

Paul's fellow workmen

Part 4

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[00:00:00] It amazed me when I dug into Scripture to see these people that Paul calls fellow workers, to see how many there are.

And I've listed them in several categories. The first category that we come to are some of those that we've already been talking about in connection with the people whose lives we were looking at in detail. John Mark, a fellow who made a bad start.

Everything went well as long as they were on Cyprus, where there were relatives. When the going got rough, he went home.

And then he became the occasion for difficulty between Paul and Uncle Barnabas.

John Mark was Barnabas' nephew. Well, we noted Barnabas took time with him, and he's the one whom Peter calls Marcus, [00:01:07] my son.

At the end of his first epistle, some have felt that as far as the human source of information for the Gospel of Mark, it may well have come from Peter, a man who was very blunt, very straightforward. And Mark, you know, writes the action gospel.

His events are often connected by immediately, straightway, next, next, next, you know, it's how he moves it along. Silas, we've seen he was the one man whom Paul chose as replacement for Barnabas as far as traveling with him.

Silas is referred to as Silvanus at the beginning of some of the epistles.

It's the same name, Silas, I believe, is the Greek, and Silvanus is the Latin name. [00:02:05] And Peter mentions him as a faithful brother.

And you know, it's nice to see that some of these who worked with Paul for a while are fond with Peter.

At other times, there are various combinations as far as these fellow workers are concerned. It's not a static group.

Paul moves along from place to place. Sometimes he has these with him, then he picks up those.

There are times when it's just himself and one other person, like Barnabas or Silas. There are times when it's a threesome, Timothy is along, then you come to a foursome, oftentimes there were four of them together, and then there's many as seven or eight at a time. You know, most assemblies today would be horrified if seven or eight brothers come at once, what [00:03:04] are you going to do with that many? But of course, their working together in this way was not so much visiting assemblies as reaching out in the gospel, although both were done. Now Titus, we've mentioned him in Galatians 2.

Paul points out that as a matter of principle, he would not circumcise Titus.

Titus was a Gentile.

The Judaizing teachers were insisting that Gentiles had to be circumcised and start keeping the law of Moses in order for their salvation to become complete. It reminds me a little bit of the Charismatic people or Pentecostal people who believe in the second blessing, and you know, it's well and good that you've gotten saved, but to [00:04:01] really come into the full good of things, you've got to receive the Holy Spirit in ways such as Ian has shown us is not really according to Scripture, and yet, you know, they would make salvation a two-step affair.

Well, these Judaizing teachers did basically the same thing, except they came from another angle that, you know, God's circle of His favor, as one of our hymns puts it, you enter that by being circumcised, and you stay in the good of that by keeping the law of Moses. And Paul writes about Titus, he says, 14 years later, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas, now the reference is to the trip made in Acts 15. He says, I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles.

[00:05:01] Now here he adds some detail to what we have in Acts 15. In Acts 15, it's the problem with these Judaizing teachers, Paul and Barnabas have stood up against them, the assembly sends them up along with several others, here Paul is giving some added detail, he says, I set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.

Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. And in verse 5, he points out, we did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. Now here was the place where Paul would stand. Now if it comes to bending because of the consciences, because of the weakness of some, [00:06:03] those who are strong will bend over backwards literally, but if it comes to standing for the truth of scripture, then we've got to stand firm, and Paul says the same to the Galatians in chapter 5 of this book, that we're to stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made us free, and we're not to be brought under a yoke of bondage. Again, it's important to distinguish between these things, and we see this in the way Paul treated Timothy and Titus, altogether differently.

The one he would circumcise to really reach out to and try to win the Jews, and the other he would deliberately refuse to circumcise to stand up for the principle that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised once they were saved.

[00:07:02] So Titus is a helper to Paul quite a bit, almost as much as Timothy, although he's not quite that prominent.

