

Women Who Assisted Paul

This year's theme is women of the Bible, a better title may have been obscure women of the Bible. All of the women that have been assigned this year we know very little about, because God chose to include very little detail about them in scripture. That being said, we know "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.*" With that understanding, it is profitable for us to prayerfully study and consider what little we are told and consider its bearing on our walk with God. As I prayed and began this study there were a couple of concerns that I asked the Lord to guard my heart against. First, that I would not read into scripture something that isn't there. It is always a temptation for me when I don't know something about a person to make conjectures (an opinion or conclusion formed on the basis of incomplete information). This can be dangerous when teaching the Bible. It's not my job to entertain you with a complete backstory of these women, but to share what is given to us. Secondly, as we look specifically at the female gender in these studies, it should be clear to all of us that our culture is in a time where biblical truths about gender and gender roles are being challenged and rewritten within and without the churches. With this understanding, I prayed to avoid the 2 extremes of diminishing the significance of the impact and role these women played in biblical history, and giving greater significance than the text of scripture allows. This study has certainly blessed and profited me greatly, and I pray that it will do the same for you.

My assigned lesson is the women who assisted the Apostle Paul. There were 5 names listed with that; Phoebe, Chloe, Nymphas, Junia and Priscilla. Brother Casey made it clear to me that I was not limited to those names and also mentioned the women listed in Romans 16 specifically. As I prayerfully considered how to approach the lesson, Romans 16 quickly became the focus of my heart and study. We will spend much of our time in that portion of scripture.

In all of Paul's letters, if I counted correctly, and with a few caveats I'll mention in a moment, there are 18 women spoken of. Ten of those are greeted at the close of Paul's letter to the saints in Rome. First let's look at those 8 that Paul mentions in his other letters as well as 2 more that we find Paul had interactions with in the book of Acts.

1. **Apphia** ([Phlm. 1:2](#)):

- a. **Phm 1:1-2** *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:*
- b. Apphia is only mentioned once in the Bible in the greeting in Paul's letter to Philemon. A letter addressing a domestic issue of a runaway slave named Onesimus and Paul's request of Philemon to receive him back no longer as a bond-servant but as a beloved brother. She is mentioned directly after Philemon in the greeting, coupled with the domestic context of the letter that includes her in the request to receive Onesimus, it seems clear that she was Philemon's wife. She is addressed as beloved by Paul and furthermore Paul references the church that is in their house in Colosse.

2. **Chloe** ([1 Cor. 1:11](#)):

- a. **1Co 1:10-11** *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*
- b. Chloe's name is mentioned once in scripture in the 1st letter from the Apostle Paul to Corinth. We are told nothing of Chloe herself, but that members of her household had delivered to Paul information concerning the contentions that existed within the church in Corinth. Paul would go on to address these issues in his letter.

3. **Claudia** ([2 Tim. 4:21](#)):

- a. **2Ti 4:21** *Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.*
- b. Claudia is mentioned once in scripture in the closing of Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy. Paul writing from prison in Rome lists Claudia alongside Eubulus, Pudens, and Linus, as well as a generic reference to all the brethren as those that were sending greetings to Timothy.

4. **Eunice &**

5. **Lois** ([2 Tim. 1:5](#), [Acts 16:1](#)):

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- a. **2Ti 1:5** *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*
 - b. Mentioned by name once in scripture near the beginning of Paul's second letter to Timothy. Paul refers to them as Timothy's mother and grandmother and commends their sincere faith. As Paul recalls fondly the sincere faith of Timothy, he states that it was a faith that first dwelt in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.
 - c. Eunice is also referenced as Timothy's mother in Acts 16:1
 - i. **Act 16:1** *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:*
 - d. We learn that she was a Jewish believer who was married to a Greek man. It seems safe to infer that his father was an unbeliever.
 - e. Paul encourages Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-15
 - i. **2Ti 3:14-15** *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
 - f. Lois and Eunice were the vessels God used to share the scriptures with Timothy from his childhood.

6. Euodias &

7. Syntyche (Phil. 4:2):

- a. **Php 4:2-3** *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*
- b. Euodias and Syntyche are named and referenced in two verses near the closing of Paul's letter to the saints in Philippi. They are mentioned by Paul because of an unknown schism that was between them and that had become a threat to the unity of the church. As Paul beseeches them to be of the same mind, he goes on to ask another companion in Phillippi to help the women reconcile. Paul says of

both of these women that they “laboured with me in the gospel,” and was clearly concerned to end the division that existed between them.

