

What Makes A Great Church, Part 4 - Romans 16:8-16 – November 10th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series titled, "What Makes A Great Church."
- In verses one through seven, we found six groups of people that make for a great church starting with our first one in verses one and two.

1. Faithful Women (Verses 1-2)

- Here Paul begins by greeting a woman by the name of Phoebe, who was so faithful and trustworthy that he has her hand deliver this letter.

2. Risk Takers (Verses 3-4)

- Paul sends his greeting to Priscilla and Aquila as fellow workers in Christ who risked their lives for Paul and all the Gentile churches.

3. Home Groups (Verse 5a)

- v5a The Apostle Paul sends his greetings to the church that met in Priscilla and Aquila's home, whom he mentioned in the previous verses.

4. New Believers (Verse 5b)

- v5b Paul greets his first convert to Jesus Christ, in the province of Asia, by the name of Epenetus, whom he considered to be a dear friend.

5. Hard Workers (Verse 6)

- v6 The Apostle Paul in an eight word verse makes sure to send his greeting to a woman by the name of Mary, who was a very hard worker.

6. Older Believers (Verse 7)

- v7 He greets his relatives who were in prison with him by the name of Andronicus and Junias, outstanding apostles in Christ before he was.

7. Godly Wives (Verses 8-10)

- v8-9 Paul greets Ampliatus, whom he loves in the Lord, Urbanus, a fellow worker in the Lord, and his dear friend by the name of Stachys.
- v10 He greets Apelles, who'd been tested and approved through his trials, then he greets those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.
- Notice the Apostle Paul's greeting is not to Aristobulus, as the man of the house rather, it's to those who were in this man's family instead.

- The reason I point this out is because it speaks to the Aristobulus' in the church today as leaders in their home, who don't know the Lord.
- Moreover, it also speaks to those families, who in spite of this, do know the Lord, love the Lord, and serve the Lord as wives and children.
- If you were to ask me what one of the biggest blessings to me as a pastor of this church was, it would be these wives and their children.

Of this, Charles Spurgeon poignantly wrote, "Where are you, Aristobulus? That is not your name, perhaps, but your character is the same as that of this unregenerate Roman, whose family knew the Lord. I might speak in God's name good words and comfortable words to your wife and to your children, but I could not so speak to you, Aristobulus! The Lord sends a message of grace to your dear child, to your beloved wife, but not to you; for you have not given your heart to him. ...It is sad to find the head of a gracious household himself unsaved."

8. Godly Men (Verses 11-13a)

- v11 Paul greets Herodion, his relative, and those who were, like Aristobulus, in the household of Narcissus, that were walking with the Lord.
- v12 He greets two sisters, Tryphena and Tryphosa, who were hard working women, along with another hard working woman named Persis.
- v13a The Apostle Paul makes a most interesting distinction when he sends his greeting to Rufus, of whom he says was chosen in the Lord.

- The common denominator in these verses is that they all speak to the paramount importance of godly men in the life of a healthy church.
- Here's how I get there, verse 11 says that Paul, may have been related to Herod, who in spite of being an ungodly man, was a godly man.
- Also in verse 11, we're told that, like Aristobulus before him, Narcissus, may have also been an ungodly man, yet he had a godly family.

- Then, in verse 12, we're told of three hard working women two of whom were sisters, all of whom may or may not have had a godly father.
- In the first part of verse thirteen we're introduced to a man by the name of Rufus, whom many believe had a godly father named Simon.
- More specifically, Simon of Cyrene who was chosen to carry the cross of Jesus, which would indicate that he, left a godly legacy to his son.

- Here's the bottom line, we need godly men in the church today, regardless of whether or not they had godly men as fathers to model it.
- In other words, it matters not whether or not our fathers were men of God, though it's better if they are, we can still break the chain as men.
- So important is the role godly men have in the life of a church, that God would deem fit to weave it into the fabric of Paul's list of greetings.

- There's something else here that I need to point out concerning godly men, before we move on to the last one we'll look at in today's text.
- When it comes to the men, Paul communicates his love for them, but when it comes to the women, he's very careful in being appropriate.
- While we'll see this again in verse 16, I think it would be good for us to take note of this as it relates to how men treat women in the church.

9. Godly Mothers (Verses 13b-16)

- v13b He goes on to send his greeting to Rufus' mother, who was such a godly mother the Apostle Paul says she's been a mother to him.
- v14-15 He then sends his greetings to a number of brothers and sisters some of whom were siblings as well as all the saints with them
- v16 Paul continues his greetings by telling them to greet one another with a holy kiss, and to send greetings to all the churches of Christ.

- It's important to understand how in that day the greeting with a holy kiss was the cultural equivalent of our hugging and kissing in Hawaii.
- The reason I bring this up is because Paul seems to take it a step further when he sort of qualifies it by saying the kiss needs to be holy.
- This because, in that day, much like today, a holy hug and kiss, can become unholy an inappropriate, and the women know the difference.

- This is where the godly mother comes in, such that, it's incumbent upon them to teach their daughters how to dress and behave modestly.
- Rather than going into too much detail, I'll bring it to a close by simply saying, it's godly mothers, wives and men that make a church great.
- Would to God that we as a church are numbered amongst those of whom it's said, they're godly wives and mothers, husbands and fathers.