

“TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOREVER.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

June 28, 2026, 10:30 AM

Scripture Texts: Romans 16:25-27

Introduction.

We turn this morning to the final text of this greatest letter ever written. What a journey, 97 sermons over four years. This morning we come to Paul's benediction or doxology. It is a sweet farewell where we feel Paul's continuing love, affection and care for the souls of the saints. The church is in its infancy and to the very end Paul is mentoring and discipling, like a good father.

It is far more than just a benediction or a goodbye. It is a pastoral appeal that draws on the truth of the Gospel that Paul has been preaching all along.

Paul ends all his letters with a doxology or a blessing. This one is the longest of all of them, and did you notice it is one sentence. Since it is one sentence we will break it up into his connected phrases.

Romans 16:25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you.

God is ***able*** to strengthen, to establish, to preserve you by His Gospel.

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

The same Gospel that saves us also sustains us every day. It is God who does it. God's grace and power are new every morning to establish us and strengthen us.

Where do you get your strength, your courage, your perseverance? Where do you draw strength from to carry on each day? From yourself, from others, from on line?

When doubts, temptations, suffering come, where do you turn? Where is your help or your security? Your own willpower?

I don't need to remind you that God is able for whatever your need is. Nothing is impossible with God. Nothing. Just go back and read the miracles in the Bible. They are there to encourage you and build up your faith and remind you that nothing is impossible with God.

The God who created everything out of nothing, can do impossible things in your life in the face of whatever weaknesses or sins you have. Humble yourself before God, lay aside your pride, tell Him your need and wait on the Lord.

There is no circumstance you are in that is bigger or stronger than God. You can trust Him with your children, your marriage, your future, your health, your growing older, even your death.

God is not just our God now in the present circumstances of our life. His adoption of us will bring us all the way to our eternal inheritance.

God is able. His grace is sufficient.

According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ.

Remember a few years ago we did a Lent series on preaching the Gospel to ourselves every day. We still need to do that. We never outgrow our need for the Gospel. We don't graduate from the Gospel and move on to other things. Our growth and maturity and faith and strength depend on the Gospel.

I need the Gospel today just as much as I did 54 years ago when I first believed and surrendered my life to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus. In fact, I am sure I need it more now than ever.

You need the preaching of the Gospel. You need the tools and instruments God has given you for your salvation and growing in your faith. If you want what Jesus offers then you must receive it the way He offers it, through His Word, His Gospel being preached, even when it is preached through fallible human vessels.

This is not just a little ritual we do, this is not playing church, this is God's means of meeting you and calling you and strengthening you. This is the wisdom of God leading you to the obedience of faith.

Romans 10:14, 17 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ... 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

There is no salvation outside of the Gospel and the proclamation of the church. You need the preaching of the Gospel, you need the means God has given you for the strengthening and building up of your faith. Don't neglect hearing the Gospel. If you do it will be to the detriment of your eternal soul.

According to the revelation of the mystery

16:25 According to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages.

When Paul uses the word mystery he is not using it in the sense of something mysterious or strange. Rather he uses it for something that is veiled, something in the shadows, something not yet fully known.

The angels knew it partly, the prophets knew it partly. Actually it is all there in the OT for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Jesus is present all through the OT.

You can preach Jesus from every page of the OT. It all points to Him.

He is there when God sacrifices an animal to make clothes for Adam and Eve, pointing to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to clothe us in His righteousness. He is there in Genesis 3:15 when God says to Satan Jesus shall bruise your head and you will bruise his heel.

He is there when Abraham goes to sacrifice his son Isaac and God provides a substitute. He is there with Moses who is the deliverer who leads his people out of bondage to slavery and through the baptismal waters of the Red Sea and gives them bread from heaven and water from a rock, who is Christ. He is there in Jonah, who spent three days and three

nights in the belly of the whale, Jesus said that was the sign He would fulfill three days and three nights in the tomb.

He is there in all the blood shed in the temple to make atonement for the sins of the people. He is there in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:5 He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

The OT is a shadow when compared to the blazing light of the glory of the Gospel reveal when Jesus comes face to face. Like the sun at noon when all the shadows flee.

II Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What was hidden is now made known, it is manifested in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All the shadows became bright light, the hints became fully disclosed. Everything in the OT became crystal clear in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Consider the immeasurable blessing of living on this side of the cross, of living in the light of the revelation of the glory of God in Jesus. Of knowing the mystery that was hidden for thousands of years and is now revealed to you.

