

Doxology Giving Praise to the God who Strengthens His People

Romans 16:25-27

Sunday, November 17, 2019

Introduction

There's a story recorded in Mark 9 of a father who went to Jesus in desperation because his son was possessed by an evil spirit. He went to Jesus asking for a miracle, but in his request Jesus noticed a lack of faith and admonished him. The man's response to Jesus's admonition is a plea that many of us can probably relate to; he said, *I believe, help my unbelief!*

The reality is that as Christians we are often tempted to have areas in our lives where we allow doubt or a lack of faith to creep in. While we've trusted in God's promise of salvation we may doubt that He can really help us overcome a particular temptation; or whether He can really give us what we need to endure a significant struggle.

But a theme that runs throughout the book of Romans is that God has the power to strengthen or establish His people. And in the final verses of the letter, in his doxology, Paul praises God for the Gospel and for the power He has to strengthen His people.

Giving praise to God for His Power – He is able to strengthen His people

- **Now to Him** – While there are great Gospel reminders in these verses we must not forget that Paul's primary aim is to praise God. After writing this incredible treatise on Gospel Paul cannot help but end with praise.
- **Now to Him who is Able** – When Paul speaks of *the God who is able* he is declaring his confidence in the undeniable power of God. While we are weak, we serve a God who is full of power – He is able (Jude 24-25; Ephesians 3:20).
- **The Power of God in Romans** – In the doxology Paul is bringing together some of the main themes that have been repeated in the letter and the power of God is certainly a constant theme throughout (Romans 1:16, 1:20, 4:20-21, 9:17, 14:4).
- **Able to Strengthen** – While God is completely powerful in every way, in this context Paul is talking specifically about God's power to strengthen or establish His people in faith. While we are often weak or prone to temptation, God is able to give us strength to endure (Ephesians 3:15, 2 Corinthians 9:8).

Giving praise to God for the Gospel – His Plan and Power for Strengthening His People

- **A Fitting Conclusion** – Not only does Paul end the letter with praise but he ends the by restating some of the primary themes of the letter. Without question the central message of the book, and what Paul reiterates in the doxology, is that the Gospel is God's plan and His power for strengthening His people (Romans 1:1, 16).
- **Strengthened by the Preaching of the Gospel** – As Paul praises God he acknowledges that the acceptance and application of the Gospel is the means through which God strengthens His people. If we are going experience God's strengthening power we must be faithful in believing the Gospel and applying Gospel truths to our daily living (preach the Gospel to yourself everyday) (1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Colossians 1:28-29).
- **Strengthened by the Mystery that has been Revealed (The Gospel)** – As Paul praises God for His power in the Gospel he recounts another theme that he has shown throughout Romans: that the Gospel is the plan of God that was once hidden, but now has been revealed. While the Old Testament saints did not fully understand God's plan of salvation, now through Christ it is being proclaimed to all nations.
 - **The mystery revealed:** Jesus Christ is the means of salvation for all people (Jew and Gentile) through faith (Ephesians 3:1-13; Colossians 1:24-29; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47).
- **The Proclamation of the Mystery (the Gospel)** – Paul is clear that God commanded him to proclaim the mystery to the world and this is a calling that has been passed to everyone who believes.
- **The Goal of the Proclamation of the Gospel (Obedience of Faith)** – Paul recognizes that the Gospel has a particular aim, to bring about the obedience of faith. This is Paul's purpose in proclaiming the Gospel and it is a theme that he has emphasized throughout the letter (Romans 1:1-5; 16, 15:17-18).

Giving praise to God for His Wisdom (in the Gospel) – In the final line of the doxology Paul harkens back to the primary theme of the other doxology in the letter (11:33-36) and the emphasis on God's wisdom. God's wisdom is immeasurable and incomprehensible and it's His wisdom that has formed and unfolded this incredible plan of salvation. He is the *only wise God*.

Application: As we consider Paul's praise for the Gospel and God's power to strengthen His people we must examine our hearts: are there places in our lives where we have failed to believe that God is able to strengthen and change us? Perhaps we need to pray the prayer of the father of the boy who was possessed: *We believe, help our unbelief!*