

**Romans 16:25-27** 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. (NKJV)

As I begin preparing this sermon I can't help but thinking where we were when this study began and where we are now. No one would have ever predicted the path we have taken to get to this point. Nor would any of us have chosen it willingly. Step by step we have had opportunity to learn and apply the truths of Romans. And God has been gracious to us.

Before we began studying Romans I asked Mike if I could play a part in learning and teaching the text. He thought about what I was suggesting and then agreed to it. My reasoning was partly selfish. I wanted to understand Romans and I knew that I would understand it better if I had to go through the discipline of studying it. I also knew that Mike would help me reign in my off-roads and keep me to the meaning of the passage. So that is how this study began for me.

Looking back I can see the providence in all that happened then. I had years of preparation for what was to come. And graciously Mike was alive through chapter 7. I am not sure I could have done it justice. I am so thankful for the work that he put into discerning the truth of that passage. That was no small blessing for us. Today will be our last sermon in our Romans study. I hope it will be one for which Mike could have nodded his head and taken notes.

**Romans 16:25-27** 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. (NKJV)

What we have in this passage is a doxology. The dictionary defines *doxology* as “an expression of praise to God, especially a short hymn sung as part of a Christian worship service.” The word *doxology* comes from the Greek *doxa*, (“glory, splendor, grandeur”) and *logos*, (“word” or “speaking”). Most doxologies are short hymns of praise to God in various Christian worship services, often added to the end of psalms, and hymns.

Romans is a book where Paul lays out the Gospel forcefully and logically. He is

absorbed with presenting it accurately. You might expect **that** to make it a dry presentation. But look what happens to Paul as he does his masterful work. In Chapter 11 Paul is summing up the sovereignty of God in God's election process. And suddenly he breaks into this doxology:

**Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 34 "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" 36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (NKJV)**

We see here what happens to a person who truly believes God's word. He cannot keep it merely a mental exercise. He cannot keep his emotions from being stirred by the wonder of God's grace and his magnificence. His heart is being stirred by what his mind discovers.

That is not an abnormal thing. In fact, this is something very normal in the life of a believer. When we get a glimpse of God, it changes us. It affects every part of us. And we cannot help for it to gain a voice. We may not be as eloquent as Paul, but praise **has to** well up in us from time to time when we behold **who He is** and **what He has done** for us.

If theology is boring to us, it is because we have not considered its implications. We don't grasp the theology of our lostness.

We don't grasp the theology of Christ's redemptive work.

We don't grasp the depth of the love of Christ for us.

And our faith has not laid claim in the blessings that have been granted to us in Christ. That is Paul's topic when he breaks into the doxology we just read.

Does your soul break into the praise of God? We will all express it differently.

That is good. But do you find a profound desire at times **in your walk with Christ** where you **cannot help** but praise Him? That is what happens when a Christian sees Christ clearly. We cannot help but praise Him.

Let's take a look at some other doxologies in scripture. Let's look into the hearts of the writers of scripture.

Let's start with the Psalms. The psalms are made up of 5 books. Each book ends with a doxology.

Quoting John MacArthur,

Book one ends with, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" ([41:13](#)). Except for the closing ascription to David ([v. 20](#)), book two ends with, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen" ([72:18-19](#)). Book three ends with, "Blessed be the Lord forever! Amen and Amen" ([89:52](#)). Book four

ends with, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, 'Amen.' Praise the Lord!" ([106:48](#)). Book five ends with [Psalm 150](#), every verse of which is a grand doxology.

At the birth of Jesus we see this scene:

**Luke 2:13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: **14** "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (NKJV)

In Luke 19:37, 38 we see this: **Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying: "'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"** (NKJV)

In Matthew 6:13 we might not view this as a doxology, but it is. It is in the prayer that the Lord taught to the disciples. **And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.** (NKJV)

In Ephesians 3:20 we see this: **Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.** (NKJV)

In Hebrews 13:20-21 we see this: **Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.** (NKJV)

And then we get a vision of heaven in Revelations and this is what we hear.

**Revelation 5:8-13** Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **9** And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood

**Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."**

**11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (NKJV)**

**Then we see in Revelation 19:1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! (NKJV)**

At the end of the day, humility and praise come from the same source. They both come from accuracy of perception. When we look at ourselves and see ourselves for what we truly are, we cannot help but be humble. Some people think that humility comes from just focusing on our negative attributes. So they feel they must think thoughts about themselves that are very lowly in order to attain humility. But that is not the picture that scripture paints. True humility is just seeing ourselves as we truly are before God. When you see yourself from God's perspective, in naked honesty, humility is the result. There is nothing fake about it. There is nothing trumped up about it. Humility is the result of an accurate perspective.

