

# To God Be Glory Through Jesus Christ Forever Amen

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by Blair Bradley

## **Romans 16:25-27**

**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.

I am here today because I have been invited to be here by your Pastor whom I have met and have grown to love and admire. And I take it as a great honor to stand behind this pulpit in this Church where I am sure so many great and powerful expositions of the Word of God have come forth. I am *not* your Pastor but a simple and utterly unimportant servant of the Lord Christ- and so I beg for your prayers and your mercy as I stand here trembling this morning and pray that God will open my lips so that my mouth may show forth His Praise.

I have chosen this passage today because it ends what is perhaps the greatest letter ever written- **The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans**. And as I told many of you this morning- this is the Book that radically transformed me from being fully Pentecostal to being fully Reformed. This is the Book that brought me from being fully Arminian to being fully Calvinistic. This is the Book that brought me from being fully convinced of the Omnipotence of Man's free will to being fully convinced of The Doctrines of Grace. This is the Book that brought me from a patchwork of very sincere but very contradictory and very inconsistent and confusing beliefs and teachings into the simplicity and the wonder and the majesty and the stability of Scripture alone.

This is the Book that- as I labored and struggled and agonized every week to study and to learn and to comprehend so that I could teach expositionally to my Church in Gulfport- more and more of what I had been taught from a young man of 16, and more and more of what I myself had taught over a period of about 30 years was upended and systematically destroyed as I began to truly learn Christ. So as I tasted and savored every Word of this masterpiece, and as I chewed them and digested them, and as I regurgitated them yet again and re-chewed and re-swallowed them again and again- and over and over- the powerful and glorious Truths of God's Grace in Jesus Christ in Paul's great exposition began to burden my soul and make me miserable, and it did great damage to my own arrogance, and it

humiliated me and it broke the staff of my pride, and I literally fell on my face on the floor in my office one Sunday Night over 9 years ago and in the words of Jonathan Edwards:

“The infinite weight and power of the Word of God fell in on me and I could do no other than repent and cry out to God”

The great and powerful Truths of **Romans** broke me and shattered my man-made religion and brought me low and changed my life and made me free. So I stand before you today- trembling at the infinite weight of what the Apostle writes here as he leaves off his Theological teaching of the first 8 Chapters about the marvelous Grace of God through Jesus Christ in justifying unworthy sinners by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone; and as he concludes his powerful exposition of the Sovereignty of God in election in general and in Israel in particular in Chapters 9-11; and as he now concludes his exhortation about how we are to live our lives now that we have been gloriously saved by God's Grace in Chapters 12-15.

Paul is now finished with this part of the inspired Revelation of God to Man. God the Holy Spirit has moved upon Paul as the wind moves a sailing vessel across the sea, and what Paul has written down here is **Inspired**- that mysterious process by which these words were *theopneustos*- breathed out by God- which by extension, that means that every Word of this Book is also **Inerrant**- in that it *does not* contain any errors; it is **Infallible**- in that it *cannot* contain any errors; it is **Authoritative**- in that Scripture is the final rule and Authority concerning all teaching and all holy living; and these words here are Relevant- meaning that these Words here are just as appropriate today as they were 2,000 years ago.

So this doxology here; this praise; this worship makes up part of the most unique Book in all the earth- a Book that is the *Verbum Dei*- the Word of God in the earth and a Book that is the *Vox Dei*- the Voice of God in the earth. And so by God's Grace- we are able to sort of look over Paul's shoulder, as it were, and through the illumination of the Holy Spirit- we are so blessed today that we may dive into these words so that the power and the importance of them can change our lives today.

Here in this passage- Paul is once again captured by the enormity of what God the Holy Spirit has moved upon him to pen down- which I assume happened to him a lot- and he is now overwhelmed at this Amazing Grace, and Paul begins to just worship the Lord as he ends this Epistle by exclaiming:

**To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.**

And he concludes this praise and exaltation of our great God with the ancient Hebrew affirmation, “**Amen**” which means: *so let it be*, or *let it be truly*, or in our vernacular, Paul says, “*Yes!*”

So we will focus today on that which is fundamental to our Faith and our Salvation and our very existence- the Glory of God.