Paul sends him to Corinth. In 2 Corinthians, he brings, he's brought the report back that leads Paul to write the second letter to the Corinthians, and in chapter 8 of 2 Corinthians, Paul refers to this Titus as a fellow laborer, and so on, he has, he says, I thank God, chapter 8, verse 16, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you, for Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. Nice to see a brother with enthusiasm, isn't it? This chapter takes up the matter of this collection that was being taken up among the assemblies [00:08:04] in Macedonia and Greece for the needy saints at Jerusalem, and here Titus was one of the brothers who was going from place to place and who would be carrying this collection to Jerusalem, and Paul says we're sending along with him the brother who's praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel, and so on, he mentions a third brother in verse 22.

In addition, we're sending with them a brother who's often proved to us in many ways that he's zealous. Now, this brother is not mentioned, but he goes on to say about Titus in verse 23, as for Titus, he's my partner and fellow worker among you.

As for our brothers, they're representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. Therefore, show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you so [00:09:03] that the churches can see it.

So Paul is very wise in working together with others.

We see that he builds them up, not with flattery, but he gives commendation.

You never find him running down his fellow workers, but if he sends this one or that one, he will give some commendation as he sends them.

Titus was left in Crete by the Apostle Paul to set in order the things that remained.

If it weren't for the letter that Paul writes Titus, where he mentions that specifically, we would never know that he had gotten to Crete. There's a lot about Paul's travels that apparently is not mentioned in detail in the Acts, but [00:10:06] we pick it up elsewhere.

And there in the letter to Titus, he mentions at the end how he was planning another trip. The letter to Titus may well have been written between the two imprisonments of the Apostle Paul, but he says, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis.

I've decided to winter there. We never read of him being in Nicopolis. Nicopolis is in present-day Albania.

We never read of him getting that far otherwise, although he does write to the Romans that he had gotten all the way up to Dalmatia. Dalmatia is present-day Croatia, where a lot of this fighting has been going on, and Bosnia. Paul got all the way up there. When he got there, we're not told, but he writes to the Romans.

[00:11:01] Before he ever got to Rome, that he had gone that far in his travels in the Gospel. But, you know, you pick up little details about Paul's travels and about his fellow laborers in many of these places, often at the end of epistles.

Paul writes to Titus with rather detailed instruction, and yet, you know, as you read the various references he makes to Titus, he's an honored and appreciated fellow worker.

He's not some kind of a flunky that has to be bossed around all the time, and you don't find this kind of an attitude in Paul working with others.

There are those, like Timothy and Titus, whom he would send from one place to another. The next man, Apollos, if you look in 1 Corinthians 16, we've talked about Apollos before, this [00:12:10] man who was helped by Aquila and Priscilla, and who himself was a very fervent and gifted preacher.

Paul respected and appreciated him. In 1 Corinthians 16, verse 12, he says, now about our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity. Paul could send Timothy, he could send Titus, and yet he would strongly urge an Apollos, but he would take no for an answer.

Here at Corinth, the Corinthians had formed factions.

Probably like so many of us, I like Brother So-and-so's ministry, and I've gotten a lot [00:13:01] of blessing out of So-and-so's ministry. He's a real help, he's an interesting speaker, and it starts out that way, and after a while here were parties forming under the name of certain brothers. Paul mentions himself, Apollos, Cephas, or Peter, and then there were those who were saying, well, you know, I don't follow men at all, I just follow Christ, and that's really the most dangerous party of all, isn't it? The ones that claim not to be following men, claim to be more spiritual than anyone else. Well, Apollos, while there were many at Corinth who really appreciated him, and God had used him much at Corinth, when Paul says, well, Apollos, you ought to go, Apollos has the spiritual sensibility, perhaps, to say, well, if some of them are calling themselves after my name, I'm not going to go there now.

