

Romans 16:1-4

Helpers in the Church

1. 16:1-2 – Phebe

- a. This chapter filled with commendations and salutations, but not w/o some trouble.
- b. *"I commend unto you"* – Needed that others may know who is approved faithful.
 - i. Saints are many, fewer are faithful, and such may be overlooked for the ambitious.
- c. *"Phebe our sister"* – The first on the list is a woman, a sister in the Lord (1 Tim 5:2)
 - i. Paul is called a misogynist, but in his stead the apostle sends this letter w/a woman.
 - ii. At their worst, women cause disorder, manipulate, deceive, usurp, malign, destroy.
 - iii. At the best, minister, assist, host, teach, pray, prophesy, wise, keep peace, gracious
 - iv. They are equal members of the Body, submissive to the Lord - Gal 3:28, Eph 5:22
 - v. Women ministered to the Lord at his death, burial, and resurrection.
- d. *Phebe ... a servant* – This got Rick Warren kicked out of SBC. Can women be pastors?
 - i. Phebe is not a bishop, nor is this claiming rank - 1 Tim 3:1,2,5,11-12; 5:1
 - ii. Was Phebe a deacon? Gr. word is the same! (But also describes unsaved servants)
 - iii. Women (nor men) are allowed to usurp authority that is not theirs - 1 Tim 2:2, 12
 - iv. Paul gives special duty, responsibility, authority to Phebe. The reason why in 16:2
 - v. Ministry of God's will done by all (women, too) - 1 Tim 2:4-5, Rom 12:1
- e. *Phebe... a succourer of many* – Succour = to give aid, assistance, help, support. Heb 2:18
 - i. Paul's instruction: "receive her... and assist her..." – he instructs men to serve her.
 - ii. *"in whatsoever business she hath need"* – This sets a rule, lead, responsibility, trust.
 - iii. Women not doing their own business, might meddle in everyone else's - 1 Tim 5:13
 - iv. *"of many, and of myself also"* – This the resume, proof, and commendable reason.
 - v. *"help those women which laboured with me ..."* – Phi 4:3, not all women, but those.
 - vi. She has assisted many, and even Paul, so she gets to be assisted in her service.
 - vii. She is given authority not by usurpation, but by submission – what a concept!
- f. Was Phebe limited by Paul because she was a woman? No. Her service was remarkable.

2. 16:3-4 – Priscilla and Aquila

- a. Paul tells the saints in Rome to greet these saints dear to him.
- b. *"my helpers in Christ Jesus"* – Not just helpers in ministry, but also personally "in Christ"
- c. Their first mention is when Paul "found" them in Corinth - Acts 18:1-2
- d. They met because of their exodus, Paul's travels, and a common occupation - Acts 18:3
- e. They might've been saved by God's grace through Paul's ministry (18:4-5), which is why...
- f. *"who have for my life laid down their own necks"* – When? Acts 18:12, 17-18
- g. They traveled with him to Ephesus, perhaps at great risk - Acts 18:18-19, 1Cor 15:30-32
- h. In Ephesus, Prisca and Aquila taught Jewish Apollos *"more perfectly"* - Acts 18:24-28
- i. *"more perfectly"* is how those "behind" learned of new things (not "repented of error")
- j. In Ephesus, this couple hosted a church in their house - 1 Cor 16:19
- k. *"unto whom not only I give thanks..."* – They are now in Rome (where they started)
- l. *"but also all the churches of the Gentiles"* – he received help from Jews and Gentiles.
- m. They are thought of together with the house of Onesiphorus - 2 Tim 1:16-18
- n. These remained faithful and dear to Paul throughout his ministry - 2 Tim 2:2, 4:19