Now, "the Glory of God" is probably the single most common phrase that is uttered among genuinely born again believers. We talk often about the Glory of God and we pray about it and we preach about it- but just what *is* the Glory of God? In my travels as I sit with people from all over and ask them to describe for me the Glory of God- I usually get two or three word answers such as, "*it is great,*" or "*it is awesome,*" or "*it wonderful,*" but very few ever talk in any depth about something that is supposed to be the primary purpose of all Creation.

So I am here today to remind you of the Glory of God. I am here to remind you that God's infinite Passion for His Own Glory is basic to the God that we love and serve. I am here to remind you- although you probably know this better than most- that God doesn't do *anything* in the Universe unless it brings Himself Glory. And that one single concept which dominates the Scriptures and which comprises the overwhelming majority of the entirety of all that is written in these 66 Books is put forth to us by the various human writers in three different ways:

- A. When God says, "*For My Glory!*"
- B. When God Says, "*For my Name's Sake!*"
- C. When God says, "*So they will know that there is none like unto me in all the earth*"

All three of those statements that are found from cover to cover in the Bible all say the same thing- God does what He does for no other reason other than it brings Himself Glory.

So since this Glory is infinitely important to God- it should be infinitely important to us. For example- **Isaiah 43:7** says that we all were created- *not* to do our own thing and *not* to live our lives according to the dictates of our own heart- but we were created for God's Glory. **Isaiah 48:9** and **1John 2:12** says that the only reason that God does not vanquish us in his Anger, but forgives us, is *not* because we are such fine people and are *entitled* to that forgiveness, but because of His Own Name's sake. And **Exodus 9:14** says that the reason that God delivers his Children and saves them is *not* because of *their* personal value- but so that the entire world will know that there is none like God in all the earth.

In fact, Paul taught in **2Thessalonians 1:10** that the main purpose as to why the Lord will burst through the clouds of Heaven and return with great Power and Glory is so that He will be glorified by his saints and be admired by all those who believe. Yea, verily Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 5:16** that the entire purpose as to why we as believers are to do "good works" in our communities among the lost is so that men will *see* those "good works" and glorify our Father Who is in Heaven.

The Reformers were so captivated by this one single subject that they taught the Latin phrase, *Soli Deo Gloria*- that everything we do in the Church and in our families and in our lives and with our money and in our minds and in our hearts should be to the Glory of God. And that Truth goes so far up as to dictate the great and earthshaking elements of our lives, and it goes so far down to be the catalyst as to what we eat and what we drink.

Now contrast that high view of God that leaves us breathless and speechless at the Grandeur of God's Glory with what is being taught far too often in the modern Church, as it is common to hear terms like:

- ✓ Self-Fulfillment
- ✓ Self-Esteem
- ✓ Self-Help
- ✓ Self-Expression

Those humanistic and unbiblical and pagan terms seek to diminish the Glory of God as they expand the glory of Man. So why would believers ever use them?

So the Glory of God is fundamental to God and fundamental to the Church and since 13 of 16 Chapters of **Romans** deals with the Glory of God- and since **Romans** contains almost all of the Christian Theology about Salvation- I suggest to you that the main reason why Paul wrote Romans is to teach us that the most vivid expression of God's Glory; the most astounding manifestation of the Glory of God; the single most tangible substance of the Majesty of God's Glory is *not* found in a waterfall or a sunset or a supernova or child's eyes, but is found in the very Face of the Lord Jesus Christ as God saves unworthy sinners by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone.

And since that is true- we must know that satan is deathly afraid of the Glory of God and so:

**the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2Corinthians 4:4)**

So satan hates the Glory of Jesus and labors with all his might to keep it from being seen because the "seeing" of God's Glory for what it is- is the transformation of everything else. The Apostle said this in **2Corinthians 3:18**:

**... beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, (we all) are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Now we talk a lot today about having marriages for the Glory of God, and of handling our money for the Glory of God, and of running our businesses for the Glory of God, and of living our lives to the Glory of God, but I suggest to you that if we are really serious about all that- then we need to realize that there is a certain priority or order between those things and the Glory of God, and that is this:

God and His Glory is ultimate- and those things are not

God is the most important reality, and our marriages and our money and our businesses and our lives are less important. *Far less* important... *infinitely* less important. Marriages exist to magnify God; Money and all our possessions and

even life itself – all of these things exist to magnify the Value and the Worth and the Importance of God. God does *not* exist to magnify marriage or our possessions or even our lives. And until that order is firm in our minds and truly valued in our hearts- our marriages and our businesses and our possessions and our lives will not “be” to the Glory of God.