I don't want to become ringleader of a party. [00:14:02] I don't want to go in there and, you know, and people think, well, I'm here, and now they don't really follow me. No, he says, Paul, I don't feel this is the appropriate time for me to go, and Paul accepts that. He says, I urged him to go, I accept that he didn't go. You know, this is beautiful to see about working together. On the one hand, it was a team, and normally we find Paul as the captain of the team, and he'll send, he'll leave Silas and Timothy behind here, he'll send Timothy there, he'll send Titus there, but then there's a real respect for fellow workers, too, and he may plead with an Apollos to go somewhere, but he takes his no. In the long run, the servant is responsible to his Lord, and that's the bottom line. Our responsibility to the Lord comes above our responsibility to any brother with whom [00:15:04] we work.

Well, there are others that are very specifically mentioned that we haven't talked about to any degree.

Luke. Luke is the one who writes the Gospel, and then later on he writes Volume 2 of this set of books that he's writing, and he refers to his previous volume, and now he's going on the things that Jesus began both to do and to teach.

And then in Acts, it's really that which, it's a continuation, but it's that which is done by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. The Book of Acts is perhaps misnamed in our Bibles, and it's not the Acts of the Apostles, it's really the Acts of the Holy Spirit using the Apostles.

Luke appears to be the only Gentile writer in the whole Bible.

[00:16:04] The other books of the Bible all appear to have been written by Jewish authors, but Luke was a Gentile, and he's a very careful, deliberate historian.

You know, the people who study these things out are still finding Luke is extremely precise in his vocabulary.

He uses medical terms like only a doctor can use, and also as a historian in writing the Acts. When Paul comes to this city, you know, Luke always uses the appropriate title for the officials, the government officials in this book. In Cyprus, the careful translations say that the Sergius Paulus was the proconsul of the island.

Well, the Romans had divided, after the first emperors were in power, the Romans divided [00:17:07] the provinces into provinces that were nominally under the rule of the Senate, and the more frontier provinces, or the ones that were rebellious, and so on, they were nominally under the rule of the emperor, and the title of the governor of the province, if it was under the Senate, was the proconsul. If it was under the emperor, it was the procurator, and, you know, there were different titles. Luke is always very, very precise in using the exact title, and some of his titles were questioned, and then as the archaeologists dig things up again and again, they, you know, I hate to say it this way because nobody can prove the Bible to be right, but as far as men are concerned, the archaeologists keep on proving that Luke was absolutely accurate [00:18:07] in his writing. And he's the one who mentions at the beginning of his gospel that he had, you know, done some research, and his writing, as a result of that, he's writing by inspiration of the Spirit of God, yes, but that didn't mean that he just waited for the Spirit of God to come on him and tell him what to write without ever having done any research on his own.

Luke joins Paul at Troas in Acts 16, and occasionally otherwise.

Sometimes he's traveling with Paul, sometimes he's not, and the way we distinguish that in the Acts, he'll write, we went here, we went there, we went there, and then he'll write about Paul and Silas going here, or they went, they went, and Luke is one who always keeps himself in the background, and I think a good historian does that, but he [00:19:05] keeps himself in the background, but you can tell when he was along, when he was an actual eyewitness of things, and when not.

And Paul refers to him as the beloved physician in writing the Colossians.

He had, the latter part of his career, when he was imprisoned and so, Luke stuck with him, and there are references on the sheets that you can look up on your own, I don't want to really go until midnight tonight, but it's interesting to trace out these things.

One of the things that was interesting to me in studying for this is to see how different these various ones are whom God uses.

God can use all kinds of people in various kinds of services, and as we come along here, [00:20:04] there are quite a few sisters mentioned, as well as brothers. Now their ministry was different, no doubt, and yet it's all valued before God.

The next fellow is really different, Onesimus. He was a slave, a slave to a man called Philemon, who had gotten saved through Paul's ministry, and I don't know whether the slave was already dissatisfied before, but probably to have a Christian master, and to have the meetings right in the house, and to have to go to the meetings and things like that made him still more unhappy. One day he runs away from his master, and evidently steals what he feels is a few years back wages, and takes some of his master's money with him, and as so many people today who run away from home or who run away, they head for the big city.

