**To God Be the Glory!**

**Romans 16:25-27 (ESV)**

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Today, we’re going to be in Romans chapter 16. Today we come to the very end of our series in this great letter. This message is simply entitled *To God Be the Glory!* because the Apostle Paul closes with a doxology, an expression of praise to God. It’s a song of the heart that says, “God, You are to be praised.” So let’s read this together as Paul concludes this great letter that exposits and draws out the Gospel for us.

***25*** *Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages* ***26*** *but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—****27*** *to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

These dark human hearts of ours take credit for accomplishments and they shift blame for failures. So a student receives an A on a final exam and he says, “Yes! I worked hard on this. I got an A!” And then that same student takes the next final exam and gets a D. He says, “That teacher gave me a D. That teacher didn’t teach what I needed to know in order to do well on this test.” We think also of the running back who in one game, breaks through the tackle right at the goal line stand. And he wins the game by breaking through. He pumps his chest and says, “You can’t stop me!” The very next weekend, the same scenario comes up. There’s a goal line stand and he has the opportunity to win the game. But this time, he gets stuffed at the line of scrimmage and the other team wins. He looks over at his offensive lineman and says, “Why didn’t you make that block?” We tend to take credit for the victories and to shift blame for our failures. We notice this pattern in others. The question is: Do we notice it in ourselves? It’s there! That’s true of every human heart.

About 20 years ago, when I was young and foolish, I was driving our young family down a four lane highway. There was snow falling and ice was forming on the pavement. Kimberly cautioned me about driving too fast in these conditions. And in confidence, I told her she had nothing to worry about. And then as we drove onto an overpass, I felt a little bump, and our car began to slide sideways, going about 40 mph. We were still in our lane, but now I was looking forward out of my side window because our car was completely perpendicular to the road. And then I was looking out the rearview mirror as we were going forward because our car had spun a complete 180 degrees. There were cars in the lane next to us, but we were staying in the lane. And at that moment, I asked myself the proverbial question, “Are you supposed to turn into a spin or away from it?” (Laughter!) But nothing was making any difference at all. It didn’t really matter what direction my wheels were facing. The pavement was so slick that there was nothing that was going to change the course of this spin.

We were floating on a sheet of ice. And again, we continued to spin, but we were staying in our lane. So now, I was looking out the other side window. We did a ¾ spin. And then finally, we were facing straight ahead as we completed that 360 degree spin like a skater from Disney on Ice. (Laughter!) When the nose of the car came around, it was slow enough of a spin that we now had completed the whole course of the overpass in that 360 degree spin. And as soon as the car came 360 degrees where I was facing straight, the front wheels hit the pavement on the other side of the overpass. There was no more ice. The wheels gripped, and we just continued down the road. And there was silence in our car. (Laughter!) And Kimberly and I looked at each other like, “Did that really just happen?” And then I said to her, “Now *that* was a fine piece of driving!” (Laughter!)

Whereupon she said, “Richard!” which is the formal designation for my name. And she kind of punched me lightly in the arm. “Richard! We better stop the car right now and thank God for His care and protection over us.” And of course, she was right. Who deserves the credit when good things happen in our lives? God does! James reminds us

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,

Everything good comes from above. And James presses in that it’s not just the generic things, but very specifically, James understands that the gift of salvation comes from God alone. Every gift does, but especially the joy of our salvation. James writes

**James 1:18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

If we’re saved, God alone deserves the credit. God alone! It’s a gift from Him. All through the letter to this church in Rome, Paul has been making this very point. God alone deserves the credit for our salvation. He tells us in Romans 3

**Romans 3:23-24, 27-28** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus…Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Any kind of boasting in reference to our spiritual condition, when we have life, it’s excluded. We’re beggars! We come to God empty. The only thing we bring to our salvation is our own sin. Boasting is completely excluded! God completes our salvation from beginning to end. Salvation, if we have it, is received as a free gift through faith in Jesus. We do not participate in even the smallest measure in the securing of the forgiveness of sins, of the adoption into God’s family. If we had any part in securing our own salvation, then we would have room for boasting. If we had any part that is, through our own baptism, through following a list of moral rules, through involvement in a set of religious rituals, or through membership in a church, then boasting would not be excluded if we had a little part in it. If God did 99.99 percent of the work of our salvation but we had .01 percent, then we would have that much to boast. But boasting in salvation is completely excluded. We cannot boast in our faith. We cannot boast in any part of God’s acceptance of us because all of us have sinned and all of us have fallen short of His glory.