Do you understand what this is saying? You might have been able to try to claim ignorance before Jesus came, but not now. The secret is out, there are no excuses now, none. You will not be able to stand before the judgment throne of God and say you didn't know.

The massive love of God has been set on permanent display for all the world to see. No love has ever been shown like the life-giving and life-changing love God has shown.

The greatest tragedy in the world today is the refusal of the Jews to believe in Jesus who is revealed all through their OT. He is right there hidden in

plain sight and they refuse to believe, they still reject Jesus as their Messiah. Don't be like them.

God took thousands of years to work out His perfect plans and purposes. When your life seems confusing, when changes happen that disrupt your life and throw you off course, when things don't make sense, remember how God has been working in our world. Trust God's providence.

His plan was wise and perfect. Trust the wisdom of God as He slowly works out His plans and purposes in your life or your family. Don't judge God or question God or reject God.

Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

The obedience of faith.

Do you see the order of events here, the order of salvation, of what comes first and what comes after that?

First, comes the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ. First comes the knowledge of the mystery concerning Jesus and then our response of faith and obedience.

The Gospel has come to lead us to the obedience of faith.

The purpose of the gospel is "to bring about the obedience of faith." True faith always bears the fruit of obedience. If I say "I believe" I show it by how it changes how I live. The Gospel is true in our lives when it transforms how we speak, act, handle relationships, money, how we forgive and seek forgiveness. Go back and read Romans 12 and I Corinthians 13.

We teach our children to obey. When we say come, they are to come. When God says come, come. Obey, don't delay, don't push Him away, say yes.

Don't try to be smarter than the Bible. Don't reject the truth of the Bible. Don't be embarrassed by anything in Bible. Creation, Jonah, wars, all the blood, cross. Not ashamed of Gospel.

To the only wise God be glory forevermore.

For 16 chapters Paul has unpacked and preached the Gospel, showing us our need for it and how to believe it and live it. It is the power of God not just to change you and your heart and life, but powerful enough to bring salvation to the whole world.

After sixteen chapters of glorious Gospel, of great truth, wonderful doctrine concerning Christ, who He is and what He has done, Paul once again overflows with heartfelt praise and worship. This is not Paul teaching, this is Paul worshipping.

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

Our God is the only God. There is no other.

Our God is the only wise God. His wisdom is infinite, unfathomable.

This is why all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called by Him. Only the wisdom of God has the ability to devise perfect ends and then devise perfect means to achieve those ends and perfectly bend all circumstances for His glory and our good.

He has made it possible for the worst of sinners bond up in their own selfish depravity to be set free from their sin and to be saved by the blood of Jesus for an eternity in heaven.

Who could have ever dreamed or imagined the magnitude of the love that could come up with a plan of salvation like this and then make it happen at an infinite cost for the sake of a most undeserving mankind?

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Eternity will not be long enough to fathom the depth or scale the heights or finish wondering at this kind of love and grace, nor will we finish worshipping and giving all the glory and honor and praise to this wise God who is made manifest to us in Jesus Christ.

Listen to this glimpse of what heaven will look and sound like.

Revelation 5:11-14 I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

14 And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Why are we so reserved in our worship, when the worship in heaven will be greater than anything going on in the World Cup stadiums. Have you seen how the Dutch worship their team?

The goal of the universe, the destiny of all of creation, and the highest calling of all Christians is to give all glory to the God of all grace, the God of our salvation.

Philippians 2:9-11 God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Implications and application.

Paul ends with lifting up the glory of God. Everything in Romans has led to this. The chief end of the Christian life is the same as the chief end for all humanity, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Make your life doxology. Live doxologically.

Ask yourself with each thing you do, will this glorify God? Will my words I am about to speak, will the way I do my work, does my family life, my entertainment choices, my response to this or that situation glorify God? That is living doxologically.

This doxology begins and ends with God. He planned our salvation. He revealed our salvation. He accomplishes salvation. He strengthens and secures our salvation. He deserves all the glory.

May the only wise God enable you by the grace of His Gospel to live each day doxologically, to end each day doxologically. May you love the glory of God, may you desire to behold the glory of God, may you see the glory of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is proclaimed to you.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Prayer: Holy, gracious and all-glorious God, we worship and praise you. The unveiled revelation of yourself in Christ Jesus and His Gospel causes our hearts to soar. Thank you that you are the one true God and that you are not only to be glorified, but to be enjoyed forever. Prepare us and make us fit for that purpose which will be ours now and forever.