

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

The Unveiling of God's Secret

Scripture: Romans 16:25-27

Code: 45-121

Let's open our Bibles now to Romans chapter 16. We're going to be looking at verses 25 through 27, the final portion of this great epistle. I want to read these verses to you beginning at verse 25. "Now to Him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now is made manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, to God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

The book of Romans ends with what we could classically call a benediction, or even more significantly a doxology. Many of us, I know I did myself, grew up singing the doxology. Do you remember it? "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." That is a doxology. It really means a praise saying. The word dox means praise or glory or honor and "ology" from logos, a saying. It is a praise saying. And Paul uses a praise saying or a doxology to bring this great epistle to a conclusion.

Now the Word of God is filled with many doxologies. There are many times when the writers of Scripture just stop in the midst of all that they are contemplating and lift their hearts to God in praise. Let me give you a rather good illustration of that. Go back to the book of Psalms. And as you know, the book of Psalms basically was the hymn book for the Hebrews. One hundred and fifty separate psalms which they recited and read and studied and even sung and it is divided into five books, there are 150 Psalms but there are five separate books of the Psalms. They speak about the attributes of God. They speak about the work of God. They speak about the power of God, the wisdom of God. And at the conclusion of each book there is a doxology.

Book one ends at Psalm 41, and you can turn to that. And you will probably notice in your marginal notes that with Psalm 42 begins Book Two of the Psalms. But I want you to notice how Book One ends. Verse 13, here is a doxology, a praise saying for all that has been said about God in these first 41 Psalms. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting amen and amen," so ends Book One.

Now you go to the end of Book Two which is in Psalm 72 and to the end of that Psalm verses 18 and 19. And after all that has been said about God in the book just passed, this Psalm comes to this

conclusion, verse 18, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name forever and let the whole earth be filled with His glory amen and amen." And then a note about the prayers of David, the son of Jesse being ended.

The third book begins in Psalm 73 and runs through Psalm 89. So we look to the end of Psalm 89 for the next doxology. It comes in verse 52..."Blessed be the Lord forever more, amen and amen."

Book Four ends with Psalm 106. At the end then of Psalm 106 verse 48 it says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting and let all the people say Amen, praise Ye the Lord."

That begins Book Five and Book Five ends at Psalm 150, the very end of the Psalms. And the whole Psalm is a doxology...the whole of Psalm 150. "Praise ye the Lord...Praise God in His sanctuary...Praise Him in the firmament of His power...Praise Him for His mighty acts...Praise Him according to His excellent greatness...Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet...Praise Him with the psaltery and Harp...Praise Him with the tymbal and dance...Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes...Praise Him upon the loud cymbals...Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals...Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord...Praise ye the Lord."

So doxologies are a very important part of the life of the people of God. When you come to the New Testament you find that at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ the angels appeared on the scene and what came from their lips was nothing other than a doxology. Luke 2:13 says, "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God...and here's what they said...Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will." A praise saying.

In Luke 19 as the Lord Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem as the Messiah it says that all the people said in verse 38, "Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Another doxology, a praise saying.

The disciples prayer by which our Lord taught us to pray in Matthew's gospel chapter 6 and verse 13 ends this way, "For Thine is the...what?...Kingdom and the power and the glory forever amen." Another doxology, another song of praise.

And as you come into the epistles of the New Testament...for example in Ephesians 3 verse 20, "Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." Another doxology.

In Hebrews, that marvelous epistle ends, chapter 13 verse 20, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep to the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well

pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

And even in Romans before you come to chapter 16 there is a marvelous doxology in chapter 11. And it begins in verse 33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Do you see the commonality in all of these praise sayings?

And when you get in to the book of Revelation chapter 5 verse 13, chapter 19 verses 1 and 2, the same kind of doxology, the same praise sayings offered to God.

And so as we come to the last section of the sixteenth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, we here are in familiar ground for here we come to another one of these praise sayings. Paul takes his pen back from Tertius, his secretary, who wrote himself in verse 22 greeting, and he wants himself to add a final word. And he gives this marvelous doxology.

