

042 - Unto Him Be Glory in the Church - Ephesians 3:20-21 - 2015-05-10

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (21) Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Call to Worship: Psalm 29:2

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 42:1-12

Sermon: "Unto Him Be Glory in the Church" Ephesians 3:20-21

Benediction: Revelation 7:12

INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus Christ chose the man Paul to be His apostle to us gentiles. The Lord inspired Paul by His Holy Spirit to write letters to the churches, which are the Word of Christ to us. So we have been studying this letter to the Ephesians, those Christians who were living in the large city Ephesus.

In this letter so far, the apostle has told us many of the wonderful things God has done for us in Christ Jesus and by His Holy Spirit:

- God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ
- He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world
- He predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ
- He made us accepted in Christ, the Beloved
- He granted us redemption through His blood, and the accompanying forgiveness of sins
 - Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross for sinners! His blood shed paid the redemption price for sinners, slaves to sin; so redeemed, they can then be granted forgiveness of sins!
- He made known to us the mystery of His will in the gospel preached to us
- He has given us an inheritance, having predestined us to it
- He has sealed us with His own Holy Spirit, as a guarantee of what we will inherit
- He has worked so powerfully in us, by His Spirit, as to make us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, alive together with Christ
 - When the Lord Jesus had died for sins, and had been buried, God raised Him to life on the third day. It is by that same power that God raises us to new life with Christ.
- He has saved us, who were children of wrath, making us sit together in Christ Jesus
- He has taken us who were afar off and brought us near by the blood of Christ
- He has reconciled us to God through the cross
- He has made us, who were formerly gentiles, one new man with those who were formerly Jews

- He has made us fellow citizens with the saints in His kingdom
- He has made us members of the household of God
- He is now making us into a holy temple, founded on Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone

We have been told that God has done all of this for us!

We also have been told *why* God has done all of this for us.

- He has done all of this because it was the good pleasure of His will
- He has done all of this because it is to the praise of the glory of His grace
- He has done all of this because it was His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself
- He has done all of this because He works all things according to the counsel of His will
- He has done all of this because it was His will to love us even when we were dead in transgressions
- He has done all of this so that He can show the exceeding riches of His grace
- He has done all of this to make a grand display in us of His amazing wisdom
- He has done all of this because it was His eternal purpose to do it

Having told us all these glorious things that God has done for us, and
Having told us why God has done them,

The apostle has told us also that he is praying for us, that God will do five things in us:

- grant us to be strengthened with might *in the inner man*
- grant that Christ may dwell *in our hearts* through faith
- make us able to *comprehend* the vast dimensions of the love of Christ
- make us able to *know* the love of Christ
- fill us with all the fullness of God

Having told us all these glorious things that God has done for us,
Having told us why God has done them, and
Having told us also that he is praying for us, that God will do great things in us

The apostle, carried along by the Holy Spirit, breaks into doxology! The reason I say, “doxology,” is that the Greek word for “glory” here is *doxa*, so an expression like this, where God’s creatures are called on to give Him glory, is traditionally called a “doxology.” Just like the old hymn we have, by Thomas Ken, where all of us creatures are called on to praise God, which we call “The Doxology.” So, the apostle, having written all these wonderful things about what God has done for us, why He has done it, and what we are praying God will do for the saints, breaks into a doxology. That is the portion of Ephesians we study together today. I intend today to go partway through this doxology, then, God willing, finish next week.

TEXT

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

BODY

- I. The statement of this doxology is, essentially, “To Him glory,”
 - A. that is the main statement, as seen in the first words of verse 21
 - B. or, to expand very slightly, “To God be the glory.”
 - C. When we get to that very short statement, we have arrived at a very central matter in all of God’s dealings with man, and man with God
 - D. We see this in the glimpses we get of heaven. What is going on there?
 1. amazing heavenly creatures are flying around the throne of God giving Him glory by saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty!”
 2. when they say that, the people there fall down before God and glorify Him also
 - E. This is the first question in the Westminster Larger Catechism
 1. What is the chief and highest end of man?
 2. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever.
 - F. And bound up in the concept of giving God glory is that we His creatures are to give glory to Him and to Him only, not to another; this is the meaning of one of the great phrases of the Reformation: *solī Deo gloria*

So, to God be glory!

