

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXX

May 10, 2020

No. 19

## The Importance of Greetings

(Jerry Fite)

How do you feel when someone takes the time and buys the opportunity to politely recognize you with a simple greeting? It brightens my moment. I do exist, and someone recognizes it. They are welcoming my existence with an expression of friendliness. Why wouldn't these brief few seconds be characterized as a beam of sunshine graciously lifting my spirit?

Greetings or salutations must be important because Paul, with specific detail, expressed salutations in the sixteenth chapter of Romans in our Bibles. Paul, in Corinth, “saluted” many individuals in Rome. We think of a “salute” as what is occurring in the military. How can that be a greeting of “howdy”? The Greek word encompasses greeting and saluting because both denote “recognition.” A soldier is saluting an officer, recognizing his superior rank. The friendly greeting is recognizing another human being as being important to the greeter.

Paul saluted individuals, recognizing the shared relationship in Jesus Christ, the Lord. Urbanus is saluted as “*our fellow worker in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 16:9). Paul also salutes Prisca and Aquila as “*fellow*

*workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks...*” Rom. 16:3-4). The salutations were not merely recognitions of humans being made in the image of God, but they were “beloved in the Lord” (Rom. 16:8); “chosen in the Lord” (Rom. 16:13); or generically, “in the Lord.” (Rom. 16:11). They were human beings being recognized as followers of Christ, promoting His cause.

Paul and Peter exhorted brethren to salute or greet “one another” with a “*holy kiss*” (Rom. 16:16) or “*a kiss of love*” (1 Pet. 5:14). This greeting of love is not seductive or an enticing doorway into the works of the flesh, but a “holy” kiss recognizing that we are “saints” in the Lord. In Christ, we have been cleansed from our sins and set apart from the world of corruption. We are “*sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place*” (1 Cor. 1:2).

Greetings are important because all saints should receive one. The church in Philippi received the following exhortation from Paul: “*Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren that are with me salute you. All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household*” (Philippians 4:21-22).

The word, “Salute” or “Greet” is plural in the Greek, denoting more than one salutation or greeting was in order. “*Every saint*” was to be so recognized. Greetings were so important that Paul wanted the saints in Philippi to know that not just a few brethren, but “*all the saints salute you.*” Included in this all-encompassing greeting was some more encouraging realities. “*All the saints*” included those saints “*of Caesar's household.*” The “imperial guard,” who were carrying out their responsibilities of guarding prisoner Paul, were responding favorably to the saving gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:12-13). These new saints were greeting fellow saints in Philippi. Every saint and all the saints should receive and offer such friendly recognitions in the Lord.

So, should we do so today. While the custom of greeting another with a kiss might have been temporarily curtailed, as our customary greeting of shaking of hands has been in the present virus pandemic, a friendly recognition of greeting should never cease. Not even one saint should enter our presence without a hospitable greeting. Brighten the corner where you are. Let another know that they truly exist in your world; you are glad they exist; and you honor their presence as a fellow saint. Greetings, saints!