[00:21:04] Twenty-five years ago, the end thing was to head for San Francisco, and I think there are still people heading that direction. One of my brothers, when he left home and really wanted to turn his back on things, he headed for New York City, and that's where the Lord got a hold of him, and so on. Onesimus headed for the big city, Rome, and yet God, in his marvelous ways, crossed his path with Paul's.

Paul was kept in his own hired house, apparently chained to a soldier, didn't have liberty to go anywhere he wanted in his first imprisonment, and the Lord can bring this Onesimus, who's running away from Philemon, he can bring him right across Paul's path. Onesimus gets saved, Onesimus starts helping Paul, he can perhaps run the errands for him, things like that, and he's doing things out of love for the Lord, and then Paul, contrary [00:22:07] to what the Israelite was instructed under the law, sends this runaway slave home. The Israelite, under the law, was not to send a runaway slave who took refuge with him back to his master, and even under Roman law, this was a dangerous thing to do, because the master had power of life and death over his slave, his slave was property, it paid for him, it could have him executed, and of course the normal Roman punishment for a first-time runaway was to have him branded, either on the cheek or on the forehead, with a big letter F, and anybody that saw a man with an F knew that that fellow had run away once as a fugitive slave, and keep an eye on him, maybe if you don't know him, maybe you'd better check him out, this kind of thing.

Well, Paul sends Philemon, sends Onesimus back to Philemon with a very personal, very [00:23:07] beautiful letter, and that's a masterpiece in itself, to see how Paul approaches this subject, and he refers to Onesimus in his letter to the Colossians, because Philemon lived right near Colossae, he refers to him in that letter as the faithful and beloved brother who is one of you, he carries that letter along with the letter to Philemon.

Well, the Tychicus, the next fellow on the list, is from the province of Asia, and he and Onesimus carry the letter to the Colossians together, Paul sends Tychicus to various places, and he says to the Ephesians, when Tychicus is to carry that letter to them, he says, [00:24:08] Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am, and what I am doing. I'm sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

And it's beautiful to see that Paul was not one who tried to live a real private life.

His life was lived out in the open, and he would share things with his fellow workers. By inspiration of the Spirit of God, he writes the letter to the Ephesians, as well as other epistles, and yet there was a lot more that the Ephesians would be interested to know about Paul.

And he says, well, Tychicus can tell you everything. [00:25:01] I have no secrets from him.

He can tell you everything that concerns me. A lot of the things that they were interested in knowing, we probably would be interested in knowing too, but God has given us, in his word, that which is necessary for us to know. And a lot of these other details, we may find out in the glory when the rewards are passed out, but they're not necessary for us to know here, and they might just cloud the issue.

But the Scripture is complete, and yet there's always indication that there was much more as far as what people would be interested in. And Paul speaks of this Tychicus in this way.

When he writes to Titus, he indicates he's sending him on another errand.

[00:26:01] He says, as soon as I send Artemis or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis. I've decided to winter there. In other words, I can send these men to you, one or the other, and they can replace you on this post, and you come to me then.

But wait until someone comes.

David, when he was sent by his father to his brothers, when Goliath was challenging the Israelites, is immediately asked by his oldest brother, with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? You've come to see the battle, and so on. Everyone sees in all this that there's an order, and you know, you come to me, but wait until so-and-so comes, he can replace you, and things are taken care of.

That was in Titus 3, verse 12.

Then Epaphroditus is the next man on the list, and these are not in any particular order, [00:27:09] and the order is not of any consequence, it's just how I put them down. He's a Philippian, whom the assembly there had sent with a gift, and he had had to travel all the way to Rome to bring this gift to Paul. And while he was in Rome, or perhaps on the way to Rome, he got very ill. And he was so concerned, he didn't want his fellow Christians at Philippi to hear how sick he was, because he knew they'd worry about him. And he was a very self-effacing, self-sacrificing man in that way. He risked his life in bringing this gift to Paul. Paul says he was sick, nigh unto death.