Here’s the truth that has been taught us all through this letter to the church at Rome by God. Any Gospel that leaves room for human boasting is a deficient Gospel. Would you remember that? Remember that as you listen to various expressions of the Gospel. Any Gospel that leaves room at all for human boasting is a deficient Gospel. It’s a defective Gospel.We cannot boast about our salvation because we do not participate in even the smallest, miniscule way to secure it. Jesus Christ accomplishes everything for us. It’s His righteousness, not our righteousness that brings us into acceptance by God. Who deserves the credit for our salvation? The answer rings back. God does!

At the end of the letter Paul is overwhelmed by the goodness of God. He’s overwhelmed by the worthiness of God. He’s overwhelmed by this gift of grace of God in the Gospel. And he just breaks out in a doxology. He breaks out in a song of praise to God. And he says, “I just want to end this whole letter by talking to God with you as the hearers, as the readers, so that we all would just sit at God’s feet and worship Him and give Him praise. He’s worthy of that!” In this doxology, Paul provides for us four reasons why God deserves all the credit; why we are right to praise God constantly and continually in our lives.

**Reason #1:  God’s power establishes us.**

***25*** *Now to him who is able to strengthen you…*

That word “strengthen” is translated in the New American Standard version and in the New International Version and in the New King James Version as “establish you.” I like that translation better. “Now to him who is able to establish you…” This word strengthen or establish is used of a prop that holds something else up. That something else is weak in itself, but through the prop, it’s able to stand erect. It’s able to be held up. I want you to think of the base of a patio umbrella. The umbrella, left to itself, is going to fall over every time. It’s unable even with no wind, to be able to stand up. It’s not designed for that. And yet, with this heavy metal, sturdy base, it’s able to stand and not fall over even though strong winds blow against it. This word in the New Testament specifically addresses the establishing or the strengthening, the nurturing then of young Christians in the faith. He says God is able to establish you. He’s able to prop you up. Your own strength won’t keep you in the faith, but God is able. He’s able to bring you into a right relationship, and then He’s able to keep you, to establish you in the faith. Paul writes to the Thessalonian church using this same word.

**1 Thessalonians 3:1-2** …we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

God, in His wisdom and in His design sends people to be used to strengthen, to establish. And Paul says, “This is why I’ve sent you Timothy. It’s because you need to be strengthened. You need to be established in your faith.” But he uses it elsewhere of God’s work alone. Here in Romans 16 but also in 2 Thessalonians. He says

**2 Thessalonians 3:3** But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

So which is it? Is it that Timothy establishes the Thessalonians’ faith, or is it that God establishes them in the faith? The answer is yes! God does it. He uses weak, flawed instruments, but God is faithful, ultimately. He is the one who will establish you and He will guard you against the evil one. We need God’s strengthening for our establishment or holding up in the Christian life.

Friends, once we come to faith in Jesus, we need God’s continued saving power. The winds of false doctrine will blow against us and we need His power to be held fast, not to be deceived. The winds of temptation will blow over our lives and we need God’s power to keep us from caving in and from walking away from a pure devotion, sincere devotion to Jesus. God’s power in saving us is not just on display in that initial work of taking we who were dead in our trespasses and sins and making us alive in Christ, of providing spiritual life. But God’s power is also on display as He strengthens us to overcome the enslaving nature of sin. These habitual sins that bite at us and dog us throughout our lives are no longer able to chain us because God’s power holds us. So what does an established believer look like? How do I know if I’m established, if I’ve been strengthened by God? I want to suggest four qualities of established believers.

Quality #1: Established believers love God and not the world.They seek to please Him and not the people around them. They walk with God in dependence through prayer and the Word. We need God’s power to establish us so that we would love Him and not love the world.

Quality #2: Established believers love one another and don’t let resentments separate them.We need God’s power to forgive when we’re wronged and hurt. We need God’s power to overlook offenses. We need God’s power to love. And God says that He is able to establish us in this way.

Quality #3: Established believers help other believers to become established. In other words, we need God’s power to have a spiritual impact upon our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can’t have a spiritual impact if we’re coming and relating to one another in our own natural strength. But beloved, God is able to establish you so that you can be used to establish others.

