Paul’s Greetings and Thanksgivings (Romans 16)

**Paul Greets His Friends**

**Today I will be finishing up the Book of the Bible that is named after Paul’s letter to the church in Rome. He had been hoping to make it to Rome, but his letter and his greeting to his friends and co-workers in Christ was going to have to do. We are going to begin in Romans chapter 16 verse 1. Please open your Bible or your phone or follow along with me on the powerpoint. I will do my best to pronounce the names correctly. I have listened to this text several times with the hope that I will get the pronunciations right.**

**16**I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. **2**Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God’s people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

**3**Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. **4**In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. **5**Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ. **6**Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit. **7**Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. **8**Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. **9**Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

**10**Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus. **11**Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet the Lord’s people from the household of Narcissus. **12**Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord’s workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord. **13**Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.

**14**Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them. **15**Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them. **16**Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Any time I have to read a text with all of these names it takes me back to the 7th grade, in an English class, when I had to read out loud in front of the class. Everyone was supposed to have pre read a few chapters of the book, and while it was my turn to read (in a class of 7th-9th graders) I came to the word…

“Rendezvous.”

 Everyone had a really good laugh, including the teacher, who then proceeded to shame me because, I clearly must not have read the chapter. Actually, I had read the chapter, I just didn’t know what that word was and I didn’t look it up. Anyway…

How do you preach on a text like this? What can we possibly learn and apply from this? It kind of just seems like a long list of names…

Well, names matter, because they are ascribed to people, real people, who had a real contributions to Paul’s life and to the life of the church. To Paul, each one of these people mentioned played a noteworthy role in the building of our Lord Jesus’ church. That is why Paul’ commanded, in verse 16, to “Greet each other with a sacred kiss.”

It doesn’t mean that you have to give each other a big smooch. The kiss that they gave each other was mean to be a sign of a person’s sincere love and acceptance of each other.

In our day and age we would say greet each other genuinely and sincerely not with a plastic pretentiousness.

Have you ever met anyone who seemed fake or too good to be true?

I think Paul would agree with me, when I say, don’t waste too much time with pretentious people. If you want to show that people are valuable and they matter to you, then don’t pretend.

This leads me to another part of the “holy” kiss. Since the word “holy,” means, “set apart, or made for a special purpose.” It goes to show that we should never minimize the blessing of being together with someone else. As I said earlier, people matter, and we should recognize the honor and privilege that comes from being with another…especially another Christian.

As the pastor, at BLCC, I have had the privilege of getting to know many of you in very special ways. We have gone through tough times together, enjoyed times of recreation and celebration, and some of you have even really helped me through some hard times. So today, coming off of the heels of Thanksgiving and looking towards Christmas, I wanted to take a minute to introduce some people whose dedication and service have kept this place afloat this year. I am thankful to have had the chance to see your hard work in the Lord and, like Paul, I would highly recommend that others would “greet” you or get to know you.

In no way will I be able to cover everyone and everything, but I do want to use this connection to Romans 16 to affirm some of your hard work in the Lord. I am going to go through this fairly quickly, but I would ask that you would stand if I mention your name. If you are watching on Facebook, it would be awesome if you would post your picture in the comments so others could see who you are and that way they could look to greet you the next time they see you in person.

**Roy Nishiyori**—

Got a problem with the heating? Ever wonder where all the leaves go? How the weeds disappear out of the flower beds? Who blows all the pine needles off of the roof? Adjusts doors? Blows the sidewalks off in the fall and de-ices them in the winter? Can answer any question about the building? Not to mention he will remember your birthday…And what about his wife Sylvia who keeps our church library in order and supports her husband as he sacrifices countless hours here at the church.

Greet Roy Nishiyori

**Chris Kuntz**—

 Greet Christopher Kuntz a gifted guitar player and knowledgeable Bible scholar.

**Gavin and Aubrae Nishiyori**—

If you need someone to preach, if you ever wondered who you could trust your teenager with for some good clean fun? As you’ve ate your donut at our meet and greet time have you wondered who coordinates all that?

Greet Gavin and Aubrae Nishiyori

**Rick and Le Khanh Nelson**—

When I am in need of a little encouragement, this team always welcomes me for some tea and usually something sweet.

He is an elder who has supported me and the church through thick and thin and His wife who has helped with so many of the organizational details.

Greet Rick and Le Khanh Nelson

**Bill Sandell**—

This man has faithfully prepared the Music for our worship services for years and years. I’m thankful for his ongoing consistency.

Greet Bill Sandell

**Tim Hoff**—

Just when I’m feeling like no one wants to put time into me, when I’m wondering if people just wait for me to pursue them…Tim Hoff texts me and says, “Wanna have coffee.”

Greet Tim Hoff a gentle giant and a loving brother in Christ.

**Dianne Bozzo**—

 Her voice and her smile has blessed so many at BLCC.

 Greet Dianne Bozzo

**Mike and Tami Kegley**—

Need something done, anything…There is nothing that Mike and Tami can’t do. They are truly competent and capable of any task. Need someone to lead kids, to play music, to sing, to run a website, to write a book, sell your house, or do some remodeling…Greet Tami Kegley.

Need some tractor work done, need some advice about motorcycles, motorhomes, trailers, cell phones, heaters, tile, snow mobiles, snow bikes, want to have an adventure anywhere you go…Greet Mike Kegley

**Brian and Jenn Roediger**—

Without these two BLCC may have never made it through this COVID crisis. BLCC may have made it without Brian and Jenn, but I might not have. Greet Brian and Jennifer Roediger the couple responsible for upgrading our A/V computers and networks and masterminding everything we needed to pull off our online services.

