



## Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

**SERMON TEXT:** Romans 16

**KEY POINT:** A healthy church displays gospel sacrifice, equality, maturity and centeredness.

### FOR LEADERS

- **Spring '21 Communities Season:** This week is our final week of our Winter Season! Our Spring 2021 Season will kickoff the week after Easter and run for 8 weeks from 4/11/21 – 5/30/21!
- **Attendance:** Please remember to take attendance for your Community Group meetings! If you need any help with setting up your group meeting on Emergence Connect, definitely reach out to us!

### GETTING STARTED

**[1] Communities Video:** Watch this week's community extras video!

**[2] Icebreaker:** What are you most praying for this Easter season?

**[3] Opener:** What were some of your big takeaways from the sermon this week?

### GOSPEL SACRIFICE

#### Ask for a volunteer to read Romans 16:1-16

In the sermon this week, we learned a bit how Paul wrote his “greeting” for Romans at the end of the letter, and this greeting is, by far, the longest of any of Paul’s letters. Recall all that you know about Paul’s history with the Roman church, as well as how they fit into his plans for the near future.

**[1]** Why do you think Paul thought it was important enough to list all these different people by name?  
Take a moment to notice some of the different things Paul is commending them for.

**[2]** What are some sacrifices that we are called to make for the sake of the Gospel today?

**[3]** As Emergence continues pushing toward a full reopening, what are you personally doing to ensure you have some “skin in the game” toward building God’s Kingdom?

### GOSPEL EQUALITY

In the sermon, Ryan noted that several of the names listed in this passage actually appear to be slaves and/or freedmen (ex-slaves who had gained their freedom.)

**[4]** What does this passage teach us about the kingdom values of the early church?

**[5]** How are these values being lived out in churches today? Conversely, in what ways might we be missing the mark on this?

**[6]** What are some ways of affirming our equality in Christ that would be culturally relevant today?

Here Paul lists a number of women with some very prominent positions, including Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, as well as the mothers of Rufus, Julia and Olympas. As we know, women were extraordinarily important in the early Christian communities, despite living in a culture where women often had inferior social status. This is something crucially important for the modern church to understand

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and live out, while at the same time maintaining Paul's other teachings, such as 1 Timothy 2:12, which highlight the differing roles women have in congregational worship.

**[7]** What are some things that churches can do today to continue to reflect this heart for women in ministry?

## GOSPEL MATURITY

This passage defines the “naïve” as those who are susceptible to deception. While none of us like to think of ourselves this way, we can all fall victim to perilously ignoring our own blind spots.

**[8]** In what ways does naivete make us vulnerable to deceit?

**[9]** What are some areas in your own life where you feel you could be naïve?

**[10]** What do you think are some common forms of deceit that Christians face today (both ethically and doctrinally?)

**[11]** Give a contemporary example of how someone might attempt to deceive with “smooth talk & flattery.”

**[12]** What are the responsibilities we have to guard the church from falling into error? How do these responsibilities shift in different areas of leadership, and why is this so important?

## GOSPEL CENTERED

**[13]** In what way(s) does the Gospel itself “strengthen” us?

In verse 26, Paul says the “command of the eternal God” is “to bring about obedience of faith” This expression also occurs in Romans 1:5, and then nowhere else in the Bible, effectively “book-ending” the letter of Romans and providing insight into its central theme.

**[14]** Why do you think Paul refers to faith as “obedience?”

## PRAYER

**[1]** Pray that our church would reflect these four Gospel values we studied in this week’s passage.

**[2]** Continue to pray for the two individuals the Lord has laid on your heart this Easter season.

## COMMENTARY

**[v. 10]** Historically, we know that King Herod Agrippa I had a brother named Aristobulus, who seems to have lived in Rome. He died in about AD 49, before Romans was written. Given the rarity of this name, and some other circumstantial evidence, many commentators think this is the Aristobulus Paul mentions in verse 10. “Family” in that verse is supplied by the translators, but is not there in Paul’s Greek text, which simply reads, “Greet those who are of Aristobulus.”

**[v. 13]** In verse 13, Paul singles out Rufus as “chosen in the Lord.” While far from certain, this may be the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry his cross. In Mark 15:21, this Simon is identified as “the father of Alexander and Rufus.”