And you know, these are the caliber men that work with him, and Paul commends this man [00:28:03] for approaching death in carrying out his ministry, and he commends him for his attitude that he didn't want to worry his fellow Christians about his own health concerns.

He didn't want them to be grieved. Epaphras, I've heard brethren say, well Epaphras and Epaphroditus were the same person, and that one is the diminutive of the other. But Epaphras is said to be from Colossae, and he is the man who is known for his carrying the assembly at Colossae, and the neighboring assembly at Laodicea, and another assembly that met in the house of Onymus in that area. He bore these assemblies on his heart in prayer.

[00:29:02] He was a real prayer warrior, and Paul in writing to the Colossians, and that's the only letter where Epaphras is mentioned, really commends this brother for his labor in prayer. You know, many of us will pray for brethren in our home assembly, I hope we all do that, but do we really labor in prayer for them?

Is it a burden?

I think many times we, you know, rattle off our prayers rather than laboring in prayer. Now that's Epaphras' particular distinction.

Trophimus, back in Acts chapter 20, as Paul is on one of his journeys, he has quite a number of companions with him.

In Acts 20, he is going to go back to Jerusalem, he wanted to sail to Syria, but then he decided [00:30:05] to go by foot partway because there was a plot against him, and so he goes back through Macedonia.

In Acts 20 verse 4, he was accompanied by Sopater, son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and from the province of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. So he's got quite a group with him there. This Trophimus goes all the way to Jerusalem with him, and when Paul is accused by the Jews of having brought a Gentile past the forbidden area into the temple, it's Trophimus that they're referring to. And it says that they had seen Trophimus with him in the city, and they jumped to the conclusion that Paul had taken him into the temple and had desecrated the temple. But this Trophimus is from Ephesus in the province of Asia, but he's with Paul here [00:31:16] in chapter 21 verse 9.

Do I have a wrong reference here? 2129, yes.

And later on, Paul writes to Timothy that he had left Trophimus at Miletum sick.

Now, this is a terrible verse for people that believe in divine healers. [00:32:03] I mean, I believe in divine healing. God certainly can heal, but there are certain men that are divine healers that I don't accept.

That's not a gift that God gives to people today to go around putting their hands on people and healing them. And Paul, who was used for the healing of various ones, we never find him healing a fellow Christian, interestingly enough.

If God is dealing with his people, he may use sickness.

And for me to interfere, even if I have a gift to heal, I'm interfering with God.

I mean, these gifts, these signed gifts were given because of the unsaved, and really to catch the attention of the unsaved and to convince them that the message being brought [00:33:03] was truly of God.

But we never find the apostle using his gift of healing to heal one of his fellow Christians. And he mentions, Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Aristarchus, another one of these fellows mentioned in chapter 20, is traveling with Paul. And later on in the book, he's a fellow prisoner when Paul is taken to Rome. And he's mentioned again in Colossians, Paul refers to him in Philemon as fellow workman. So he's stuck with Paul a long time while Paul was imprisoned in Rome.

Philemon, Paul refers to him as my fellow workman in the little letter that he writes him. He was

evidently a convert of Paul's from somewhere right near Colossae, and he seems [00:34:07] to have been a married man. The letter, since it deals with a slave that had run away, personal property under Roman law, and so is addressed to Philemon as well as to his wife, to his, it would probably be his son, Archippus, our fellow soldier. And then the church that meets in your house, the assembly would be interested, the assembly meeting in a man's house would be interested in how he treats this new brother who had done him such wrong in the past.