- II. What is glory, in this sense?
 - A. Understand that when you talk about God’s glory, the way God’s greatness shines out from Him, you are talking about something slightly different; that is nothing that we can be said to give to Him or do toward Him
 - B. Instead, in the way the apostle uses “glory” here, he means something very like “praise” or “honor.”
 - C. Best dealt with here by two account of people giving and not giving glory to God
 1. The account of when one man, healed of leprosy, gave glory to God, and nine men did not Luke 17:15-18 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice **glorified** God, (16) and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a

Samaritan. (17) So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? (18) Were there not any found who returned to give **glory** to God except this foreigner?"

2. The account of when Herod did not give glory to God Acts 12:21-23 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. (22) And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" (23) Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give **glory** to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

So, to God be glory; that is, to God be praise and honor!

III. Why? Because of His great power: "able to do"

- A. God is perfect in all His attributes, and worthy to receive glory for all that He is, not just for His power. But that is the aspect of God that the apostle is speaking of here, so we limit ourselves to that consideration just now: God is to be glorified because of His power, His ability to do.
- B. ILLUS: Isn't it true that we give glory in this life to those who are able to do something
 1. the officer able to win battles is glorified with medals and promotions and even election to the presidency
 2. the football player able to score touchdowns or make tackles is glorified with the heisman trophy or the outland trophy or some other
 3. the soprano able to sing the high notes beautifully is glorified with roses and applause
 4. the gymnast able to complete the difficult routine and then stick the landing is glorified with the gold medal
 5. and so on through all parts of human society; we give glory to those who are able to do something
- C. We are here talking not of any puny human's ability to do, but of *God's* ability to do, His strength, His power, which is far above any human ability, any creaturely power, being infinite; so we call God's power His omnipotence, His infinite power, shown to us first in how He created everything in the universe from the smallest particle in the mud to the highest archangel in glory
- D. But the bible is speaking here of God's omnipotence exerted not in the creation of a million galaxies, but in a much more personal arena: the power that works *in us*. Remember what the apostle has just finished teaching us---he is praying for us regarding God's work *inside of us*
 1. to be strengthened with might *in the inner man*
 2. that Christ may dwell *in our hearts* through faith
 3. that you maybe able to *comprehend* the vast dimensions of the love of Christ
 4. that you maybe *know* the love of Christ

- 5. that you maybe *filled* with all the fullness of God
- E. In verse 20 Paul talks about this power working in us, but of course in the reading of this letter it would have been only a few seconds since he specified that this power of God at work inside us is exerted by the Holy Spirit of God, which is the person of the trinity who does the work in the mind, in the heart, in the inner man
- F. God's infinite power, His omnipotence, the apostle could have described as is done elsewhere in the bible, in terms of being far above what it took Him to light the stars in their great fires, far greater than what it took to set the planets in the orbits, far grander than what it took to establish the oceans and the continents on the earth, and far in excess of what it took to fill the earth with creatures great and small
- G. Instead, he calls on us to glorify God for His power in consideration of how much greater is God's power to do things for us than is our power to ask things from Him; God's ability to do things for us, *inside us*, is exceedingly abundantly above our ability to pray for those things
 - 1. this ability of God to do, this power of God's to change us on the inside by His Holy Spirit, is infinitely greater than anything we ask for
 - 2. as a matter of fact, God's power to work inside us is infinitely greater than our ability even to think about it
- H. APPLICATION
 - 1. *1 Peter 3:6 humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time*
 - a) the natural thing to our sinful flesh is this: I will get glory for myself
 - (1) but when you ponder the difference between your puny strength, which itself is a gift from God, and God's infinite abilities, you can see how foolish you have been trying to glorify yourself
 - b) the spiritual thing of the Lord is this: I will humble myself and give glory to God; in due time God will allow me to share in His glory
 - 2. Take heart regarding prayer for yourself.
 - a) consider Peter
 - 3. Take heart regarding prayer for others in Christ's church.
 - a) consider Nebuchadnezzar
 - 4. Take heart regarding your efforts to be obedient disciples of Jesus Christ

So, to God, for His power, be glory!