**Larry Oliver**—

What can I say about this next guy…Larry has been a steady and highly involved presence at BLCC for years and years. He runs the slides, he has written the checks to pay the bills, he has helped set up Christmas lights, not to mention the personal encouragement he has shown me over the years…And oh yeah, He is usually the guy who locks the doors and closes the gate. He is a first to get here last one to leave kind of guy. Not to mention the fact that his wife **Janet** has quite possibly touched more lives than any through her years of ministry to kids in the community.

**Ray Uebler**—

Sound is crucial at a church service, after all doesn’t the Bible say “How will they believe if they don’t hear?” Every week this man chases me down to get my microphone back up in the booth and sometimes he even has to remind me to get it before I go up to preach. By the way if you have ever enjoyed coffee here at BLCC there is a high probability that Ray made it. Greet Ray Uebler.

**Ceharra Uebler**—

Following Ray’s example Ceharra has started to serve on our AV team. I am so thankful for her willingness to run our media shout and powerpoint. Greet Ceharra Uebler.

**Alise McCoy**—

Do you need a song? Do you need someone who is strong? Would you like to meet someone who could win a most infectious smile contest? Do you want to get your butt kicked at pickle ball or tennis?

Greet Alise McCoy

**Steve McCoy**—

Are you looking for a Teacher, encourager, group facilitator, and one who can challenge people to know why they believe what they believe. Greet Steve McCoy.

**Merle Green**—

This guy has blessed us all so much with his voice, his ability to keep us on beat, and his dedicated heart for prayer!

Greet Merle Green

**James Cathey—**

Who did I call on when I needed someone to get our feed online in a pinch? Who could I count on to help out with kids? And who blessed the church by playing piano? Who, when he asked me to go Mt Biking, helped relieved my stress?

Greet James Cathey

**Lena Cathey**—

A father couldn’t be more proud of his daughter’s beautiful voice and her passion for life. I don’t know what I would do without her.

Greet Lena Cathey

I give thanks for the music these two have made to support Bonney Lake and I look forward to seeing how God will use them in their future.

Greet Richie and Emily Espitia

**Tyler Germaine**—

What an example of a man who is bold enough to worship God and bless others with his strong clear voice. Greet Tyler Germaine.

**Daryl Germaine**—

Need a preacher? A teacher? Need wise counsel? Some advice on auto mechanics? A good missionary story? Or any kind of story for that matter.

Greet Daryl Germaine

**Sharon Germaine**—

Need something mended? Want some help finding a good deal on an obscure need? Would you like to figure out how to repurpose something? Are you interested in gaining wisdom on what it is like to serve on the Mission field.

Get to know Sharon Germaine

**Patsy Johannes**—

 Need to learn compassion in action for the broken…Greet Patsy Johannes

**Sharon Dougherty**—

This lady will help with anything, anytime, just about anywhere. She could just as easily help a child with a craft or teach an adult how to rough it in a tent for a week.

Greet Sharon Dougherty

**Carol Osbourne**—

 Her gentle spirit is comforting, and her dedication is amazing. Greet Carol Osbourne.

There are so many who have touched my life in special ways that have encouraged me and at the same time built up the body of believers in Bonney Lake.

Jesse and Tenille

Brett and Lauren

Sam and Kate

Bad and Rachel

Kelly

Taylor

Scott and Jerri

Tracy and Kathy

Bobby and Kimberly

Tim Tiesta

Don and Jane

John and Pam

Steve Ray

Francis Pickering

The list could go on and on because…

there are many more of you who give to this church and this community…

Why do these people do what they do? If you asked them what would they say?

First of all they would probably say, “What do you mean? I feel like I haven’t done much.”

That is because their work has been “Done in the Lord,” as Paul mentions so many times in Romans.

People who serve without an agenda aren’t looking for recognition and affirmation. It doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t recognize and affirm others in their work.

After all, isn’t that exactly what Paul is doing here in Romans 16?

What it means is that accolades are not why servants do what they do. At times there will be some people whose aim is self-aggrandizement. This is why Paul warns:

**17I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.**

Romans 16:17-19

But thankfully, this will not always be the case…we are reminded:

**20**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

And now finally Paul comes to the end of his letter, and his scribe “Tertius,” writes the closing…

**21**Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

**22**I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

**23**Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city’s director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. **24**

**25**Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, **26**but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— **27**to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Jesus is the one. He is the one who will establish you. He is the one who will empower you. He is the one who forgives you. He is the one who serves you and teaches you to be a servant. And Jesus is the one who has gifted us with each other.

As I close today, I want to recognize two more ladies who have made Bonney Lake Community Church what it is. They were both here many years before I was. And I bet you will be able to know who I am talking about just from a short description. So go ahead and call out there name once you know who I’m talking about.

**Anna McCoy**—

Have you needed advice on how to show love to difficult kids? Do you notice cute decorations, subtle artwork? Have you ever needed someone to talk to or a shoulder to cry on? Did you notice a warm welcome at the front door? Did someone make you feel like it mattered that you were here today? Whether it was Anna who greeted you or someone that she trained, I bet that when you walked in today Anna McCoy had a part in making you feel special.

Greet Anna McCoy

**Char Oskamp**—

Have you wanted to know your Bible better? Have you taken part in a cell-phone prayer time? Have you needed someone you could depend on? Have you received a caring phone call when you least expected it? Was there a person who said, “Let me pray for you right now.”

Greet Char Oskamp

I’d like to ask Anna and Char to come up today. Because today we are going to recognize them as deacons (in other words official servants). It has been such an honor to learn along with them and serve with them here.

Prayer