Quality #4: Established believers proclaim Jesus to friends and family who may be hostile to Him. They may persecute you and they may mock you when you talk about Jesus. But God is able to establish you so that you tell others that there is a Redeemer. You tell others that there is a King of kings and a LORD of Lords who calls us all to bow our knees.

Every true disciple of Jesus desires this kind of established life. That’s what happens to a soul that’s awakened. We say, “That’s the kind of life I want to live.” But every believer, upon entering into this kind of life, recognizes how difficult, in fact how impossible this life is apart from the power of God. It is only as the power of God establishes us that we’re able to live up to the potential that God created for us when He brought us to faith in Jesus. And that’s why Paul rejoices. It’s because he loves this new life that God has given him. He says, “Now to Him who is able to establish you. He established me and He’s able to establish you as well. He’s able to establish this whole church for the glory of His name.” God’s power deserves the credit for any spiritual good in our lives! Paul began here when he started this letter.

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

And he ends here. He says, “God is able! His power is able to establish you and strengthen you.” It’s right, beloved, for God’s people to take time just simply to give Him praise. That’s what Paul is modeling here. It might not seem like this is the most productive, fruitful thing we could possibly do, but actually it is. It is right for us just to take time and let’s give God a doxology of praise for this. And we do it together. That’s why we come together. That’s the value. It reminds us that together we’re going to give Him praise. God is able! “To Him who is able, to Him be glory forever!” And that’s all of our singing on Sunday morning. It’s about giving God the credit. But also daily, in our individual life, to stop and say, “God, I want to give You the credit for what’s happening, these good things that You’re doing in my life. You deserve to be given praise and thanksgiving for all these good gifts, particularly the gifts related to who I am in Christ and how I’m progressing.”

You see, when we don’t give praise to God, we naturally will begin to take credit for some of these things to ourselves. It would be silly for the patio umbrella to boast about its ability to stand up in the face of wind. It would be silly! There’s no ability whatsoever. The umbrella would be blown asunder were it not for the heavy metal base. And that’s us. It’s a picture of us. We are unbalanced, unstable apart from God’s saving, strengthening, establishing power. Now what are some applications to the power of God in our lives?

1. Be encouraged and not discouraged about your spiritual growth!

We need encouragement. And sometimes we feel so weak. We feel like we’re such failures. And we wonder in our own minds whether or not our failings will ever be overcome. We are tempted to wave the flag of surrender in the face of the battle and say, “Okay, I quit! I give up! I’m not going to try anymore.” And it’s God’s power that says, no. The righteous man falls six times and he gets up seven. And it’s not because he believes something about himself, but it’s because he believes something about his God.

I love the story of Nebuchadnezzar and these three young men who were deported to Babylon. They began their lives in Israel and were deported because of Babylon’s conquering of their own nation. And these three guys, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were told by King Nebuchadnezzar, “You have to bow down to the statue. You have to bow down and worship the statue.” And they say, “No, we will not!” And Nebuchadnezzar taunts them at this point.

**Daniel 3:15** But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?

Nebuchadnezzar says this because he knows these three guys give praise to God. He knows these three guys are devoted to the worship of Yahweh. But he couldn’t fathom that any God would be that strong. And here’s these three young men. They’re young men!

**Daniel 3:16-18** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

“God is strong enough to rescue us! He spoke, and the worlds came into being. Do you think He’d have trouble protecting a guy in a fire? No! Our God is able! And we believe He will rescue us.” But they recognized that the secret things belong to God. We don’t know exactly what God is going to do in the next moment. They say, “But if He doesn’t rescue us, please know this. Our God is the living God, that He is worthy, and that we will not bow down and worship those false gods because our God is the one, true God.”

You see, who deserves the credit? God does. And He deserves the credit because He is able. So whatever is happening in your life right now, Friends, do not be dismayed. Do not be afraid. Do not despair because God is able. And He’s the God who says

**Isaiah 41:10** fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

2. Ask God daily to establish our hearts knowing that He has the power to do it!

We often do not have spiritual strength because we don’t plead with God, who possesses such strength and is willing to give it to us. I love Psalm 86! Psalm 86 is a prayer to God for strength.

