



Empowering People to Change the World

**A Loving Unified Church Crushes Satan**

**Steve Holt**

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**Holy Sexuality and the Gospel Conference**

## Road Declaration

### A Loving Unified Church Crushes Satan

#### Romans 16

- The last several chapters of Romans are all about walking out a life of love for the church.
- **Loving people is Spiritual Warfare! Being unified in the love of God crushes Satan under our feet.**
- We see God's deep heart for unity and love—great love for Jesus always leads to unity in the church.
- It is amazing just how much God loves unity!
  - The letters to the Galatians and Ephesians are all about unity.
  - The Pastoral Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are all about unity.
  - Paul is finishing out this great letter with a call for deep unity and love.

**Chapter 16 is very interesting in that Paul is now going to name twenty-six people by name—this is a harbor of love for him pull into for rest and friendship.**

- At least eleven he has previous relationship with.
- Nine of them are women.

- Four times he says “beloved.”
- Paul could not do the work without these people.
  - As a Roadster, you are all assisting, vital to the ministry and growth of this fellowship—you all play a dynamic part in reaching people with the love of Christ.

### Verses 1-2

#### Phoebe is a Deaconess, a Single Widow, being Used Mightily by God

- Phoebe is a servant, *diakonon*, probably she is a deaconess of the Lord, she may be the woman bringing this epistle.
- She is probably a single widow—because she would not have been allowed to travel alone as a single woman, but as a widow she could.
- She was giving her singleness to the Lord, probably full-time.
  - At The Road, we have so many widowed women, single women who are giving their lives for the gospel: if you are single, a widow, older, these can be the best years of your life—ministering to the needs of the Church.

### Verses 3-5

#### Church Planters putting their Necks “under the axe”

- It literally means they put their necks “under the axe.”

- They had left Rome when Caesar had made a decree (Acts 18) and had been at Corinth, then to Ephesus, and then they return to Rome.
- They are church planters (2 Timothy 4) that continue to minister with Paul.
  - I look for the Priscillas and Aquillas who are willing to minister together and lay down their lives for the gospel...your pastors at The Road, need that mindset—willing to risk all for the gospel...
- God takes note of the fellowship that is in their home! If you are a leader or involved in a Community Group, God takes note of what is happening in your home.
- And the first convert in Achaia is still walking with the Lord.

### **Verses 6-7**

#### **Real People Loved by Paul**

- Andronicus( from Star Trek – joke)
- Paul seems to indicate that these men were Jewish believers who had been in prison in the past, probably with Paul. They were saved before he was.

### **Verses 8-11**

- Aristobulus is the grandson of Herod the Great according to Josephus, the great Jewish historian.

### **Verses 12-13**

- He really knows the names of these believers...I can't even pronounce them.

- This is the Rufus of Mark 15, his father is Simon the Cyrene who carried the cross of Christ for him on that fateful day.
  - They tied the cross bar to the arms, so weak he can no longer carry the cross bar—little did he know that the Passover Lamb was right before him—came to celebrate the Passover lamb, was now carrying the cross of The Passover Lamb!!
  - And now he knows the son and wife of Rufus—I wonder what it would have been like to ask him questions about that fateful day...at the house of Rufus. “What was it like?” “what did he say?” Can you imagine that?
- “Deny yourself and carry your cross” Simon really knew what that meant! Paul knew his son and his wife! I’ll bet he drank deeply at the house of Rufus...

### **Verses 14-16**

#### **Handshakes will Do just Fine!**

- We do that today with a handshake! No holy kiss’n going on please.
- This is why we take time to greet each other every service...this is our “holy kiss.”
- One historian says that by this time, the women and men were on opposite sides of the church and the holy kiss would have been men with men and women with women, and I heard one man say, “I can’t think of anything that would make my kiss more holy than having to kiss a man.”
- Notice that most of these names are Romans. The Church in Rome is gradually being taken over by Gentiles.

