

WHO CARES?

Romans 16

Every generation has its great preachers –great sermons

Early 20th C: Robert Lee–

"Payday Someday" => Ahab & Jezebel

Late 20th C: Joe Stowell– "Who Cares?"

=> Who cares about the lost?

Hard to preach exciting sermon from greetings & benedictions

Yet Bible says ***all*** Scripture is inspired by God & profitable!

God recorded Rom. 16!

It too must be PROFITABLE!

Remember Yellow caution signs hanging in car windows:

started with warning: "Baby on board."

People added, "Ex-boyfriend in trunk"

& "Nobody on board."

Troubling sign: "***Who Cares?***"

If God were into commute talk, He'd hang yellow signs around necks of people without Christ saying "Precious to God."

Would *WE* hang signs that ask:

"WHO CARES?"

Rom 16: Paul points to **3 things God cares about.**

If they're important to God, they should be important to us!

1st, God cares about **His children;**

We're precious to Him!

Who cares about God's children? 16:1-16

Paul's interest in God's children in Rome is obvious.

1) Paul cares about God's children! => US!

Mentions 35 by name—not bad for church he's never been to!!

Most are people he met on journeys.

“Garage Door” phenomena

–houses don’t have front porch!

People are looking for someone who cares.

Reasons people choose a church.

Survey results:

12% => denominational affiliation

8% => beautiful facilities

3% => preacher [humbling!]

18% => location

21% => respected people who attend

37% => someone took interest in them!

People are looking for someone who cares.

God seeks people who care about His people. Do WE care?

2) Paul expresses appreciation for faithful women.

(1) Phoebe 1-2 *“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.*

Phoebe faithfully serves the Lord, serving other people.

He commends her ministry=>Treat her as she treats others

(2) Priscilla 3-4 *“Greet Priscilla & Aquila, my co- workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.*

All the churches recognize their collaboration in ministry.

(3) 4 other “hard-working” women

Mary 16:6 “Greet Mary, who **worked very hard** for you.”

Tryphena & Tryphosa 12

“Greet Tryphena & Tryphosa, those **women who work hard** in the Lord.”

Names mean “dainty” and “delicate”

May be “dainty” & “delicate,” but known for **hard work**

Persis 12

“Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has **worked very hard** in the Lord.”

Other women mentioned & considered valuable

In God's sight women aren't inferior.

Ministry not minimized

3) Paul expresses gratitude NOW –in this life!

“Little-known people” in God’s “hall of fame.” Say it **now!**

“I’d rather have one little rose

From the garden of a friend,

Than to have the choicest flowers

When my stay on earth must end.

I would rather have a pleasant word

In kindness said to me,

Than flattery when my heart is still,

& life has ceased to be.

I’d rather have a loving smile

From friends I know are true,

Than tears shed 'round my casket,

When this world I've bid adieu.

Bring me all your flowers today,
 Whether pink, or white, or red;
 I'd rather have 1 blossom *now*,
 Than a truckload when I'm dead"
 Do WE owe word of appreciation?

*Don't wait! **Say it now!***

Greet one another with warm expression of love

16 *"Greet 1 another with a holy kiss.*

All the churches of Christ send greetings."

Not sure how to apply this in these days!

Holy kiss = fraternal greeting, similar to "*abrazos*" = "hugs"

Show love with visible expressions of caring for each
 other—in holy way—warm handshake; fist/elbow bump

God wants *us* to care about His children—care for each other

Who cares?

Do we care about each other?

[2nd group God cares about:]

Who cares about people who hurt God's church

17-20 **17** *"I urge you, brothers, to **watch out** for those who **cause divisions** and **put obstacles** in your way that are contrary to the **teaching** you've learned. Keep away from them."*

Paul wants us to greet one another warmly;

Group we *shouldn't* greet warmly:

people who hurt His church!

Warm greetings are for people who believe *same doctrine*,
 & love each other;

NOT all who **call** selves Christians.

Warning incl. 2 kinds of tools Satan uses to derail God's people
2 kinds of people hurt God's church:

1) People who cause dissension

Be alert anytime God's people get serious about serving Him!