**Psalm 86:10-11** For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.

He recognizes that his heart is often divided between this world and eternal matters. He says, “Unite my heart so I will be wholly devoted to you.” And then he says

**Psalm 86:15-16** But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious…Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant,

God wants to hear us cry out to Him, “God, you’re able! You’re strong! Give strength to Your servant. Establish us.”

3. Confront ourselves for our own spiritual weakness!

Let’s not lay the blame of our stumblings and our failings on anyone else or anything else but ourselves. If love and joy and peace and patience are not ruling our hearts, we’re living below our blessing. And it’s not because someone else stole our joy or stole love from our hearts or did something that made peace impossible. But it’s because we are forfeiting that which is ours in Christ. And so, let’s confront ourselves about that and let’s say, “The only reason why I’m not experiencing this power is because I’ve moved away and become independent from the Lord.” And let’s push ourselves back into humble dependence. God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. He gives strength to the humble.

4. Let’s praise God for His power at work in us!

This is the ultimate application. This is the one Paul makes.

***25*** *Now to him who is able to strengthen you…****27****…be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

So the first reason why God deserves all the credit is because God’s power establishes us. But secondly because

**Reason #2: God’s love reveals His gospel to us.**

God could have kept us in the dark about His love, about His salvation, about His Son, but He didn’t. In love, He said, “I want to make Myself known to you.” And He didn’t do it for His own sake. He’s the happy God who had been fine without ever being known by us. But He did it so that we might enter into this love and glorify Him in our joy in Him. And so, it’s His love that the Apostle Paul continually returns to throughout this letter, that is a foundation for our praise. It’s a foundation for our worship.

***25*** *Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages* ***26*** *but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations…*

Paul is just rejoicing all through this letter that God, in love, is revealing Himself. He’s sharing this good news that God is availing Himself to relationship with sinful people. And even while we’re sinners, we are loved by God. So think of this. I’m just going to mark down through this letter how Paul speaks of God’s love in revealing the Gospel.

**Romans 1:7** To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

He’s speaking to loved people. If you’re saved, you’re loved by God. That’s the only reason why you would have become a saint, become a believer in Jesus. It’s because you’re loved by God.

**Romans 5:5** God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

God gives us His love. He pours it into our hearts; just lavishes it upon us.

**Romans 5:8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were still angry at God and hostile toward Him and cursing Him, rebelling against Him, God demonstrates His love toward us. Christ died for us. He died in our place. He offered the ultimate sacrifice.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**Romans 8:35-39** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It’s the Gospel that God provides for us that shines a spotlight on God’s great love for us. And that’s why He is worthy to be praised. To Him be the glory forever and ever because He loves us.

I want you to notice three phrases that Paul uses. Two are really short, and the third one is rather lengthy. The first phrase that Paul uses to connect with God’s love is this little phrase, “my Gospel.” Do you notice that? For Paul, the Gospel is not something to be studied and something to be observed. “Oh, that’s very interesting. Let’s have an intellectual conversation about it.” It’s very, very personal. It’s a personal treasure. It’s something that is close up. He says, “This is my joy.”

When my kids were little, Kimberly and I would be sitting close on a couch. Invariably, when they were about age two or three, they would climb up. First, they would wedge their foot in, and then they’d wedge their head in, and pretty soon, they’d wedge their whole body between Kimberly and me. And then, because Kimberly is the awesome person she is, my boys would look at me and say, “This is my mommy!” (Laughter!) They wouldn’t look at her and say, “This is my daddy.” They look at me and say, “This is my mommy!” In other words, they were a bit jealous about me sitting so close, and they wanted to be in that place.

Now, when Paul calls this “my Gospel,” it’s not sort of a spirit of jealousy where he says, “I don’t want to share this.” It’s quite the contrary. But Paul is communicating that same deep personal affection and attachment to the Gospel that my boys had with their mom and still have with their mom. “This is my mommy.” It’s a deep, personal, loving embrace. “This is my Gospel.” You can’t say, “My mommy,” as a little boy without having your heart just fill you up. And a believer can’t say “my Gospel,” without having their heart just fill up almost to bursting with pleasure and affection. So I would ask you: Can you say, “This is *my* Gospel”? That really is the difference between a born again Christian in Jesus’ church and an unregenerate member of a church. They both talk about *the* Gospel and they both very much connect with statements of truth that they agree to. But one says, “This is *my* Gospel.” Can you say that? It’s the most important matter of anyone’s life to be able to say, “*my* Gospel.”

