***The Benediction, No. 1 - Romans 16:20b-27
RO200-02***

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**The Times We Live In**

This morning, we begin our final section of the Book of Romans. It's almost kind of sad. But we begin Romans 16:20b-27; the title of this section is The Benediction, and this is Segment Number 1. Paul has concluded his letter to the Christians in Rome with personal greetings to a number of people. He has warned the believers against tolerating teachers of false doctrine who enslave Christians to the lusts of the Old Sin Nature. Paul expresses his great joy over the good reports he has received concerning the positive volition obedience of the Roman Christians to God's word. Paul commands his readers to be knowledgeable and experienced in all that is good in the world by God's standard; but to be innocent about all of the evil of Satan's world. Paul reminds the Christians that at the Second Coming of Christ they will participate with the Lord in the final defeat of Satan. So, Paul commends these Roman Christians to the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said in the first part of verse 20, "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." God, who is the source of peace, will one day bring victory over Satan to all those and through all those who are trusting in Christ. The world of Satan today, as you know, is on a huge peace delusion, just exactly as the Bible predicted it would happen.

I remind you again, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 where, we read, "Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord [technical term, you know what it means. You should immediately have a picture in your mind when you hear the word 'Day of the Lord.' You should see 7 years tribulation plus 1,000 years of a Millennium. That is the period of time in the Bible called the 'Day of the Lord.' The Day of the Lord is always described as a grim nightmare that ends up in the joyous sunshine and the glorious event. It starts with the grimness of the 7 year Tribulation and ends with the glory of the 1,000 year Millennium. You yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord,] will come just like a thief in the night. [The reason it's going to come as a thief in the night is because we don't know when the Rapture takes place. When the Church is called out of the out of this world, that's when the Day of the Lord begins.] While they're saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in the darkness, that that day should overtake you like a thief; for you all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of the night nor of darkness;" Indeed we are not. Because we are not, we understand what's going on in world society today. We can listen to the nightly news and we know how to interpret that in terms of its true significance and true meaning.

How many of you remember the great event that took place this past week, the great historical event that took place this past week in 1944, a smattering? The reason you don't remember is because the communication media, that powerful force in the United States that decides what you will hear and will not hear, has dropped a Maxwell Smart's 'Cone of Silence' over one of the most dramatic events in human history. On June the 6th of 1944, the Allies of World War II had scheduled what is known in military parlance as D-Day. The term D-Day refers to Departure Day. It is the highest kept secret in any military operation because it indicates when a campaign will be set in motion. It was very important to try to catch the Germans off guard and off balance, to be able to make one of the greatest and the most difficult amphibious landings in the history of the world.

Why were we doing this? Yes, you've seen the pictures on Omaha Beach, and Utah Beach, and Crown, and Sword, and Juno. And you've seen the men coming up with those amphibious tractors and the ramps dropping and the men rushing out. And all of a sudden you hear the machine guns and you see men falling on the beach who were hit as others struggle to gain a foothold. A German general in charge of the channel defenses of Germany, Rommel, Eric Rommel, said, 'If we do not stop the Allies on the beach, we will lose the war.' Everything was geared to stop the Allies on the beach. It was called Europa, Fortress Europa, Fortress Europe. They built all kinds of concrete barriers and fields of fire, and it was seemingly impossible that you could land anywhere on that whole stretch of beach on the channel to bring people over. Well, the day came and the weather was terrible. General Eisenhower, Commander in Chief of the Operation, scheduled an early morning meeting to get one more weather report. It had to go June 4th, 5th, or 6th, or it couldn't go. It would have to wait again. Men were already on the ship. Things had to be set in motion hours ahead of time. Everything was moving. Finally they got the final weather report. Good news from the British meteorologists who was in charge that there was a break coming down from Norway of clear weather; you would have 24 hours.

Never had there been a storm such as was on the North Sea in 20 years. The Germans said 'We can all breathe a sigh of relief. The Allies will not land today.' Even Rommel himself went home with a present for his wife's birthday, a new pair of shoes, which was hard to come by those days. He went home and the officers scattered everywhere. Everybody felt safe.

But the grace of God gave a 24 hour stint of good weather to perform a magnificent landing. General Eisenhower turned to the British officer after the meeting and said, 'Now, try not to give us any more bad news, but hold that good weather report.' He said, 'Let's go!' The operation was set in motion. That room flew into a frenzy of activity as instructions were sent out immediately and the ships headed across the channel.

