

The Doxology

Romans 16:21-27

If you have your Bibles I'd invite you to turn with me to Romans chapter 16. Today we come to our last lesson in our verse-by-verse study of Romans, a study that began almost two years and 80 sermons ago on August 20, 2015. And although that seems like a long time and stacks of sermons, we have barely scratched the surface of the marvelous truth of God in this great epistle. I hope that this study has whet your appetite for the gospel of Jesus Christ and that you will all come back regularly to Romans in your own Bible reading and Bible study to continue to plumb the depths of this great book.

In this final section of Romans Paul closes his letter with greetings and prayer. Paul's love for and his concern for God's people comes out in the greetings. His awe of God, his sense of the greatness of God, comes out in his prayer of benediction and doxology. It is an appropriate response to the glorious plan of salvation revealed in this letter.

Please follow along in your Bibles as I read, Romans 16:21-27:

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord.

**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.**

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith--

27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

In verses 21-23 Paul and those who are with him in Corinth give their greetings to the church at Rome who would be receiving this letter. You get the feeling at the end of this letter it's almost as if a crowd is around Paul and Tertius, his secretary, as they are finishing the final words of this letter saying, "Paul, would you tell them that I send them my greetings." And as we saw two weeks ago, these greetings give us a picture of the loving community that is the church of Jesus Christ.

In verse 24, Paul prays almost the exact benediction for the church at Rome that he just wrote in verse 20, **"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."** Then, as Paul concludes his letter to the Romans, he becomes so filled up with praise to the Lord for His blessings that he bursts forth in a "*doxology*."

Some of you may not know what a doxology is. I remember growing up attending a church where we sang a doxology every week. I remember so clearly standing with the congregation to sing:

***Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

What really is a doxology? We see the origin of the word, doxology, in the word “**glory**” in verse 27 where it says, “**to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.**” The word glory is the Greek word *doxa* meaning splendor, brightness, majesty, magnificence, glory. The “ology” at the end of doxology comes from the Greek *logia*, or *logos* meaning “to speak a word.” So to say a doxology is to speak a word of glory, to praise God for His perfection, to exalt God for His excellence, to magnify God for His majesty.

Now actually in our text today we Paul gives us both a benediction and a doxology. Ligon Duncan in his sermon on this text points out difference between a benediction and a doxology. The benediction is in verse 24, “**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**” Paul normally will end his letters or somewhere close to the end of his letters with a benediction.

A benediction is a spoken blessing. A benediction is a prayer for God’s blessing on His people. A doxology, on the other hand, is when God’s people give glory to God. A benediction is God’s blessing on us. A doxology is our praise to God. The benediction to us. The doxology to God.

The Bible is full of doxologies. Many times in the Word of God, the biblical authors were so overcome with the awe and wonder of who God is and what God has done that they just had to express their love and praise for the Lord. Has that ever happened with you?

I would like for us to look at Paul’s benediction and doxology today. Alan Carr pointed out that there are three words used by Paul that form the vocabulary of praise for Paul. These three words also give us abundant reasons to praise the Lord ourselves.

I. GRACE (Rom. 16:24)

Paul’s benediction for the Roman Christians, and for us, is “**grace**”. There may be no sweeter blessing that we could receive than grace. Grace is the unmerited love and favor of God for sinners. Grace has been a major theme in Romans. This verse reminds us of what we have learned about God’s grace in the rest of the book.

A. **It Is Sovereign Grace** - Paul says that it is, “**The grace of our Lord**”. Saving grace is something that begins and ends with God. In chapters 1-3 of Romans Paul drove home the point that man does not seek God, God seeks men. In Romans 3:10-11 Paul quoted the scriptures when he wrote, “**As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one.’ ‘There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.’**” Grace means that man does not initiate

salvation, God does! Romans 11:5 says, **"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace."** Man does not provide the means of salvation, God did, **Romans 5:8**. God saw the need of man and He took the initiative. He provided a Savior to cleanse us, a Spirit to draw us and plan to save us. Grace is sovereign, it is, **"The grace of our Lord"**. Grace is what God does for us!