The next phrase Paul uses is the little phrase, “the preaching of Jesus Christ.” So what is the Gospel? What is my Gospel? He says, “I’m talking about the preaching of Jesus.” If anyone asks you, what is the Gospel?” you’re right to say, “The Gospel is Jesus; who He is and all He has done for us.” The Gospel is His eternal Person. He is God of very God. The Gospel is His Incarnation. God’s Son, who created the world, took on human flesh. The Gospel is His perfection. He completely obeyed the Law even though He was tempted as we are. The Gospel is His crucifixion. He took our sins in His body and God the Father laid upon Him the punishment that our own sins deserved. The Gospel is His resurrection. Jesus conquered sin and conquered death for us. The grave could not hold Him! Satan is crushed under His heel. The Gospel is His Kingly return. He will come again to this world and He will rule and reign. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that this Jesus is Lord. And they’ll say that to the glory of God the Father! The Gospel is the “preaching of Jesus.” What a wonderful message! It’s a message that is located in a person.

And then finally, this longer phrase in verses 25 and 26:

***25*** *… according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages* ***26*** *but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations…*

Now this is important! This word “mystery” in the Bible is not kind of the way we use the word “mystery.” We use it like an Agatha Christie mystery where you don’t really know the end of the story until all the way at the end. You’re still in the middle of it. The word “mystery” in the Bible is used in a way that says something used to be hidden, but now it’s uncovered and it’s made known. It’s sort of like a master artist who has created a statue and they put a big blanket or a sheet over the statue, but then they uncover it. That’s the mystery. It’s uncovered. While it was covered, it was not the mystery. It’s after it is uncovered that it becomes the mystery. That’s the way the word “mystery” is used in the New Testament. It’s the after-effect of the unveiling of something that had been hidden.

So Paul talks about the things which had been hidden but have now been disclosed; these things had been kept secret, but now they’re proclaimed. They were kept secret when the Old Testament prophets were writing about them. But now, through Jesus, we understand them. What exactly had been kept secret and is now disclosed? I want to run through a couple of things for you for your thoughts.

1. The mystery is that God’s plan regarding the Messiah included first coming to suffer and then wait a long period of time before coming a second time to rule and to reign. That was a mystery. But when Jesus came, it was uncovered that that’s what was to be so.

2. That Israel would experience a partial hardening so that God would reach the Gentile nations with the Gospel. That was a mystery. We didn’t know exactly how all the nations of the earth would be blessed. But here’s what we find out in this mystery that has now been made known to us.

3. That Jews and Gentiles will be united in one new community called the Church. The Jews were always separate from Gentiles, and now they’re brought together into one new people. That’s a mystery. That’s something new. The church is this mystery.

4. That the Messiah would dwell in His people and would cause us to eagerly await a day of glory with Him. That was a mystery; that the Messiah would actually be in us and we in Him. That there would be such a personal connection to Him and that we would share in His glory. That was a mystery.

5. That God’s people would experience a resurrection at the return of Jesus.

Every part of God’s revelation is a mystery that is a bold declaration of His love for us, of His desire for us to know that which needed to be known in order to have our life made complete, in order for us to have joy inexpressible.

So imagine if Michelangelo came back from the dead and for one year, he worked on a statute. And he finally says to the world, “I finished it. It’s right here standing behind me,” but it’s covered in a sheet. And he says, “Next week, on Monday morning, I’m going to have a grand unveiling in New York City.” Do you imagine that people who are interested in art would make sure that they dropped everything in order to see what this masterpiece was? It’s an unveiling! You have to see it if Michelangelo did it! And Michelangelo would say, “This makes *David* look like it was done by a kindergartner.” Whoa! We really have to see this!

Now, God says, “I’ve disclosed this mystery for you.” And there’s so many in the church that say, “I’m sure it’s nice. I’m sure somebody, maybe a pastor or somebody in Seminary will be interested in discovering what that is.” Doesn’t that seem crazy to you?! “Talk to me about something temporal, about how I can have a better life right now because I really don’t want to spend a lot of time talking about this mystery or thinking about it much.”

