

PM Romans 16 Lessons from the Life of Phoebe

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[0 : 00] In singing from the Psalter, please turn with me to God's Word in Romans chapter 16. Romans chapter 16.

And I'll be reading this entire chapter. Romans 16. Oh, sorry. Page 1145 in the Pew Bibles. Romans 16. Hear the Word of God. I commend to you, our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Sanctria, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you.

For she has been a patron of many, and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who raised their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.

Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Aponiatius, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

[1 : 25] Greet Andronicus and Juniah, my kinsmen and fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord.

Greet Abenas, our fellow worker in Christ. Greet Aponiatius and my beloved Stachys. Greet Aponiatius, who is a proving Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.

Greet my kinsmen Herodian. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphenia and Tryphosa.

Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

Greet Asyncretus, Philigon, Hermes, Petrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nearest, and his sister Olympus, and all the saints who are with them.

[2 : 33] Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.

Avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ by their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you.

So do Lucius and Jason and Sosipata, my kinsmen. I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you.

[3 : 39] Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you. Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings, has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God be glory forevermore, through Jesus Christ.

Amen. And amen may the Lord at his blessing today. Public reading of his holy and inspired word. We will continue in prayer. Let's pray.

Our gracious God and our loving Heavenly Father, we come into your holy presence once again, and Lord, we do give thanks that we have the living written word before us.

What a glorious passage before us that we've just read and we're about to consider. Oh Lord, we do pray, Lord, that you would speak to us through this living and written word by your Holy Spirit that we may receive a blessing from on high and that we may also think about the living incarnate

word, the Lord Jesus Christ and all that he means to us.

Oh Lord, we do give thanks for his glorious work on Calvary, his birth, his life, his sinless, perfect life, his death upon Calvary and his glorious resurrection and his ascension seated at the right hand of the Father now.

[5 : 32] Oh Lord, we do pray, Lord, that we may have high views of Christ, our living incarnate word. Oh Lord, may we have a real sense of the presence of God with us this evening as we consider the lessons to be learned from Phoebe.

We do pray that we may humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God as we read and consider the things of God this night. Remember, as well, Lord, those who have rule over us.

We think of those in local governments. We think of those in Holyrood, in Westminster. We do pray that the Lord will guide them in their thoughts, that they may think about the consequences, the dire consequences of putting out laws that are against the word of God.

We do pray that the Lord would move in their hearts and change them and move them to put forward laws and policies that will allow the gospel the free reign in this land and nation.

How this land and nation in Scotland needs the gospel of Jesus Christ in this day and age of unbelief. We do remember, as well, Lord, those who are persecuted for their faith.

[6 : 50] Remember, Lord, that even as the Apostle Paul reminds us to remember those who are bound in chains as being bound with them. Perhaps we have been very comfortable in where we are and as good in that.

But we do pray, Lord, for those who are struggling because of persecutions. We think of those in Middle Eastern countries, those in parts of China, in parts of Southeast Asia, think of those in North Korea, think of those in countries where the gospel is outlawed and those Christians are driven underground.

We do pray that the Lord would be merciful to them, help them through their own time of worship, help them in their desire to spread the gospel in their communities.

We do pray that the Lord would bless them where they are and grant that they, not only would the persecution end, but, Lord, that we pray that the gospel may flourish in such countries, in such areas, we do pray.

And, Lord, we do pray for this place, Dumfries Free Church. We do pray that the Lord would bless them and keep them, use them to spread the gospel in this area. Those who are perhaps, haven't, haven't darkened the doors of any church, may they come in to this place, come under the sound of gospel and be saved.

[8 : 20] Pray for those young people, many around here, we're sure, young people, children, toddlers, we do pray that they may come in to consider the things of God.

They may be young in age, but never too young to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we think of the, not only those who are outside this place, we think of us now gathered in this place.

We trust that, though we are small in gathering, we know that it is the Lord who brought us here. It's not by chance, it's not by luck, but the Lord has brought us here for the specific reason of worshipping our God and to hear the word preached.