Run away, stolen, and so on, yet the Lord had saved him, and Paul very carefully approaches this. He writes him a very touching letter, and he says among other things in verse 7 that he had refreshed the hearts of the saints, or as it's very literally put, the bowels [00:35:07] of the saints.

Would he do that with this new saint who had done so much to hurt him?

Well, that's the question, and yet Paul expresses his confidence in him. He says to Philemon in verse 21, confident of your obedience, I write to you knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

Some have questioned why the New Testament doesn't strike out against slavery, against the social evil, and they would ask why Christians don't strike out against all the social evils in the world. Well, it's through Christianity that slavery came to its end, and I believe that the letter to Philemon is quite a blow against slavery, although Paul doesn't attack the institution.

[00:36:09] But I think here when he says, knowing that you'll do even more than what I ask, he had asked Philemon to receive this runaway slave back as a dearly beloved brother, and to treat him as he would treat Paul, to whom Philemon owed his salvation under God.

And so, well, what more could he do? Even more than what I'm asking, he couldn't do, but the only thing he could do beyond this would be to emancipate the man, to let him go completely, wouldn't it? And yet Christianity, in first line, meets the heart's need of man rather than striking out at all the institutions that sin has brought into the world.

Well, there's a Jesus called Justice, a Jewish fellow worker who was a consolation to Paul [00:37:08] during his time at Rome. You know, there are workers with whom you work, you respect them, you appreciate them, respect the gift that the Lord has given them, and so on, and there are others who really get close to your heart.

And some of these that we read very little about, Paul is very human, and you know, these little touches, he's been a real consolation to me, shows Paul was not just hard and indifferent and pushing and going all the time, he had feelings too.

And in working together, how we work together, expression of feelings, of interest, and so on, these things are all important, and it's beautiful to see this in Scripture. And then we see that not every fellow worker was a joy to Paul.

[00:38:06] He had had his disappointment in John Mark at the early part of John Mark's service for the Lord.

John Mark was anxious to go along, and so on. He had turned back when the going got rough, and we find a Demas who is mentioned as a fellow worker in several of the epistles, and yet in his last

epistle, Paul has to say about Demas, very sadly, that he's forsaken me, he's gone to Thessalonica, having loved the present age.

He doesn't say he's apostatized from the Lord, and I think one has to be careful not to read more into some of these statements. I mean, brethren love to spiritualize all these things. These are, in first line, very human comments on individuals. Now, there may be various depths, various layers of meaning, application that we can [00:39:05] draw from them, but let's remember, in first line, these are human beings.

These are men who serve the Lord, and just as today, one can go on for a long time faithfully and apparently well, and then some trouble, some problem comes into the life, and you really get disappointed.

Scripture tells us, back in the Psalms, 118th Psalm, very central verses in the Bible, verse 8 and 9, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. For myself, I've often substituted the word brethren for princes. You work with anyone long enough, and you're apt to get disappointed. Now, here was one who had served the Lord a long time, and yet when Paul was in prison [00:40:03] and when things were going rough, and all those in Asia had forsaken him, Demas decides to go to Thessalonica, something there that draws his heart. He loves the present age, loves to get ahead in the world better.

There are those who love the Lord and who will find in heaven, but they love the praise of men, they love material prosperity or whatever it may be that the enemy can draw them away with. There are other fellow workmen mentioned with even less detail. The letter to the Philippians, you know, there was a little problem in the assembly at Philippi. Philippi, a wonderful assembly in many ways, but there were two sisters that were not getting along very well, and the danger was that the assembly would choose sides, and that these two sisters would be the cause of a local division, perhaps.

[00:41:05] And Paul comes so gently, so carefully, presenting the importance of unity among saints if the work of God is to prosper.

And he gives them good examples of those who sacrificed themselves for sake of the work. First of all, the Lord Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took on him the form of a servant.

You know, usually if two people have a quarrel about anything, each is trying to assert themselves, not to sacrifice themselves.