No. Paul is rejoicing. He says, “God is worthy to be worshiped because He, in love, has made to us in this time, a revealing of this which formerly was concealed. And it’s fantastic! It’s unbelievable!” I love that song, *Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery!* It’s the invitation to the church every Sunday. Come! Let’s think about these things. What are some applications?

1. Let’s not seek value in our own worth. Let’s seek value in God’s infinite love.

This world is filled with the idea that your value is in self-love. That’s never where your value will ever, ever be found. It’s only in the love of God.

2. Know that we’re secure in Christ.

God doesn’t get disappointed in us and stop loving us. We don’t have to labor for His affections. We simply rejoice in His unfailing love.

3. Praise God that you are loved! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

These last two reasons for bringing God glory, we’ll walk through rather quickly.

**Reason #3: God’s command opens the door of salvation for us.**

Do you notice this in verse 26? Look at this.

***26*** *but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—*

Not many of us are Jewish, here. Jesus was a Jew and He came to the Jews. He lived among the Jews. He preached primarily among the Jews. So how did we Gentiles receive the Good News of the sacred mystery? The answer is that God commanded His Gospel to go into all the nations. God’s people heard that command and obeyed it; people like the Apostle Paul, so that you and I could understand and know what this mystery is, know this Gospel, so we could know God. But who deserves the credit? And again, there were people who suffered, many of them who died and were martyred in order to bring us the Gospel. But who deserves the credit? It’s not the people. It’s always the God who commanded the people. That’s where it all started.

If God hadn’t commanded the people to go, then we would have never discovered it. And so, God deserves the credit for our hearing. Now, are we thankful for people who are faithful? Yes! But we give God the credit because apart from God’s working and command, we would have never heard the Gospel. We would have never received it. God continues giving us this command today. He commands for the Gospel to go forth into all nations and He uses His church to do it.

So what’s the application? Let’s obey the command of God by faith to proclaim Jesus. It’s a command of God. It’s not an elective course for some Christians who really are bold and really out there. This is the command of God upon every disciple. Let’s go and proclaim Jesus to our world. They need it! God deserves the credit because His power establishes us, His love reveals the Gospel to us, His command opens the door for salvation, and finally

**Reason #4:  God’s wisdom makes salvation possible.**

***27*** *to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Paul is awestruck by the wisdom of God in His plan of salvation! He’s awestruck by it. This is the exclamation point on the whole letter. “I want to talk about God’s wisdom. I’m just overwhelmed by how wise God is in fashioning a way for sinners to become worshipers.” And really, it’s the outline of the entire book of Romans.

In chapters 1-4 it’s God’s wisdom in forgiving sinners who deserved to be condemned. In chapters 5-8 it’s God’s wisdom in sanctifying and securing a people who are prone to wander from Him. How could God do that; securing us in His love? It’s His wisdom. In chapters 9-11 it’s God’s wisdom in being faithful to His promises to Israel and at the same time, opening a door to the Gentiles. That’s wisdom that brought that about. How does God do that? In chapters 12-16 it’s God’s wisdom in directing our worship of Him and our relationships with each other; of creating a church that can bring all people together and still uniting us in one. That’s God’s wisdom.

***27*** *to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Beloved, let’s dwell often upon the wisdom of God. It transforms us. I would offer these applications.

1. Do not doubt God’s wisdom at work in your life when dark clouds gather over your life.

He’s already given all of the evidence we need that He is the only wise God. Don’t we realize He knows what He’s doing? “I don’t know what the dark clouds are about. I don’t like them. I wish they would go away. I want the sunshine. God, how come you have those dark clouds over my life right now?” Don’t doubt that He’s wise in bringing those dark clouds. Don’t doubt that!

2. Trust God’s wisdom and don’t lean on your own wisdom for life. Consecrate your life to Him.

Say, “I will not lean on my own understanding. I’m going to acknowledge Him because His ways are better than my ways. His thoughts are higher than my thoughts. And I want my life to be aligned with His thoughts and His ways. I need Him! I can’t trust myself.” The world says, “Trust your heart.” God says, “Don’t trust your heart. It will lead you to death. There’s a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof leads to death.” He says, “Trust Me. Trust My revelations.” That’s why we need to hear the teaching of God’s Word and not the teaching of man’s wisdom.

3. Let us praise Him with all our heart!

The Gospel awakens us to the glory of God. Who deserves the credit? God does!

***27*** *to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*