Now I want to suggest to you that as we look at this tonight ever so briefly, this doxology captures the three major themes of the entire Roman epistle. Now you'll remember if you've studied with us that Romans can be broken basically into three parts. Chapters 1 to 3 roughly deal with the problem of man's sin. Chapter 3 at the end of the chapter through chapter 8 deal with the matter of salvation. And then beginning in chapter 9 all the way to the end of chapter 16 you have matters related to Christian life and ministry and relationships. And those are the three themes that we note in this doxology, as I shall express them to you.

Also, you need to note and you can do this for your own study that there is a marvelous parallel between the closing doxology and the opening eleven verses of Romans. In fact, they deal with very much the same material. The parallels are very apparent. You'll notice the word "establish" in verse 25, in chapter 1 verse 11 Paul speaks about strengthening. You will notice that here he talks about "my gospel," in verse 25. In chapter 1 and verse 1 it is the gospel of God. Here he talks about the mystery that is hidden in verse 25. In chapter 1 it is the gospel promised before hand in verse 2. Here he speaks of the Scriptures of the prophets in verse 26. In chapter 1 verse 2 it was the sacred Scriptures. Here he speaks of preaching Jesus Christ in verse 25. There it was concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, chapter 1 verse 3. Here he speaks of the obedience of faith and also of the obedience of faith in chapter 1 verse 5. Here he speaks of all nations in verse 26 and in chapter 1 verse 5 also speaks of all nations coming to the gospel. So it is an... almost a wrap up, it's almost a bracketing of the same truth with which he introduced this great epistle. It is introduced and concluded then with elements that summarize all that is in between.

Now in this doxology there are three main truths for which Paul praises God. First, it is a gospel to establish to men. Secondly, it is a gospel concerning Jesus Christ. And thirdly, it is a gospel revealing mystery. Those are the three key points. And I want you to look at them with me.

First of all, Paul praises God for the gospel which establishes men. Notice verse 25, "Now to Him...and that is to God as it points out in verse 27 when it picks back up that introductory phrase...to Him...that is to God...who is able to establish you according to my gospel." It is a gospel that is able to establish men. And so he offers his praise to God for the fact that the saving gospel of Jesus Christ establishes men.

Now what does he mean by that? Well you'll see in your Bible perhaps the words "now to Him that is of power to establish you," the word is the simple verb "to be able." God is able to establish. That is to say God is powerful enough, God is wise enough, God is mighty enough to establish men. The word "establish" simply means to set steadfastly in an immovable position. It means to settle somebody. It means to confirm somebody, to root somebody, to plant their feet. The word sterizo basically carries the idea of being mentally settled. You know how it is before you know God. You know how it is before you've become a Christian. You know how it is before you've turned your life over to Jesus Christ and began to understand the Word of the living God, you're unsettled. That's the case of the whole fallen world. There is an unsettled attitude in the world today. And I don't mean that in the sense of turmoil on the outside, I mean that in the sense of the struggle for truth on the inside. Men and women are not mentally settled.

But the gospel is able to settle the mind, to settle the mind on what is the truth, to settle the mind on a course of action in life, to settle the mind on a right path, on a true path. How wonderful. The saving gospel is able to make us firm. It settles us. It establishes us. It grounds us solidly in the mind as to what we believe and how we behave. And once you've come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and once you've come to commit yourself to His saving gospel, then you know the truth and the truth sets the path for your life. No one in the world is more settled than a Christian. We know what we believe and we thank God for that. Paul put it this way, "I know in whom I have...what?...believed." And not only that, but we know what we believe, we believe the Word of the living God and we are settled and it is the gospel that has allowed us to come to a settled conviction about truth and behavior, about duty, about life, every dimension included.

