

Doxology of Praise for the Gospel of God

February 24, 2013

Romans 16:25-27

Dr. David Harrell

Will you join me by taking your bibles and turning to Romans 16. I have entitled my discourse to you this morning "Doxology of Praise for the Gospel of God." We will be looking at verses 25 through 27. Before I read this text to you I might add that we began our verse by verse study of Paul's epistle to the Romans on October 31, 2010. Now 28 months and 85 expositions later we come to the study of the final 3 verses. I must also confess that we've just barely scratched the surface of this preeminent, doctrinal work of the New Testament. Nevertheless I have benefited greatly by this study, I hope you have as well and we will continue to do so as the Spirit of God continues to bring His truth to bear on our lives. So let me read this great doxology and then we will look at it more closely.

Romans 16:25: "Now to Him to is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past but now is manifested and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God and made know to all the nations leading to obedience of faith to the only wise God through Jesus Christ be the glory forever amen."

The grand theme of Paul's epistle to the Romans is the righteousness of God that can be imputed to sinful men by His grace. That God justifies the ungodly, the guilty, and the condemned. He does this by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. In these 16 chapters as we look at them chronologically we could review them as follows.

God has revealed to us how the righteous shall live by faith, the power of the gospel to save sinners, the wrath of God that abides on the unrighteousness, the wrath of divine abandonment. The righteous judgement of God revealed in His law, the fallacy of trusting in the flesh. He has revealed the unrighteousness of man that is revealed in his character and in his conduct. He has shown to us the miracle of justification by faith, the satisfaction of divine justice, how God justifies the ungodly. He has revealed to us the amazing benefits of justification, how to make peace with God through faith in Christ, He has shown us the truths about the deadly invasion of sin through Adam, the reality of being dead to sin and alive to God, He has helped us understand how to be slaves of righteousness rather than sin, how we have been released from the law that held us captive.

He has helped us understand how we can gain victory over sin that no longer remains, but no longer reigns but still remains within us. He has revealed to us the marvel of being in Christ, the joy of living a life empowered by the indwelling Spirit. He has shown us the Christian's obligation, confirmation, glorification, lamentation, limitation, consolation, progression, and exultation. He has explained to us Israel's unbelief in light of the promises of God. He has constructed us concerning the Christians attitude toward God, toward fellow Christians, toward all people, toward civil authority, and He has helped us

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understand the urgency of all-encompassing love, how unity encompasses liberty, and He has shown us the accepting and admonishing one another in love.

Finally, He has revealed to us an example of a Godly apostle committed to proclaiming and protecting the living gospel of God. Truly His word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. How could we see if we did not have this? Where would we be if we did not know these truths?

So in light of these astonishing, eternal life giving truths, it is fitting that he would conclude with something more than a mere benediction, but rather an explosion of a doxology of his heart. A magnificent doxology that encompasses these major themes that I have just rehearsed for you. This is why I would call this a doxology of praise for the Gospel of God. One that saved not only Him, but saves all who place their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. A salvation that would be validated by a person's obvious commitment to loving Christ and to serving Him, being a joyful, loving slave of their Lord and Master even as Paul did.

As we begin this morning you must ask yourself, do I share such a doxology? Is this an expression of my heart? Or is this something foreign to me? Does the reality of being rescued from an eternal hell by the gospel cause you to bow your head and your heart in humility and cry out with gratitude for such undeserved mercy? Does this cause you to want to present your body as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship? Does this reflect a heart that is so overflowing with praise that others see in you an increased love for Christ? A hunger for His word, a life that bears much spiritual fruit, a life that gives God glory, a zeal for evangelism, compassion for the lost, and a passion to serve the Lord in His church.

If not, dear friends, there is something terribly wrong with your heart. Unless you get serious with your relationship with Him, your heart will continue to harden because of the deceitfulness of sin. If you do not share this type of a doxology and you truly know Christ, then I would submit to you that because you are living in your flesh the Spirit has been grieved, the Spirit is quenched, your forfeiting blessing in your life. You're wandering through life without really making an impact for the Savior and probably without realizing it; you are living a miserable life in the dungeon of divine chastening. But your too self-willed, too proud, too deceived to even know it.