The reason that this had to be done, the reason those men died on those beaches was because Germany and Russia had teamed up as 2 brutal tyrants and said, let's gobble up Poland between us. Stalin, you can have the eastern part, Hitler, you take the western part. On September 1st of 1939, the Germans and the Russians kicked off the attack from both sides and little Poland was doomed. That's what began World War Two. The result of that day was 50 million people dead before it was over, trillions of dollars wasted and millions and millions of Jews slaughtered in the death camps of Nazi Germany.

I have never before seen the week of D-Day arrive, I have never before seen June 6th come around, but what I could look at my TV guide and see numerous movies about the Normandy landings. I could expect all kinds of comments and observations from the news commentators. And I thought I was missing something. I kept going back to my calendar, thumbing through by the phone. I thought I had missed the wrong day. It wasn't in the TV guide, not one. You saw one? I didn't see a single movie commemorating June 6th event and I didn't hear a single reference to it on the nightly news, and I've asked a lot of people and none of them. Why this Maxwell Smart 'Cone of Silence' descending upon this event this year? I think I finally figured it out. It's a deliberate, calculated move on the power structures that really run this country to deemphasize what was one of the most brutal, bestial, and remember, occult regimes, (Because that's what the Nazis were. They were deep into the occult.) in the history of mankind. D-Day is being ignored because today the battle cry is peace. The rallying cry is peace. Today, we want to unite the Germanys again. Today we want people to forget that the only reason Russia was our ally in World War Two was because Hitler turned and double crossed Russia as his ally after the Poland invasion. The world wants us to forget who brought this devastating suffering upon mankind, who took the lives of these millions of human beings. It was Russia. It was Germany. The 2 countries that we are now being told had put their past behind them. We have arrived at peace and safety. Just as 1 Thessalonians 5 told us, the time would come that we would believe that.

Did you think that this kind of a power structure in the world did not exist to control the media of our country as to what you would hear and see? It does exist. Hello, antichrist; he's on the scene. This structure is set for this man to take over. Now, if some of you Christians have not yet begun to set your affairs in order, at least you will not have me to blame in eternity for not having alerted you to that fact. I would again remind you that the time has come for you to set your affairs in order. The return of the Lord is on the horizon. You are about to leave it all behind you. Make sure it counts for eternity.

**No Peace Until Jesus**

There will never be peace on this earth until Jesus Himself sits on His earthly throne, ruling the nations in His Millennial kingdom. Today, Israel has a new government, a coalition government made up of religious, dedicated religious fanatics who want the Old Testament instituted in all of its details. The Israeli Premier cannot rule without them. He's put together this coalition and Shamir now says, 'We are going after the Arabs and we are going to put a stop to the intifada rebellion of the Arabs once and for all.' The Arab world is in disarray and terror. It has ripples reverberated through the Arab world, who is now on edge, that the Jews who can do that are really going to do that. They're going to flush the Arabs out of those West Bank territories. They're going to fill them with all these Jews flooding in from Russia and other places in the world. They're going to take over physically that territory.

And the Arabs, of all things, now are enraged at the United States. And the United States government has been told directly 'If you do not stop Israel, you may expect a jihad, a Muhammadan holy war, against everything American.' Enter stage right the antichrist, from Western Europe, to now become the protector of Israel. Even the United States is not going to stick its neck out that far for Israel. Did you ever believe that in your lifetime you would see Scripture coming together and all these little pieces so fulfilled, even to the point that Russia is now amenable to religion? Didn't you realize that that had to happen or the antichrist false prophet could not conduct a world church, that Russia had to be included? Who would believe that Russia is now amenable to religion? That's another big piece of the mosaic. The picture is becoming clearer all the time.

So, when the apostle Paul closes his letter here in verse 20 and he pronounces a blessing upon the believers of Rome by commending them to the peace of God, it is indeed a significant statement: the peace of God, which will come upon this world with the arrival of our Lord. In verse 20b, he says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." God's grace is what sustains the believer in his journey through Satan's world. It is the grace of God that has given us that power system for surviving in Satan's world, the same one which Isaiah 11:2 described that God prepared for the coming Messiah King in His humanity.

