

Romans 16:25-27 Understanding Obedience of Faith

We are going to attempt today to finish out Romans chapter 16, and therefore finish out the book of Romans. I am going to be lost next week as I will not know what to do if we are not in Romans. But what we are heading toward, Lord willing, is next week we will begin Philippians, as we have start started Isaiah the first hour.

Romans chapter 16. The book of Romans is what many call The Constitution of the Christian Faith. The entire book from chapter 1 verse 1 to the end is presented to us in doctrinal form. Even the doxology - verses 25 through 27 of Romans chapter 16 that we are in - though it is in benediction to the Lord, and His ability, and His glory, yet at the same time within this benediction there is an implication of the doctrine of God. As to who God is. What God is like. So in these verses Paul pronounces the benediction to God and His relationship in ministry to us.

²⁵ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶ But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: ²⁷ To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Romans 16:25-27 KJV

Verse 25, **Now to the One being able to establish you** - notice the present participle: *being able*. It means *to have the capacity*. God has the capacity to establish us in the things of God. We do not have the ability to establish ourselves. So Paul is speaking in benediction to God, **To the One being able to establish you**. And as we pointed out, there are two prepositional phrases telling the basis upon which God establishes us.

First Prepositional Phrase

He says, **According to my gospel**. This is the gospel that the Lord gave to Paul. So it is his gospel. Very pointed. I like to emphasize it every time we come to one of these points because Paul even said in Romans chapter 2 that all will be judged according to my gospel, Paul says. In Galatians chapter 1 verses 8 and 9 it was Paul that said, "If anybody preaches any other gospel than that which I have preached let him be accursed." That is pretty bold, pretty authoritative. And yet also in Galatians chapter 1 verse 11 Paul says he got his gospel directly from Jesus Christ as a revelation from Christ. So the teachings of Paul do not contradict the teachings of Jesus. In fact, we can gain insight into a lot of the meaning of the teachings of Jesus that the Lord did not give us answers to by the teachings of Paul and the others of the New Testament.

So, **God is able to establish you in Him according to my gospel**, Paul says. He does not say *according to the Bible* or *according to the gospel*, which would be correct. But Paul says, *according to my gospel*. If you are in a gospel that is different than the gospel of Jesus Christ as established by God's word, you will not be established in Christ. God works through His word and His truth. And Paul gives the two parts, **According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ**. Remember in I Corinthians chapter 2 verse 2 Paul said, "I have determined not to know anything amongst you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." And that is my prayer today, whenever the Lord lays upon my heart, for God's people and for leadership. Get back to preaching and teaching Jesus Christ. Not things. Not experiences. Not disputes. Not arguments. But Christ. **According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ**.

Second Prepositional Phrase

Secondly, **According to the mystery which has been kept secret for times eternal, but now has been made manifest, and through the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, he has made known to all the nations this mystery**. We have spent several weeks on the mystery.

Remember in Ephesians chapter 3 Paul said to him that he was chosen to reveal the mysteries of Christ, which even as this text says has been hidden throughout the ages. There are two aspects about the mystery of God that Paul revealed, that still seems to be spiritually a mystery today, even though it is in the Bible. God's Spirit has not enlightened many with the simple presentation of Scripture.

In Colossians chapter 1 verse 27 Paul says, first of all the mystery of Christ which has been hidden from ages and is now revealed is **Christ in you the hope of glory**. That was not known before. Just like today, yes, believe in Christ. Yes, receive Christ. Yes, okay, Christ in you, if you want to put it that way. But then we have all these other things. If you do not believe the same doctrine I do, you cannot be saved. There are certain requirements that we add to God's requirements and the early church only had one requirement. Like Paul said in Romans 8:9. If the Spirit of Christ does not dwell in you, you do not belong to Him. Because the Holy Spirit is God's seal, His guarantee, His mark of ownership. Not my religious actions, but the very indwelling presence of Christ. I belong to Christ because Christ is in me, not because of my confession and pronouncement about any type of condition without there being no presence of Christ. No fruit of His presence. **Christ in you the hope of glory**. The only hope of glory you have is Christ dwelling in you. It comes through the new birth. It is called the regeneration and washing of the Holy Spirit. The very coming and presence of the very nature of God.