So I suggest to you that we need to stop talking so much about our marriages and our money and our businesses and our lives, and we need to talk more about the Glory of God until God visits us once again, and until we have a genuine, Heaven sent revival of falling in love with God again, and until we have a revival of being in awe of God again, and of standing astounded with our mouths gaping at God again; and until we have revival of the fear of the Lord- that reverential respect of this glorious God.

So let me encourage you today to not be so enamored over your smart phones or your I-pads, or the latest technological or medical advancements, or the latest special effects of *Avatar*, but that we all become once again enamored with God as being the single most glorious and lovely and important and worthwhile Being in the Universe.

The Bible teaches us that everything exists for the Glory of God, and so everything is here- to magnify and exalt and display and declare the Value and the Worth and the Beauty and the Importance of God. And so I say to you that the same thing holds true for Salvation. Salvation exists- not simply so we can miss the lake of fire and spend eternity reunited with those who have gone before us as we walk on streets of gold.

But Salvation was created by God for the Glory of God. And the Justification of unworthy sinners through the Grace and Mercy of an infinitely Righteous God declares the Beauty and the Importance and the Value and the Worth of God far better than anything else.

And by using the term “magnify,” I do *not* mean the kind of magnification that you do with a *microscope*- but rather the magnifying that you do with a *telescope*. A microscope takes things that are unbelievably small and makes them appear to be larger than they really are so you can see them. But a telescope takes things that are unbelievably large and brings them into human reality so we can see them and comprehend them. A microscope moves things *away* from reality while a telescope moves things *toward* reality. It is blasphemy to attempt to magnify God with a microscope- but it is worship to magnify God with a telescope.

God is unimaginably great; He is infinitely valuable; God is unsurpassed in beauty-

### **Psalms 145:3**

**Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.**

Now as he taught the radical Theology of Justification by Faith alone in **Romans**- Paul was overcome with the enormity of the Glory of God in Salvation and he exclaimed in **Romans 11:33-36**:

**33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!**

**34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?**

**35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?**

**36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.**

**Amen.**

So everything is *from* God, and everything is sustained *by* God, and everything is designed *for* God's Glory, or you can read the same thing about Christ in **Colossians 1:16-19** that says:

**16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:**

**17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**

**18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

**19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;**

So everything was made *for* Jesus Christ- and woe unto you if you think that the phrase "for Him" means: for His *improvement* or for His *benefit*, as so much of the children's curriculum teaches in Sunday Schools all across this country. In effect it teaches young people to think, "*Poor old God- He had to create the Universe because He was lonely and wanted a friend*". My dear friends- that is- to put it as gentle as I know how- blasphemy!

No, when the Bible says that everything was made for Jesus Christ that means that everything was made *for* Jesus Christ to the *Glory* of Jesus Christ.

So, the foundation that I am trying to lay here today is that- just like everything else- Salvation was created by God for the Glory of God. So I struggle today to get you to see your own everlasting life in Jesus Christ as the greatest means by which God can be exalted in His Value and in His Worth and in His Beauty and in His Importance.

Now the absence of God in this world is breathtaking. When you stop and think about just how sinful sin is to God - it is unbelievable that we are not crushed under the weight of God's Wrath against our sins- and we need to know that we are *not* crushed for only one reason- the Glory of God's Name in choosing us for Salvation, and the Glory of God's Grace in actually saving us.

But even though it is real bad that God is absent in the minds of the lost- the absence of God in the Church among believers is unconscionable. Because the modern Church has left off being distinct *from* the world and we are now part of the world- we know how to lose weight and how to balance our checkbooks and how to live more moral lives- but we know less about God and His Glory than any generation of Christians in history. And that sin must stop today.

The pulpits of the modern Church are filled with politics and social issues and moral pronouncements but they are not filled with God. They are not filled with God and the *particularities* of His Glory, and we are left with very general and very vague *generalities* about God that leave our heads empty of the infinite Majesty and Worth and Awe of the spectacular Glory of God.