And Paul calls it "my gospel." He's not being particularly possessive. What he means to say is it's the gospel that I preach, it's the gospel that was given to me. And I think he felt it was a little bit uniquely his because it had been given to him by direct revelation from God. He didn't learn the gospel like we do, from hearing someone preach. He didn't learn the gospel by reading about it. He learned the gospel because Jesus Himself gave it to him. He says in the writing of the letter to the Galatians that no man gave me this. I was not taught this even by the erudite leaders of the church, but the Lord Himself gave me this gospel. And so it was a gospel unique. Galatians 1 verse 11

celebrates that thought. Galatians 2 verses 2 and 3 also. And so Paul says the gospel given to me is that gospel of Jesus Christ which is able to establish men. The good news that Paul preached was that God has the power and God has the wisdom to take a vacillating, fallen, drifting, shiftless, misunderstanding, chaotic mind and settle it once and for all on the truth so that it can stand erect and say, "I know what I believe, I know in whom I have believed, I know what God asks of me and I understand His promises." Without the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, man has fallen, man is unsure, man is insecure, he is unsettled, he is crushed under the weight of sin. He is ignorant of truth and he is thereby unable to do his duty before God.

And frankly, in that fallen and unstable situation he has no defense against Satan. And really in that situation he has no defense against God either. The man without God is not established. The man without the gospel has no footing. He does not know what he believes. He may be ever learning but Paul says he is never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, 2 Timothy 3. He grabs at every moment to get out of it and to squeeze out of it all the joy and meaning and fulfillment and satisfaction he can find. But it isn't there. It's reminiscent of Arthur Miller's "After the Fall," in which he makes the statement that man and wife were sitting at the breakfast table and the man looked at his wife and said to her, "Frankly, dear, life has deteriorated to how many miles we get on our Volkswagen." It is reminiscent of Mrs. Melee(?) who said, "Life must go on, I forget why." The purposelessness and meaninglessness of life, meaning is sucked out of life and the chaos of misunderstanding, fallen man doesn't know what to believe and he doesn't know where to stand. And so he tries maybe to drown that in activity or in his work or in sex or drugs or booze or materialism or whatever. And it is the fallenness of man to which this alludes. God is able to take that fallen man, lift him up and set him on his feet. Now isn't that what Romans 1 to 3 basically is about? The fallenness of man? That's its theme.

Let's go back there for just a brief moment and we'll find that this doxology briefly will review the whole epistle. Remember how Paul described the fallenness of man? How he described man before he was stood firm by God? First of all, in chapter 1 he says he's under the wrath of God, verses 8...18 to 20. In verse 21 he says man rejected his knowledge of God and fell in to idolatry. When they knew God they glorified him not as God, they weren't thankful. They had these empty imaginations. Their foolish heart was darkened. They thought they were wise...they thought they were wise, they really were fools and they started creating idols for their own. In other words, man must worship somewhere, if he doesn't know to worship the true God he'll make a God that he can worship.

Secondly, accompanying his idolatry is inevitable sensuality. Verse 24 and following says that once God is ignored, the true God, then God gives them up and the result is uncleanness, the lust of the heart. They dishonor their bodies between themselves. They exchange the truth of God for a lie. And verse 26, they fall in to vile affections, even women exchange the natural use for that which is against nature...likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the woman burned in their lust one

toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, that is homosexuality which is a gross sin in the Word of God. In other words, this is the pattern of fallenness, when they do not know God and they therefore do not know truth and they don't know where to stand or how to stand in their fallenness, they make idols of their own and those idols which cannot save them are always accompanied by sensuality. Sensuality then leads to a total disregard for the commandments of God. And beginning in verse 29 it says mankind falls into unrighteousness, fornication, sexual sin, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit and so forth and so on.

And so, here is the predicament of man before he is established in the truth. No wonder in the doxology then Paul praises God that He has the ability to establish us. What a condition to be in...a degenerate tragic condition. And, of course, in that condition chapter 1 verses 18 to 20 say God's moral law takes over and man is under sentence to judgment. And so Paul chronologs the sickening catalog of sins that cause a man to fall under the judgment of God.

But Paul doesn't want to leave man in that predicament and neither does God. So he goes on a search really to find a power that can establish man, lift him up from his fallenness and set his feet down. And what power is that? Well we look in to chapter 2, is it special favor for certain people? Verse 11 says no, there's no respect of persons with God. It isn't some special favor for certain people. Well is it a special forgiveness by God because of ignorance? No. Verse 12 says, "As many as have sinned without the law will perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law." So ignorance isn't going to be the issue. It's not going to be that God's going to say, "Well, that's all right, you were ignorant, so I'll forgive you." What power is it then if it isn't some special favor to some special group, if it isn't special forgiveness because of ignorance? Maybe it's some...maybe it's some religious ritual you go through...you do some religious stuff? No, look at verses 28 and 29, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter whose praise is not of men but of God." And what he's saying is true child of God, a truly righteous person is not one who does external religious things, but whose heart is changed.