8. **Nymphas or Nympha** ([Col. 4:15](#)):

- a. **Col 4:15** *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*
- b. There is much debate on whether this person is a man or woman. The manuscripts vary and there seems to be no definitive evidence one way or another. English translators have gone both directions. The King James translators and Young’s Literal Translation refer to Nymphas (masculine) and thus use the pronoun him, while other English translations like the NASB or ESV say Nympha (feminine) and use the pronoun her. Nymphas/Nympha is greeted by Paul in the closing of his letter to the saints in Colossae where he/she greets the brethren in Laodicea and then Nympha(s) by name, mentioning that the church was in his/her house.

9. **Lydia** ([Acts 16:14, 40](#)):

- a. **Act 16:13-15** *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*
- b. We are introduced to Lydia in the 16th chapter of Acts. Paul, having received the Macedonian call to bring the gospel to Europe sails with his companions to Macedonia where they came into Phillipi. On the Sabbath, Paul and his missionary companions head outside the city to a riverside where a group of women gathered to pray. There, the missionaries spoke to the women and shared the gospel with them. One of the women was named Lydia. She was from the city of Thyatira, a city in Asia Minor and was a “seller of purple.” Purple was the color of royalty and very valuable and we can infer from this that she was a woman of means. She is described as a “worshiper of God,” but clearly had never responded to the gospel. It was in this encounter that “The Lord opened

her heart.” God spoke to her through the Apostle Paul and she believed. She is the first recorded conversion upon landing in Macedonia. Afterwards, she was baptized and her whole household also. She entreated the missionaries to come and stay at her home. After Paul and Silas’s stint in the prison they came again and visited Lydia's house.

- i. **Act 16:40** *And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.*

10. **Damaris (Acts 17:34)**

- a. **Act 17:34** *Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*
- b. After Paul preached the resurrection of Jesus to the crowd on Mars hill in Acts 17, it is recorded that there was a threefold response, “some mocked,” some said, “We will hear thee again of this matter,” and some “believed.” Among this group of those who believed was a woman named Damaris.

Now let's Read Romans 16:1-16 and consider the 10 women mentioned therein

Rom 16:1-16 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus chosen in the*

Lord, and his mother and mine. **14** Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. **15** Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. **16** Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

The same Greek word ἀσπάζομαι (aspazomai, as-pad'-zom-ahee) is used 17 times in these 16 verses and is translated as salute or greet. It is an imperative that means to embrace, to draw to one's self, to greet. It speaks to Paul's fondness and deep care for these individuals and his desire to honor them for their service in the Lord's kingdom. Let's first look at the 10 women that are mentioned among the 29 individuals that are named in Paul's final greetings to the Roman saints.

11. **Julia &**

12. **Nereus' sister** ([Rom. 16:15](#)):

- a. **Rom 16:15** Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.
- b. This is the only place both women are mentioned in scripture. Julia's name is coupled with a man named Philologus which could mean, as is often the case in scripture, she was his wife. Other than they lived in Rome, we know nothing else of either woman.

13. **Rufus' mother** ([Rom. 16:13](#)):

- a. **Rom 16:13** Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.
- b. This unnamed woman is only referred to as "Rufus' mother." Yet Paul in this one brief statement attributes to her high praise, likening her to a mother figure in his life.

14. **Tryphena &**

15. **Tryphosa &**

16. **Persis** ([Rom. 16:12](#)):

- a. **Rom 16:12** Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.
- b. Paul greets Tryphena and Tryphosa and says of them that they, "labour in the Lord"
- c. Persis who Paul calls "beloved" is also commended for her hard work.

17. * **Junia** ([Rom. 16:7](#)):

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- a. **Rom 16:7** *Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*
 - b. There is some debate as to whether the latin name mentioned here by Paul is a contraction of the masculine Junianus or from the feminine Junia, and thus debate over whether this was a man or woman. It would seem to me in my research and limited understanding of language, that the female Junia is correct. Junia is listed in Paul's greetings coupled with Andronicus which in scripture is often indicative of a marriage or relational bond. Paul calls them both "my kinsmen," which could mean they were fellow Jews or possibly blood relatives. Paul refers to them as his "fellow prisoners." Thus, we know they too were imprisoned and persecuted for their faith in Christ, and their labors for the Lord made them "of note among the apostles." Paul also adds that the two of them were "in Christ before me." Making clear that their faith and service to the Lord preceded Paul's conversion.

18. **Mary** ([Rom. 16:6](#)):

- a. **Rom 16:6** *Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.*
- b. Paul commends Mary for her hard work on their behalf. She was clearly a woman with a profound work ethic for Christ's Kingdom.