And that is why, for example- most of us are no longer captured or overwhelmed by **the Glory of God's Eternality**, and our minds no longer explode with the knowledge that God never had a beginning. Or why we are not amazed at **the Glory of God's Omniscience** that makes Quantum Physics look like a first grade reader. Or **the Glory of God's Wisdom**, and we no longer stand in awe of the fact that God has never and will never be counseled by anybody. Or **the Glory of God's Omnipotence** in that God is Almighty so much so that without God's allowance- no man or beast or angel or demon on earth or in Heaven or in hell moves once single inch. Or in **the Glory of God's Providence** whereby no bird hops on the ground and not one single leaf in the Amazon Forest falls to the ground and not one hair on our head turns white. Or **the Glory of God's Word** which upholds the entire universe and all the atoms and all the subatomic particles in it as well as all the galaxies and all the stars. Or **the Glory of God's Power** to walk on water and raise the dead and heal organic diseases and curse fig trees and open blind eyes and raise the dead. Or **the Glory of God's Purity** whereby Jesus Christ never, ever sinned one single time; Jesus never had a bad attitude for even one millisecond; He never lusted- not one single time; He never coveted- ever; He never was envious or enacted vengeance. Or **the Glory of God's Trustworthiness**- God *always* keeps His Word and He has never let one single Promise fall to the ground and He *cannot* lie. Or **the Glory of His Justice**- whereby- at the end of all time- there will be no outstanding accounts left open and *everything* will be forever settled either on the Cross or in Hell- every man, woman and child will either be redeemed or they will burn forever in Hell, and there will be absolutely no injustice. Or **the Glory of His Patience**- as God endures decade after decade after decade of Blair Bradley's sin and agonizingly slow Sanctification. Or **the Glory of God's Slave like Obedience**- as Jesus fully embraced the most excruciating death ever invented by Man in humble and joyful obedience to His Father. Or **the Glory of God's Wrath** which one day will be poured out in such infinite fierceness that men and women and children will cry for the rocks to fall on them to hide them rather than have to look on the Face of the Lamb of God. Or **the Glory of God's Grace**- which justifies the ungodly; or **the Glory of God's Love** that dies for us while we are yet sinners.

And until we grasp and until we are so overwhelmed with all of the *particularities* of God's Glory- to the point where we thunder it from our pulpits and are consumed by it in our own daily lives; Until we make God to be so magnificently attractive in all of His various Attributes- none of our marriages and none of our money and none of our businesses and none of our lives will be lived to the Glory of God! And please hear me when I tell you that the very epitome of the Vastness and

infinite Worth of God's Glory is found in Jesus Christ in Salvation. So much for my introduction.

Now exactly what did Paul mean in verse 27, when he said,

"To God *be* glory"?

In the original Greek- as Paul wrote it- there is no verb at all. It simply says literally,

"To God, glory!"

And I think the absence of any verb here opens the meaning to two things:

1. A worshipful statement of fact
2. A worshipful expression of longing or desire

The statement of fact would be: "*To God belongs glory!*" In other words, we are heralding this Fact and Truth in worship: that God *is* infinitely glorious! And whether you or I see it or not- God has Glory and He displays that Glory.

And the expression of Paul's longing or his desire would be,

"May glory be *given* to God!"

... That is, may all the people on the earth see God as glorious and praise Him as being glorious.

"Give God glory,"

... not in the sense of us *adding* anything to His Glory, but in the sense of us *acknowledging* that Glory and treasuring it. So when Paul leaves the verb out and simply says,

"To the only wise God, glory!"

... I think he has both of these two things in mind:

- A. The statement of fact: God *is* glorious!
- B. And the longing or the desire: May all the nations see God's Glory and acknowledge it and value it as their highest Treasure!

And I suggest to you that those two things is really what **Romans** is all about- understanding the fact that God is glorious and of doing everything we can to encourage the nations of the world to see that- by actually being saved and of living out that Salvation before all men.



So let's see if that is true. And let's turn to **Romans 1:5** to begin- even though the word *glory* is not actually there—because the substance is there so clearly as the goal of Paul's life and ministry—and ours! Read with me:

**By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:**

Now remember what I told you earlier as you see the phrase “**for his name**” here. This Phrase means *for His Name's Sake*, which is just another way of saying “*for the Glory of God*”.

So this means that God chose and called and saved Paul, and put him into the Ministry so that the Name of Christ would be seen as infinitely glorious above all other names and all other persons and all other ideas and all other possessions and all other possible dreams. In other words, the entirety of Paul's Ministry was so that the Glory of Jesus Christ would be known and valued in all the world above all other things by saving unworthy sinners by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone.

