

Would You Make the List?  
Rom 16:1-15

I was at my in-laws the last time we were in Hawaii and she had this photo (SHOW ON SCREEN) on their mantle. I asked her about it and found out it was her grandfather. At the time the photo was taken, he was one of most influential Chinese men in Hawaii and was a friend of Sun Yat Sen, the founding father of Modern China and its first president before communism overtook the nation, and they often exchanged ideas on leadership.

I like to look through photo albums people keep on their coffee table. AS you know, those are very quickly disappearing in our digital age! It allows you to learn about them and who is important to them. Each picture represents something special to that family. Sometimes there is only one picture of a person in the whole book, but at that moment, that one person was special. Others show up over and over again and obviously mean very much to the family. Each person is immortalized as long as that photo album exists.

Paul begins to wrap up his letter with several personal greetings to members of the church in Rome. Even though he had never been to that congregation, these people had become dear to him. His words are like a photo album. Each person there meant something to him. Some were very dear friends and some were people whom he had met on his travels and wanted to greet. Each one was immortalized by being a part of this letter. We know something about some of them and others we only know the names he has listed.

As we look at that list there are some things we can learn about those names that are important to the church even today.

PRAYER

# **I. Paul's List of Names**

## **A. Paul's list of names**

### **1. Phoebe**

- a) We don't know if she was a formal servant known as a deacon, or informal.**
- b) The word used is the same word used for both cases.**
- c) What we do know is that she was a dedicated servant of church in whatever role she played.**
- d) She was a great support not only to Paul but to other missionaries as well.**

### **2. Pricilla and Aquila**

- a) 2 people that had been a very important part of Paul's ministry throughout the years.**
- b) Interestingly, Pricilla is always mentioned first. Probably because she was the more gifted one in their joint ministry.**
- c) These first two names indicate that women then and today, play very important roles in the life of the church.**
- d) They should not be relegated to second class citizens, but understand that both genders have been given different and equally important roles.**

### **3. Epenetus – all we know about him is the fact that he was the first person to give his life to Christ in Asia.**

- a) Yet, what's more important is that even though he was the first convert, he had remained faithful all those years.**
- b) Archeology has discovered other references to him that showed he was a rich and powerful ruler in the city of Corinth.**

**c) He is the perfect example of someone who was of high station in the world, but totally committed to God.**

- 4. Person after person is identified as beloved or dear.**
- 5. Some had been imprisoned with Paul.**
- 6. Some were dedicated laborers.**
- 7. Tryphena and Thyphosa were probably twins and the words Paul uses for them indicates they worked to the point of exhaustion for the Lord.**
- 8. Men, women, and households are mentioned here in their commitment to God and his kingdom.**
- 9. It's not just a list of special friends, but of dearly beloved dedicated members of God's kingdom.**

### ***B. Lesson learned***

- 1. What this list tells me is that the church this letter was written to had a wonderful group of dedicated Christians in it.**
- 2. The church wasn't perfect, as we have seen over the last 15 chapters.**
- 3. They didn't have all their theology down**
- 4. But the dedication to God was there.**
- 5. Many members had a faith that led them to travel the world to teach the lost.**
- 6. Many members had a faith that led to imprisonment.**
- 7. Almost all of these people were commended for their hard work for the Lord.**
- 8. Notice too the fact that list isn't just the elders or deacons.**
- 9. It wasn't just the men.**
- 10. It was a list of all ages, genders and station who loved God and his church will all of their heart...and all of their capabilities.**

## **II. Rochester's list of names**

### ***A. Questions for us***

- 1. We have had a hard go of it lately.**
- 2. We have lost loved ones, some have left our group because of sin, some are crushed by terrible news, some are suffering the ravages of cancer and other debilitating diseases.**
- 3. We have been rocked back on our heels both emotionally and spiritually.**
- 4. What would Paul have said to us?**
- 5. What would he have said about us? As a congregation? As individual in the congregation?**

### ***B. Would your name be on the list?***

- 1. This is a list of the Who's Who.**
- 2. When I was young I was honored to be accepted into the Outstanding Young Men of America. It was a great honor to**

make that list. It was a listing of young men who were going someplace in the future.

3. And they also included people like me.

4. Paul's list isn't a who's who socially, but who's who spiritually.

5. Whose names would have surfaced as special to him from our congregation?

6. How many of us have a faith that takes us to other places to teach the lost?

7. How many of us have a faith to teach the lost even when we are in other places?

8. Who among us are willing to suffer persecution for their faith?

9. How many of us would put our money where our mouth is and help support the work of the church as best we can?

10. How many of us would be the beloved of a missionary or evangelist because of our continual support and prayer and love for them?

11. How many of us work so hard for God that other Christians can see beyond a doubt your commitment to God?

### ***C. The Challenge***

1. In last month's elders and deacons meeting, the deacons felt like our pool of dependable workers is too small to get everything done.

2. Several felt exhausted trying to keep things going.

3. We have a major decision before us that only you can decide.

4. Will we stand up, stand strong and keep moving forward to glorify God in our community?

5. Or will we give up, claim defeat and slowly drift into irrelevance and disappear as a congregation?

**6. Who among us will live a life so dedicated to God and his kingdom that our names would be at the end of the letter?**

**7. Would Paul write greet, put your name there, who has worked hard for the Lord?**

**8. In the last book Paul wrote, he said this: 2 Timothy 4:7–8 (ESV) — 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,**

will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

9. But that was the Great Man of God, Paul. People like me don't need to make that much effort, I just want to be a "regular" Christian.

10. Hebrews 12:1 says Let US run with endurance the race that is set before us.

11. Galatians 6:9 (ESV) — 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

12. Don't give up. Keep running the race. Cross the finish line.

13. It's not a suggestion, it's a command.

#### ***D. Closing***

1. This list of people that Paul mentions is much more than a list of names at the end of a letter.

2. It much more than getting to be remembered for as long as the Bible exists.

3. Its about loving God so much and showing that love, that you're just naturally part of a list like this one.

4. Revelation 20:11ff talks about another listing.

5. This one is much more important than a heartfelt mention at the end of a letter.

6. This list is a list of every single one of us and whether we are saved or not? The Book of Life.

7. It's a list of eternal consequence.

8. Is your name on that list?