If you profess Christ and you see a doxology like this and you confess, "well I don't really feel any of that, that doesn't really get me that excited", it may well be that you profess Christ, but you don't possess Him. Therefore you will continue to live your Christian charade and yet you will doubt your salvation in your heart. In the middle of the night that doubt will nag you and you'll continue chasing after the fleeting pleasures of this life arrogant and self-willed living for yourself, miserable, angry, depressed, afraid, enjoying a fool's paradise. My friend, one day, unless you repent, you will die and you

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will face the Lord that we celebrate here today. You will try to convince Him of all the religious things that you have done and He will say, "depart from me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you." If you have no doxology of praise for the gospel you have no love for Christ, it's as simple as that. So I would invite you if that is you, to give your heart to Christ today, and join with the rest of all of us sinners saved by grace in expressing this doxology of praise for the gospel of God.

As we look at this text I believe that we could divide it rather simply into 3 sections. Here we see Paul offering praise for 3 things that the gospel does.

1. It establishes believers in obedient faith.
2. It preaches the person and work of Jesus Christ.
3. It reveals the mystery of God's promise to the Gentiles.

So let's get lost once again in the love of God and what He has done for us by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not that Christ procured the Father's love for us. Indeed Christ is the gift of that love, not the cause of it. Because we know that the Father chose to set His love upon the elect before the foundation of the world. But because of our sin, because of the penalty of our sin, we could not experience the love of the Father until Christ paid the penalty and made an end to sin thus allowing, shall we say, that torrent of grace to flow in full force upon us.

Spurgeon put it this way: "Our Lord, as it were, took out of the river-bed of grace the great rock which blocked up the water courses, and now along the wide and open channel immortal joys come streaming down, joys like his grief, immense, unknown."

So Paul gives praise for the gospel first of all because it establishes believers in obedient faith. Notice verse 25: "Now to Him who is able (meaning to Him who has the power) to establish you according to my gospel." Now, when He says, "My gospel", this does not mean that this is some gospel that the Apostle Paul concocted on his own to somehow make money like so many charlatans' do today. This is not the phony gospel of neo-evangelicalism that we see running rampant in our culture today. The gospel of self-fulfillment where Jesus is nothing more than kind of a smiley face Santa Claus god that winks at sin and paces the throne room of Heaven with his fingers crossed hoping that someone will exercise their will and accept Jesus into their heart so that he can hand out all of the goodies. A decision, by the way, that he is powerless to initiate.

No, that's not the gospel. When he says my gospel, He is referring to the distinct gospel that he preached that was revealed to Him by the Lord Jesus Himself, this is the gospel that God gave Him. This is the gospel that is distinct from the false gospels, this is the gospel the world hates, but this is the gospel that saves. In Romans 1:1 he began by saying: "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel

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of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son."

He told the Galatians in Galatians 1:11: "I would have you know, brethren that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

Now, notice what God has the power to do through the Gospel. In verse 25: "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel." The term "establish" in the original language means to stabilize, to confirm, and to strengthen. It's the idea of the gospel by the power of God being able to cause us to be well grounded in the truth so that we can bear much fruit. Or as in the words of the Psalmist: "He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."

Now being established by the power of God according to the gospel is the opposite of how many people live. As a matter of fact, all people who do not know Christ, but even many Christians. It's the opposite of living a life of uncertainty; it's a life that vacillates, a life that is wishy-washy where you're chasing after every fad and every guru. Like those that chase after false teachers like Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, Binny Hinn. People like that who are nothing more than religious versions of the new age gurus like Deepak Chopra or Oprah Winfrey. People who as Paul say in 2 Timothy 3:6: "who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

You see these people need to be established in the truth, they need to be grounded in the truth of the gospel. In Jude 12-13 he describes false teachers who are obviously not rooted, not grounded as: "those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever."