If Satan can keep us fighting *among ourselves*, we won't have *time* to reach others, or focus on fruitbearing

2nd kind of people who hurt God's church:

2) People who deceive others with false teaching

Many call selves "Christian;" teach opposing God's Word

False teachers roam around!

Gold Rush, many excited about finding "gold"—only to discover what they found was 'fools' gold!

Looks like gold; entirely different; isn't worth anything.

Learned hard way **"everything that glitters isn't gold."**

What are we to do about such people?

17b **"Keep away from them!"** Avoid them! **WHY? 18** *"For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people."*

1) They serve themselves rather than Christ

In spite of what they say, they're not serving our Lord.

—not HIS slaves; but slaves of their own appetites.

2) They lead people astray —convincing talkers!

Impressive presentations deceive people without discernment

Tell people what *they* want to hear

—NOT *truth*! "You can do it!"

—get fat at expense of people who don't recognize lie.

We'd better pay attention to preacher's message rather than style!

3) God's purpose for us!

–to make us discerning people **19** *“Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.”*

Risk to people who respond positively to God's Word

We want to DO what God says

–want to please God

False teachers come disguised; convince people God's asking us to do what's not in agreement with His Word

Paul exhorts: be wise

–distinguish between good & evil

Mark of godly, spiritual maturity: discernment.

Search for leaders, 1st quality: discern truth; relate it to life.

I cringe when people tell me they have “gift of discernment.”

Scripture never calls discernment a gift => **mark of maturity**

Eph. 4:12ff: God gave gifts to church so God's people might be built up, until we ALL become mature, until we reach Christlikeness, =>

“14 *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back & forth by the waves, & blown here & there by every wind of teaching & by the cunning & craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”*

Heb 5:14: *“Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained them-selves to distinguish good from evil.”*

Mature people are able to distinguish truth from error, good from evil.

Internet “discernment ministry.” Attacks Bible teachers. Doesn’t teach *Scripture*; tears down people who do. Anyone who states things different than *HIS* way of saying things is a heretic.

That’s not discernment—that’s arrogance; that’s a divisive spirit!

We must learn to distinguish truth from error; take a stand for truth.

But we’re also required to **speak truth *in love*!**

God’s 2nd purpose in midst of people who hurt His church:

b) He wants to use us to defeat Satan 20a

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

Staying pure *will* provoke spiritual war

Satan won’t leave us in peace.

He wants to make us fall!

If we remain faithful, discern good from evil, obey what God teaches, God, will ultimately give us victory.

Our faithfulness will ultimately result in Satan's fall

God cares about people who sneak in among his people & lead others astray!

Do we care?

3rd thing God cares about: **HIS GLORY**

Is. 48:11: *“I will not yield **My Glory** to another.”*

Who cares about God's glory? 25-27 *“Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel, & the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶but now revealed & made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all*

*nations might believe & obey Him—²⁷to the only wise God **be glory forever** through Jesus Christ! Amen.”*

Who establishes us? Only God can establish us!

How? How does God establish us?

How is he glorified?

1) By the Gospel

2) By preaching about Jesus –which leads to faith

What does this produce in us? Trust & obedience

What does this *ultimately* produce? God's Glory!

Concludes book with praise—summarizes his message:

"Only God deserves glory."

God takes people who were enslaved to sin

While we were sinners, Christ died for us—to give us life

He has transformed us into image of His Son

Only God is capable of designing such a plan to save us,
while WE were still rebels!

=> *He alone is worthy of praise.*

“to the only wise God be glory forever, through Jesus Christ!”

ALL THE GLORY IS DUE HIM.

Truth communicated all through God’s Word

Now, by preaching gospel it’s been revealed to all nations, even pagans, so we may **respond appropriately, obeying what**

God demands:

that we trust His Son Jesus Christ.

Only God deserves glory

He designed plan;

he alone is able to confirm us

What does God want US to care about?

God cares about His children

God cares about His church

(& those who would harm it!)

God cares about His glory

WHO CARES? GOD CARES!

Do we care about what God cares about?