

Romans 16:6-12

“...A Holy Kiss”



Vs. 10b-11-

- ~“*Greet the household of Aristobulus*” – A Greek name. Nothing else known.
- ~“*Herodion, my relative*” Nothing else known???
- ~“*Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.*”



Narcissus was the name of a Greek god that was physically perfect but was so self-absorbed that he distained everyone but himself. He was led to a quiet pool by the god Nemesis, where he saw his reflection in the water and fell in love with it. He sat and stared at himself until, finally, realizing that the reflection could never return his love and admiration, he committed suicide!

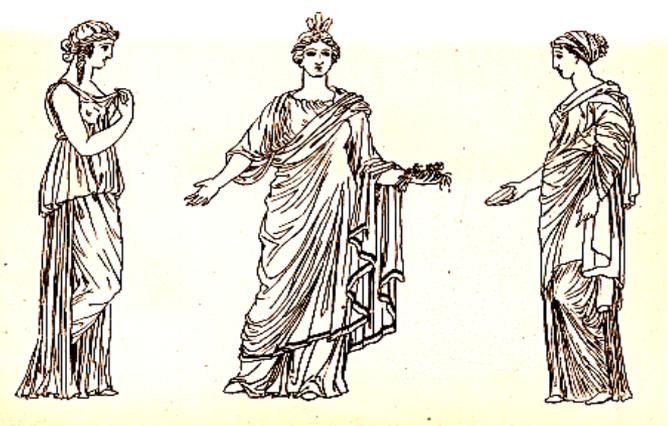
Who would name their child after this pathetic figure?! You would have to be pretty warped, I think. This Narcissus (of vs. 11) was almost certainly a gentile that had come from a truly messed up family, immersed in Roman culture and values. Romans valued outward beauty more than anything, and thought the meaning of life was the pleasure of one's body and fulfillment of one's ego.

Somehow, this Narcissus had found a greater love than himself. He had found Jesus, and at least part of his household had given themselves to Jesus as well. Paul sends his greetings to those in the family that were Christ followers. The others had surely resisted Christ and probably greatly resented Paul for the division in their family .

Vs. 12 –

~“*Tryphena and Tryphosa*” – Probably sisters.

~“*My dear friend Persis - another woman who works hard in the Lord*”



Women have always been full partners in the effort of God to win the world to himself. The church has never been male dominated if done right. Women have always been on the same level as men in the church. In general, where men are weak, women are strong, and where men are strong women are weak. But working together, men and women are a complete team, strong, and without the weaknesses of one gender or the other. Jesus was supported by a large entourage of women disciples. Paul, obviously, was very grateful to the women that had helped him along the way or had been a part of his team. They were true servants and are exalted in the eyes of God. In the church they have been the strength of the body, the backbone of any achievements it has made in the purposes of God

ANYONE that works hard in the church is appreciated greatly, woman, man, or child. If your service is given “*as unto the Lord*”, it will always stand out as being over and above! Its effect is to encourage others and to motivate them to work hard also. Hard work is generally characterized by excellence! To these servants the Lord will one day utter those exquisite words of priceless value - “*Well done, good and faithful servant!*”.



Vs. 13 – “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord” and his motherly mother.

The term “*chosen*” is simply an expression of identity and purpose. Jesus is the one chosen before the creation of the world, and we partake in His chosen-ness when, by faith, we receive Jesus. *Everyone* that receives Jesus as Savior and leader then partakes/shares in His chosen-ness. The term always relates to being chosen for the purpose of DOING something! As Christ was *chosen* to win the world over to Himself, so we too are *chosen* (in Him) to carry on the task of winning the world to Jesus! His mission has become ours!

got purpose?

Are you fully on board with this great task that was transferred to you when you received Jesus?

Vs. 14, 15 – “*Greet...*” – a litany of names of people personally Paul knows in the Roman church. He knows them enough to name them but has not had a lot of history with them, so there is no personal comment after their names, other than the general “brothers” or “saints”. Never-the-less, they are important to Paul, and he views them as allies. Naming them causes Paul’s authority to rub off on them. He is counting on them all to hold things together until he gets there.



Vs. 16 – “*Greet one another with a holy kiss*”



When I was a kid, we always laughed and made jokes about this verse. But this was not a kiss on the lips, but this is likely a brush of cheeks with a sidelong pursing of the lips – a style of greeting still carried on to this day in many Middle Eastern cultures.

It is a more familiar greeting than a simple handshake, but a mark of intimate familiarity, respect, and affection. A show of genuine affection in the body of Christ is an appropriate expression of the love of Christ.

Keep on loving, respecting each other and do not be afraid to express it! “A holy kiss” is a symbol for the will of Christ for His people. Show warmth, appreciation, fondness, and care. Stop being so guarded! European reserve, aloofness, detachment is NOT the will of Christ for us!

Vs. 17 – But not everyone at the church merited such affection.

Some were obvious trouble makers, obstinate, contrarian. Some things never change. Such people still exist in the church.

We are very fortunate that we don't really have any of this sort right now at Bethany, but we certainly will in the future.

They are identifiable because they will be divisive, argumentative, confrontational! They will not listen to leadership, but will have their own agenda, and it much different than that of Christ! They will speak badly of others, but will usually reserve a special contempt for leadership, especially when leadership disagrees with them. They can often behave like spoiled children that throw tantrums when they do not get their way.



Steer clear of them or you will be potentially won over “*by smooth talk and flattery*”, and so become partakers in their dark sins of slander and bad attitude! Don't be naive by being accommodating. Such people need to be rebuked, isolated, resisted at every opportunity or they will ruin morale, all momentum, or even *split* the church! They may even be well-meaning, but they are deadly poisonous and are doing the work of the Evil One in the church!

* “Well-intentioned Dragons”

BTW – the flipside of this is that pastors can be this way too. If a pastor exhibits authoritarianism, it's a problem! If he will not listen his leadership team but bullies his way through issues, the leadership needs to be strong enough to insist that he step down. The longer such a man leads, the more of a problem he will become, so don't delay too long. Confront, give a chance to course correct, and then if there is no change, sever ties! The work of God is too important to let any one person ruin what God is trying to do in and through His church



Remember - there is chirch (with an “i”) and church (with a “u”).

Chirch is about the conspicuous “I”. Church with a “u” is about others. Chirch and church sound the same but do not look the same in practice! If you think church is about yourself, then you are in

chirch. Chirch is characterized by competing agendas, animosities, and divisions. Its hard to be a flock following the Good Shepherd in a chirch where wolves roam freely. But in the real church we put others before ourselves, and we put Christ above all! We confront divisiveness. It cannot stand because it is anti-Christ! Nothing and no one can be allowed to be a detriment to the mission!