May the word preached be a word in season for the good of all our souls. So bless both preacher and hearer alike, we do pray, as we continue to worship. For we ask these things in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Please turn me once again to Romans 16.

[9 : 28] And I've mentioned this morning, we'll be looking at the life or the lessons from the life of Phoebe in verses 1 and 2 in chapter 16.

I commend to you, our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at St. Crea, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and help her in whatever she may need from you. for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. Well, Paul wrote Romans from this place in Crea, a port in Corinth, and this letter was delivered by Phoebe to the Roman Christians there herself.

Now, this is part of Paul's journey or before Paul's journey to Jerusalem around about AD 55 to 58 as part of his third missionary journey.

You can read all that in Acts chapter 20. Where he was in Corinth, he was staying with this person named Gaius, which you read in verse 23.

[10:54] Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. And this person, Gaius, is somebody who Paul had some contact in the past. We know that when, if you, you can just flip literally in the next page in chapter 1, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, I thank God, chapter 1 verse 14, it says, I thank God I baptize none of you except Crispus and Gaius.

So, he was someone who Paul had baptized in the past and who is now a host to Paul and to his little band of helpers and the church as well.

So, this is a, he's writing to a newly established church a church that is made up of Jews and Gentiles in Rome. And, the late Professor John Murray wrote that where faith is, it seeks the fellowship of the saints.

Where faith is, it seeks the fellowship of the saints. And so, these are people who have gathered together after conversion, after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, they've sought each other out and they've gathered themselves together and formed a church.

But, they needed teaching as do all of us. They needed teaching and so Paul in writing this, this, this weighty letter wrote in two parts, well not in two parts, it's one letter but it comes in two parts.

[12:29] The first half is about doctrine, so the first eleven chapters and in chapters twelve to fifteen it's all about practice. So, theory and practice, doctrine and practice.

When it comes to chapter sixteen it's a slightly different tone. It's very much a commendation and salutations as one writer puts it.

There is much love towards the brethren there. There's very much a, well the superscript on the, in chapter sixteen is written as personal greetings and it's very much that.

It's Paul acknowledging the people in the church in Rome and there's very much a very personal and loving feeling towards these brethren and that's very much characteristic characteristic and should be characteristic of the Christian faith.

Matthew Henry wrote that true religion you can say true Christianity rightly received never made any man uncivil. Don't you just love the way the old writers puts it?

[13:49] True religion rightly received never made any man uncivil. And they say Matthew Henry wrote that courtesy and Christianity agree well together. just love that.

In fact so much so that in the first three centuries there was when the tension between Christianity and hedonism were really at loggerheads or paganism were at loggerheads one the apologist Tertullian writing in defense of the Christian faith wrote that it is mainly with the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us.

See they say how they love one another how they are ready even to die for one another for they themselves will sooner be put to death. That was how much the early church banded themselves together in such a tight knit community and it was so evident to the heathen or the pagans around them that these Christians really genuinely love one another.

So the Christian faith was promoted at that time in the early church in the time of Paul's writing to the Roman Christians and even beyond that in the first two or three centuries that Christianity was promoted not only as a religion that is true based on facts and evidence of the birth the life the death the resurrection of Jesus Christ as not only facts to be believed in but it's also promoted as a good way of living as a good way of living as a better way of living compared to the heathens and to the pagans round about them.

Now can you imagine when this letter of Romans was read in the church and can you imagine that this letter being read in the church and obviously it would be read in the church can you imagine if it reaches Romans chapter 16 I wonder how these people who are mentioned how would they feel how would they feel would it be a bit you know would it feel a bit uncomfortable that the names were mentioned you know perhaps start feeling a bit cringy start having the you know goosebumps you know when they greet Prisker and Aquila you know there they are sitting in the midst who risked their lives for my next for my risked their necks for my life you know how would they feel I wonder would they feel a bit embarrassed honored proud or probably humbling would you like a letter like this to be read in a church in public you know in some some