You may remember when we studied Isaiah 11:2 that Isaiah says, 'When the Messiah comes, since He will be a human being, God must provide Him a way to remain sinless in this world and to be able to whip Satan at his own game. So, He gave Him certain qualities, certain factors to carry His humanity through. Jesus field tested the system of power, and it was then delivered to every Christian who now lives victoriously by these same qualities: the spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom, understanding, council, strength (Remember, strength means good health.), and the spirit of knowledge, and the fear, the respect of the Lord. We have many, many messages on that verse and it deals with the same production of the Peace of God that carries you through Satan's world in complete, calm and peaceful possession of yourself and everything that surrounds you.

Christians who keep their eyes on the Lord Jesus are going to indeed be vindicated one day by the grace of God, not by something we have done. It is the curse of churches today that they fail to teach Christians the glories of the grace lifestyle. Churches are trivial. Churches are legalistic. Churches are entertainment centers. Somebody left a bulletin last week from a local Bible church. I thumbed through it. I was appalled at how much entertainment was being announced. You had the pool, the billiards night, you had the eating night, you had the basketball night. You had the people who went out to do this and the people went out to do that. I mean, it was entertainment, entertainment. It was an entertainment center. I suspect that happens because I know a great deal about that place and I get the reports that it happens all the time. I also know that in the church services, there's a lot of sweetness and light and people eat it up. Where do you think you're going when you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ with that kind of preparation? One of the things that Christians will curse the most at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be the preachers that stood in the pulpits and robbed them of their eternal blessings.

**Paul's Final Greetings**

Beginning with verse 21, having committed them with this benediction to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul enters a series of final greetings. In verse 21 he begins with one of his top favorites, Timothy. He says, "Timothy my fellow worker greets you." Timothy sends his greetings to the believers in Rome. Timothy was, as you may well remember, Paul's spiritual child, and he was very special to him. 2 Timothy 1:2 refers to him in that way. Timothy was associated with Paul in his ministry in Corinth, and he was in Corinth when Paul was writing this book to the Romans. That's why Timothy adds his greeting. Timothy, of course, was very highly valued by the apostle Paul because he could count on this man. And who us could not enter into Paul's feelings about a servant of God that we can count on, whose interests are the Lord's business first, that rare breed of Christian, and then personal interests leftover second.

Philippians 2, Paul on one occasion writing to the Philippians, burst out with an expression of gratitude concerning Timothy. Philippians 2:19-22, Paul says, "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. [Timothy was often sent as Paul's agent and troubleshooter to churches in the New Testament world. He was going to send him to the churches in Philippi.] For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father." Now what greater thing could any Christian have said about him than to have the honored position that this person looks after the things of God before he pays attention to taking care of his own business? His concern is, first of all, when he wakes up in the morning, what will I do with the body I breathe in for this day in the service of Almighty God who has a plan for me for this day? Young people learn it early, use your whole life. Don't come, as many of our tapers come to me and say, 'Here I am, 50, 60 years old. For the first time in my life, I'm learning the Word of God and the principles of grace and what life is all about. I've wasted so much of it that I could have been using for storing treasures in Heaven.' Timothy understood this principle, and he had his eyes focused in the right direction on his own eternity.

Timothy had acted as an agent on other occasions in dealing with problems in the local church. In 1 Corinthians 4:17 Paul says "For this reason I have sent to you Timothy." Timothy was sent to deal with problems in the churches of Corinth, and boy, did they ever have problems. They were the insipient originators of what today is the charismatic movement. They were doing all of the offbeat confused misconceptions relative to the Holy Spirit that happens today. Timothy was sent to get it straight. [1Corinthians 4:17] "For this reason, I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church." Paul says, I'm going to send Timothy. There isn't a lot he can do. He can't reach into your brain and make you think straight. But he will give you the doctrine that he has learned from me. He'll give you the straight scoop on doctrine and then you will have no excuse for not knowing how God acts and how you should act.

When Paul knew that his death was near at the hands of the Emperor Nero, he wrote his last book, 2 Timothy. He wrote it to Timothy. And he expressed his desire that Timothy, as quickly as possible, would make his way to Rome so that he could be with Paul in Paul's final day. 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul says, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come." Paul says I know that Nero is going to condemn me and I know I'm going to be executed. Then in verse 9 Paul says, "Make every effort to come to me soon," speaking to Timothy. He describes Timothy by an honorable title and calls him "my fellow worker" because he was well taught in doctrine. He was a gifted teacher and he worked closely with Paul in his missionary journeys. Timothy himself was unselfishly committed to serving Jesus Christ and therefore Paul knew that he could count on his help.