You see my friends the truth of the gospel remedies that kind of chaos and instability when a man or a woman truly embraces it. Peter described it this way in 1 Peter 5:10: "The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." Now I ask you, are you established in the truth of the gospel or are you constantly wandering around in your life trying to find God, trying to feel Jesus, trying to somehow find purpose in your life, trying to experience some abundant life. It was Paul's passion for all believers to be established.

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Again at the beginning of his epistle in Romans 1:11 he says: "For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established." How I long for you to be established. The term in the original language can also be translated strengthened. Paul uses it in 1 Thessalonians 3:2: "We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith." Likewise in 2 Thessalonians 2:16: "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word."

Now you must understand, beloved, the gospel is not only the good news of God's provision whereby sinful man can be reconciled unto Himself, whereby He can grant to them eternal life, but the gospel is also the supernatural Gibraltar of truth that provides an anchor for every aspect of your life. The gospel reveals the truth about God and His standard of righteousness. The gospel reveals the truth about the wrath of God abiding upon sinners, and the provision of His grace and forgiveness and righteousness through His beloved Son. It provides the truth about God's desire to bless those who fear Him, those who walk faithfully and obediently with Him. It reveals the truth about our eternal destiny that provides confident hope. It encompasses the entirety of scripture. Through the gospel we understand the truths about marriage, family, raising our children, our career, our finances, purpose in life, our entire world view is shaped by the gospel.

Paul is rejoicing in the power of God to enable believers to be established in the truth and therefore to live a gospel centered life. Does that describe your life? No wonder Paul breaks forth in praise.

Now, you must ask yourself, is my life:

A. Anchored in the bedrock truths of the gospel? . . . or

B. Like a ship at sea without a rudder, aimlessly drifting along subject to the prevailing winds of life.

If B, allow me to describe you because I have known thousands of people who fall into that category and I fear that some of you do. If this is you then this doxology first of all, is foreign to you. You don't really celebrate much of anything in your life, certainly not your salvation, certainly not the gospel. You're a Sunday morning Christian at best. The sermons that you hear are kind of boring to you; you just tolerate them because that's just what you're supposed to do when you come to church. You have no real desire to serve Christ. Oh you do a little bit, but it's not really a passion. Other things are far more important. Most of your waking life is spent thinking about you. Life is all about you; my pleasures, my happiness, my desires.

You wake up in the morning and you have no desire to pray. You have your coffee and you think about your day. You go to work and you think about your pay. You go home and you think about your play, and you go to bed again and you realize I have no desire

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to pray. That's your life. Your happiness is directly tied to your circumstances. If things go well your happy, if they don't your depressed. Your life has no real meaning, no real purpose. You love many things far more than you love Christ, which makes you an idolater. You anesthetize the pain of your miserable existence with things like prescription drugs, maybe even illegal drugs, alcohol, entertainment, pornography.

You find temporary relief but no lasting joy in things like the television and internet, maybe some special relationship you have. Maybe even with your child or your children. You try to fill the void of your empty life with mindless and endless texting and social networking. There's really never a thought of meditating on scripture, much less memorizing the word of God. You enjoy fellowship and communion with all of your friends but you really have no desire to fellowship and commune with the Lover of your soul. You hate silence, you hate being alone, because when you are there is nothing to drown out the screams of your conscience that tell you that you are not right with God. So you look for something else to silence the conscience and to ease the pain. What's wrong? My friend, what is wrong is you have not been established by the power of God in the gospel.

For some of you, as believers, it's because you have, as Paul said in Revelation 2, "left your first love." For others of you, you haven't left your first love; you've never had a first love. Allow me to illustrate how this happens to believers.

You may recall that the church of Ephesus received this very same gospel at the close of Paul's second missionary journey. This was in about A.D. 52. There he left Priscilla and Aquila to continue the ministry. There they met the mighty Apollos and co-ministered with him. Then later, on Paul's third missionary journey, he returned once again to Ephesus and he spent 3 years establishing those saints in that church. Until finally all of the idol worshippers and the idol makers, ran him out of town. Later, while a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote them a letter and eventually he left Timothy to be in charge of that great church. Later, around A.D. 66, the apostle John arrived and he took up the mantle of ministry, until he was exiled to the island of Patmos. Tradition has it that John was only exiled a relatively short period of time and he was eventually allowed to return to that church in Ephesus.