And the second part of that mystery was that both Jew and Gentile would experience this Christ in you. Same requirements for both Jew and Gentile. It is not through the law. It is not through paganism. The requirements for both is to receive Christ. Have Christ in you. That is the only hope of glory and God has taken from out of these two groups, Gentiles and Jews - God has taken out from them believers and made them the church. The church has not replaced Israel. God still has His covenant promises with Israel as we are studying from Isaiah. We have not replaced Israel. Both Jew and Gentile make up the church to the point that we are all brothers and sisters and that we have Christ dwelling in us, and there is no Jew or Gentile.

And Paul said in Ephesians chapter 5 that even marriage is a great mystery. Well, we have known that, right? Somebody woke up. But the reason why God instituted the relationship between man and woman is to be a testimony to Christ and the church. We are miniature churches that get together for one big family called the church. So that is why the ongoing situation that we have to change the very definition of marriage itself is called not sin, but an abomination. Not because of the activities of the people who want to enter into this covenant of same genders but because it perverts the very purpose and the very thing for which the marriage relationship represents.

We do not just talk about sin, we talk about purpose. It is God's purpose. **It is a mystery**, Paul says in Ephesians 5. That the man and his wife are testimonies of Christ and the church. All these things are mysteries that have now been revealed. He says that **they have been kept secret from time eternal**, secondly, **but now has been made manifest** (or revealed), **and through the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations**. All the nations are being told the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

But notice the purpose for it all. Purpose clause. **For the obedience of faith**. It is being proclaimed so that people will obey, or put their hearing under the faith. And we have gone over this before. George has heard it five hundred one times. But the truth remains the same. It is the hearing of faith. Not by faith. Not in faith.

Remember the word *faith* πίστις (pistis) comes from πείθω (peithō) that means *persuasion*. It is a word that describes the very presence and the very activity of God's Spirit himself. He is invisible. He is a Spirit. Therefore when He ministers to us there is a persuasion that takes place, which is what the word *faith* means in Greek. There is a persuasion that takes place. And we have a response to that persuasion. We either say, no, no, no, I don't want that persuasion. See in the Bible that is what a nonbeliever is - somebody who is disobedient is somebody who is refusing the persuasion of God's Spirit revealing to them of their need for Christ. That is the word *disobedience* in Scripture. *To refuse, reject the persuasion of God*. But the gospel of Jesus Christ goes out so that people will be obedient, **For the obedience of the faith**. That people will have a favorable response to God's Spirit persuading them about the truth of Christ.

Now the verse that is used mostly in the New Testament that people use when you want to find the definition of faith is Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen. Some people think that is a definition. It is not a definition, it is a description of what faith does. The convictions that I have and the basis for my relationship with the Lord is based on that persuasion of His Spirit. Even when people want to argue the Bible - they now have classes and seminars to teach believers how to defend the Bible from its attacks. Take the Bible, I do not care. I have not chosen to believe that the Bible is the word of God. God's Spirit has convinced me and convicted me of that. You can take my Bible away from me. You can say, "It is not the word of God." Go ahead. I am not going to try to defend it. Because you have to have the Spirit of God convincing you and convicting you that is true. And if you just pick it up as a book, a textbook, you can argue day and night.

And in all of my interactions and discussions and controversies with people over the Bible or the things of Christ, I always come down to one thing - whether it is evolution or whatever. That if I did not have Christ dwelling in me, if I did not have the convincing and convicting of his Spirit in me, I would probably believe just like you. It just disarms the whole situation. I mean, I can see your point. You have to come up with something if you do not have Christ or you reject Him. You have to come up with some philosophy. And if I did not have Christ I would probably agree with you, and say, "Eh, that sounds pretty good from a human standpoint. It does not hold water, but it will do."

But no matter what people say, if it comes out tomorrow, headlines across the newspaper, scientists have proven the Bible to be a hoax. In fact, there is an article on the Internet that popped up there this morning that says, "Is the Bible a fairy tale?" If somebody came to me and said, "Oh, the scientists have now proven that it is all a hoax." I cannot do anything about that. It is not the ink on the paper. I still have Christ dwelling in me. And based on Christ in me, that is my hope of glory. Not words on a page. And yet somehow, in some miraculous way, God has taken the words of the page of the word of God and made it living and alive to me. And I share that life with you, "Here is how it is alive to me." And you might listen and say, "That is not living to me." I cannot do anything about it.