HERE IS A POSSIBLE PLACE TO STOP

IV. Where? In the church

- A. Outside of God's church, men do not give God the glory for His power
 - 1. Romans 1:20-21 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (21) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
 - 2. you don't need the bible to know that God should be praised for His power
 - 3. but those who are not in God's church do not glorify Him as God
- B. But in the church, God is glorified
 - 1. when assembled, we praise and honor God
 - a) we speak His praises and give thanks as part of praying
 - b) we read of His greatness in the bible
 - c) we glorify God in the taking of the Lord's Supper
 - d) we glorify God in the preaching and teaching of the Word
 - e) we glorify God in the congregational singing, and the instrumental accompaniment
 - f) we glorify God by baptizing those who have professed faith in Christ
 - 2. an important part of giving glory to God when the church is assembled is not to hold up anything else before our eyes for praise
 - a) not any images: cross, face, theme banner
 - b) not flags
 - c) not any people: Mother, Father, Veteran, Graduate
 - 3. I am speaking in the ideal; let us make sure that we do:
 - a) it is possible, when praying, to have in mind my own glory, not God's
 - b) it is possible, when reading the bible, not to have the glory of God in mind
 - c) it is possible, when taking the Lord's Supper, not to have the glory of God in mind

- d) it is possible, when preaching, or when listening to the preaching, not to glorify God
 - (1) but to glorify men
 - (2) to glorify yourself
 - e) it is possible, when singing or playing an instrument, not to glorify God
 - (1) we don't do solos
 - (2) the orchestra sits over to the side
 - f) it is possible, when seeking baptism, when baptizing, when observing baptism, when reflecting on baptism
4. Because of the real possibility and frequent temptation, when the church is assembled, to give glory to ourselves and not to God, we don't call the Lord's Day anything else
- a) Christmas
 - b) Easter
 - c) Mother's Day

So, to God, for His power, be glory in the church!

HERE IS THE STOPPING POINT IF YOU'VE GOT THIS FAR!

V. How? In Christ Jesus

- A. 1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- B. test

So, unto God, for His power, be glory in the church in Christ Jesus!

VI. When? Forever

- A. test
- B. test

So, unto God, for His power, be glory in the church in Christ Jesus forever!

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen!

This is a doxology

His ability to do exceeds

-what we ask

-even what we can think of

Bayne:

great flood

Red Sea

fiery furnace

We must not measure his power by our sense and conceiving; we must not stint him
Yet we must not use this sentence as madmen do swords, for the papists and
Lutherans, when they presume monstrous things against God's will, will therefore have
us believe them, because God's power to work is above our reason.

It must teach us to sanctify God in our heart by trusting on him; for this consideration
doth much serve to strengthen faith.

What if we are in such evils . . . as poverty, sickness

What if our prayers be full of defects, much troubled, too too imperfect

What if conscience of unworthiness will not let us apply things as we would

This we must assure ourselves of, that God's power is able in itself, and almighty to
bring us through all distresses.

Though the devil and the world be mighty, yet God is ALMIGHTY. The want of this
consideration makes God's children so faint, when they see the power of the flesh and
Satan to stand against them, they think then they shall fall, and come to nothing; but
be they God's children, then rest assured, though we see all things turned upside
down, and one misery follow upon the head of another, like the waves of the sea, yet
let us trust to this incomprehensible power of God, and we shall see all things conspire
and work for the best

there is no less power working in us than the power of God, which can subdue all
things to itself.

Observe in whom we must offer up our thanksgiving, viz. in and by Christ Jesus.
as Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of
our Lord Jesus Christ, [for these reasons]

1. Christ is the fountain whence all spiritual blessings flow to us (Eph 1:3)
2. He is the fountain of all that ability which doth enable us to pray
3. All our entrance to the Father is through him
4. All our acceptance with the Father is by mean of him

JRY:

What a different kind of praying!

Lord, make all the glory in Your church be to you, and none to me.

My thoughts are not all that good; my prayers are not all that good; but God is greater
than all that is so poor in me!

understanding with what a mighty power God is at work gives me confidence
-to pray rather than to fret
-to obey rather than to scheme

note we do not make this “Mother’s Day”

by Christ Jesus ESV, NIV: and in Christ Jesus

JFB:

In the parallelism of these clauses is implied the great idea of the Epistle—the unity of the Church in Christ. Hence all that is “in the Church” is “in Christ Jesus.” The visible unity of the Church represents, as it depends on, the invisible unity with God in Him.

Hodge:

Glory is to be rendered to God in the church, and in and through Christ Jesus, as her head and representative. The church is the company of the redeemed here and in heaven; which constitutes one body through which God is to manifest his manifold wisdom, and which is through all ages to ascribe unto him glory, honor, and dominion.

Poole:

by (according to our version) Christ, as the Mediator between God and us; by whom we offer up our services to God, praises as well as prayers (Rom 1:8)

Gill:

may refer either to the church, which is in Christ; or to him as the medium by whom praise and glory are to be given to God; for all blessings are in Christ, and come to us through him, and he is the only way of access to God; nor can our praises and thanksgivings be acceptable unto God, but through him