



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Praise God

November 22, 2020

Romans 16:21-27

Clint Pressley

²¹ Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

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

²³ Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. ^[24]

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

(Pastor prays)

It has been said that a good communicator will tell you what he is going to say, say what he has to say, and then tell you what it is he has said. And in so many ways that is exactly what the Apostle Paul did in the book of Romans. In Chapter 1, Paul says he has been set apart for the Gospel of God. And here in verse 25, he calls it “my gospel.” In chapter 1:16, Paul says he is not ashamed of the Gospel because it's the power of God. Here in verse 25, he tells us God is able. And chapter 1:16, the Gospel is the power of God for Salvation. In chapter 16:25 it says that God has the power to strengthen and establish. In chapter 1:5, Paul says he's preaching to bring

about the obedience of faith for all nations. In chapter 16:26, Paul closes his letter by speaking of that same missionary zeal for the obedience of faith for all nations.

From start to finish, stern to stern, and all points in between, Paul saturates us with the victory gospel of grace found only in Jesus Christ. And even as he closes, he gets our eyes up, to Him. I want you to feel that. Read it, circle it and love it. I want you to live your life unto Christ! Every bit of it! Every day of it! Every second of it! Because He's better than what you're facing or fighting or stuck in! This gospel is the pearl of great price to have, and the Gospel is the featherbed of grace for you to fall in. It is worth you turning to. Turn to Him because of what Jesus has done on the cross. I want to take this passage today and help you.

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Let me give you some reasons to praise God from this text, even as we near the end of a tough year.

Praise God for loyal Christian friends

In verse 21, Paul says, "Timothy my fellow worker greets you." If there ever was a person worthy of being called Paul's fellow worker, it was Timothy. Paul met Timothy in Lystra (Acts 16). He came from a divided home. His dad wasn't a believer but his mom was a devoted Christian. In 1 Timothy, Paul calls him "my true son in the faith." In 2 Timothy, Paul calls Timothy "my dear son." In Philippians, Paul spoke of how much Timothy was worth to him. In fact, Paul and Timothy were so close that his name pops up in all but three of Paul's letters. For eight years they worked together. Whatever Paul faced; Timothy faced it with him. That's a loyal Christian friend right there. One of the special graces God gives us in difficult times are loyal Christian friends. Who do you need to thank God for? Who do you need to tell that he or she has been a loyal Christian friend? Who do you know that needs you to be a better Christian friend? Praise God for loyal Christian friends.

Praise God for broken barriers

This is what the Gospel does. Just read the list of names of the people with Paul. They are Jews and Gentiles . They are rich and poor. They are slaves and free. Lucius, Jason and Sosipater are kinsmen. Tertius is Paul's secretary. He is probably a slave. His name means "third." Primus, Secundus, Tertius and Quartus. Maybe Tertius was the third son and Quartus the fourth. Gaius has a house big enough in Corinth for Paul to stay in and for the church to meet in. And then

Erastus is in city government, treasurer. In 1928 a stone arch was found with that name on it so possibly this Erastus.

My point is that all walks of life mentioned right here have been brought together at the cross of Christ. We are equally lost because of our sin and equally saved in Christ. As Paul said in Ephesians, there is one “new man.” What effort will you make this week to keep those boundaries down? What radically different person from you will you have into your home between now and Christmas? Praise God for loyal Christian friends. Praise God for broken barriers.

Praise God because he is able

Verse 25 says “to him who is able.” *Dunamis*. That is the power of God, and the whole theme of this book is the Gospel and the power of God to save. This is what we rely on, and rest in, the power of God. This is why we pray when things are bad and pray more when they are worse! All through the New Testament we learn about God being able. In Hebrews 7 it says, He is able to save to the uttermost! In 2 Timothy 7:12 it says He is able to keep you. In Hebrews 2:18, for because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted. Call to Him. In Jude 24 it says, “able to keep us from stumbling or quitting.” In Philippians 3, “able to raise us from the dead.” Ephesians 3:20, “now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.” Won't He do it?! Let us quit doubting God's power and let's start calling on God's power to work and move and save and heal and fix. What or who have you given up on that you need to ask God again to show HE has power? What frustrations have you not taken fully and completely and consistently to God and asked him to fix? I would like to add to that one.