B. **It Is Saving Grace** - He also tells us that it is **"The grace of our Lord Jesus."** Our Lord was given the name Jesus, meaning savior, because **"He will save His people from their sins,"** (Matt. 1:21). Jesus came to this world to save sinners. He did that by dying on the cross and shedding His innocent blood to save fallen men. The innocent Son of God came to die for guilty sinners so that the guilty might be made righteous! That is grace!

Listen again to what Pau wrote in Romans 3:23-25:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness ...

It is God's saving grace that justifies us—makes us right with God. He gave that saving grace through Jesus Christ who paid with His own blood the due penalty for our sin, death. And so by His grace He has redeemed us, paid the price so that we could be set free from sin and death. God took all our sin and placed it on the cross with Jesus. Our sin was put to His account so that His righteousness could be put to our account. That's what it means to be saved, to be justified.

We receive this salvation by faith, by believing in Jesus Christ. Romans 4:16 says, **"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace."** Salvation is a gift of grace, given to those who put their faith in Jesus who died for them and was raised again for their justification (Rom. 4:25).

In Romans 5:1-2 we read, **"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."** We stand justified before God by faith because of the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is saving grace.

C. **It Is Sanctifying Grace** – Finally Romans 16:24 calls it **"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."** Jesus is **"the Christ"**. This word means **"Anointed One."** It identifies Jesus as our Prophet, our Priest and our King. It labels Him as One Who is able to meet us at the point of every need of life. He is able to help us through this world and will when we call on Him and trust Him by faith. It is His grace that not only justifies us, but also His grace that makes us holy and enables us to face life's trials.

That is what chapters 6-8 of Romans are all about. Romans 6:14 says, **"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."** Before we came to Christ we were slaves of sin, now we are servants of righteousness leading to holiness (Rom. 6:18, 22). Now, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God we are being transformed into the image of Christ to be His holy

people who love Him and serve Him. Because of this sanctifying grace nothing can ever “**separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,**” (Rom. 8:39),

O the blessing of grace! Sovereign, saving, sanctifying grace—amazing grace!

Thank God for grace! No wonder Paul praised the name of the Lord!

II. GOSPEL (Rom. 16:25-26)

Secondly we see Paul praising God for the gospel. Verse 25 says, “**Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel.**” This word means: “**good news,**” *specifically, the glad tidings of salvation through Christ.* What is it about this good news that Paul wants to sing about?

First,

A. The Ministry Of The Gospel – In verse 25 Paul tell us that the ministry of the gospel is “**to establish**” you. This word means, “*to make stable, place firmly, set fast, to strengthen, or make firm.*” When you believe the Gospel and God saves you by grace, God establishes you. He gives you a firm footing upon which to stand. Apart from the gospel of Christ no one can stand, instead we all fall. Remember Romans 3:23?, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Only the righteous will be able to stand in the judgment. But Romans 3:10 says, “**There is none righteous, no, not one.**” That’s the bad news.

But this is why the gospel is good news: When you were not able to stand, God is able to make you stand. He has the power to establish you, to make you to stand in the judgment because you do not stand on the sinking sand of your own works, but on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:16 says, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**” The gospel is the power of God to save.

Those who put their trust in Him are no longer in danger of Hell. We are no longer in fear of falling. The Gospel gives us a living hope and eternal security as we face life and the judgment to come. The ministry of the gospel is to establish you. That is good news! No wonder Paul got excited!

B. The Message Of The Gospel - Paul says that the Gospel message is the “**preaching of Jesus Christ.**” Regardless of what men may say, the Gospel message is a message about Jesus, Who He is, and what He did for sinners. The message of the Gospel is one of Christ's death on the cross for sinners and of His victorious resurrection from the dead. The Gospel is a message of God's love for all sinners. It is a message of hope, of peace and of power.

Why is it so necessary to preach Jesus? Because Romans 10:17 says, “**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**” Because Jesus Christ is the only name that can save the sin sick soul, Acts 4:12 says, “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” The message of the gospel is the preaching of Jesus Christ.

