

**WORKING WOMEN. DIVISIVE DECEIVERS. CRUSHING SATAN.**

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

**Romans 16 (Psalm 110)**

Opening Prayer: **READ *Romans 16:25a, 27***

For our healthy maturation as people, wise parental advice with kind and considerate peer role models is crucial. This is God's good design for us within our families and communities. Of course, not all families and peer groups are healthy, and often times we find our sole identity in human roles and relationships rather than in Christ our King. Nevertheless, family relationships and fatherly guidance are good gifts from God for our growth, and these are reflections of our Creator. Our hymns today speak of God as our Father, and we are, indeed, His children with a wonderful inheritance in Christ. Our Father in heaven, as a loving and wise Father does, instructs us to prepare us for our inheritance. Paul the Apostle, himself instructed by our Father as a servant of King Jesus, instructs us as a loving spiritual father today, and he gives us wonderful words of wisdom, which are things we have looked at before in our study of Proverbs. For example, Paul gives us examples of wise women whose work we are to emulate, and he advises us to avoid foolish peers who are out for themselves, causing divisions and who could lead us to destruction.

We looked at Paul's priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel and explored his ministry plan for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom that includes Gospel unity, Gospel partnering and prayer. Paul's priestly duty and ministry plan are templates for our own Gospel proclamation to those who do not know Christ and to ourselves as a reminder of our unity in Christ despite our differences. We now come to the conclusion of Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. In chapter 16 verses 1 through 16, Paul greets various Gospel partners and fellow servants of King Jesus. In these greetings, Paul encourages the Roman Christians to

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'welcome' Phoebe who may be the one who actually delivered this letter. Phoebe is the first of several women Paul commends as fellow workers for the Gospel, and they provide us with examples of how Paul's priestly duty and ministry plan are carried on in us as fellow servants of King Jesus. Then, in verses 17-20, Paul strongly urges the Roman Believers to avoid false teachers who deceive naïve people and who cause divisions with their obstacles of false teaching erected as stumbling blocks in our path of righteousness. These deceivers are spiritual offspring of Satan, the great deceiver, but Paul, in verse 20, reminds us of God's promise that Satan, that serpent of old, will be crushed under OUR feet. Lastly, in verses 25-27, Paul concludes with giving God glory for the Gospel that reveals a mystery of His merciful inclusion of us, Gentiles, into His People through "the obedience of faith". In this, we see that Paul commends Working Women; he urges Christians to avoid Deceivers who cause Divisions; and he encourages us with the promise that God will soon Crush Satan under our feet.

### 1. Working Women

a. Commends and Greeted READ Verses 1-2a, 3, 6a, 7a, 12a,c, 13a, 15

i. Why such commendations and greetings? Because, these are wise working women. They work hard for King Jesus as His servants in the fear of the Lord.

1. Let's start with a brief look at Phoebe

a. Verses 1-2

i. "Deacon": I believe Paul is likely using this word for a "table waiter" here suggesting that Phoebe held an office within the Cenchreae Church with a focus like the original seven in Acts 6:2 of serving the poor and needy. It seems she had the means to

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humbly deny herself and serve her Christian Brethren in this manner based on another term Paul uses to describe her.

ii. "Benefactor": Phoebe was quite possibly a wealthy Gentile Christian able to support Paul's ministry in much the same way many wealthy and prominent women supported Jesus and the Disciples.

1. For example, in Luke 8:3, we read that Joanna, the wife of Chuza who was the manager of Herod's household, along with Susanna and many others were women who supported Jesus and The Twelve out of their own means.

2. Priscilla, whose husband, mentioned secondly, is Aquila, is Paul's co-worker, and she risked her life for him for which he is grateful.

a. We can read more about this wife-husband team who partnered with Paul for the proclamation of the Gospel in Acts 18. They helped established the church in Ephesus, and these two were Jews initially expelled from Rome under Emperor Claudius and who had returned to the church in Rome.

3. Mary "worked very hard for" the Roman Christians in verse 6.

4. Junia is wife to Andronicus, and they appear to be another husband-wife couple who were imprisoned with Paul and who are esteemed

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ambassadors of Christ doing their priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel of God to advance Christ's Kingdom in verse 7.

5. **READ verse 12** NOTE: These women work hard in the Lord.

6. Lastly, look at an example of mothering care toward the Apostle for which he is thankful - **READ verse 13**

b. Working women, wise in our Lord, are essential for the growth of Christ's Kingdom, and all of us are to emulate their priestly duty and ministry plan as servants of King Jesus.

i. On the other hand, Paul instructs us to avoid...

### 2. **...Divisive Deceivers**

a. We are urged to Watch Out for and Keep Away from them. **READ Verses 17-19**

i. Why must we avoid these Divisive Deceivers?

1. Because they put obstacles in the way of Christians – obstacles of false teaching that is contrary to apostolic teaching.

2. Because they serve their own appetites – their own selfish ambitions disguised in nice religious ministry language but not according to God's good, pleasing and perfect will.

b. This is sound fatherly wisdom from the Apostle Paul. We are to follow the wise women who are diligent in their work. We are to avoid foolish friends with false teaching that could lead us to destruction. Paul gives us this closing instruction; because, he wants us to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. But, the Apostle doesn't leave us there. He reiterates a promise from God that will be fulfilled through our own priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel as servants of King Jesus to advance His Kingdom. That is the promise of...

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**3. ...Crushing Satan (READ Verse 20)**

a. Amazing how the crushing of Satan, the serpent, is under our feet!

i. How can this be? In and through Christ Who is already victoriously ascended into heaven as the Son of Man by His death and glorious resurrection.

**1. READ *Psalm 110:1***

a. Jesus is now seated at the Father's right hand in His glorified humanity as our representative as children of God while He continues to bring peace by defeating His enemies. God does this for us in Christ and through us by His Spirit as sanctified servants for our future inheritance according to our Father's promise. We continue the advancement of the Kingdom, our inheritance, through our priestly duty of proclaiming the Gospel according to God's plan. *This is all for our good and His glory. This is what Paul is summing up in His concluding doxology.*

**2. READ *Romans 16:25-27*.** This Gospel is the revealed fulfillment of *Psalm 110* in Christ our King Who has defeated His enemies and reconciled us to God through His mercy. We look forward to the consummation of this reality in ***Romans 16:20*** in which we rule with Christ and judge even the angels (***1 Corinthians 6:3***).

ii. The God of peace will soon accomplish this. God has established peace through His Son, Jesus, our King, and this peace unifies us despite our differences. This is in contrast to the false teachers and their obstacles that seek to disrupt the unity we share in the Spirit. Christ has defeated the chief prince of discord, Satan, by His

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death and resurrection, and by the Holy Spirit in us as Christ's sanctified servants, we can stand against Satan's false teachers who sow seeds of discord to cause divisions. Paul points us to God's ultimate victory, which is the crushing of the serpent's head through the seed of the woman according to His promise. Our unity in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to work, like the wise women commended by Paul, and to avoid divisions caused by false teachers. This is the means by which the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet as the Body of Christ Who is our Head.

This victory in Christ our King is an established reality, and we advance His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven by proclaiming the Gospel as sanctified servants of our King. We are co-rulers and inheritors of this Kingdom in and through Christ. This is what it means to be children of God. The building up of this Kingdom is the growth of our inheritance in and through Jesus. Inviting people of all types into this Kingdom by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus is our priestly duty according to God's plan for our good and God's eternal glory.

Closing Prayer: **READ *Romans 16:25a, 27***

AMEN