So this was a significant, prominent church in the ancient world. That this is true is reflected in the fact that it was the recipient of we believe 8 books of the New Testament. It received the Gospel of John, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation. Moreover, Paul was serving the church at Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians. So therefore, in Revelation 2, the Lord praised them for their hard labor, for their patience endurance of significant trials. He praised them for their doctrinal discernment, moral purity, unwillingness to tolerate heretics, and in verse 3: "and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary."

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My, what a commendable, God-honoring church. Then in verse 4 there is that 3 letter word, but. Oh what a frightening word dear friends. How we all need to be on guard for the "however's" in our spiritual life. "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." The doxology wouldn't be there, you've left your first love. In the original language it's literally your love, the first love. The emphasis is on first. What that means is you have forsaken, laid aside, departed from your first love. First love describes that passionate, fervent, chaste and pure love of the newly-wedded bride. You've left that, now you love other things. It does not say that you've *lost* it, but that you've *left* it. You have unwittingly departed from that original position of passion and sacrificial, pure and chaste love for your Savior, your doxology is gone. What had been first is now secondary, maybe tertiary.

Think how this must have happened when the Lord revealed this to John on Patmos, 40 years had lapsed from the first days of their fervent love for Christ when Paul was there. A second generation had now taken over and as we all know, typically the next generation does not appreciate those things that have been handed down to them. My look at our culture with respect to understanding freedom in our own country. So they take things for granted and somehow in that church something happened that can happen in each of our lives. A cold, dead, mechanical orthodoxy begins to set in. Some were perhaps unregenerate. They had, I'm sure, tares among the wheat. Some did not possess the same deep love for Christ, each other, or for the lost. The kind of love that was characteristic of the church when it was first founded.

Beloved do you remember when you first fell in love with your wife or your husband? When the object of that love literally became the center of gravity around which your whole life orbited. It was an all consuming passion wasn't it? Then you get married, there is this selfless, sacrificial devotion at first. You long to hear your spouse's voice, you long to see their face, to hold their hand, to embrace each other in the oneness of intimacy. Then gradually, imperceptibly, self-will and spiritual apathy begins to set in and soon after the honeymoon is over you begin to leave your first love. The things of the world begin to impact you, it subtly shapes you into its image, your priorities change, you start walking by the flesh rather than the Spirit, you don't even think you're doing it.

You see, if you're not staying anchored and established in the gospel, your flesh will always drift towards ungodliness, it will never drift in the other direction. So you're no longer disciplining yourself for the sake of Godliness and before you know it you're living with your spouse as if you're nothing more than roommates. Oh you love each other; you just don't really enjoy each other. You learn to tolerate one other, you live in separate worlds. You say, "boy, pastor I will never let that happen in my marriage!" I would humbly say to you that if you love anything more than Christ, right now, it's happening right now and it will destroy you and it will destroy your marriage.

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Remember when you first came to Christ and you were captivated by His love, overwhelmed by His grace. You couldn't spend enough time in the Word, you were hungry for the Word, and you longed to hear the Savior's voice through His Word. You longed to commune with Him, you joyfully obeyed every commandment. You weren't just a hearer, you were a doer. You remember when there was nothing that could keep you from a Bible study or from coming to church. You couldn't wait to serve Him because you loved Him so much? You once had a joyful countenance, joyful heart, but gradually it started to grow cold and you become sour and sullen. You begin to complain, and become more and more apathetic. Without realizing it, your life is no longer established in the gospel by the power of God.