C. **The Mystery Of The Gospel** – The end of verse 25 and verse 26 says, **“according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith.”**

By the mystery of the gospel I mean this: When Jesus Christ came and brought the saving gospel, something that had never been seen was seen, something that had never been known became fully known. Ever since man sinned in the Garden of Eden, people had been fighting and losing the battle with sin. Because of this they have been fighting with themselves and with one another through mankind's history. How this enmity would ever be taken care of was a mystery hidden from the minds of men.

However, all along, God gave man glimpses into what He was planning. The first such glimpse was in Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. There was the promise in Genesis 12 that God would bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham's seed. There was the picture of Abraham offering Isaac on Mount Moriah and God providing a substitute in Genesis 22. There was God delivering the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt because they had been spared by the blood of the lamb in Exodus 12. There was the ancient Jewish sacrificial system that required an innocent offering for the sin of the guilty. The prophetic scriptures made it known that God Himself would provide salvation for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Finally, the mystery was revealed when the Lord Jesus went to the cross and died for sinners. Now, the entire plan of God has been revealed. Now, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, (Rom. 10:13). Jews may be saved by believing in Jesus. Gentiles may be saved by believing in Jesus.

In Ephesians 3:6 Paul explains this mystery, **“that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”** In Colossians 1:26, it's the same thing: **“the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.”** And what is the mystery? Colossians 1:27, **“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”** The wonderful unveiled secret is that Jew and Gentile possess the Savior and are one in Him. That is it. That is the sacred secret, the union of all believers in the body of Christ. This is the mystery which was revealed, **“according to the commandment of the everlasting God,”** that the saving gospel should be **“made known to all nations” “for the obedience of faith.”**

Romans 1:16 again, the **“gospel of Christ ... is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”** That is what Romans 9-11 were all about, how God's plan is to save both Jews and Gentiles who believe. That is what Romans 12-15 were all about, living in one body in the church, loving and accepting one another, ministering to one another.

What a glorious gospel. In Jesus Christ are the answers to every human problem.

Friend, what have you done with the Gospel? Have you received it? Have you believed it? Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior?

III. GLORY (Rom. 16:27)

Finally, the third word in Paul's vocabulary of praise is the word "**glory**". What is it about God that is worthy of glory?

A. The Glory Of God's Wisdom - Paul says that He is the "**only wise God**."

This is a reference to the fact that only an infinitely wise mind like that of our Lord could have designed such a flawless plan of redemption. Had salvation been left up to man, we would have created a system that would have had us bogged down in a morass of rules and regulations for all of eternity. After all, look at what a mess man has made of things with his religions!

God, in His wisdom, devised a plan of salvation that is absolutely perfect! Only He would have sent His own Son to die. Only He would have conceived of giving the innocent for the guilty. Only He would have designed a plan that would work for anyone, anywhere, who would simply call on Him by faith. Only God, in His perfect wisdom, could have dreamed up a plan as simple as this, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**." For that, He is worthy of glory and praise!

B. The Glory Of God's Work - That last phrase "**through Jesus Christ forever**", places things in their proper perspective. We are reminded that all God has done for us, He did through the agency of His Son.

And this reminds us that for us to glorify God, we must do so through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other Way to approach Him. There is no other Way to serve Him. There is no other Way to know Him. Jesus, alone, is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The very fact that God would provide all this for us through the Lord Jesus Christ proves beyond all doubt that He is worthy of all the praise and glory we can render to Him. If you are saved, you have ample reason to praise the Lord today!

As I close this message, a few questions come to my mind. First, are you really saved? Can you look back at a moment in time when you trusted Jesus and Him alone for your soul's salvation? Second, have you learned and placed into use the vocabulary of praise? Are you actively thanking God for **His Grace**, **His Gospel** and **His Glory**?

If the Lord has dealt with your heart today in any area whatsoever, please allow Him to do His wonderful work in your life. Bow before Him and surrender your all to Him today. Give God glory!