Each would like to knock the other, and so Paul starts with the example of the Lord Jesus, and then he goes on to himself, and to Timothy, and to Epaphroditus, and finally in the last chapter of the book, he appeals to these two sisters by name, without going into the details of their problem. Epaphroditus had probably told him about it, and he doesn't take sides, he doesn't try [00:42:06] to be a judge, but he appeals to them to be of the same mind in the Lord. And he mentions Clement, he mentions a true yoke fellow, he mentions those women that labored with me in the gospel, I mean, he mentions quite a number of other workers there at Philippi without mentioning names.

But here are two sisters, Euodia and Syntyche.

One brother, I think it was Raymond Campbell, has mentioned them as odious and soon touchy. And

you know, sometimes we can be a real stinker about something, that we can be soon touchy. Well, that's perhaps a play on their names in English, it's not the meaning in Greek. He mentions a Clement, a true yoke fellow, other fellow laborers. In the heading of his letter to the Corinthians, he mentions Sosthenes.

[00:43:05] Now when you go into Acts 18, you find that the Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed. And then there's another ruler of the synagogue mentioned, Sosthenes. And in all probability, he later got saved too, and is included by Paul, he may have been visiting with Paul, and Paul includes him in writing to the Corinthians. And he may have been a man whom they well respected, if he had been the ruler of the synagogue before, had gotten saved, had taken a stand for the Lord, well, Paul can include him when he says, you know, Paul and Sosthenes, and to the assembly at Corinth, and so on. In Romans 16, there's quite a list of names, and Paul mentions an Urbanus, or Urban, as a fellow workman in Christ.

[00:44:01] What he did is not told, but he's called a fellow workman in Christ. You know, if the Apostle Paul were writing me a letter and called me a fellow workman in Christ, it would be something to be thankful for, wouldn't it? Or, as the world would say, to be proud of. But God scatters these appellations throughout the New Testament epistles.

There's a Tertius, Paul's secretary at Corinth, as he writes the letter, and Tertius adds one verse himself.

As Paul is giving the greetings to the Romans in chapter 16, all at once you come to the verse that says, I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. Tertius felt free to put his own greetings in the letter. It was the one verse that Paul didn't dictate, but Paul approved it, let it go, and Tertius writes it, interestingly enough. [00:45:01] We have a Quartus, a brother Quartus, mentioned in this chapter. Quartus means number four.

We have a Tertius, means number three. We have a Secundus, mentioned in Scripture, means number two, and the Romans often gave their slaves names, just numbered them like that, all right, one, two, three, just called them by those names, especially if they had quite a few. We don't like to be a number, we like to be a name. These names were really numbers, but the one name that we don't find in the New Testament is Primus, which means number one, because in all things he must have the preeminence.

The Lord Jesus is number one, the only proper number one. You can have all kinds of numbers in his slaves, in his followers, but he is number one. [00:46:01] Well, an Erastus is mentioned in Acts 19.

Is he the same one as the Erastus who is mentioned in Romans 16, the city's director of public works?

I read recently that the archaeologist had dug up something in Corinth that had the inscription with this man's name on it. This had been built under the freighter ship of Erastus, so his name has been actually dug up in Corinth, the same man that is mentioned here in Romans 16.

Whether he's the one or whether there are two Erastuses in the New Testament is not altogether certain.

We have the mention of an Erastus in the end of 2 Timothy, where Paul says Erastus stayed in Corinth. It may very well have been this man who had high office. [00:47:04] Well, when Luke writes the Acts, he addresses it O Theophilus.

When he wrote Luke, the first book in the series, most excellent Theophilus. It may well have been that Theophilus was a government official that got converted and that eventually lost his job because of it.

Generally speaking, if you let your light shine for the Lord and you take a real uncompromising stand for Christ, if you're in government office, you don't stay in government office too long.