19. **Priscilla** ([Rom. 16:3-5](#); [1 Cor. 16:19](#); [2 Tim. 4:19](#) cf. [Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26](#)),

- a. **Rom 16:3-5** *Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*
- b. Priscilla who also is referred to elsewhere in scripture as Prisca, is listed second in Paul's final greetings in Romans and is coupled with her husband Aquila as is always the case when they are referenced in scripture. We know more about her than anyone else on this list, as Paul mentions her and her husband in 3 of his letters and Luke shares details about their lives in Acts as well. We are first introduced to them in Acts 18:
 - i. **Act 18:1-3** *After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. 3 And*

because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

- c. We learn that Priscilla and Aquila left Rome and came to Corinth because of the edict of Claudius who was the Roman emperor who expelled all the Jews. The apostle Paul arriving fresh in Corinth, having come from Athens, found Aquila and Priscilla, fellow Jews that shared the same trade, being tentmakers just like Paul. This began a wonderful and important friendship, as Paul lived and worked with them as he shared the gospel with both Jews and Gentiles.
- i. **Act 18:18-21** *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.*
- d. When Paul left Corinth, the couple went with him to Syria and then settled down in Ephesus. They (Either Aquila and Priscilla or the Jews) asked Paul to stay with them but Paul felt compelled to continue on. What happens next in Ephesus is really quite fascinating.
- i. **Act 18:24-28** *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*

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- e. Apollos comes to Ephesus. We are told that he was born in Alexandria and an “eloquent man,” and “mighty in the scriptures.” Luke continues to tell us that, “this man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord,” but then adds that he knew “only the baptism of John.” So clearly Apollos was a gifted preacher that preached with conviction as he shared the truths of the scriptures, but he lacked a full understanding of the person and work of Christ. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak in the synagogue they took him aside “and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” This encounter speaks to Priscilla and Aquila’s humility, intelligence, and tactfulness. They did not make a public show, but privately counseled Apollos on the complete work of God in Jesus Christ. The fruits of this interaction are immediately seen. Apollos went to Achaia and “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”
 - f. When Paul greets them in the Roman letter, its clear that at some point they had made their way back to Rome. Paul speaks of the church that is in their house there. This had become a pattern in their lives as Paul also references the church in their house in Ephesus as well:
 - i. **1Co 16:19** *The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*
 - g. He calls them his “helpers in Christ Jesus” and shares that they, “have for my life laid down their own necks.” What an amazing friendship that God brought together! Paul’s final mention of the couple comes in his final letter (2 Tim) where he instructs Timothy to greet them. He clearly loved them till the end.

20. **Phebe/Phoebe (Rom. 16:1-2):**

- a. **Rom 16:1-2** *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.*
- b. Phebe is mentioned only once in scripture, here at the start of Paul’s greetings at the close of Romans. She is listed first and more is said of her compared to most others in the list. Paul is commending Phebe to the Saints in Rome and it is clear that Paul holds her in high regard. She belonged and served in the church in

Cenchrea, which was a port city about 7 miles east of Corinth where Paul was writing his letter to the Romans. If the subscription that is included at the end of Romans is accurate:

- i. *Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.*

(Many commonly believe that the subscription is an addition that is not inspired, however it is commonly held that its contents are true based on the context of verses 1 and 2). Then Phebe was given the task of delivering Paul's letter from Corinth to the saints in Rome. Paul makes clear that she is "our sister" and that she is a "servant of the church." Paul, instructs the Christians in Rome to welcome her and treat her as "becometh a saint." Adding that they should help her and provide for her whatever she needs. Relating that she had been a "Succourer" of many and of him as well. This means that she was a patroness, she was a selfless provider for the needs of many that served Christ's Kingdom. She would have been a woman with at least some degree of wealth, and clearly used it to support those who labored in the gospel. Paul's emphatic commendation of her speaks to her continued faithfulness to come to the aid of God's servants. Much discussion/debate continues over the use of the Greek word **διάκονος** (diakonos, dee-ak'-on-os) Paul uses to describe Phebe. Some believe that Phebe held an official office of deaconess in the church at Cenchrea. The word however predates the office of deacon and was commonly used to describe anyone who served others. We see this use in John 2:5 and Matthew 23:11 for example. I believe the office of deacon as we use it today began in Acts 6 when they were instructed to, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business," and that some of the qualifications for the office of deacon listed in 1 Timothy are to "be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." It seems evident that Phebe did not hold the official office of a deacon in the church, but that should not diminish in any way her faithfulness to serve and aid the saints of God.