You remember the prescription, by the way, at the church at Ephesus? What did they need to do in Revelation 5:2, they needed to "remember". Jesus said through John, "Remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first." Remember and repent. Remember, it's the idea of keep on remembering, never stop remembering from where you have fallen. The grammar there where you have, the perfect tense indicates that this decline had occurred over a considerable period of time and they weren't aware of it. Beloved, Satan has enormous patience and the amazing thing about sin is that its devastating consequences typically don't just show up, they sneak up over a long period of time. Sin slowly eats away at your life, your marriage, your relationship with Christ like the gradual erosion of water on a mountain. So beloved you simply must remember the staggering truths of the gospel that once captivated your heart. You've got to go back and remember where you once were and what you once did.

I so vividly remember when I first fell in love with my dear Nancy. That thrill, by God's grace has never left. I remember when there was no greater priority in my life then being with her, and serving her. Again, by God's grace that has only grown. Likewise I can remember when I first came to Christ and I saw Him as the lover of my soul, and I was so captivated by His grace that it literally motivated every thought in my life. How easy it is for everything else in this world and in our life to get between that type of thinking, that type of love. It happens to us all, so we have to remember from where we have fallen and do the deed you did at first. By the way, this is the purpose of communion when we come together at the Lord's Table. To remember! How easy it is to unwittingly forsake our first love and begin to live a life of loveless orthodoxy. Therefore it was Paul's passion and this is why he is celebrating in this doxology. It was his passion to continue to help the church be established by the power of God and the gospel of Christ.

Not only does the Gospel establish believers in obedient faith but verse 25 we see that 2. *It Preaches the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.* Notice, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ." My friends there are no more glorious theme in all the world then Jesus Christ. May I remind you briefly of who our precious Savior and King really is. He is the second person of the triune Godhead who possessed all of the divine Excellencies of the Father. He is coequal,

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coeternal, consubstantial with the Father. In other words He is of the same essence. John 1:2-3: "He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." Think about that the next time you look at the babe in the manger!

He is the Son of God; He was born of a virgin who in His incarnation surrendered the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence. He accepted all of the essential characteristics of humanity so that He would become the God-Man, The theanthropon who would reveal God, who would redeem men and rule over God's kingdom forever. He is the Lord's Savior and sacrifice for sin. He is the one who accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood, and His sacrificial death on the cross. A death that was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory and a death that was redemptive.

My friends the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who gave His life so believing sinners could be forgiven, so that we could be declared righteous, so that we could be freed from the penalty, the power and someday the very presence of sin and have eternal life. He is the resurrected and the ascended Christ now seated at the right hand of the Father where He is our divine mediator, advocate, our High Priest. He is the one who was executed, who is coming again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to bring judgment upon the nations. He is the one rejected who will come again and takes back from the usurper that which is rightfully His. Then establish Israel's promised kingdom for a thousand years on a renovated earth; a kingdom that will be the consummating bridge between human history and eternal state.

He is the one who will exercise power over all the world one day and one day He alone will receive honor, and worship due His name. In a day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. He is the one whom according to Philippians 2:9: "God highly exalted and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (LORD)... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

My friends there is no gospel apart from the preaching of Christ—*this* Christ! Not the Christ of Neo-evangelicalism. If the Jesus I have just described is not your Jesus, then your faith is dead and you worship in vain. The apostle Paul said in Romans 10:17: "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." This Christ. Not the Santa Claus Christ of man's making. Not the sissy smiley face Jesus of charlatans that packs out massive auditoriums and sells millions of books. Not the sentimental Jesus you snuggle up to on Christian radio. Not the Jesus that even some of you worship that supposedly winks at your sin and is content with you ignoring Him, and disregarding Him, and dishonoring Him. No, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:23: "we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

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Indeed He is the power of God *from all eternity*. Paul tells us in Colossians 1:17: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Similarly in Hebrews 1:3, the writer tells us that Christ: “upholds all things by the word of His power.” So He is Christ, the power of God from all eternity and even right now this very moment. Do you realize that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead? He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father as our Mediator and our faithful high priest. He is right now causing all things to work together for our good to those who love God. Moreover, He is the power of God for all eternity.

