

“Paul’s Gospel”
Romans 16:25-26
(Preached at Trinity, April 15, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul is now bringing this letter to a close. He has concluded all of his greetings to these beloved Roman Christians and conveyed the greetings from his Corinthian brothers. Now he begins his final benediction, a lengthy benediction that will take three verses to complete.
2. He begins by directing our attention to our great God, “Now to Him . . .”
 - A. Our hearts are being drawn upward; infinitely upward . . . “Now to Him”
There is no higher thought, no higher glory—“To Him”
 - B. Who is Paul talking about? To Whom is Paul directing our gaze?
He doesn’t leave us in the dark.
Paul’s benediction is actually a doxology – a song of praise. Paul is dedicating this letter to the only one worthy of all things . . . to which Paul will finally conclude:
Romans 16:27 NAU - "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen."
 - C. Matthew Henry: “Here the apostle solemnly closes his epistle with a magnificent ascription of glory to the blessed God, as one that terminated all in the praise and glory of God, and studied to return all to him, seeing all is of him and from him.”
3. While God is infinite in majesty, high above all, He is not absent. God is intimately involved in the world. While all of humanity has fallen into abominable corruption God has chosen to show mercy unto a multitude. He entered into our condition.
Isaiah 53:4 KJV - "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."
Hebrews 4:15 NAU - " For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin."
4. God is carrying out His redemptive purpose. He is saving His people. Nothing shall keep Him from accomplishing this marvelous work.
Romans 16:25 NAS - " Now to Him who is able to establish you"
5. Paul gives the basis of his confidence in the all powerful working of God:
"according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ"
God is accomplishing His redemptive purpose through the preaching of Jesus Christ.
Jesus IS the Gospel. We preach Christ and Him crucified.

6. What did Paul mean by his expression, "my Gospel?"
This isn't the first time he referred to the Gospel in this manner.
Romans 2:16 NAU - "on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."
2 Timothy 2:7-8 NAU - "Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,"
7. This seems a rather strange way to refer to the Gospel of Christ. How should we understand it? What does Paul mean?
8. Let me tell you what he didn't mean.
Paul wasn't implying that the Gospel was flexible and that every man could contextualize it according to his culture. It wasn't implying that you can have your Gospel and I can have my Gospel. Paul received the only one true Gospel by Divine revelation and neither he nor anyone else had the power or authority to change it.
Galatians 1:6-8 NAU - "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"
9. There are many gospels being preached today but only one has the power to save. Paul declared:
Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
This is the only Gospel which must be preached.
Romans 16:25 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ"
10. Paul wasn't speaking of his Gospel as being his distinctly as if it were particular to him. In this epistle he has made it clear that his Gospel is of Divine origin.
Romans 1:1 NAU - "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,"
Romans 1:9 NAU - "For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the gospel of His Son*. . ."
Romans 15:15-16 NAU - "But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God"
Romans 15:19 NAU - "from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."
11. Paul wants us to know that his Gospel is the one true Gospel, the only Gospel. He owned it. He lived it. He died for it. He had absolute confidence in it. He is saying that this Gospel was his Gospel. In these final verses Paul tells us several important things about the Gospel.
- I. First, it is an ancient Gospel
Romans 16:25 NAU - "according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past"

- A. Paul states that this Gospel is of eternal design and eternal decree
1. The translation “long ages” doesn’t give us the full meaning of the phrase χρόνοις αἰωνίοις - χρόνος refers to time—only its in the plural. And αἰώνιος is an adjective that means eternal, everlasting, without end. In other words, Paul is speaking of this Gospel as having its beginnings in eternity.
 2. The KJV does a better job in conveying this idea.
Rom 16:25 KJV - "which was kept secret since the world began"
 3. This Gospel finds its origin in eternity. It is at the heart of God’s eternal Covenant of Redemption. It describes God’s means of saving His elect people through the redeeming work of His Son.
 4. This Gospel is at the very heart of God’s promise in the Covenant of Grace.
Genesis 3:15 NAS - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
 5. Paul’s words imply clearly that this eternal Gospel is also an unchanging Gospel – his Gospel was *the* Gospel, the only Gospel.
 6. Paul’s Gospel was the Gospel revealed to him and the other Apostles. Any other Gospel is a false gospel.
This is the Gospel that Paul was compelled to preach
1 Corinthians 9:16 NAS - "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel."
- B. What did Paul mean that his Gospel was a "mystery which has been kept secret?"
1. μυστήριον – something previously concealed that has now been revealed
 2. Paul often spoke of the Gospel as a mystery
1 Corinthians 2:7-8 NAU - " but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;"
Eph 3:8-9 NAU - "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;"
 - a. The Gospel for long ages was a mystery largely kept secret revealed only in types and foreshadows
 - b. It was revealed in stages, and in mysteries too wonderful to be fully understood.
“He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”
Matthew 1:23 NAS - ""Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