In Summary here are some of the characteristics about these women commended by Paul or learned from their actions recorded in scripture :

1. Beloved friends
2. Sincere Faith
3. A grandmother who spiritually impacted her grandchild
4. A mother who spiritually impacted her child
5. Teaching the scriptures to their children
6. Labored side by side with Paul in the gospel
7. Imprisoned for Christ's sake
8. Hosted churches in their homes
9. Given the responsibility of important acts of service for the churches
10. Sister in the Lord
11. Servant of the church
12. Patron to many
13. Friends & Travel Companions (Husband and Wife duo)
14. Intelligent, Tactful, humble
15. Helpers in Christ
16. Risked their own life for Paul's
17. Mother to him

As we reflect on the impact these women made in Paul's life and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, let's consider for a moment the consequences of Paul's conversion. He tells us in the Philipian letter:

Php 3:8-9 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

Paul suffered the loss of all things! As would have been the case for an Orthodox Jew like Saul of Tarsus, that as soon as he professed faith in Christ he would have been disinherited. Having once held proudly to his family legacy, his standing within the Jewish community, and his friendships among the Pharisees, he lost all of that and much more. While Paul counted them as dung compared to winning Christ, some might say that the costliness of following Christ can appear to be overwhelming.

Peter once announced before Jesus that he and the other disciples had left all to follow him. And Jesus answered him:

***Mar 10:29-31** And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, **30** But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

***31** But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.*

Jesus answered that while their ultimate reward would be in the world to come, that those who forsake all for Christ will receive hundredfold now in this time. As Paul sends his greetings to name after name, you wonder if he remembered this promise of Jesus as these dear friends' names flowed from his heart! These beloved sisters or Rufus' mother, who was also a mother to him. Priscilla and her husband Aquilla who he had lived and worked with and who had risked their necks for his life. Phebe, his sister in the Lord who provided his needs and made sure that he was cared for. Junia, who with Andronicus was a "fellow prisoner" with Paul, suffering side by side for the sake of Christ's kingdom. Or the numerous other women that labored with him in the gospel. Paul wrote often of his adoption into the family of God. It would seem He was fully aware that Christ had, within the family of God, given him a hundredfold all that he lost to follow Christ.

In these first 16 verses of Romans 16 Paul mentions:

- 10 women
- 19 Men
- Some married couples
- Several families
- Some Jews
- Most Gentiles
- Some were people of wealth
- Others had common slave names

This group of people would never be found in a list together outside of the family of God. Many of those listed, including women and slaves, were treated with little to no value within the

cultural and historical setting in which it was written. Yet Paul makes no distinction as he writes with great affection for them. God had gathered up the broken and divided fragments of Roman society and built them into a glorious body of Christ, working side-by-side for the common cause of Christ's Kingdom.

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia saying:

Gal 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Similarly to the saints in Colosse:

Col 3:11 *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

The most glorious reality concerning the women in this study is not their womanhood or feminine individualism, it's that they are part of something far bigger than themselves. That they, having become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, chose to selflessly serve the Lord by serving those who labored in the gospel.

Jesus said in Matthew 20:26-27:

Mat 20:26-27 *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (diakonos, Servant); 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto (diakoneō served), but to minister (diakoneō serve), and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Phebe was like Christ! Phebe was a servant! How foolish do we sound when we think we have to give her an official leadership office in the church for her to have the distinction and honor she deserves (we sound like the Corinthians). The greatest among you are servants!!! Like Christ served!!! Phebe was numbered with the greatest!!!

In Matthew 10 Jesus is sending his disciples out to preach the gospel and instructs them in vs 9 and 10 to:

***“Mat 10:9-10** Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, 10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”*

In other words, pack light! Go with haste! Whenever you get there God’s people should take care of you. Go and preach the gospel. You are worthy of the support you receive. At the end of that discourse in verse 40-42 Jesus speaks concerning those that would come to their aid and support.

***Mat 10:40-42** “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”*

What reward do you think that the Apostle Paul will receive on the last day? He wrote a significant portion of the New Testament. He traveled extensively preaching the gospel and planting churches. He suffered severe persecutions and imprisonments for the sake of Christ. He mentored other ministers of the gospel, and many were converted under the sound of his preaching. I can only imagine, but you know what...? Phebe who served the church and who provided and came to the aid of many including Paul, will share in the same reward. Pricilla who with her husband opened their home for the work of the gospel and became companions to Paul risking their necks for his life, will share in the same reward. Rufus’ mother who was like a mother to Paul, she will share in the same reward.

One thing made clear in Paul’s closing in Romans is that it is not unspiritual to thank someone for their service in God’s kingdom. I praise God for the servants that God has used in my life and certainly many of them are women. So in the example of the Apostle Paul, I close with this:

Thank you Judy, my mother, for teaching me the scripture from my youth and who’s sincere faith and quiet obedience have deeply impacted my walk with the Lord.

Thank you Kathleen and Brad, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who have so often been the encouragement and council my family has needed at just the right time.

Thank you Giana, who is a patron of many and to myself as well.

Thank you Janet, who labors with me in the gospel.

Thank you Ashley, my beloved sister who has worked tirelessly for God's kingdom.

*to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. - **Romans 16:27***