But the Presence of Jesus Christ assumes our great need for a Savior. So after he makes that statement- Paul backs up and explains just why there is a universal need for a Savior. First, he addresses the condition of the nations *outside* Israel in **Romans 1:21** when he says,

**... that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

Now just how did the Gentile nations not glorify God? What have human beings done? Verse 23 gives us the answer:

**(They) changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**

... and of course, the most common image today is not one that we carve in wood or stone- but the one we see in the mirror. (This is why the Gospel is designed on purpose by the Wisdom of God to insult the pride of Man and strip us of all grounds for boasting in ourselves, and make the Lord the only object of our exultation). You see part of what it means to *be* fallen is that we don't think that we *are* fallen. In fact fallen man is so blind that he not only doesn't think he is fallen – he actually thinks he is god, and therefore being fallen means that they live their lives for only one purpose- to rob God of the Glory that is due His holy Name.

Which is why all genuine Gospel presentations must begin with the Truth about the condition of fallen Man. The “Good News” of God saving us in Christ is only “Good News” because there is some real “Bad News”. Without the “Bad News” that we are all sinners and the Wrath of God is bearing down on us like a freight train at 300 miles an hour and we are chained to the railroad tracks- without that real “Bad News” being clearly articulated and understood in the minds and hearts

of the people then the "Good News" of Jesus dying to rescue us from that Wrath is reduced to being simply "News," or some real nice information. But because we are just that wicked and just that deserving of eternal damnation- Salvation from that certain destruction becomes the universal need of the nations who have exchanged the Glory of God.

Next Paul turns to his own Jewish people and shows that they are in a similar condition and that they also need a Savior. For example, after multiple indictments, he says in **Romans 2:24**,

**For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.**

In other words, you Jews do not glorify God's Name either- but because you know better- you don't just sin- you bring God's Name and Glory into reproach.

And then Paul sums up the condition of all fallen human beings in the passage beginning in **Romans 3:10** when he says in **Romans 3:23**:

**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

"For all have sinned," and literally, *lack* the "glory of God." So sin is defined by God as lacking or falling short of the Glory of God. So ultimately, *anything* that does not bring God the full measure of His Worth and Importance and Beauty and Glory is sin. And this links us back to **Romans 1:23** where we have all exchanged the Glory of God for other things. And that is why we "lack" it, or "fall short" of it, and that is the very essence of sin. We are created to treasure the Glory of God above all things, and none of us does that. Which means we have committed an outrageous crime against God. And that crime of robbing God of the Glory that is due His Holy Name is far more serious than murder or rape or theft or lying. Therefore, because that is true about every single one of us- we all stand as guilty under the Wrath of God and therefore we all need a Savior.

Next Paul teaches that our Salvation from Sin and Death and Judgment that Christ brings is received by Faith alone. And Paul illustrates this Faith by completely passing over Moses- the most revered man in Palestine in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century- and going all the way back to Abraham in **Romans 4:20**- proving how Salvation relates to the Glory of God when he said:

**He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;**

In other words, Paul is teaching here that one reason that *faith* alone is the single way that God saves us is because the gracious gift of saving faith gives Glory to God. That is, faith calls attention to and magnifies the Glory of God. Faith puts us in the position of being weak and dependent, and in great need, and faith also puts God in the position of being Strong and Independent and Merciful. So salvation by faith alone is essential to displaying the Glory of God.

Then in Chapters five and eight- Paul shows that our Salvation through Christ secures for us the hope of the fullness of the Glory of God in Heaven. And this is ultimate gift of the Gospel. But this hope happens to us in two senses:

1. We see and experience the Glory of God in full display, instead of in a mirror dimly
2. We are transformed by that Glory into God-reflecting beings ourselves.