Praise God because He strengthens us

Verse 25 says, “now to him who is able to strengthen you.” That is *dunamis*. Your Bible might say “to establish you.” That is *sterizo*. It means “to make firm, to make mental and emotionally stable, to be settled and firmly rooted” in the Gospel. Praise God because He is able to make you stand strong in the very worst of times.

Honestly, is there any way you would have made it this far if it weren't for the Lord strengthening you? Just take this year alone. There have been car wrecks, sudden deaths, broken hearts, lost jobs, hurt feelings, abandoned hopes, depression, anxiety, arguments, and wayward children. And I haven't even *gotten* to Covid-19, killings or riots or the election. And yet we are all here by God's good grace. Why? Because it is Him who is able to strengthen you. What terrible thing do you need to thank God for getting you through? What obstacle do you need to overcome to be content? I've been listening to *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* by Jeremiah Burroughs. Because one of the greatest safeguards to your soul will be genuine contentment in Christ. Praise God because He is able. Praise God because He strengthens us.

Praise God for the Gospel

To him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel. I want to pay close attention to the way Paul describes the Gospel here in verse 25. He says "it is my gospel." That's not to contrast it with somebody else's gospel as if to say his is different. I think Paul has personalized it so much and the Gospel is so real to him that it has transformed him completely. We might say "Jesus Christ is my personal Lord and savior. I have been personally and profoundly changed by the perfect life of Jesus. I have been changed by the death of Jesus on the cross for sinners and by His miraculous resurrection. I have a saving faith in that." The Gospel: it's mine. Is it yours? How personal is the Gospel to you? Is it *your* Gospel and can you explain it? Can you apply it and trust it? Praise God for the Gospel.

Praise God for the Bible

Let's start in verse 25. *Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith.*

I want you to look at that word "preaching." The preaching of Jesus Christ. That word is *kerygma*. It is only used one time in the book of Romans. Paul uses that word, *kerygma*, right here at the end to say that the content of my message is Jesus Christ. The whole of what I want

to say is Jesus. And then he goes on to say that that message was concealed, it was a mystery. But as it was unfolded, it brought about the obedience of the faith.

What is the message of Jesus? It is the virgin birth, the sinless life, the crucified, resurrected savior. And verse 26 says it has been disclosed through the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament Jesus Christ was concealed and in the New Testament Jesus Christ is revealed. It's why we read, trust, pray, study and believe the Bible, because it shows us and uncovers for us the riches that are Christ. How do you approach the Bible? How do you read the Bible? How often? How long? What have you meditated on or read lately? John Stegemerten is putting together a reading plan for us next year. Praise God for the Bible.

Praise guide for the missionary impulse

Verse 26 says it is being made known to all nations according to the command of the eternal God! That is the heart of God, the command of Christ and the call to the church. It is now and always will be one of a missionary Impulse. It's not just sharing Christ with friends and being a disciple-maker. it's having a tangible hand and investment in the Gospel mission. How are you investing in mission or Gospel ministry? Is God calling you to full-time Gospel mission or ministry?

Praise God for grace

Verse 26 also talks about the obedience of faith. That He saves us through faith in Christ and that faith is always evident in obedience.

Praise God for His wisdom

Verse 27 says "to the only wise God." 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 says, ²³ *but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,* ²⁴ *but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

I think this is how I want to end this book.

Praise God for Jesus

Let's read verse 27. *27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.* Jesus saves you, strengthens you, forgives you. He calls you and loves you. In fact, why don't we close in an attitude of prayer thanking and praising God for Jesus. Praise Him from what He saved you from. Praise Him for what He's brought you through. Praise Him for how He's healed your soul. Praise Him for the call on your life. Praise Him for the hope we have for tomorrow.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

(Pastor prays)