[16:55] Christian circles when you come into membership in the church I know it's not practiced in a free church but in some circles to come into a membership into a church you need to show a letter of membership transfer from the previous church and that letter will be read out in public usually you find this in brethren circles and in Baptist churches now if such a letter was read about you what would it say what would it say would you like to know what other Christians thought about you would we like to know what other Christians say about us would they say nice glowing things

like what we just read in Romans 16 or would they say something like so and so attends church fairly regularly sometimes you might actually see them at the prayer meetings things

I've heard this before this church cannot be built on so and so not that anyone would want to build a church based on one person but basically what it means is that person is not very reliable well are we like that if there's going to be a letter being read in public and there's no reason why Romans 16 would not be read in public because that's what the letter is for but would people see us and say well this bunch not very reliable inconsistent schismatic difficult people or would they say things like what we've got here greet so and so my beloved in the Lord I commend to you our sister Phoebe you welcome her in the Lord what would people say about us what would other

Christians say about us well we should pray we should pray for ourselves pray for our churches that we would be seen as good upright trustworthy reliable loving Christians who are loving inside the church and outside the church as well so so that so much so that we are what Paul described as a sweet savor of Christ about us there's a sweet savor of Christ in our midst and people can see that people can see that we should pray that the Lord would help us in our churches not just Dumfries but even in Dublin as well but we come to Phoebe and Phoebe my first point is Phoebe the sister we read I commend to you our sister Phoebe well it's not just our sister it's

Phoebe the sister now Phoebe is a name of a Greek goddess perhaps she's not a Jew I mean it'd be a bit strange for a Jewish person to name their daughter of the Greek goddess but it's likely that she didn't change her name even upon her conversion we read I read in the reading in Romans 16 there's quite a number of names in there which are Greek gods and Greek goddesses you know in verse 14 we have all these names Asyncritus Hermes and this is Hermes well Hermes is not just the parcel delivery company the courier company that we see around in the trucks or sometimes known as every Hermes is not just a delivery company but it's the name of a Greek god and this person is named Hermes but more importantly Phoebe is described as our sister the sister this is a person who is a sister to the rest of the siblings she's described as a sister in other words everyone else is a sibling to her they are a family a family of god she's not an outsider well she may be an outsider in terms of she's physically coming into their midst but she's not an outsider in terms of her relationship with everyone else she's an insider she's a family member she's a sister not by birth but sister by the new birth she's a new creation a new creation alongside all the others all these names here she's related to them by new birth she's born again as are the rest of them and not least is she born again but she's being adopted into the family of god she's adopted into the family of god she is we read in

Paul's letter to the Ephesians that she's now we read in verse chapter 1 verse 5 after god has predestinated us for adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will she's been adopted into the family of god Jesus is to her a brother she has god as our father as do all those who profess and believe and possess the gospel in our hearts we have Jesus as our brother and god as our father she was once dead in trespasses and sins she was once one who walked following the cause of this world following the prince of the power of the air that's what she once was but now she's adopted into the family of god and now she has a family a new family not an earthly family she has a church family she has a church family which makes a big difference when he described her as a sister we don't know

[23 : 24] I don't want to read too much into her life but to be converted in those days and sometimes in this country and elsewhere to be converted from a pagan family to be converted to Christ you may lose your family if you don't if you haven't lost your life the likelihood is you get kicked out of your family and perhaps Phoebe is one of those who has been kicked out of a family and so now Paul is saying well that's okay it's painful it's sad you've lost your mom and your dad your brothers and your sisters but now you are brought into this family the family of God and your church family is going to be loving they're going to be kind towards you they're going to be helpful towards you yes there will be troubles in any church and we know that that's going to be the case because in verse 17 we read

I appeal to you ghost contrary to the doctrine you've been taught avoid them so there are problems or some issues within the church in Rome but he's telling them look this is still your sister be nice to her be kind to her be loving to her she's brought you this letter scroll letter whatever she's brought it to you be good to her and it's the same for us when we are converted we are brought into the family of God and the people who are with us our so called church family ought to be loving and kind and show goodness to one another yes there will be troubles in any church there will be difficulties but

we should seek to maintain peace in the church we should pray for peace in Zion so that's Phoebe a little bit of Phoebe our sister the sister but then there's Phoebe the servant Phoebe the servant she's described as a servant of the church in St.