The same is true about praise. Praise is not about ascribing positive things to God artificially. It is not some emotion to be worked up. Look at Paul's example. He is working on theology, not a new praise cd. And as he gazes at the raw naked truth about God, he breaks into praise. He has to. That is the affect that an accurate perspective on God produces. That is the beauty of it.

When we are in love we might write poetry about our girl or guy and those glowing words would would make it appear like we are speaking of the most wonderful of God's creations. Then a few years later when we are seeking counsel for how to possibly live with this person, we find that our initial perspective was a bit skewed. Well true worship is not that **idealistic poetry** about God. True worship is perfectly factual and accurate. That is the wonder of God. He is really **that great**. He is **that perfect**. He is **that good**, and **Holy**, and **pure**, and **powerful**, and **knowledgeable**, and **wise**, and **jealous**, and on and on. When we see Him for what He is, we cannot help but praise Him.

Do we have this kind of awe about God? If not, it is not hard to figure out why we don't. When is the last time you have really thought about your beloved Savior? Do we fill our minds with the truths of Him? It isn't complicated. We simply need to see. We simply need to focus. Praise must be the result if we see Him in His beauty at all.

And that perspective will help us when we face temptation. Because what is the allure of sin in the face of the wonder of our Savior? We must take our eyes off Christ in order to choose something so inferior, something so ugly, something so belittling, something so evil.

Now back to our text.

**Romans 16:25-27** 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. (NKJV)

**Now to Him who is able to establish you**

Make no mistake. God has the power to accomplish this thing. God is able. We need to allow that idea to permeate our thinking. We, of our own resources, are not able to do this thing. But we don't have to be able. Because God is able. To establish- to make firm and stable, to make fast. This is the process of God changing our minds, renewing our minds, until we are solid in the truth of the Gospel. We see everything from a completely different perspective than the world around us.

We become certain of who we were before Christ pursued us. We become certain of what God's intentions are for us. We become convinced of our only means for salvation. We become fixated on the future hope of what God will certainly do when we die. We become solid so that we are no longer wavering back and forth like the double minded man in James. We are established.

**according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,**

Paul is clearly not trying to imply that he has a gospel **that is different** than the gospel preached by others. When he refers to "my gospel" he is likely showing his identification with the message he believes and preaches. It is not some foreign message. It is the message he preaches everywhere he goes.

And that gospel is clearly focused on the preaching of Jesus Christ. It is only **that message** that is ever used to establish someone. And it is the message **God uses**.

The enemy will always try to attack that message. He will distort it. He will deny it. He will add to it. But he knows that he cannot leave it alone. It is dangerous to his purposes. The gospel message is the only way that humans can be established in the kingdom of God.

**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,**

This word for mystery isn't used the way that we would ordinarily use it. It is something that was previously unknown or not clearly understood and now has been clearly revealed.

The word mystery is used in the New Testament several times. And it refers to various mysteries. The mystery of lawlessness, of godliness, of the rapture, of the kingdom of God, of Christ's will, of Christ, of Christ and the church, of the gospel, of Christ in believers, of faith.

Probably the way that the word mystery is **used the most** is the mystery of how God was going to win both Jews and gentiles to Himself.

This mystery was contained in the prophetic scriptures. Some things were revealed in a way that the Jews should have understood. But no one could have completely understood what was to come. When Christ came, he made clear what all those scriptures meant. So those Old Testament prophecies are now able to be used to clarify the gospel message. They verify the truth that this plan is the plan that God had from the beginning. It is completely consistent with everything that God has ever done.

**according to the commandment of the everlasting God,**

What commandment is that?

I think it is likely this command-

**Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen. (NKJV)**

We are a very blessed people. We have had the opportunity to understand the Gospel from the very skilled hand of Paul. We have delved into its depths. We have no excuse for not understanding this book.

Now the question comes down to, what will we do about it? What will we do with the wonderful gift we have been given? It is likely that we all have opportunities to obey this command. We all have encounters with people. Some of us have

more than others. And what do we do with them? Are we trying to share this encounter with Jesus Christ that we had with others? Do we see that this gift was not given to us **just for us**? We have a great gift that **everyone** needs. What will we do about it? It is nice that we at Ferndale have a good understanding of the Gospel. That is good. But if we do not allow it to permeate our lives, if we don't allow it to change how we live and how we treat others, we might as well not understand it. In scripture, truth always compels action. Knowledge is never for its own sake. It isn't for storing up. It is **for using**. We know a lot. Scripture says to whom much is given, much will be required. We have been given much. We have so much to give.

