

By Love Set Free

APRIL 6/7, 2019

LIVING EXAMPLES OF FREEDOM

ROMANS 16:1-16

SENIOR PASTOR BYRON MACDONALD

“So if the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed” – John 8:36.

Phoebe: A businesswoman for Christ, vv. 1-2.

- A servant leader of the church (Deaconess), v. 1.
- A business traveler who used her travels as opportunities for Christ, v. 1.
- A person who used her financial successes as opportunities and resources to bless the church and Gospel workers, v. 2.

Priscilla and Aquila: A business couple for Christ, vv. 3-4.

- A marriage built on the foundation of Christ (nobility and a Jewish businessman), v.3.
- A team that disciplined others, v.3.
- Ones who loved the church and became a significant part of it wherever they were (Rome, Corinth, Ephesus), vv. 4-5.
- A willingness to go to prison or die for Christ, if that is required, v. 4.

Adronicus and Junia: A missionary couple for Christ, v. 7.

- Missionaries committed to take the Gospel where Jesus is not named, v. 7.
- Boldly going forward despite having been in prison for the Gospel, v. 7.

Urbanus and Stachys (slaves) and Herodian (royalty): Brothers in Christ, vv. 9, 11.

- Slaves and royalty who found the bond of Christ greater than the differences of race and rank in society.

Rufus: Son of an eyewitness of the triumph of Jesus Christ through the cross and resurrection (Mark 15:21-22), v. 13.

- His father bore the cross of Christ in place of Jesus on the way to the execution site.
- The family (father, mother, sons) became radical followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philologus and Julia: A couple and home for Christ, v.15.

PASTOR'S CHAT

It's surprising how much the Bible has to say about money. Money seems to be particularly important to God. It is the Lord Jesus who helps us understand the importance of money to God. Jesus said it simply in Matthew 6:21, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" Isn't that interesting that our heart follows where our money is? That is why money is important to God, because He knows it becomes the tangible expression of where our heart is. Jesus calls for us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. So, if where your money is tells God where your heart is, what is the money God has entrusted you telling Him? Are you telling Him that you love His Son with all your heart? If not, then this is the time to start making sure our money goes to the Lord Jesus as the true expression of our love for Him.

As a church, our efforts are to be the best stewards we can of the monies entrusted to us through financial giving. We are passionate about making disciples in our local community and around the world, where our global partners are leading incredibly fruitful and important ministries. This is such a fruitful season for our ministries. Resurrection Journey this Saturday shared the truth of the Gospel to our preschool age children. *Pageant of Our Lord* is sharing the Gospel with about 3,000 people each weekend. Soon the Easter tent will be coming with the great opportunity we have of sharing the Gospel on Resurrection Sunday two weeks from this weekend. We are supporting national church planters through Partners International in some of the most challenging places and doing it with great faithfulness and fruitfulness. Your giving is supporting ministries all around the world where God is significantly moving.

As our church year ends in May, and as my ministry as Senior Pastor ends in June, I am praying we will be able to keep all our financial commitments. We have lagged a little behind in financial giving this year, not in profound ways, but still in ways that are keeping us from doing all we hoped to do. I would love for us to finish this season strong financially. But again, our giving is not so much about the specifics of the needs and opportunities as it is about our heart and making sure how we use our financial resources is a reflection of the best in our love for the Lord Jesus and our commitment to the mission of the Gospel.

As we give it is important to know it is not the actual size of our financial gift as compared to others that is important. What is important is that this is my best for the Lord Jesus. In Jesus' day there were boxes for financial giving in the Temple area. Some of the wealthy made a great show of pouring their coins into the offering boxes. But Jesus knew this did not represent sacrifice to those wealthy givers, it was just giving out of their excess. But a widow came with a few coins that she quietly put in the offering box. This was not her extra money, it was all she had. Even though it was just a few pennies her gift meant so much to the Lord Jesus. He said this in Luke 21:3-4, "*Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.*" Let's show the Lord Jesus, with our money, how He is the treasure of our heart. Let's have this season of my ministry at RHCC finish strong. I say that knowing you will never be able to out give God, for He will cause His blessings to overflow in your life.

Pastor Byron welcomes your questions/comments at bmacdonald@rhcc.net