The word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, the writer of Hebrews says. It cuts down through the human tissues and is a critic of the thoughts and motives of a person's heart. That is powerful. How many books do you know that somebody can read? And I shared this with you before where reading the genealogy. As you know we go through the Bible book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, and every once in a while we have all these names. And it is like, what does this have to do with me? It is the only book that I know that you can read the names and if somebody does not know Christ you can bring conviction to their hearts. I have seen people in this church that while I was apologizing for the list of names, yet were crying and made to feel uneasy. Just reading the names. I do not mean to be blasphemous, but it is not the book that is alive, it is the Spirit of God that is alive. Without the Spirit of God it is just a book.

This mystery is being shared and **made known to all the nations for obedience of faith.** Galatians 5:22 tells us that faith is produced by the Holy Spirit. It is fruit of God's Spirit.

If you were to come and ask me, "Here is my situation I don't know what to do." Now in years past, I would have had a little notebook there that said okay that is situation 3B and it says here you are supposed to do this. But it does not seem to work out that way. When people come to me and say, "Here is my situation, what should I do? How do I know what the Lord wants me to do?"

"I do not know, what is He persuading you to do?"

"Nothing."

Bingo. Do nothing. As simple as that.

Just like I said the first hour, it is not that the Lord gives us His strength so that my weaknesses will now be strong - so He does not give us messages and tell us what to do. He calls us to follow Him. I always ask, "Well, if you don't know what to do, what is the Lord doing in this situation? Follow Him."

"Well, He is not doing anything."

"Have a seat. Do what He does."

If He is not doing anything then be still and know that He is God. Enjoy His peace and His presence and confidence in Him. Look for the Lord to move and be following Him.

He is not like an information booth and we come to Him say, "Well, I have to make this decision" and He says, "Okay, now go down the street about two blocks, and turn right and go down and turn left." Oh, thanks Lord, and off we go. He does not give us little messages to tell us what to. It is His Spirit in us and before us that we follow. And that also is faith.

Now I do not know about you, but since I have had my automobile accidents and I have grown old - if we get in a car and we start out, I like to know where we are going. We are going to the store. Which one? What street? I mean I want to know where I am going from here, not at the last minute. Okay. And even I get confused about that. I am thinking to myself, well I have a doctor's appointment with my orthopaedic surgeon so here we go. And just out of habit I drive down Betteravia and get on the freeway and Patty says, "Where are you going?"

"Freeway."

"Yeah, but the doctor is that way. He's on Betteravia, you should have kept going."

So we were 15 - 20 minutes late because I had to get off on Stowell, turn around, come back. So even when I think I know I am going I do not always go in the right place.

But faith is not like that. God does not have to tell us what to do. He does not have to tell us what He is doing. That is what faith is. I do not have to know. I just have to know that *He is*. That He is in charge. That He is working. He is there. I do not have to think positive to know that Christ is alive and that He is in control of my circumstances. He just is. So whatever He does, I will follow. If He does nothing - maybe again it is age, but if He does nothing, I am more than happy just to sit at home. Do not have to do anything.

In I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9 Paul says that faith is given to people by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus Christ is the author, the architect, and the completer of the faith. Not *our* faith, but *the* faith.

And again my favorite verse, right now anyway, Galatians chapter 2 verse 20. Paul says, **I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in**

me: and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. When Jesus died I died. He died my death. I was crucified with Him. Yet He continues to live in me, but it is His faith that is living in me. Invisible. But He is the true and living God. And His Spirit is alive and active. So the first characteristic is the Lord who is able to establish us.

Verse 27, the second characteristic, **To the only wise God.** Which can be translated in different ways: to the only God who is wise; or to the only wise God; or to the wise God who is the only one. It is all projecting the same message. He is the only God and He is the only wise God.

In first Corinthians chapter 1 verses 30 and 31 Jesus Christ is presented to us as being our wisdom. What I learn with my intellect is not wisdom - Christ is my wisdom. He does not give me wisdom. He is my wisdom.

Again this is being pronounced to God in benediction, **To the only wise God is the glory through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.** Notice how it is translated: He is the glory, through Jesus Christ. The word *be*, if you notice in the text is in italics. It was inserted. Yet whenever you see the word *be* the Greek text expects the verb *is*. It is not a pronouncement of blessing upon Him nor upon us but is a factual statement, **To Him is the glory, through Jesus Christ into the ages, or forever. Amen.**

So we have finished the book of Romans. I almost feel like maybe next Sunday we ought to review. I do not know how long it has been - somebody has been keeping track

Let's close with prayer.