Crea now that big controversy was Phoebe a deaconess was Phoebe a deacon I'm not a Greek expert but apparently the Greek word diakonos is literally translated as servant in a general sense the root word is sometimes depending on context could mean to minister to render service it's not neither masculine feminine it's not even talking about an office but it's talking about a function it's to minister to render service to help somebody to provide a service and so the English translations seem to vary the older translations tend to describe her as a servant the ESV we've got it as a servant the authorized version the revised version the

Geneva Bible describe her as a servant even the older additions to the NIV describe her as a servant it's the more modern translations and slightly looser translations that describe her as a deaconess like RSV or the more modern NIV describe her as a deacon deacon the modern translation who are trying to be more gender neutral would describe her as a deacon interestingly Wycliffe Bible which is translated in 1388 described her as one who is in the service of the church Phoebe who is in the service of the church so basically the general trend is that she provided a service she's a real helper to the apostle

[27 : 59] Paul and to the other Christians as well the you know the role of the deacon the qualifications are given to us in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 6 the first deacons that were appointed to fulfill a task of supporting the Hebrew widows and so they picked out among the seven were chosen to support the Hebrew widows and so they were told in Acts of the Apostles chapter 6 pick among you seven men of good repute full of the spirit and wisdom whom we will appoint to this duty and so the apostles and the elders would devote themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and the deacons will support in terms of the practical outworkings of the church and again the

Apostle Paul would expand on that later on in 1st Timothy chapter 3 which I won't go into the deacons were appointed for a very specific task they were servants of the church they dealt with the practical issues of the church and the elders and pastors were there to be under shepherds to preach the gospel to function differently from the deacons and we know this we should know this by now what we should be concerned is not the office of the deacon but the function of the deacon and specifically what the function of Phoebe was interestingly when we think about something when you look at the arguments about you know Phoebe being a deacon there seemed to be a certain sense of you know this big office of the deacon and so

Phoebe must be this office bearer of the church but if you look at what we've just read in my mind it sounds that Phoebe is a lot more downplayed in terms of some big office that she holds but she's seen as one who is humble a servant of the church and who brought the letter to them there's no glam no title no great vision of some great rule that she has over the church some great power some great grandeur you know it seems strange that people have this great fascination with Phoebe and seem to put her in this high position that she doesn't actually possess and more importantly if one wants to be a deacon on that basis whether it be a man or woman who thinks that they can take the role of a deacon perhaps it would be good to read what Paul has to say about the role of a deacon one has to be grave not double tongue not given to much wine not greedy or filthy lucre would such people be willing to be first proved tested and found blameless and if married are their wives to be grave not slanderous sober faithful in all things deacons husbands of one wife that tells you a lot about what deacons are ruling their children in the house as well those are very high standards

I've just basically picked out those few verses in 1st Timothy chapter 3 about the role of a deacon those are very high standards set just look at the example of Philip the deacon and lay preacher it's not about some great office to be held Phoebe's example is not some great position that she holds but it's the humble the humility of Phoebe that we see here a servant of the church and perhaps that's something that we need to be aware for ourselves not to be distracted by all the various arguments about female deaconess and so on and yet not do the task of a servant if she was a deaconess which is what some people are promoting what service did she perform nothing much apart from the fact that she probably brought the letter to them but the role of a deacon is very clear look after the sick look after the poor look after those who are in difficult positions serve tables there's a need for Christians to be servants need for

Christians to have a servant heart not just to aspire for some great office but to be servants of the church that is what we should be Phoebe shows us the example of being a servant of the church even for those of us who stand in a pulpit to preach it's not for us to bark orders like this that we are some kind of a tyrant or some kind of army officer we don't bark orders at the church dialing people off you know why are you doing this why are you living this way as we preach the word of God faithfully the Holy Spirit applies what is being said to our hearts and if done with love Christians are illuminated with the things of God and built up in the things of God and have a greater sight of Christ and his finished work on Calvary and those who are outside the kingdom of

