

[quartus]

:: romans 16.23 ::

Romans 16.23 is our text. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is closing his letter and listing out some folks for special recognition and, therefore, for our benefit and learning.

Romans 16.23 - Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.

Our main focus will be on the third chap, Quartus.

Herbert Lockyer comments on this verse in his book *All The Men Of The Bible*, where he says:

Among the thousands of persons named in the Bible, there is only one under the letter Q, namely, Quartus, the Corinthian Christian whom Paul calls "a brother" and who joined the apostle in sending a salutation to the Church at Rome.

[Lockyer // All The Men Of The Bible pg 280]

This particular subject is interesting to me because of how he is referenced together with these 2 other guys, Gaius and Erastus. His 3 words of Scripture speak to us today and give a clear compass by which we should apply our lives.

His name means simply *the fourth*. Perhaps it was the first century equivalent of *Sonny* or *Junior*. At this juncture we don't find any devotional insight into the name in and of itself.

So then we are only left with the one other word of description we are given: *brother*.

There is something in that description that God desires to teach us about and there's something about this pairing with Gaius and Erastus that we can draw from and meditate upon.

Gaius was the host of Paul and the whole church. In Gaius, we see the **personality**. He was a man who was spiritually gifted in hospitality. Gifted to serve in this particular way. He had opened his home and his schedule to Paul and the people of the Church.

As we know, each of us are given specific spiritual gifts so that we can serve the Lord and serve the Church. He does this so that He can use us in specific ways to edify others, build the kingdom and glorify Christ. Those gifts are important. The Bible spends a lot of time explaining them to us and showing us how the gifts work out in the Church.

Gaius is listed for us and we could say that it was his **gifting** or his **spiritual personality** that the Holy Spirit highlighted in this verse. A study of him would cause us to pause and consider which ways God has gifted us as individuals, and then to evaluate whether we are using or developing those gifts, or if we are leaving them unopened in our lives.

Gaius was a host. Erastus was the treasurer of the city. If Gaius was listed for his **personality**, we could say that Erastus was listed for his **position**.

As a high official in the city of Corinth, Erastus had much to lose. However, like Daniel and Joseph, he loved and served the Lord right where God had placed him, despite the occupational hazards it might have caused.

Not all of us are called to a position of great prominence, but all of us are placed somewhere by God to be a light in the darkness. Your job is a mission field. Your place in the community is a mission field. Sometimes that will cause tension between us and the world, but as Christians, we are to follow the Lord and honor Him no matter what the risk may be to our career or social standing.

Erastus continued his service in the Church and his witness in the city despite his prominent position. If we were to study his life, it would cause us to pause and consider our testimony at our work place and in the community and to evaluate whether we are shining or hiding our light for Christ in the positions He has placed us.

But then we get to Quartus. No personality listed. No position given. Instead, he is just referenced by the common New Testament word *brother*. So, why would someone who was seemingly plain and nondescript be given to us in this text? What did he do to be recognized in this letter?

The good news is that we should identify with him in this classification. He is a type of every believer, a **pattern** for every one of us. As Christians we are all **brothers** in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is first an encouragement to us, that our lives are important, they are significant. We may not have a big ministry like Gaius. We may not have a prominent position like Erastus. But our simple lives are meaningful and important to God, who takes **every** brother and desires to use him for His glory.

But second, we see this word *brother* and we think of his pedigree. We remember that this word identifies us with Jesus Christ who said this:

Matthew 12.48-50 - But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

Brotherhood with Jesus means we are recipients of His power and His wisdom and His inheritance. As we follow the Lord and do the will of the Father in heaven, we become heirs to eternity as sons of God. As brothers, we are reconciled to God who saves us from death and frees us from the bondage of the corruption that sin brought into the world. As brothers, we receive a pedigree that comes with the power of God, the protection of God, the provision of God, the plan of God. We receive the mysteries which were hidden away, now revealed to us not for intellect's sake, but for relevant, heavenly living. As brothers we become friends with God, who loves us and can then bestow upon us all the that He desires for His redeemed children.

We think about that pedigree and remember that our lives suddenly have liveliness and meaning. We suddenly have opportunities that we did not have before. We suddenly have strength that we did not have before. We suddenly have potential that we did not have before, because we are now sons of God, brothers of Jesus.

But then, we not only think about Quartus being a *pattern* for every believer, we not only think about his *pedigree* as a brother in Christ, but third we think of his *partnership* in God's will.

He is listed by Paul because he not only *was* a brother, but he *acted* like a brother. He had determined to partner together with Paul and his fellow believers to accomplish God's will, no matter what.

Not all of us have brothers, and I'm sure some of you don't have a perfect relationship with the brothers you *DO* have, but we do have this cultural understanding of brotherhood. We have that idea of a bond that surpasses all other things. A connection that looks past differences, looks past mistakes, looks past opinions, looks past everything because of the bond of brotherhood.

That is how we are to mature together as believers in the Church. This is how we should see other Christians in our hearts, with that unbreakable bond of fellowship and fraternity.

We are to forgive, because that's my brother. We are to show grace, because that's my brother. We are to sacrifice, because that's my brother. We are to teach and help and guard and guide these people, because they are my brothers, and I have the understanding that I would do *anything* for my brother, to help him and protect him and love him, because he and I belong in a special way.

Will we have differences? Sure. Will other Christians do things that we don't agree with or approve of? Of course. That's obvious. But we must cultivate this understanding that God's family *IS* a family and our brotherhood is very important to the Lord and we are connected together in a eternal, spiritual heritage.

Quartus was *brother* to Paul.

But, in order to be a brother to Paul, he had to be a brother to Jesus in this spiritual sense we've been talking about.

So what about us? How do we become better brothers in the Biblical sense?

The answer is, of course, given to us in the Bible.

First, we need to be sanctified.

Hebrews 2.11 - For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Sanctification simply means *to make holy*. We are made holy in 2 ways.

First, we are purified. Thus, a Biblical brother is a man who is being purified from sin. A life that is dominated by sin is the life of a prodigal, a life of broken relationship with God the Father and his spiritual brethren.

Second, we are made holy by being set apart by God for His work. A Biblical brother is a man who is distinguishable from the world and is serving the Lord personally and passionately. Those trapped by the lures of the world are like the Rich Young Ruler, who was sorrowful when he discovered that

being in the family of God means being set apart from worldliness for something glorious and eternal.

Looking within, if we desire to be brothers like Quartus, we should find sanctification. We should not find habitual sin. We should not find carnal worldliness. We should find holiness.

That's the theological aspect of being a brother. How do we do that practically?

Spurgeon said this about sanctification:

The truth is the sanctifier, and if we do not hear or read the truth, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding.

Brotherhood begins with sanctification, and sanctification is found in God's truth.

Peter elaborates on this process in very plain terms:

2 Peter 1.5-11 - But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is how you become a Biblical brother that honors God through your life. This is why Quartus was worthy of this heavenly recognition, because he was a spiritual brother, dedicated to the family of God and the will of God.

So the question is this: **What am I going to do to honor God today?** What kind of son am I going to be to Him? What kind of brother am I going to be to my fellow believers?

That's the challenge. That's the opportunity. That's the choice we get to make today. We've been cleansed. We've been set apart. We've been gifted and placed. Now it's time for us to live in this Biblical bond of brothers.