



## The Gospel: A Mystery Revealed, Powerful and Glorious

(Romans 16:25–27)

Today, we end our study of the book of Romans with Paul's doxology at the close of his epistle. In it he praises God for the gospel which he describes as being a mystery revealed, powerful, and glorious. It is fitting that Paul winds up his book by bringing us to God. To God be the glory! This is where all preaching should lead.

In my preparation, I came across a gem from the writings of Origen, an Early Church Father, which, as you will discover, provides an insightful look into the passage that will be at the heart of today's sermon. Writing upon Romans 16:25–27 in his commentary on Romans, Origen wrote:

Paul wants to show that there are two ways in which those who believe in the gospel are strengthened. One is by his preaching, which is the preaching of Christ. The other is by the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages, and which has now been revealed in Christ . . . not without suitable witnesses but with the backing of the prophetic Scriptures. (as cited in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, Volume VI, Romans*, edited by Gerald Bray. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 366.

Did you catch what Origen said? For the gospel to do us any good, two things must happen: 1) It must be preached 2) the mystery of it must be revealed.

Praise is given to God for the gospel, the good news of salvation that is found in Christ, because our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit planned the salvation of sinners. He also accomplished it, and applied it. There is a quickening power in the gospel, but that life-giving power is generated by the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit opening our blind eyes, our deaf ears, and breathing life into our dead hearts the gospel will do us no good. Satan has so blinded our eyes that even when the gospel is clearly and plainly preached, unless the Spirit reveals to us "the mystery," it goes in one ear and out the other. The gospel will remain hidden to us without the Holy Spirit's work. Those who have experienced that work of the Holy Spirit, i.e.—God's resurrection power inwardly in their innermost being, that figuratively raises us from the dead like Lazarus, will praise God like Jonah, who said, "Salvation comes from the LORD" (Jonah 2:10).

The book of Romans is not only about the work of Christ in salvation, but also the Holy Spirit's work is also highlighted. In it we discover that our Triune God has provided a way of deliverance from, not only the penalty of sin, but also from its power. As we look toward the future, the time will come when those saved will also be delivered from the presence of sin. Romans is a glorious book! Do you remember climbing the summit of God's love in Romans chapter 8 (the "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" passage) after the section on the work of the Holy Spirit?

Our outline today will bring us from a consideration of the gospel to the praise of God. In Paul's doxology, we will discover the following aspects about the gospel.

1. The gospel is the announcement of Christ's salvation.
2. The gospel is a mystery revealed.
3. The gospel is a transforming power.
4. The gospel is the means to a Godward focus and praise of our Triune God.

Table 1. Romans 16:25–27

<p><sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, <sup>26</sup> but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.</p>	<p><b>Now to Him [the only wise God]</b>  <b>Who will strengthen you</b>          1) according to (<i>kata</i>) my gospel          [means] and the announcement          (i.e. the preaching) of Jesus Christ           2) according to (<i>kata</i>) the revelation of the mystery          hidden for long ages          but now revealed and made known          [means] through the prophetic writings          [means] by (<i>kata</i>) the command of the eternal God          [purpose] unto (<i>eis</i>) the obedience of faith          [purpose] unto (<i>eis</i>) all nations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>to the only wise God</b>  <b>be glory forever</b>          through Jesus Christ</p>
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Paul began his letter by saying he wanted to come among the Romans to strengthen them (Romans 1:11) and he wanted to preach the gospel to them (Romans 1:15). He also said that he wanted to call them to “the obedience of faith” (Romans 1:7). Paul ends his letter with some of the same themes he begins with. However, he points the Romans to the One who can bring it all to pass – **the only wise God**.

What about the hiddenness of the gospel in Old Testament times? It is like reading a mystery novel. There has been a murder. Someone did it. The author knows. The reader does not at first. The author drops clues. The reader may or may not pick up on the hints. But then there comes the aha moment! I know who the killer is! Now that you know the entire novel seems to point to the killer. The mystery is a mystery no longer.

Once you see what Jesus Christ did, once you refresh your mind with the Old Testament Scriptures (the only Scriptures that Christ and the apostles had), you begin to see Christ everywhere.

Jesus said, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39). –**through the prophetic writings**

The Apostles being taught by Christ about how He fulfilled the Scriptures were commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Matthew 28:16–20, Mark 16:15). –**by (*kata*) the command of the eternal God**

### 1. The gospel is the announcement of Christ’s salvation.

It is to be proclaimed. “Hear ye! Hear ye! Thus, saith the Lord!” We are to herald it. We are to preach it.

But preaching is not enough.

### 2. The gospel is a mystery revealed.

We must look to the Lord to open hearts and minds. People must see it, just hearing it will not do. The gospel needs to be embraced by faith.

The word and Spirit are seen in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones that came to life. The bones in Ezekiel 37 had to be prophesied to, but there would be no life until the Sovereign LORD breathed into them.

It was not enough for Nikodemus to hear the gospel from Christ lips in John 3. He must be born of the Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit must be operative before a person can see the gospel and embrace it is why “the only wise God” is to be praised and to receive glory. When the gospel is preached and mingled with the work of the Holy Spirit and new life occurs, the cry of new-born faith can be heard!

If you have responded to the gospel and have embraced Jesus as your Savior, it is because God has taken away your stony heart and has given life to you!

**1 Corinthians 3:5,6** <sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

### 3. The gospel is a transforming power.

Paul made that known in the first chapter.

**Romans 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because **it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes**: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

This past week I came across a moving example of the power of the gospel. (please bear with me. I am going to read it. You are going to like this. I have made up copies for you to take home after the message).

“Those Who Sow in Tears: The Story of David and Svea Flood”

Everything about the Christian life entails impossibilities, things that are impossible for you, but easy for God to do on your behalf.

a. Salvation

b. Overcoming sin’s power in your life

### 4. The gospel is the means to a Godward focus and praise of our Triune God

When you know through experience the reality of sin’s forgiven and sin’s power subdued, and you know that it is because of God’s grace to you, then you cannot help but praise God.

Paul was able to preach as he did because he knew first-hand what it was to live daily in God’s presence, and to have the mind of Christ, because he had come to know God through time spent in God’s Word (the Bible). Paul was mighty in the Scriptures.

Would you like peace and joy, then embrace Christ as your Savior, spend time with Him reading His Word, pray to Him, be obedient (walk in His ways). If you do so, you will experience His care and direction. It will not always be smooth sailing. Expect the storms. Know this, God will steer you through the toughest of life’s calamities. You can trust Him.

This is my next to the last message to you as your pastor. If I can get you to the place of a Godward look and to have trusting faith in Him, then I know that I have left you in a safe and good state.