[34 : 30] God those who are unconverted will see and see Christ and his fullness and that is being a servant even a servant from the pulpit Phoebe is a person although she has a status of being a servant in the church she was very happy to be a letter bearer for Paul she carried a letter with her traveled to bring this letter to her to the Christians in Rome and she is commended for that think about it a female carrying a letter traveling from one place to another not in the sort of sanctified civilized country that we have to dig but perhaps she might be she could have been easily waylaid by robbers and we read that even in the gospel accounts of the good

Samaritan and the man who was attacked by robbers she could have been attacked but no she just did what she was asked to do and she just brought the letter and they are told to welcome her she is truly a servant a servant spirit and that's what we need that's what we need in our churches today then my third point is this what is the church response towards Phoebe what is the church meant to do towards Phoebe and that is a lesson for us as well what the Roman Christians are meant to do with her how they're meant to respond to her how they're meant to welcome her ought to be lessons for us as well how we deal with other Christians around us first thing we can see is this that to welcome her in the

Lord in verse 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord it may seem very obvious but to welcome her in the Lord is to accept her in the words of John Murray again to accept her as one bound to them in the bond and fellowship of union with Christ to accept her as one bound to them in the bond and fellowship of union with Christ to welcome her in the Lord Paul is telling them you put yourself in that same position as her and you welcome her because she is one of yours and you are a Christian she's a Christian you serve the same God you believe in the same Christ you welcome her on that basis Paul is saying basically well how did

Christ receive you you were one sinner if you say that you've been bought with the blood of Christ then let me tell you this she was bought with the blood of Christ if you say that Christ has washed her renewed her sanctify her cleansed her you're saying that for yourself as well so you receive her as a sister in Christ you receive her in the Lord now you can imagine when they were reading this letter in front of Phoebe in front of the whole congregation you receive her you welcome her in the Lord everyone will sit and say okay Christ died for her Christ saved her we will welcome her that same Christ who died for me has died for her who rose for me who rose for her yes we will welcome her in the

Lord oh you can imagine the Roman Christian would say no that's probably not going to happen it serves as a reminder for all of us how should we receive people into fellowship and membership of the church sometimes we can be a bit too suspicious you know somebody comes into our doors and you kind of think oh not sure about that without even asking the person, you know, their spiritual journey, their spiritual life.

[39 : 25] You know, somebody may come in through our doors and the person may be, you know, dressed in a certain way, behave in a certain way. But the person has been changed and born again, saved by the grace of God, drawn by factual grace.

That's, you know, how can we not welcome such a person? Put it this way, we should welcome them without some great expectation that they'll become a free church person.

Okay, the likelihood that, you know, in this day and age, that's very unlikely going to happen. We welcome them, not with some great expectation that they're going to be some free church person, you know, through and through, you know.

But we welcome them because they are bought with the same blood of Christ. So the church response to Phoebe is welcome her in the Lord.

But also, not only that, but we read that welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints. In a way worthy of the saints. In the authorised virgin, slightly, kind of slightly vague, as becometh saints.

[40 : 38] Or one writer puts it this way, as he becomes saints to receive a believer. You welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints.

John Murray, in his commentary, focuses or throws a light on the church. Not on Phoebe.

As he becomes saints to receive a believer. He throws a light on the church. He's saying that you welcome her in a way any true Christian will welcome another Christian.

Throws a light right back at the church in Rome. So the Roman Christians are to receive Phoebe, not only because she's a saint, but because they would demonstrate to be saints themselves if they welcome her.

The light is thrown on her. You know, how we welcome others into the church says more about us than about them.

[41 : 54] I think you know that's true. How we treat others, how we receive others into the church, says more about us than about them. And Paul, in writing these few words, to welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, he's throwing a light on the church in Rome, saying, well, you call yourself saints, you receive her as one of you, as a fellow saint.

But what else can we say about how the church should respond to Phoebe? Well, we can think about the gifts and graces of Phoebe.