Furthermore, one of the things that was a pleasure about Timothy was that he was not two-Faced. He was a genuine example to other young people, 1 Timothy 4:12. He did have a little timidity about him. He was a little different than Titus in that respect. When Paul had some congregation that had to really be stomped on with apostolic authority, then he sent Titus. Titus was more the Marine Corps type. Timothy had occasions when he was gentle and you could scare him a little bit and Paul knew that. That is shown to us in 1 Timothy 4:12 where he said to Timothy "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." Then Paul tells him in verse 13, "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching," or to doctrine.

And then on another occasion he [Paul] cautions believers to treat Timothy gently and to be receptive to his ministry. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul sums up his final message to Timothy, that he should continue in sound doctrine and be a strong soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:1-3, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. [Got it ... be strong in grace, not in legalism, strong in God doing things. Be strong in those principles of Isaiah 11:2 that are expressed in a variety of ways for your humanity to be successful in the world that Satan controls.] And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. [Keep teaching doctrine so people can teach each other.] Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." And don't cut out Timothy when the going gets tough, because it will get tough. So, Paul adds this greeting from his fellow worker Timothy that has meant so much to him.

Then we get a series of 3 names in verse 21. We have Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater. Here's some very good names for those of you who may be having baby boys that you need a name for: Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. Sosipater, I like that one. That would make an impression. In any case, he sends greetings to them. He calls them his "kinsmen." Here again, Paul is not referring to these as relatives. What he is referring to is the fact that they are fellow Jews. So, a better way to translate this is my countryman. Lucius, we have a Lucius mentioned in Acts 13:1, but we don't know if it's the same man. We have a Jason mentioned in Acts 17:5-9, but we don't know if the 2 are connected. There is a man named Sopiter, not Sosipater who is mentioned in Acts 24, but it is uncertain again if they are identical. In any case, these were 3 Christian men who also sent their greetings and in some way had some connection in some way were knowledgeable to the people in Rome.

Then we get to verse 22 and we discover something that Paul very often did and probably regularly did. He never sat down and took the pen and the parchment and wrote out his own letters. He had a secretary, and he apparently had one here. In the Greek world, the secretary was called an "amanuensis," a m a n u e n s i s. An "amanuensis" was simply a secretary. But sometimes you may read in commentaries about Paul's "amanuensis." That's just his recorder, his secretary. The man he had here is a man whose name was "Tertius," T e r t i u s.

In the slave servants social system of ancient Rome, there was a hierarchy of rank among the slaves and the servants, which was indicated by your number. There was a number one slave who carried the greatest status, privilege and responsibilities from his master, much greater than number 2 slave or number 3. "Tertius" means 3. And in the Latin of ancient Rome, therefore, there were names like Primus, which means number one, "Secundus" number two, "Tertius" number 3, "Quartus" number 4, and "Quintus" number 5. If you have ever heard any Latin names, you've heard all of those. Those are simply numbers. What we have is that "Tertius," who is probably a slave of some wealthy man, was number 3 boy in the hierarchy of that household. This man, this number 3 boy, Tertius, was used to write this letter. He says, "I, Tertius," and he identifies himself. Tertius now is given permission by Paul to add a note of greeting of his own. Of course, that permission from Paul was also under the supervision and approval of God the Holy Spirit.

And Tertius says, "Now I Tertius, [the amanuensis,] who write this letter." This is the Greek word for letter, "epistole" e p i s t o l e, from which we get our English word "epistle." Paul dictated his epistle to an amanuensis on other occasions. You can see that in 1 Corinthians 16:21, Colossians 4:18, and 2 Thessalonians 3:17. When Paul proceeded to add in his own handwriting a statement as those verses indicate, it also indicates someone else had been writing the letter and Paul did this regularly to, as it were, append his own signature, his own handwriting to authenticate that the letter was really from him. So, Tertius, the amanuensis who is copying this letter, taking Paul's dictation, he also greets them and he says he greets them "in the Lord," which means he is greeting them in the Lord Jesus Christ. Tertius greets them as a fellow believer in Christ Jesus. I'm sure that Paul probably followed the practice of always using a Christian recorder rather than some pagan recorder. Tertius here sends his greetings to the family of God, brethren in the circle of eternal fellowship. Little did he realize that when he did this, he would immortalize his name among the Christians down through the centuries? For centuries, Christians have heard of Tertius, the secretary and fellow believer in Corinth. While people remember the name of the number 3 boy, most people don't even remember the name of the emperor at the time who was number one boy. But this boy, number 3 boy in the structure who took down the dictation, has immortalized his name. I'm sure many of us will look forward to shaking his hand when we get to Heaven, and meeting number 3 boy.