In government office, at least in our own country, elective office is the art of compromise. And if you are a Christian, you may get into an office, but you really have to compromise to stay there and to get reelected. Now, there are others also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8, which we read about, and then [00:48:03] we have some occupations given us.

These people in the last section here are not specifically called fellow workmen, but they certainly worked together with Paul. Some were hosts or hostesses. Lydia at Philippi, Jason at Thessalonica, Philip the Evangelist at Caesarea, Manasseh.

Paul was to lodge with him when he came up to Jerusalem. He was an old brother, a Cyprian.

Publius on the island of Malta, Melita, when Paul was shipwrecked. He was the chief man of the island. Paul healed his father, and this man Publius was kind enough to be Paul's host there.

Gaius is mentioned here in Romans 16, verse 23.

Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. [00:49:06] One of the older translations, Gaius my host and that of the church.

So one of the assemblies in Rome met at this man Gaius' home.

In the New Testament, among these Christians is the hospitality and how much various ones used their homes for the Lord. Here's a whole list of people who were either Paul's host or hostess, or they had the assembly in their home.

This isn't the complete list. Some traveled with Paul or were with him when he wrote his letters, and they say, add my greetings.

So Peter and Gaius, Acts 20, verse 4, they traveled with him. Paul is writing from Corinth to the Romans, and he's putting this long list of people [00:50:02] to greet, and then there are a number of brethren standing around who say, send my greetings, and Tertius writes in, I greet you too, and somebody else, you know, he's the steward of the city, and it's so beautiful to see that, isn't it? Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus, who's distinguished for nothing but for being a brother, send their greetings. You know, the director of public works and the ordinary brother, a slave, number four, you know, the director of public works and number four both send you their greetings. Isn't that beautiful?

He breaks down all these human distinctions that have come in. They're both brothers. They both love the saints at Rome. Probably neither has ever been there, but they're both sending their greetings. The house of Chloe.

Paul had gotten a sad report about conditions in Corinth from this household, and when you [00:51:03] read about the house of somebody in Scripture, especially in the New Testament, but even in the Old, the house of so-and-so normally includes the slaves.

The family is different from the house. Now, with Abraham, you find this in Genesis 18, I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after me to keep the way of the Lord. The household is something much bigger than the family itself, and Lydia had a household. We never read that she had a husband. We don't read that she had children, but she was a well-to-do businesswoman, and she had a household.

She had servants there.

The house of Stephanus.

Beautiful thing. They're addicted, at least according to the King James translation. They had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. Lovely addiction. I wish there were more brethren who were addicted to the ministry of the saints today. [00:52:05] Yes? Was that Philippian jelly Stephanus received? The Philippian jelly is never named for us. Oh, really?

No. Stephanus, Achaicus, Fortunatus, these were Corinthians who had come to Paul and had carried a letter apparently to him, given him a report. Well, these are people that he has contact with. All kinds of people.

When you read the list in Romans 16, how many there are there. We've skipped over some of the detail here.

Phoebe we had touched on before. The letter to the Romans is written as a commendation for her. There's Triphina and Triphosa. I always figure that they must have been twins. They're beloved because of their work, and then there's the beloved Persis. Triphina and Triphosa who labor in the Lord, and then the beloved Persis who labored much [00:53:05] in the Lord. Evidently, an older sister whose days of active ministry had come to an end, but Paul commends her. He speaks about the mother of a Rufus who also had been a mother to him. Had she sewed some buttons on his shirts? Had she fixed him a nice meal? Had she mothered him a little bit?

All these things are possibilities. But there are so many ways to serve the Lord, and while Paul details many names, makes many brief comments about various ones, think of how much longer the list that the Lord is keeping, the list that's going to be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ. Think of how much longer that list is, and how he notes every detail of our service for him. It's not just the big prominent preachers, but these dear sisters, these dear brothers [00:54:03] in the background, number four slave, number three slave who could take down the dictation, and so on, all working together in the interests of the Lord Jesus. May the Lord help us to do likewise.