We read that she's a patron of many, and of myself as well. The NIV uses the word benefactor. She's somebody who is a protector, a patron, somebody who cares about the affairs of others around her. Perhaps back in the church in Corinth, she's somebody who looks after the elderly, somebody who looks after the sick, the elderly, somebody who is a bit like what we would call a matron of a care home.

I think you know what I mean. A matron of a care home. She'll look after the needs of those who are sick and elderly, and so on. She's seen as a protector, a patron, a benefactor.

[43 : 23] Now, was Phoebe rich? Hard to tell. But in order to be a benefactor, to be a patron, the very likelihood is she probably has quite a bit of money to buy the food, the clothing, to help the sick, the elderly.

Perhaps she might even have a bigish home. I'm not reading a bit into the life of Phoebe, but she's somebody who has been a patron of many, and of myself as well.

This is Paul speaking. So, Paul and his merry band of helpers were helped by her. Perhaps she's somebody who has got a bigish house, who look after the poor and the sick and the elderly, but also she's one who helped missionaries, helped people like the apostle Paul and his band of helpers.

So, she will be called somebody who helped the missionaries, the church workers in those days.

Just think of people the likes of Lydia. For example, in the Acts of the Apostle, remember the conversion of Lydia, where the Lord opened the heart of Lydia.

And we read in Acts of the Apostle, chapter 16, that after she was baptized and her household as well, she urged us, this is Paul and his band of his helpers, she urged us saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

[44 : 53] And Lydia basically looked after the apostles and the fellow church workers.

And perhaps Phoebe is one of those persons as well. She's a patron of many and of myself as well. She may be somebody who has looked after Paul and his fellow church workers, Christian workers, missionaries, just like Lydia.

And, you know, we can see even in church history, we were talking about it in Norman's place earlier, about Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. She was aristocrat, rich, but it said that she devoted herself, her means, her time, her thoughts, to the cause of Christ.

She did not spend money on herself. This is part of a biography of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. She did not spend money on herself. She did not allow the homage paid to her rank to remain with herself.

And she was a pivotal figure in the 18th century evangelical revival in this country. She was friends with Whitfield and the Wesleyan brothers.

[46 : 09] Perhaps she put them in separate parts of her house. I don't know. She was friends with Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, the hymn writers, and Augustus Toplady, the Rock of Ages, clever me.

Apparently, she built 64 chapels, built for various Methodist preachers, and she cared for the preachers, cared for the hearers, cared for the rich, cared for the poor, cared for the church

workers, cared for the missionaries, not much different from Phoebe.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, could be described as a patron of many, and of all the various Christian writers and hymn writers that we know of.

And this leads to, this led to John Mary to write that Phoebe is one of the women memorialized in the New Testament by the devoted service to the gospel whose honor is not to be tarnished by elevation to position and functions inconsistent with the station they occupy in the economy of human relationships.

Phoebe is not somebody who, Phoebe is somebody who ought to be remembered by her devoted love for gospel work, for being a servant to the church, and service to the gospel, and not to be lifted to some strange position that had she been around today, she would be completely flabbergasted.

[47 : 59] the composition that people are putting her on, the pedestal that people are putting Phoebe on, would be completely unheard of in her time and probably to her as well.

She would be embarrassed by some of the things that you read online, or you hear online about Phoebe. And I've heard quite a few things that are said about her which I kind of thought if Phoebe was alive today, she would be aghast at some of the things that are said about her, the things that lift her up.

She's not that sort of person. We can be certain of that. Well, so some lessons about Phoebe, her humility, but most importantly that she is one who is in the Lord, one who is in Christ and one to be received as a sister in Christ and it's for us to learn how to respond to such Christians who are amongst us, how we should respond to them.

Because it says a lot about us, how we respond to Christians who come amongst our midst. So some thoughts about Phoebe, the servant of the church at St. Crea, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and help her in whatever she may need from you for she's been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Well, may the Lord bless this word to our hearts this evening. We will conclude in singing. And doncs. paucing. Rocan on mer