

**Grace to You** :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

## **Our Thankful Praise for Salvation**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 82-8

As we link together tonight our time of thanksgiving with the Lord's Table, we will connect our thanksgiving to the sacrifice of Christ. The Old Testament is full of praise, particularly the Psalms. But the New Testament is also full of praise. It's not located in one place as in the Old Testament book of Psalms, there is no New Testament Psalter. But doxologies are spread throughout the New Testament in critical places and places that are instructed for our worship. I want to just look at a few of them for you to consider tonight as we offer our thanks to God for the gift of Jesus Christ.

Open your Bible to Galatians chapter 1, and the first of these New Testament doxologies, these New Testament calls to praise is found in verses 3, 4 and 5. Galatians chapter 1: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, who gave Himself for our sins."

The great truth of substitutionary atonement, the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for the people of God. And by that sacrifice comes the forgiveness of sin and rescue from this present evil age. What is a proper response to such a reality? It is doxology, and that is verse 5, speaking of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen."

And this is how, in particular, Pauline doxologies occur in the New Testament. They aren't gathered into one place or another, they're spread throughout the writings of the apostle, and they appear in almost spontaneous form just after some great declaration related to our salvation. We have received grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the sacrifice for our sins, He rescued us from this present evil age. All of this according to the will of our God and Father; and our response can only be to give Him glory forevermore. Amen, so let it be. We have been delivered. We will not perish with this passing world. We have been rescued. We have been forgiven. Our sins have been paid for. The response is to glorify the One who has given us such an unspeakable gift.

At the end of Paul's letter to the Romans, if you will, turn to the sixteenth chapter. Paul, of course, in the book of Romans has gone to the very heights of salvation doctrine. He has swept through that doctrine and finally comes to a final chapter, some personal notes; talks about the people who have helped him. But he brings it all to a final conclusion in verses 25 and following.

"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith." And what he's talking about is the New Testament revelation of the gospel, the full understanding of the gospel, which was mystery in the Old Testament, kept secret; but now, since Christ has come, is manifested. And now the Scriptures of the prophets have meaning as they are being fulfilled according to the

commandment of the eternal God, and the gospel is being made known to all the nations leading to the obedience of faith. Faith is an act of obedience to the will of God. Paul realizes that the gospel has established us, verse 25.

Not only do we have forgiveness of sins, not only have we been rescued from this world, this present evil age, but we have been established by the gospel, by the preaching of Jesus, by the mystery of the full revelation of the gospel, the fulfillment of the writings of the prophets. We have been given the truth; we stand on the truth. God has worked this truth in us so that our lives are firm, and settled, and fixed, and confirmed, and confident, and immovable, and solid on the truth. What a blessing this is, to be not only mentally stable, mentally settled on truth, but to be spiritually settled on truth as well.

Without the gospel, without the words of Jesus, without the New Testament, we would never be settled, we would always be waiting, as Old Testament saints were, for that mysterious reality to appear – the Messiah and His redemptive work. But He did appear; and because of that, and because of our faith in Him, we are settled.

What is our response? And here again another doxology, verse 27, “To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” Again, an almost spontaneous outburst of thankfulness, not just for forgiveness, but for spiritual stability, standing firmly on the truth.

In writing to Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 1, we find another of these kinds of outbursts of praise. As Paul thinks of his own life, he says, “It is a trustworthy statement,” – 1 Timothy 1:15 – “deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” Eternal life is what’s in Paul’s mind here.

Not only have we been given forgiveness, not only have we been given atonement through the death of Christ, not only have we been given mental and spiritual stability as we stand on the revealed Word of God – the full Word of God, Old Testament and New Testament – but we have been given eternal life, a quality of life that belongs to God. It is God’s life; it is everlasting life. God has endured us, the worst of sinners, the foremost of all. He has granted us mercy in order to display His perfect patience. He has granted us that eternal life, put Himself on display and the magnanimous character of His grace. And what is the only possible response to such a contemplation of that mercy and that eternal life? Verse 17, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” We’re beginning to see that Paul’s thinking is punctuated with doxology. That should be characteristic of our very lives. Our theology should produce doxology.

Look to Ephesians for just a moment, chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1, another illustration of this. He blesses God in verse 3, but we’ll start in verse 4.

“Our God and Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, first chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” This is an astounding list.

God chose us. He chose us to make us holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us. He adopted us as His children. He redeemed us, He forgave our sins, He lavished grace on us, and He gave us an inheritance. He sealed us with the Spirit, the pledge of that inheritance.