- c. In the fulness of time the Gospel has been fully revealed in Christ
Galatians 4:4-5 NAS - "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
3. But Paul has a specific aspect of the Gospel in mind here. As I've pointed out many times as we've gone through Romans one of Paul's recurring themes has been the unity of Jews and Gentiles into one people. He previously expressed it in this epistle
Romans 11:25 NAU - "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"
4. Paul is speaking of the mystery of the universal nature of the Gospel—that the Gentiles would be included as the people of God.
5. Paul stresses this in the next verse
Romans 16:26 NAS - "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"
The word for nations is ἔθνος which is most often translated "Gentiles"
This is the way the NIV translates it
6. Paul also wrote of this in the Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 2:13-14 NAU - "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into one* and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,"
- C. That which has been unknown is now fully revealed in the Gospel.
Romans 16:26 NAU - " 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"
Paul is saying that *This Gospel*, the Gospel ordained from the foundation of the world, the Gospel that was a mystery from all ages but now revealed, *This Gospel* is *MY* Gospel.

II. It is an effective Gospel

Romans 16:25 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel"

- A. Paul declares that is through the preaching of this Gospel that we will be established.
1. Paul used this same expression in **Chapter 1**.
Romans 1:11 NAU - "For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established"
 2. Paul's point here is our salvation is a process. Not in the sense of our justification wherein we have received the righteousness of Christ, but in the sense of our sanctification there is much work to be accomplished in us. The Christian life is a journey.

3. In the sense of the work of the Gospel in us we are being prepared for heaven, but there is no doubt that God accomplishing this work in His people.
Philippians 1:3-6 NAU - "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵ in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 1:12 KJV - "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

- B. Paul is stating that we can have great confidence that we will be established
 1. God has purposed to establish us and He is able to establish us
 2. The Gospel is perfect in effecting our establishment in faith
Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
 3. Paul is saying that *This Gospel*, which by the power of God is able to establish you in the faith, is MY Gospel

III. It is a personal Gospel – It must be our Gospel

- A. This Gospel must be applied to us personally
 1. Paul gives the basis of his confidence:
 "according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ"
 2. This is the Gospel that saved Paul from his sin and this is the Gospel that saves every Christian from his sin
1 Timothy 1:15 KJV - "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NAU - " But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 3. This is the Gospel that comes with the power to transform lives
1 Thessalonians 1:5 NAU - " for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction"
 4. This is the Gospel that Paul preached boldly
 This was Paul's Gospel
- B. This Gospel must become our gospel by our compelling mission
 1. This Gospel had become Paul's Gospel. It was his life. He preached it. He protected it. He saw it as a sacred trust.
1 Corinthians 4:2 KJV - "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
 2. This Gospel must become OUR Gospel
 This is the Gospel that drives our mission. This is our work. This Gospel drives us.

Conclusion:

1. Has this Gospel become YOUR Gospel?
 - A. Is this the Gospel by which you've been saved?
1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NAU - " Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."
 - B. There is no other way
2 Timothy 1:9-10 NAU - "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰ but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
2. Do you give yourself to spreading this Gospel – no matter what the cost.
2 Timothy 1:8 NAU - "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,"
3. Not all of us are called to preach. But the work of the Gospel is a shared work.
 Do you pray, do you invite, is your life a reflection of Christ?