about his relationships & Community?**
- 3. Any comments or thoughts?**

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

PAUL'S GREETINGS CONTINUED

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.

Paul greets **Herodian** as **my kinsman**, who, for the same reason explained above, was Paul's physical kinsman and therefore a Jew, as well as his spiritual kinsman in Christ. As the name indicates, **Herodian** was related to the Herod family in some way and therefore may have been associated with the household of Aristobulus.

Like Aristobulus, **Narcissus** was probably not a believer, but some of **those of his household** were in the Lord.

In verse 12, Paul greets and commends three women. The first two, **Tryphaena and Tryphosa**, possibly were twin sisters, whose names mean "delicate" and "dainty," respectively. Those words may have characterized their lives before salvation, but spiritually they were active and faithful **workers in the Lord**.

Persis doubtless received her name from her native land of Persia. Not only was she **the beloved**, suggesting (by the definite article **the**) she was loved by everyone who knew her, but she also was one who had **worked hard in the Lord**. Because the work of **Tryphaena and Tryphosa** is spoken of in the present tense and that of **Persis** in the past tense, it may have been that the first two were

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

younger women and still active and that **Persis** was an older saint who had already lived her most productive years. But all three were noted for their work for and **in the Lord**.

Paul speaks of **Rufus** as **a choice man in the Lord**. **Choice** has the literal meaning of chosen, or elected. The idea here, as the *New American Standard Bible* rendering indicates, is that **Rufus** was **choice** in the general sense in which that word is used today. He was an extraordinary Christian, known for his love and work for the Lord and for the Lord's people.

The greeting to **his mother and mine** does not mean Rufus was Paul's natural brother but that Rufus's **mother**, somewhere and in some way during Paul's travels and ministry, had cared for the apostle as if he were her own son. Like many other Jews converted at or soon after Pentecost, Simon and his family may have chosen to stay in Jerusalem and therefore have had the opportunity to know and befriend Paul during his visits there.

Paul makes no comment about **Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, and Hermas**. The mention of **the brethren with them** indicates that the five men named here were leaders of one of the many assemblies of believers in Rome. In this context, **brethren** would include all believers there, including women.

Paul's greetings in verse 15 were to another such assembly of **saints**, in which **Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas** were outstanding members and leaders.

Paul ends this section with the admonition, **Greet one another with a holy kiss**. The practice of embracing and kissing friends on the forehead or cheek was common in Old Testament times. Men would sometimes be kissed on the beard.

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Such kisses were in no way romantic, much less erotic, and kissing on the mouth was rare, except for married couples. Kissing was common among relatives and close friends, especially when they first came together after a long separation and when they departed, as is common today. To kiss a person of high position was a sign of honor and respect.

The New Testament church, at first composed primarily of Jews, carried on the traditional practice of kissing among relatives and close friends. Because many new believers were made outcasts by their biological families, the spiritual kinship of Christians became all the dearer and was frequently manifested by what came to be called **a holy kiss**. Paul admonished believers in Rome to maintain the practice when they would **greet one another**.

The practice of the holy kiss, or kiss of love, continued for many years in the early church. It probably came to an end by being corrupted by sensuous perversion. In our own day, there is also danger of certain physical signs of affection being misunderstood and abused. Those dangers have always existed and will continue to exist until the Lord returns. But, if practiced with sensible discretion, a loving embrace and a truly holy kiss that reflect genuine, heartfelt love between Christians should not be discarded simply because of possible misunderstanding or misuse.

Paul extended greetings in behalf of **all the churches of Christ**, doubtless referring to congregations he had recently visited. We know from the New Testament that there were differences of opinions in the early church, even among the most spiritual leaders, including the apostles. Even serious factionalism, such as that in the church at Corinth, was not unknown, but there were no denominations as we know them today, no splinter groups within the body of orthodox believers. They **all** simply were **the churches of Christ**. Those believers,

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Jews and Gentiles, wealthy and poor, free and slave, famous and unknown, enjoyed in Christ a depth of fellowship and partnership the world has no way of understanding. But the world can observe it, and God's people should give the world more opportunity to do so. The Lord assured us, **“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).**

That kind of love characterized the church at Ephesus, of whom Paul wrote that he had “heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints” (**Eph. 1:15**). Again, linking faith in Christ with love for the brethren, he told the Colossian believers, “We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints” (**Col. 1:4; cf. v. 8**). He could say of the church at Thessalonica, “You have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another” (**1 Thess. 4:9**)

Discussion Questions

- 1. What underlying unity holds this diverse group together?**
- 2. What stood out to you in this lesson, any comments or observations?**
- 3. Application - identify family, friends, neighbors, coworkers and follow Paul's example by letting them know that they are appreciated.**

CLOSING PRAYER