

Romans 16:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Analysis

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord—Aspasasthe Tryphainan kai Tryphōsan tas kopiōsas en kyriō (ἀσπάσασθε Τρύφαιναν καὶ Τρυφῶσαν τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ). Kopiōsas (κοπιάω, labor/toil) is present participle—continuous, exhausting work. Paul uses kopiaō for apostolic ministry (1 Corinthians 15:10, 'I labored more abundantly'), manual work (Ephesians 4:28, 'labor with his hands'), and gospel service. Tryphena and Tryphosa were likely sisters or ministry partners, kopiōsas en kyriō (laboring in the Lord)—not generic church work but gospel ministry requiring sacrifice, effort, endurance.

Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord—Aspasasthe Persida tēn agapētēn, hētis polla ekopiasēn en kyriō (ἀσπάσασθε Περσίδα τὴν ἀγαπητήν, ἣτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ). Persis ('Persian woman') receives agapētēn (beloved) and commendation for polla kopiaō (much labor)—the aorist tense suggests past, completed service. She may have been older, now less active, but her prior labor is remembered and honored. Paul's threefold commendation of women's 'labor' (Mary v. 6, Tryphena-Tryphosa-Persis v. 12) demonstrates women's active, recognized ministry in the early church.

Historical Context

All three names (Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis) were common slave names. Tryphena and Tryphosa mean 'dainty' and 'delicate'—possibly sisters with matching names, common practice among slaves. Persis means 'Persian woman,' indicating ethnic

origin. Their prominence in Paul's greetings shows that the early church was predominantly lower-class (1 Corinthians 1:26-28, 'not many mighty, not many noble'). Yet Paul honors their gospel labor as highly as any apostle's—*kopiaō en kyriō* (laboring in the Lord) transcends social status.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's recognition of women's 'labor' (kopiaō)—the same term he uses for his apostolic work—affirm women's active ministry?
2. What does it look like to 'labor much in the Lord' (polla kopiaō en kyriō) in your context—exhausting, sacrificial gospel service?
3. How can churches honor the 'Persis' figures—older believers whose past labor may be forgotten but deserves recognition?

Interlinear Text

ἀσπάσασθε Τρύφαιναν καὶ Τρυφῶσαν τὰς ἐκοπίασεν ἐν
Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa G3588 laboured in
G782 G5170 G2532 G5173 G1722

κυρίω ἀσπάσασθε Περσίδα τὴν ἀγαπητήν ἥτις πολλὰ
the Lord Salute Persis G3588 the beloved which much
G2962 G782 G4069 G27 G3748 G4183

ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίω
laboured in the Lord
G2872 G1722 G2962

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 16:16 (Parallel theme): That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (Love): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

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