So when we're looking for deliverance from the fallenness of man, we don't find it in special favor given to special people. We don't find it in special forgiveness given to those that are ignorant. We don't find it in some religious rites that people perform. Well what about really super good works? Isn't salvation for people who do good works? I mean, don't you establish yourself and stand firm before God by your good works? Well that gets in to chapter 3. And we find in verse 10 there is none righteous, no not one. And we find in verse 20 by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified. Nobody is going to be right with God by what they do in terms of their self-righteousness. Well what is that power? What is that power? What is it?

Verse 22 says it is the righteousness of God that comes by faith in Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of Christ that is able to establish us. And that's why way back in chapter 1 verse 16 Paul says, "I'm not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the...what?...power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first and also the Gentile." It's the gospel alone, it's the good news from God through Christ that there is power for a transformed life. And is it any wonder then that Paul says, "Now unto Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, because nothing else could do it,"? Nothing else. The gospel alone establishes us.

Jude had that in mind in his doxology. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Did you hear it? He is able to keep you from falling and present you...what?...faultless. Yes, no wonder he praises God for the gospel that establishes a fallen man, that picks him up and sets him on his feet.

Secondly, it is not only a gospel that establishes men, it is a gospel concerning Jesus Christ. Look back at verse 25 of Romans 16 and you will note there that he says, "Now unto Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ." Proclamation of Jesus Christ, the public preaching of Jesus Christ. Is that a major theme in Romans? Starting in chapter 3 verse 20 and running all the way through the end of chapter 8 where he really delineates the gospel, the theme is ever and always Jesus Christ.

Paul, that was his life commitment. First Corinthians 1:23 he says, "We preach Christ crucified." That was his message. In 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 5, "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord." And he said, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ in Him crucified," 1 Corinthians 2.

So, Paul's great theme was Jesus Christ. In Romans 10:17 he said, "Faith comes by hearing a message about Jesus Christ." So he praises God not only that the gospel lifts up fallen man and establishes him, and that takes care of the first part of Romans by way of a brief review. But then he praises God for the preaching of Jesus Christ because that's the heart of the epistle from chapter 3 verse 21 all the way to the end of chapter 8. And throughout all of that he delineates every single feature of Christian living that comes as a result of the wonderful work of Jesus Christ.

Go back with me for just a moment to that section starting in chapter 3 and just a couple of highlights. We don't have time for many. But it says there in verse 22 that righteousness comes by the faith of Jesus Christ. Verse 24, we are justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus came, went to the cross, died for our sin, providing the salvation for us. Then that is why he praises God because Christ is the theme of our salvation. He took our punishment. And by faith we receive the gift of salvation. And what is it that Christ gives to us? He starts to recite that in chapter 5 after chapter 4 spends the time discussing faith and what saving faith is really all about. In chapter 5 he says we have peace with God...peace with God. Then he says we stand in grace, verse 2. Then he says we rejoice in hope. Jesus Christ, the preaching of Jesus Christ brings us all of that.

It brings us peace with God, grace to stand in, hope to rejoice over.

Is that all? No, he goes in to chapter 6 and he says because of the work of Christ when we put our faith in Him, we have died to sin. What does that mean? Sin no longer can punish us. Sin no longer can judge us. Sin no longer can condemn us. Why? Because Christ took our condemnation and we died in Him and we rose in Him and we walk in newness of life.

Toward the end of chapter 6 in verse 16 and following down through verse 22 he says we are now servants of God. You were, he says, the servants of sin, verse 17, but now having obeyed from the heart the truth that was taught to you, you have been made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness.

All of these are the blessings that came to us in the preaching of Jesus Christ. He goes in to chapter 7 and he says we're free from the law. The law can no longer condemn us since it only has dominion, verse 1, over a man as long as he lives. You say, "Well, I'm alive." No, in the spiritual sense when you put your faith in Christ you...what?...you died, you died. Because you died in Him He bore your death. And so the law has no more claim over you. Its penalty has been paid.