If we understand the gospel and how it saved us, there is no reason for us to be bashful about it.

And then look at what it is for. In the Matthew text it says we are to disciple others to obey like we obey. We are to go alongside others and teach them how to live the Christian life, how to think properly. We are to be used in God's process of establishing people.

In our Romans text Paul uses this phrase:

**for obedience to the faith--**

I would like it better if it just said for understanding of the faith, or for an experience of the faith. But it doesn't. It says for obedience.

I don't know about you, but I find living with me a bit tricky. I am very good at lying to myself, at kidding myself, at minimizing my failures, about regarding **my intentions** as being far more important than **my performance**. I am good about coming up with excuses for why I can't obey in such and such a situation.

So I would prefer some kind of **Christianity that can exist without power to change**. That would leave my excuses stand. I could then say, I cannot obey Lord. And really, it is unreasonable to expect me to obey when I have such strong compulsions, such strong desires, such strong temptations, such great weaknesses. If we had such a Christianity, obedience would not be compulsory. It would be an option. And it would fit in much better with **what we expect of ourselves**. But that is not how scripture views obedience. In fact Jesus used it as a litmus test. He is not at all shy about how all this works. He says

**John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. (NKJV)**

This isn't tricky. It is straight forward. Believers obey. Not perfectly but persistently.

Look at what Romans has already told us about this topic.

**Romans 2:5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (NKJV)**

Notice the doing in these verses. **Doing good** cannot be disconnected from **believing well**. There are those that obey and there are those who do not. Those who obey are God's people with the God given grace to live obedient lives and those who do not are not God's children. Then there is more in Romans.

**Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

**Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (NKJV)**

Here we are told how to live in this flesh. We are told how to win the internal battle against our fleshly desires. We are called **slaves of obedience leading to righteousness**.

It is so easy to impress people with our knowledge. It is so easy to get people to believe that we live well because we speak well. But what does the life video reveal? What are our secrets that if revealed would show that our speech is just a good front. What would people think if they saw the tape? That is what God sees. And that is where the battle lays. What do we say when we are frustrated with a spouse or a child? What do we do when we simply want what we want and we are not getting it? What do we do when our security is threatened? What do we do with our flesh's strong desires? Where do you fail? That is the point where the Gospel most needs applied. That is the point that our attention needs focused on.



What would those closest to us say our sin is? Or what sin do we practice that no one knows about. That is where the power of the gospel must be displayed. We can rest assured that our sin, whatever it is, is destructive. The devil is the destroyer and he loves nothing more than to see a believer in sinful habits or sinful responses. Sin destroys our peace with God. It destroys our fellowship with each other. It always multiplies itself. And the sin and its guilt always detracts from the advancements we should be making in the Christian life.

What are your “yes, buts.” Our- yes I know this is what God wants , BUT and then we give our long list of excuses. We need to just stop at the Yes and leave the but out of the sentence. Yes Lord is the attitude we need to have. Yes Lord at any price. Yes Lord to every inclination or temptation. Until we exercise that, we are **showing an ignorance of the Gospel**. We know the information but we really don’t believe it. Because when we really get the gospel, when we really believe it, it changes our lives and moves us to obedience.

That should be the fruit of this lengthy study we have done. If we leave this book the same as we started it, it would be criminal.

Paul has revealed a powerful gospel, an amazing story of Grace toward those who could never deserve or earn God’s favor. It was given to us at a tremendous price. And we are told how to understand it and how to apply it. We are left with a wonderful hope and a reason for peace. And at the same time we are left knowing that the Gospel has the power to change everyone who is drawn to it. We would do well to compare our lives to what Paul has said about the power and effects of the Gospel, and get to work wherever our lives need work.

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

This last verse closes our book. And it ends like it started. The gospel is all about God. And we see His wisdom in every page. Man would have never figured it. They would have never suggested it. And they could have never done it anyway. But the Gospel shows the wisdom of God. I have got to mention here that every time we have a “Yes, but” with God, our but is an attempt to prove ourselves wiser than God. But we know without even considering it just how foolish that is. God alone is wise. So we are very wise to accept that and adjust accordingly.

And here we have it. God has chosen the Gospel in order to be glorified through Jesus Christ forever and ever. AMEN