So first, consider **Romans 5:1&2** that says:

**1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

**2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

We are justified by faith right now. We are declared righteous right now. And that gives us incomparable peace with God—in *fact* and in *feeling*. But in this life- there are many hard things both emotionally and physically and relationally. And so without the hope of something more- we would be of all men most to be pitied. And there *is* more. And the greatest thing that Christians hope for is to see and enjoy the greatest Beauty in the universe—the greatest Good and the greatest Power and the greatest Justice and Grace- namely, the unfiltered Glory of God- the beautiful totality of God's infinite and manifold Perfections in Heaven. And verse 2 says that we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice *in hope of the glory of God.*"

Now in **Romans 8:18**, Paul says this hope in the Glory of God in Heaven makes all the sufferings we have to experience in this life worth it when he said:

**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

The Glory of God will be so overwhelmingly satisfying that the horrors of a long illness and a painful death will be as nothing in comparison.

Then in **Romans 8:21** and **8:30**, the Apostle speaks of our sharing in that Glory so that we become glorious, God-reflecting persons. Verse 21 says:

**Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**

So all of Creation and all saved creatures will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of *the glory of the children of God.*" First, we are made glorious at the Resurrection; then the whole Creation is made a suitable habitation for the glorious children of God.

Then verse 30 says that all of this is so certain that Paul can speak of it as being virtually completed:

**Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**

So the Glory of God is our supreme hope- both in the sense of *seeing* and *being*—we *see* it and all our longings for beauty are satisfied, and we are changed by it and all our longings for *being* beautiful, uncontaminated reflectors of God's Glory are satisfied. *Beholding* and *becoming*.

Then in Chapter 9- Paul begins to tackle the question of God's faithfulness to His Covenant with Israel, and the related question arises in verse 14 about God's Righteousness in view of His Sovereignty over so much lostness and so much evil. So in verses 22&23, Paul gives his ultimate and final answer to the question, and he does it with a view to the Glory of God and he says,

**22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:**

**23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,**

In other words, the final argument for the Righteousness of God in a world with so much evil and destruction is that this evil serves the Revelation of God's Glory. Another way of understanding this is to say that God's just and final Judgment *of* all evil and God's gracious Rescue *from* all evil displays more fully the Glory of God than if there had never been any evil at all.

Now it is very hard to overstate the centrality of the Glory of God in view of **Romans 9:23**. Because the highest and the deepest and the most ultimate answer to why the world is the way that it is, even though God is Sovereign and even though God is Good, is that *in His infinite Wisdom- this world reveals the fullness of God's Glory*—including the Glory of Wrath and Power (v. 22) as well as the Glory of Grace and Mercy. So if you grasp the Biblical vision of God and His Glory as the highest Value in all the Universe, you will become a strong and gracious and useful person in the world—for the Glory of God.

Then in **Romans 15**, as Paul is finishing his handling of how weak and strong Christians should relate to each other in the Church, he tells them the purpose of the Church, and how Christ set the pattern for how to build the Church. The purpose of the Church is in verses 5&6 that say:

**5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:**

**6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

This is why Christ bought and builds the Church. Not just isolated, individual worship- but united voices, whether speaking or singing, that glorify God. So displaying the Glory of God on the earth is the main purpose of the Church.

Then, in verse 7, Paul gives Christ as the pattern for building this Church. He says,

**Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.**

In other words- Christ does everything that He does—including welcoming you into His family and building His Church—“for the Glory of God.” You are saved by Christ for the Glory of God. You are welcomed into His friendship for the Glory of God. And this is very humbling because we are *never* the final reason for anything- God is. And it is gloriously good news, because we wouldn’t want it any other way. God gets the Glory and we get the joy.

And then in verses 8&9, Paul underscores Christ’s Pattern of building the Church by showing that this is the very reason He came for the nations when he says:

**8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:**

**9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.**

Christ came to prove that God is faithful to His Promises and to be glorified among the nations. That is why evangelism and missions and Church planting and Covenant of Peace and Audobon Drive Bible Church exists.

And that brings us finally back to where we started in the closing doxology of **Romans 16:27**,

**To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.**

So is that the cry of your heart? Do you love the Glory of God? God is calling for your attention and admiration every day because **Psalm 19:1** says,

**The heavens declare the glory of God.**

And **Isaiah 6:3** says,

**The whole earth is full of his glory!**

I tell you that God is calling out to you: *“Behold My Glory and declare that Glory to the nations!”* So I pray that you can see the Glory of God, and that you will love it, and that you are transformed by it because you were made for this. Repent

of your sins today and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Master and Lord and Savior, and you will become a child of God, and if you become a child of God- you will see Him and love Him and grow up—all the way up—to be like Him because you will see Him as He is- Unspeakably glorious!

Let's pray.