And then starting in chapter 7 verse 14 through 24 he describes our new nature. We love the law of God. We long to do what is right. Our hearts hunger to honor God and serve Him. And these are marvelous things. Because of the preaching of Jesus Christ, let me summarize, we have peace with God, grace to stand in, hope to rejoice over, we have died to sin, we have become servants of God. We are free from the law. We have received a new nature. And that new nature is a glorious new nature. It causes us, verse 22 of Romans says...of Romans 7 says, to delight in the law of God after the inward man. The law of God is no longer a threat to us, it is no longer an intrusion, it is a delight.

Then he comes in to chapter 8 and he says another thing that comes to us through the gospel of Christ is the indwelling Holy Spirit. Verse 2 he talks about the law of the Spirit. Verse 4 he talks about walking in the Spirit. He talks about possessing the Holy Spirit in verse 9. He talks about the life the Spirit gives us in verse 11. He talks about the power of the Spirit to kill the deeds of the body in verse 13. He talks about the leading of the Spirit in verse 14. He talks about the witness of the Spirit that we're the children of God in verse 16. And then in verse 23 he talks about the guarantee of the Spirit, that some day we're going to be with the Lord. The marvelous ministry of the Spirit culminates then in verses 26 to 28 where he talks about the interceding work of the Spirit as he prays on our behalf. This because of the preaching of Christ.

And then finally he wraps up chapter 8 talking about the eternal security of the believer. Verse 1 said it, "There's no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." And starting in verse 18 he talks about our future glory. Starting in verse 28 all things work together for good, nothing will separate us from the love of Christ. We're going to glory because God will never lay any charge to His own elect.

And wraps all of those wonders that come with salvation together. And all of that flows out of the work of Christ...all of that flows out of the preaching of Christ. So it's no wonder that he says, "Now unto Him who is able to establish us, to lift us up from our fallenness and set us firmly down, and the preaching of Jesus Christ," that's the heart of this epistle. We possess a gospel that establishes fallen man and we possess a gospel that is provided by an unfallen man, the God/Man, Jesus Christ.

And finally, looking at the remainder of this doxology, it is a gospel revealing mystery. Listen carefully. It is a gospel revealing mystery. Verse 25 says, "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now is made manifest." What does he mean by that?

He means that when Jesus Christ came and brought the saving gospel, something that had never been seen was seen, something that had never been known was fully known. Oh? It had been predicted, he says that in verse 26, by the Scriptures of the prophets. The prophets had talked about it. They had written about Messiah. Ezekiel had written about the fact that some day God would come and save His people and take away their stony heart and give them a heart of flesh and He would write His law in their hearts and He would give them His Spirit and He would wash them with water. The prophets had said that a Savior would come, a Messiah, a deliverer, a King. The Scriptures of the prophets predicted it. But it was never made manifest. It was always hidden. It was always veiled. And that's why it is called mysterion, a mystery. A mystery is something that was hidden in the Old Testament and is revealed in the New. And listen carefully, the gospel was the unfolding of a mystery, a mystery kept secret since the world began and now made manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets. Yes, they spoke of it. And it was by the commandment of the everlasting God that it would now on God's schedule be made known. By the commandment of God it was made known in all its fullness.

And, beloved, you and I know because we know the gospel, because we have the epistle to the Romans, we know the mystery that all the saints of the past looked for. Peter says they searched diligently to see what manner of person and time these things they wrote spoke about. And Hebrews tells us that without us, chapter 11, those old saints were not perfected because the gospel is the full unveiling of what was a mystery in the Old Testament.

Now what is that mystery? Specifically? Look at Ephesians chapter 3 for a moment. Ephesians 3 verse 3 Paul says that the Lord made known to me the mystery...then go down to verse 4...by which when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. He refers to it again. Then he explains the character of a mystery in verse 5, which in other ages wasn't made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit. So it's very simple. To understand a mystery...any time you see that word mysterion in the New Testament, whether it's the mystery of iniquity or the mystery of lawlessness or the mystery of Christ in you, or whatever mystery it is, it means that something is revealed in the New Testament that was not fully

revealed in the Old, even though the Scripture may have prophesied it. And so he says the mystery was hidden but is now revealed.