An astonishing list of grace gifts. The only proper response is the very response that begins this section, verse 3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” This time Paul begins with the doxology, and then gives the reason for it. All we could ever imagine, and even beyond what we could imagine, is ours in Christ: forgiveness, saving truth, eternal life, all spiritual blessings. There should be just constant doxological praise rising out of our hearts.

Philippians chapter 4 and verse 18, Paul says, “I have received everything in full and have an abundance;” – not lacking anything “I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.” And then this, verse 19, “My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. My God will supply all your needs, all your needs.”

Not just forgiveness, not just atonement, not just saving truth, not just eternal life, not just all spiritual blessings, but all your needs, all your needs. Not only in the spiritual realm, but in the earthly realm. And in this case he’s talking about that, to make up for any sacrifice that had been made by the apostle or by anybody else. There will never be a need unmet in the life of a believer. What a promise.

How do we respond to that? Verse 20: “Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” And again, spontaneous thanksgiving erupts from the mind and heart of one who contemplates the greatness and the vastness of God’s goodness in our salvation.

Second Timothy chapter 4 gives us a glimpse at another such paean of praise. This is the end of Paul’s journey, the end of his life. This is his last letter. It’s sad. He says in verse 16, “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom,” the promise of the Lord holding on to His own and bringing every believer into heavenly glory. And what is the only possible response? End of verse 18: “To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

And you can see that doxology lived right on the edge of the lips of Paul. It wasn’t just Paul. Turn to

Jude. In this little epistle, there is a beautiful doxology down in verse 24 that really parallels what we just read from Paul.

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” Is that not an amazing promise. You will not stumble, you will stand in the presence of His glory, and you will stand there blameless with great joy. You will stand there blameless. What should be the response? Verse 25: “To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” As believers, this is how we are to live our lives, with praise on our lips at all times.

And a final doxology in the eleventh chapter of Romans. Romans chapter 11. Paul has come to the end of this chapter and really to the end of the entire section, from chapter 1 through 11, in which he talks about the greatness of salvation. And verse 32 sort of wraps it up: “He has shut up all in disobedience” – that is He has denounced all as sinners – “so that He may show mercy to all.” The news was bad; and then, of course, the news was good – the gospel. God indicts the world; God indicts the sinner, so that the sinner in seeing his condition can flee to Him for mercy.

What kind of an amazing God is this, who puts us in the inescapable condition of disobedience beforehand, who declares that we are unworthy, we are disobedient, we are wretched, corrupt, sinful, hopeless, helpless? We have nothing to commend ourselves. And then He shows mercy to us. What is the only possible response? Verse 33: “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Sound theology always ends up in doxology. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgements,” – judgments that render grace and mercy to us.

Psalms 92:5 says, “Your thoughts are very deep.” Psalm 139 says, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; I cannot attain to it.” We cannot even grasp the fringe of God’s vast knowledge, and the wonder of His mercy and grace. He pours it out on us. And in response, we give Him glory forever. Amen.

That’s a thankful life. It’s fine to be thankful for the things that we have in this life, but you will not find such an outburst in contemplation of those things in the New Testament Epistles. These kinds of outbursts are connected to the contemplation of our salvation, as rightly they should be; and it is because of that salvation that we gather around this Table tonight. Let’s bow together in just a word of prayer and ask the Lord to be with us in a special way.

Our Father, we have opened our hearts and declared our gratitude to You. We have borrowed the words of the apostle Paul and of Jude. We want to give You glory and honor for providing for us an atonement, forgiveness, rescue, the truth in which we stand, mercy, grace, for meeting all our needs, for granting us eternal life, for keeping us so that we would never stumble, but would appear in the presence of our Lord blameless and with great joy. Because of that, Lord, we want to honor You and praise Your name. We’ve heard Your praise sung, we’ve joined in the singing; but now may it rise from our hearts as we think about all that You have done for us at the cross, which is pictured in this simple ceremony.

Lord, I ask that You would work in every life, in every heart. Reveal to us anything that doesn't belong there – any thought, any attitude, any desire, any longing that doesn't honor You. Help us to understand there may be relationships in our lives that do not bring You honor. We need You to help us make them right. We want, Lord, to come to this Table and we want to praise You. We want to glorify You and honor You. We want it to be an experience of doxology, as we praise You, as we glorify You, Your name forever and ever. And we can't do that, Lord, unless our hearts are pure before You.

So wash us and make us clean from anything that displeases You at all, and help us to see in this simple beauty of this service a way in which we can truly offer praise. Even in taking the bread and the cup we are glorifying the one who gave His life for us. May that be our heart attitude, even as we worship together. We thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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