

**The Role of the Sisters in the Church Life
according to Paul's Gospel in the Book of Romans**

I. The subject of the book of Romans is the Gospel of God—to make sinners sons of God to constitute the Body of Christ, which is expressed as the local churches:

A. Paul refers to the book of Romans as “my gospel”—2:16; 16:25:

Rom. 2:16

In the day when God judges the secrets of men according to my gospel through Jesus Christ.

Rom. 16:25

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages.

1. Romans shows us God in His creation (ch. 1)—vv. 19-20.

Rom. 1:19-20

19 Because that which is known of God is manifest within them, for God manifested it to them.

20 For the invisible things of Him, both His eternal power and divine characteristics, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being perceived by the things made, so that they would be without excuse.

2. Romans unveils to us God in condemnation (ch. 2)—vv. 1-2.

Rom. 2:1-2

1 Therefore you are without excuse, O every man who judges, for in what you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who practice such things.

3. Romans presents to us God in redemption (ch. 3)—v. 24.

Rom. 3:24

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

4. God is revealed in justification (chs. 4 and 5)—4:25—5:1.

Rom. 4:25

Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.

Rom. 5:1

Therefore having been justified out of faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. God is seen in reconciliation (ch. 5)—vv. 9-10.

Rom. 5:9-10

9 Much more then, having now been justified in His blood, we will be saved through Him from the wrath.

10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled.

6. God is realized by us in our identification with Christ (ch. 6)—vv. 3-5.

Rom. 6:3-5

3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

- 4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.
7. God is experienced by us in sanctification (chs. 6—8)—6:19.
Rom. 6:19
 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.
8. God is enjoyed by us in glorification (ch. 8)—v. 30.
Rom. 8:30
 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.
9. God is revealed to us in His love that secures our destiny (vv. 31-39)—vv. 38-39.
Rom. 8:38-39
 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers
 39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
10. God is seen in His selection (chs. 9—11)—v. 33.
Rom. 11:33
 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways!
11. God is glorified in the Body of Christ (chs. 12—15)—12:4-5.
Rom. 12:4-5
 4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
 5 So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
12. Finally, Romans unfolds to us that God is expressed in the church life (ch. 16)—vv. 16, 20.
Rom. 16:16, 20
 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
 20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- B. In Romans 1 we find the word *creation*; in chapter 16 we find the word *churches*:
1. God had to perform a work in various stages as part of a lengthy process which included redemption, justification, reconciliation, regeneration, sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification.
 2. As a result of this lengthy process, God has made the churches. The churches are the peak, the consummation, of God's work and building. He cannot go any higher.
 3. Therefore, the book of Romans ends with chapter 16. In this chapter the Lord's work has reached its summit.

II. There are several stations in the book of Romans:

- A. Many Christians have stopped at the station of justification in Romans 4.

- B. Some have gone further to the station of sanctification in Romans 8.
- C. Other seeking Christians have gone as far as Romans 12 and talk about the Body, although they lack the genuine experience of the Body.
- D. We are in the last station, the station of the local churches in Romans 16.

III. The fellowship of concern among the saints and between the churches is seen in Romans 16:

- A. The church and the churches are mentioned five times in Romans 16:
 1. In verse 1 Paul says, “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea.”
 2. Speaking of Prisca and Aquila, Paul says in verse 4 that they “risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”
 3. Again speaking of Prisca and Aquila, Paul says in verse 5, “greet the church in their house.” On the one hand, this couple was for all the churches; on the other hand, they were for their local church in particular.
 4. In verse 16 Paul says, “The churches of Christ greet you.” The church in every locality must be the church of Christ.
 5. The last mention of the church in Romans regards hospitality. In verse 23 Paul says, “Gaius, my host and host of the whole church, greets you.”
- B. Hence, the ultimate consummation of the gospel is the church life.

IV. After the greeting which shows the fellowship of concern among the saints and between the churches, the apostle declared that the God of peace would crush Satan, and would crush him soon under the feet of the saints who are in the church life—v. 20a:

Rom. 16:20a

Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

- A. We experience and participate in the peace of God by our victory over the troublemaker, Satan.
- B. If we are not in the church and do not practice the church life, it will be difficult for us to have Satan crushed under our feet by God. The church life is the strongest means by which God overcomes Satan.

V. Following his declaration that God will crush Satan under the feet of the church people, the apostle gives his blessing to them, saying that the grace of the Lord Jesus would be with them—v. 20b.

Rom. 16:20b

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- A. This indicates that it is in the church life that the grace of the Lord Jesus is dispensed to all the saints.
- B. The church is not only the place where we have Satan crushed under our feet and experience the God of peace, but also the place where we enjoy the rich grace of the Lord.

VI. If you study all the books in the New Testament, you will find that, other than Romans, not one of them ends with such a melody as we find in the last three verses of chapter 16—vv. 25-27.

Rom. 16:25-27

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages

- 26 But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith;
- 27 To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.