And what is it? What is this mystery of which he speaks? Go to verse 6 of Ephesians 3, "That...and here is the main unveiling...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." With whom? With whom? With the Jews, that Jew and Gentile would be one in Jesus Christ. What a wonderful wonderful truth. We have seen that happen through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at Colossians 1:26, it's the same thing, "The mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations and now is made manifest to His saints," and what is the mystery? "To whom God would make known what is 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...one in Him. That is it. That is the sacred secret...the union of all believers in the body.

The prophets prophesied that. You can go all the way back to Genesis 12...in fact you can go back to Genesis 9 and all of the peoples of the world, in a sense, would be blessed in the tents of Shem. In Genesis 12 it was through the Abrahamic covenant which gave us the nation Israel that God says whoever blesses you will be...what?...blessed. Through the channel of Israel God's intention was to bless the whole world and embrace them in His salvation. But these truths though the prophet spoke of them and spoke of them often and spoke of them frequently, these truths were locked in a cloudy obscurity until Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the new covenant and drew to Himself Jew and Gentile as one in Him. And this is the mystery which was revealed...back to verse 26...according to the commandment of the everlasting God that the saving gospel should be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Oh, he says, I praise God, I praise God, I do my praise saying, I give my doxology, because we have a gospel that lifted us up and established us in righteousness, because we have a gospel that centers on the work of Jesus Christ, a totally transforming work. And then I praise God because we have a gospel that is a mystery revealed, that is the revelation of a hidden secret and that hidden secret is that God would want the salvation that He desired to be made known to all the nations, that they all might be obedient to the faith. How marvelous.

And isn't that the theme he begins in chapter 9? Isn't it? Let's go back to chapter 9 and the final section of Romans, isn't that what he deals with? You remember what 9, 10 and 11 are about? We were in there for months and months. Romans 9, 10 and 11 is all about the fact that Israel has no corner on salvation. Chapter 9 says that, verse 6, "For they are not all Israel who are Israel." No, they don't have exclusive right to salvation. Look at verse 24, "Even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles. Aren't they also called by the commandment of God in the unveiling of the mystery to obedience to the faith?" Starting in verse 24 and running all the way to the end of the chapter he speaks about the salvation of Gentiles. Look at verse 25, the prophet Hosea

said, "I will call them My people who were not My people, I will call her beloved who was not beloved," that is a Gentile. And Isaiah said the same thing, that the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness would attain to righteousness, the righteousness of faith.

We come all the way in to chapter 11 and he's still talking about the same theme in verse 26, "All Israel will be saved, but not just all Israel...beyond Israel," The desire of God is that all men might be saved. Verse 32, God has concluded all of them in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all. And so, the mystery of Jew and Gentile, one in Christ, salvation extended to the ends of the earth is Paul's major theme even here.

And then as he launches in to chapter 12 he talks about the relationships that those Jews and Gentiles have in the church. They're to minister their gifts, starting in verse 3 down through verse 8, they're to minister their gifts mutually to each other. Starting in verse 9 he talks about how they are to love one another and be kind to one another and care for each other.

Coming in to chapter 13 he talks about how this new body of Jew and Gentile one in Christ are to respond to the society in which they live, how they're to be submissive to that society, paying their taxes. How they are to be marked, in verses 8 to 10, by love and love is the fulfillment of the whole law. He comes in to chapter 14 and 15 and he says, "Now you also are to be sure you don't offend each other, you don't cause each other to stumble." And he goes through all of those details in chapter 14 verse 13, he says don't judge one another, don't put a stumbling block in any other person's way. Verse 15, don't grieve your brother with your food but walk in love. Down in verse 19 he says follow the things that make for peace.