#### **Be Aware of Divisive People in the Church**

## Verse 17

- In the Greek tenses it means “continually” be on the look out for those who are easily offended and cause divisions within the church—watch out for those people.
  
- Learn to live an unoffendable life! It will set you free and give you so much joy—learn to “turn the other cheek” and give people the benefit of doubt.
  - I have a hard time with people who cause divisions! And I understand that we are all at different places, and some people here have just gotten saved and they just don’t know how to live in harmony with those who they disagree with—they’ve never done that before, and I have grace for them.
  
  - But the people who have a definite agenda to lure people into their camp...who have an offense and they are deliberately luring people and causing division because they have *inside information* that no one else knows...watch out for them.
  
  - There are people who deliberately sow discord through gossip and innuendo.
  
  - Paul says, “take note” of those who cause divisions which means in the Greek, “mark” them, “keep a watchful eye”, literally “take aim.”

## Divisions happen most frequently through Gossip

- Some people get energy from sharing the latest gossipy news or opinion...
  
- And you can know their agendas—that’s all they talk about, think about, and email about—their little agendas.

- We all have temptations to gossip or find out *inside information* or gather people toward criticism and let me encourage you to avoid being that person and listening to such people. Delete those emails...
- Remember whenever you listen to gossip and grievances, you are only hearing 50% of the story, and all of us embellish our side of the story!
- Remember, a half-truth is not a whole truth!

**“Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).**

- Defiled means “dirty,” it makes you dirty.
- It makes your children dirty too.
- I have seen gossip defile some of the best of families...it’s so sad.
- Don’t fall victim to a *root of bitterness*.

### **Verse 18**

- “Simple” or “innocent” and it is the innocent and the sweetest of people who get lured in by flattery!
  - These people often use prayer, “please pray about” and they unload on the best people...we might call it *gossip prayer* which by the way is an oxymoron.

- The church is supposed to be a place where you can let down your guard and trust people.
- The church is filled with humans though and you will never find the perfect church.
- If you find the perfect church, don't join it or you will ruin it!

**“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.’ Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven’ (Matthew 18:15-18).**

### **Church Discipline at The Road:**

**Step 1: Covenant of Harmony with the Person Offended**

**Step 2: Covenant of Harmony with a Pastor**

**Step 3: Restore the Humble; Put out the Prideful**

- We follow the scripture and encourage people to work out issues.
- If that can't work out the problems, then a leader or pastor gets involved.
- If the issue cannot be reconciled, we invite people to leave.

### **Verse 19**

- Great advice: be simple about evil—I don't want to know about evil; I don't want to know what is the latest gossip or controversy.



- Hang up the phone with such people, delete their emails.

## Verse 20

### **Satan is Crushed through the Unity of the Body of Christ**

- I love this—Satan is going to be crushed through the love and unity of the church!!
- Under your feet! When you walk in unity and love, Satan gets crushed under your feet...cool.
- Division within a church is always Satanic!! God loves the church and when you bring division, you stand against God—now that's scary.
- Fight for Love, fight for, Unity!!

## **1 Corinthians 1:10**

**“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”**

## **Titus 3:9-11**

**“But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”**

- This is a veteran brother who Paul really trusts—they have been in battle together.
  - Bloodstained Allies.

## **We Conclude the Greatest Letter ever Written**

## Verse 22

- Tertius is the secretary, or scribe writing the epistle for Paul.

## Verse 23-27

- “Establish” is passive, meaning that you can’t be established in your own power but the Holy Spirit must do it in you.
- And so concludes the greatest letter ever written—now after 32 messages, we come to the end of this great book.
- And so, Paul concludes that knowing the doctrine of the faith, following that doctrine should now guides us into great love:
  - Great love for God—loving Him with all of our hearts and minds.
  - Great love for God’s people—loving the way Jesus loved.
  - Great love for the cause of Christ around the world.
  - Great love for unity in the church—avoiding those who bring division.
  - This is a God, a people, and a cause worth dying for!