Not just from eternity but *for all eternity*. Because of this we know that Jesus Christ is going to come again someday and receive unto himself His church which is His body, at the rapture, and then He will return again with His church in glory to establish His millennial kingdom on earth. You see, He is the one through whom God will judge all mankind. He is the mediator between man and God, the head of the body, the church. He is the universal king who will reign on the throne of David, He is the final judge of all who refuse to trust Him, and worship Him as Lord. No wonder Paul just breaks forth in praise for the gospel in this magnificent doxology. It establishes believers in obedient faith, it preaches the person and work of Jesus Christ, and oh how I hope that you share Christ in such a way in your heart today.

But finally he gives praise for the gospel because, 3. It reveals the mystery of God’s promise to the Gentiles. This is so precious to us who are Gentiles who have been saved by His grace. Notice verse 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 which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”

Now a mystery in scripture speaks of a truth not fully understood, not fully explained in the Old Testament, but one that has now become apparent in the New Testament because of the coming of Christ. As we look at scripture and as we look specifically at the Old Testament, you will see a drama that begins to unfold one in which God conceals the full intentions of His plan of redemption. He will make small allusions to the fact that He is going to receive both Jew and Gentile into the same body, the church of Jesus Christ. But it’s not real clear until Christ comes. Even though it “has been kept secret for long ages past”, as Paul says, it was His plan all along. There was no plan B dear friends. In verse 26: “but now is manifested,” in other words something happened, an event occurred what is that? The incarnation of Christ and the revealing of the gospel. He says it was also revealed, verse 26: “by the Scriptures of the prophets.”

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God alluded to this all along this offering of grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, even in His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. There, you will recall He said: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” More than just your family, all the families, He’s going to include the Gentiles. In Exodus 19:6 where we learn of God’s covenant with Moses on Mt. Sinai. He once again alluded to this in another way. He said: “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Now, how else could this be realized apart from Israel as a nation being God’s mediators for the entire world? And He said the same thing in Isaiah 42:6, “a light to the nations.” Moreover, He spoke through His prophet Hosea and said, “I will call those who were not My people, My people, and her who was not beloved, beloved.”

So this was the mystery and in this mystery we see 3 things:

- a. Kept secret for long ages past.
- b. It has now been made manifest through Christ and through the Gospel.
- c. (according to the middle of verse 26), in accordance with the command of the eternal God. I love that statement, boy you talk about certainty there. This mystery was being clarified through the prophetic Scriptures for a purpose.

And what was that? It was in order to bring about obedience of faith among all the nations of the world. This obviously included the Gentiles. Notice the end of verse 26: “according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”

So I must ask you, is this true of your life? You see, the evidence of a gospel centered life, evidence of a person who has been established in the Gospel, is a life of obedient faith. Does this characterize your life? If so, you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength and you will love your neighbor as yourself. As a result your heart will resonate with this great doxology of praise, a doxology of praise for the gospel of God that saved you. Again, how thankful I am as a believing Gentile, that Christ’s saving grace was made available to me. What an astonishing plan, what a magnificent gospel, what a glorious Savior!

This mystery was more fully revealed in Ephesians 3:8 Paul describes: “grace given (to him), to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for all ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

With this in mind, Paul closes with this in verse 27: “to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever, amen.” He speaks of our wise God, our omniscient God. It

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reminds me of his doxology at the end of Romans 11 after he had just poured out all of the great truths about justification. You will recall he says: “Oh the depth of the riches both the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”

Oh child of God there will be no end to the glory of God through Jesus Christ, nor will there be any end to the glory that we will enjoy because of what God has done to us through Christ through the gospel. But my friend if you do not know Him, if you do not love Him, there will be no end to your sorrow and to your torment. So I plead with you this day to give your heart to Christ, to cry out to Him for salvation, to beg Him to give you the mercy that He will so gladly give and be established in the truth of the gospel of God, by the saving power of God. He will never turn anyone away who seeks His mercy. Dear sinner, won't you seek Him today before it's too late? Dear Christian, won't you serve Him while there is still time and let your heart express the doxology of praise for what He has done.

Let's pray together. Father, we give you praise as Your people for this marvelous work of grace. Establish us in these truths, that we might bear much fruit to the praise of Your glory, amen.