So from chapter 9 on it's all about how the Jew and the Gentile kind of get along in the church, the place they both play, how they're to share with each other, serve each other, minister to each other. This is an incredible thing, how Paul has managed in that doxology to capture the essence of a review of the whole of Romans. In two brief verses, verses 25 and 26, the reader is carried back and swept through the whole Roman epistle to review quickly the gospel which brings praise to God, the gospel which causes the doxology. It is a gospel that establishes men in righteousness who formerly were fallen in sin. It is a gospel concerning Jesus Christ who has provided for us all the necessary elements of Christian living, and it is a gospel that is a mystery revealed, that Jew and Gentile are one in a great fellowship of love which fellowship is regulated by the principles given in chapter 9 and following. What a glorious gospel. What a glorious gospel.

Is it any wonder then that Paul cries out in final conclusion, "To God only wise." Why does he say that? Why doesn't he say only powerful, or only loving, or only gracious? I'll tell you why, because only an infinite mind could ever have designed such a plan. God only wise...there is no one who would be wise enough to ever accomplish such a saving work. And in Ephesians 3 Paul says that the whole point of God saving men and the whole point of what he calls the fellowship of the mystery, that

is Jew and Gentile loving one another in the church of Christ, the whole point is so that the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies might know the manifold wisdom of God. And Paul says, "O God, only wise, to have done this, to You be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." Which means, "so let it be." God then is the object of the doxology. God is commonly the object of a commonly, though Christ could as well be the object, God is here. And God also is the object of the doxology in Romans 11:36. God is the object of the doxology in Galatians 1:5, "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." God is the object of the doxology in Ephesians 3:21, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus," but God is the object, "throughout all ages, world without end."

In Philippians chapter 4 and verse 20 God is the object again of the doxology, "Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." God is the object of the doxology in 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now to the King eternal immortal invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." And there again God is seen as wise because he's just described His saving work and only great infinite supernatural wisdom could have prepared such a work. In 1 Peter 5:11 God again is the object, "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Now, you know, I just have read you tonight off and end, beginning and end, a whole lot of doxologies. That's not all there are. But it strikes me in my mind that rarely do we launch in to those kinds of things which seem so rather common place to the biblical environment. Would to God that doxologies were on our lips more often. And so he gives praise to God for the glorious saving gospel.

What does this say to us? What does this say to you and me? Well let's talk about an unbeliever. Let's say you're here tonight, you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, what does this say to you? Well it says to you this, you have never been established, you have never been lifted up from your sin. You are in a situation of alienation from God, of fallenness. You are in a situation of heading for the judgment of God. And what it says to you is turn your eyes to Jesus Christ and look at the work that He did for you and believe in that work that you might be established and that you might receive all the things that come to you because of your faith in Jesus Christ and enter in to this fellowship of love of all those who embrace the Savior.

But what does this say to a believer? Most of us tonight love the Lord, what does it say to us? It says our hearts ought to be filled with...what?...with praise, first of all. It ought to be that it spontaneously rises from our lips that we praise God. It ought to be that as we would come to any thought about the gospel we would launch into the same kind of praise and doxology that Paul does.

Furthermore, it causes me to remember that Christ didn't do this wonderful work so that I could continue to live in sin, right? So the very reminder of this work calls me to a renewed commitment to holiness. I wasn't given the fullness of salvation by the perfect work of Jesus Christ so that I could give back God a disobedient life, was I? The Lord didn't do all of that for me so I could serve Him with a half of a heart. And furthermore, it reminds me that He saved us to put us in to a great

fellowship and that I want to give all to that fellowship that is in me to give, don't you? I'm a part of the unveiling of the mystery hidden from ages past and now revealed. O my dear friends, should we not praise God that we are a part of what He has done? Let's share together in a closing prayer.

Thank You, our Lord, for what a wonderful day we've had, for the blessing that You've given to us, for the great year that we have remembered tonight, for the many ones who have come to Christ whose lives have passed from darkness to light, from death to life. Thank You for the blessed gospel which all of us who believe have received, a gospel that establishes us, a gospel that gives to us all the work of Christ, a gospel that makes us a part of the wonderful unfolding of something hidden from the foundation of the world. How rich we are and how thankful. And even now, Lord, work in every heart and draw to the prayer room those that Your Spirit would desire to come that we might help in any way we can. And may no one walk away tonight without putting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we love and serve and in whose name we pray...and everyone said... Amen. God bless you.

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