

## Sermon Notes on “Friends and a Great Doxology” Romans 16:21-27

*Paul concludes his letter with two things that really matter in life: people and the gospel, so he shares a few more greetings from those who wanted to extend their love toward the Roman church (v. 21-24) and then provides a doxology to the Lord for His great gospel (v. 25-27).*

### 1. The ministry of God’s people matter (16:21-24)

- a. Paul lists eight more people who want to share their greetings to the church at Rome and it reminds us of how important people are in the Lord’s ministry:
  - i. God uses **diverse people** who are “*in the Lord*” (v. 22):
    1. Paul mentions some lower-class people (Tertius and Quartus whose names mean “*third*” and “*fourth*” as slaves, yet now in Christ, Tertius is Paul’s trusted secretary and Quartus is his “*brother*” in Christ.
    2. Paul mentions some upper-class people (Erastus the city treasurer.
    3. Paul mentions some fellow Jews (“*my kinsmen*” -he’s mentioned six of them since verse 7 and now adds Lucus, Jason and Sosipater).
    4. What connects all of these is the most important designation we all share in common (v. 22: “*in the Lord*” – communicated 11x in chapter 16)
  - ii. God uses **ordinary people** who are growing to live for the Lord through sound doctrine (the most doctrinally deep letter in the New Testament is written to common everyday people, not to professional theologians)
  - iii. God uses **ministry workers** (v. 21): Paul has already mentioned eight workers (v. 1, 3, 6, 9, 12), now he mentioned one of his most faithful (“*Timothy*”) and “*Gaius*” who opened his home for the church to gather.
- b. Don’t ever underestimate any word or deed of ministry, no matter how small when it’s done in the name of the Lord (Zech 4:10 – “*the day of small things*”)

### 2. The message of God’s gospel matters (16:25-27)

- a. The final three verses are a doxology of praise (v. 24 is probably not in the original text since it’s not in earlier manuscripts and Paul already

communicated this in verse 20). This doxology reminds us that theology flows out into a heart that overflows in praise to God. It's His glory, not our happiness or fulfillment that is the goal of the gospel (v. 25: "Now to Him..."; v. 27: "be the glory forever")

- i. It's an **empowered** message (v. 25a: "Now to Him who is able"; v. 26c: "leading to obedience of faith"): On our own, we are impotent to change our lives. Only the Lord is able to resurrect a dead heart or rescue a condemned life or pay our unpayable debt of sin or transfer us into "*the kingdom of His beloved Son*" or satisfy God's raging wrath against us or reconcile us from being His enemy or adopt us into His eternal family or redeem us from the slave-market of sin or give us the gift of eternal life.
- ii. It's an **establishing** message (v. 26-27: the word for "establish" is where we get our word steroids. It means to make something stable or fix something so it stands upright and immovable and God does this for us in 5 ways)
  1. Through a divinely delivered "gospel" God gave Paul (Gal. 1:11-15)
  2. Through the "preaching of Jesus Christ"
  3. Through the "revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past" (the gospel was not clearly seen in the Old Testament as it is to us who see it clearly in the New Testament, yet it was communicated.
  4. Through the "Scriptures of the prophets": The gospel we now see clearly ("but now is manifested") was in the shadows for those before Christ, but it was in the prophets message all along, but didn't come into sharp focus until the death and resurrection of Christ.
  5. Through the result of the gospel that "leads to obedience of faith" (seen in Rom. 1:5): We are not saved by faith plus works, but by a genuine faith that always results in a life of obedience to Christ (not perfect, but it is one way "we know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments" – 1 John 2:3)
- iii. It's an **everyone-everywhere** message (v. 26b: "according to the commandment of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations"): Paul is not saying the missionary task is completed [he's planning on going to Spain], but he's emphasizing the universal applicability of the gospel to everyone, everywhere.

**No one could have ever dreamed us this brilliant message except our “God who is able” (v. 25); who is “eternal” (v. 26) and “the only wise God” (v. 27).**

**So:**

1. Are you willing to **admit the bad news** of life? You have a big problem (1:18; 3:10, 23) and a big predicament (8:8-9; 3:20; 6:23a)
2. Are you willing to **accept the good news** of life? You’ve been given a unique provision (5:8; 6:23B; 3:24) and an eternal promise (4:5; 10:9-10, 13, 8:1-2)