

Week of July 1-7

P.S.

Scripture Reading: Read Romans chapter 16

Have you ever written a letter and signed your name only to remember that there was something else you wanted to say? In today's computer age, that's not a problem. Open up the document, add the additional information and print out a new copy to sign. In the days of written letters, however, it was too time-consuming to rewrite an entire letter. To solve the problem, most people added a postscript or P.S. after their name and included the information they forgot. When you read today's chapter, the final one of Romans, you might get the feeling you're reading a P.S. from Paul and maybe even a P.P.S., but just because it's a P.S. doesn't mean it's unimportant as we'll see today.

Having finished Romans 15 with a prayer of blessing for the Romans and an "Amen," Paul seems to be at a natural ending to his epistle. However, he moves to a P.S. and commends Phoebe to the church at Rome as a faithful servant of God in the opening verses of chapter 16 ("servant" translates the word deacon and probably means she was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea. She most likely carried Paul's letter to the church at Rome.) From there, Paul begins a series of greetings that encompasses dozens of folks, almost thirty of them specifically by name. For a church he had never visited, he certainly had become acquainted with many of its members through his missionary journeys in the eastern part of the Roman Empire! Most of these folks are never mentioned anywhere else in Scripture but they made it in the book of Romans as faithful servants of Christ, forever remembered now in church history because of a P.S. In addition, there are at least seven women mentioned in Rom 16, indicating how much he valued their contribution to the kingdom. Both men AND women served as Paul's co-laborers. It's something we may have missed without Paul's P.S. Following his greeting, Paul provides a needful warning to the church of the 1st century to watch out for those who would harm the church. It's a needful warning for the 21st century, too, and it comes courtesy of a P.S. Paul, then, picks up his theme again from the end of Rom 15 about the God of peace and adds a promise to it: *"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."* It's a welcome reminder of God's victory and the devil's defeat; given because Paul was willing to give us a P.S.

With this promise given, Paul seems ready to conclude his epistle again with another blessing at the end of verse 20. Yet, Paul's not done. He adds a P.S.S. and sends greetings from those who were with him, including Tertius, his secretary, who wrote the letter of Romans as Paul dictated it. Having exhausted their greetings, Paul finally moves to his closing, a doxology of praise to God in verses 25-27 (a doxology we would have missed, by the way, if Paul had finished with Rom 15). Following his doxology, Paul closes off his letter with a fifth and final "Amen" of the book!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Review the affirmations Paul makes about his co-laborers in Romans 16. Pray for the Lord to show you a believer who could use a note of encouragement this week. After prayer, write a note to that believer and include a specific affirmation like Paul did (and it doesn't even have to be in a P.S.).

Take-a-way: *When reading God's letters, don't miss the P.S.'s. When sending your letters, don't forget a P.S. of encouragement.*