

A Faithful Woman ***Romans 16:1 -2***

¹I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.

Today we focus on a woman who gained Paul's admiration and trust. She was identified as a servant and as one who was of great help to Paul in his work. The word in Greek used to describe Phoebe as a servant is the same word often translated as deaconess or deacon. She was clearly one who put Christ first and others ahead of herself. She is mentioned by name only once in Scripture (16:1).

Some have suggested that Phoebe may have been converted to Christ from a pagan background. Her name was also one of the names of the pagan goddess Diana. In Greek her name literally meant one who is "bright and radiant."

David Jeremiah identified three important aspects of Phoebe's life and service in the church based upon Paul's commendation of this woman...

- 1. She is a *sister*...belonging without doubt to Christ alone.**
- 2. She is a *servant* of her church...willing to serve Christ, others and Christ through others**
- 3. She is a *saint*...distinguished by the depth and quality of her life and faith and her application of the Christian faith**

Phoebe could be described as one of the subtle, humble and quiet heroines of the Christian faith. Without any fanfare or self-acclaim, she simply went about her business of serving God and advancing the cause of the Kingdom. Indeed, the Church has been made sturdy and enduring in large part because of "Phoebes" who make serving a priority and embody the wisdom of John the Baptist - decreasing in stature and attention while ensuring that Christ increases.

We often serve and live in the shadow of someone else. Phoebe had no problems living in the shadow of Paul. She employed her gifts and blessings for the greater good of the Christian mission. Like John the Baptist and the faithful disciples, Phoebe knew the spotlight would not fall on her life or performance. Rather, her mission was to defer and deflect the light to One greater than herself: *Jesus Himself*.

David Jeremiah had this to say about Phoebe. *“Phoebe must have been a marvelous woman, a faithful saint in the church in Corinth. We don’t know anything about her travels to Rome, or what happened to her afterwards. But we know Paul would not have entrusted his letter to her, nor made such an effort to commend her to the church in Rome, had she not been worthy of the Lord of such attention.”*

Applications . . .

1. Recall this week any “Phoebes” that you may know. Be sure to thank them for what they do and the ways they serve quietly and humbly.
2. How would you rank or evaluate your service? Do you see any resemblances with Phoebe? What ways would you like to serve the cause of Christ?
3. What has Christ “entrusted” to you? What has he asked you to be faithful in doing and sharing for the Kingdom?
4. Make an effort this week to do something good for someone else in an anonymous way. Pray for God to bless your genuine efforts and for Him alone to be glorified by what you do.
5. What other characters in the Bible would you compare to Phoebe?

Imagine living a life like Phoebe...one that is still talked about and remembered almost 2000 years later! Wow!

*“When we give ourselves to God as the source of all the power in our lives,
then we see results we could never attain on our own.*

Never. No matter how hard we tried.

*We will fail repeatedly in our attempts to change
if we’re only doing it for ourselves, by ourselves.*

*God has so many more resources available to us –
limitless fuel on an incredible track we can’t even imagine.”*

Chris and Kerry Shook, One Month To Live