Romans 16:23 - Paul now refers to his host in the city of Corinth. "Gaius, who is host to me," that is, he was the provider of hospitality for Paul while Paul was ministering here in the city of Corinth. This Gaius is probably the same one that is referred to in 1 Corinthians 1:14 where Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius." People were taking sides and creating factions in the Corinthian church, one of the many things they were doing that were sinful. They were creating factions on the basis of who baptized them and they were taking pride about whose hands had delivered the baptism. Paul said he knew that a lot of them were calling themselves the Paul party and that they were doing it on the basis of the fact that he had baptized them. He points out that he did not baptize many. He did this at first until Silas and Timothy came along. Then he handed over the baptismal routine to them. But Paul said a few people early on I did. Crispus and Gaius were 2 that I remember. Maybe there were some others. But Gaius was apparently one of the first converts in Corinth. So, Paul actually baptized him. There is a Gaius in Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4, 3 John verses 1, 4, and 5, but we don't think that this is the same Gaius.

We do know from this text, however, that Gaius was host to Paul while he ministered in Corinth, that is Paul lodged with him. At first, you remember from Acts 18:3, we know that Paul lodged with his friend Prisca and Aquila, but Prisca and Aquila moved on after Paul arrived and then he apparently was invited into the home of this man who must have been a wealthy man, Gaius, to be host to Paul during his ministry.

It was in the house of Gaius, therefore, that Paul wrote the letter to the Roman church. We're also told that this man was not only extending hospitality to Paul, but he extended hospitality to the whole church, which means that as Christians pass through Rome and they needed lodging and food, Gaius provided it for them, and he let it be known that people could be directed to him. It probably also indicates that some of the believers formed a congregation and met in the house of Gaius because he probably had a substantial house for them to meet in. This business of hospitality was indeed a very important ministry in the early church; it was very necessary. It wasn't easy to find a Motel 6 in those days, and when you did they were always full because they're such nice places to be. So, you needed someplace to stay for somebody to take care of you. Acts 21:16 indicates how important this was that other people did this regularly. "And some of the disciples from Ceasarea also came with us, [Paul says,] taking us to the Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge." So, here's another man mentioned in the New Testament as a hospitality provider. In Matthew 10:40 and in Mark 9:41, the Lord Jesus Christ adds his commendation and approval and blessing on those who provide hospitality for Christians who need it. "Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you."

Then he introduces greetings from another person, one that was a man of some prominence in the city of Corinth because he was in the political realm, and a man that apparently the people, the believers in Rome, had some acquaintance with, this man named Erastus. Erastus was the city treasurer. The word "treasurer" is the Greek word "oikonomos" o i k o n o m o s, and "oikonomos" is the word from which we get our English word, "economists." An "oikonomos" was a person who dealt with finances. We have this word used in Luke 12:42 where it is translated "steward," and it is used in Luke 16:1 translated "steward," and there it is used as a manager of a large estate. So, Erastus was a city official in Corinth which was a position of influence and of social standing, and it indicates to us that people of higher social levels had also come under Paul's influence. And through his evangelism had been won to Christianity. We don't know if this is the same Erastus in Acts 19:22 and 2 Timothy 4:20. But we do know from this simple little statement, 'Erastus sends his greeting, the city treasurer."

We do know from this that faith in Jesus Christ as Savior did not disqualify Erastus from holding public office, any more than it does today. As a matter of fact, the very faith in Jesus Christ uniquely qualified him for holding public office, especially such a trust as handling the city's finances. So Christianity, you see, has actually bound together diverse social levels into a common fellowship. This is the only kind of brotherhood you know in the Bible. Brotherhood of man is nonsense. Liberals like to talk about the unity of mankind; there is not! The only brotherhood is the brotherhood which is in Christ Jesus. Of course, this was particularly evident in New Testament times when they gathered for the Lord's Supper. At that supper table, you would be aware of the fact that there was indeed no difference in Christ as Galatians 3:28 indicates, and John 13:35. They had come to the common ground of the foot of the cross. So, at the Lord's table with the communion service you would see the master and his slave partaking together, some slave or the master serving the elements. You would see Jew and Gentile at that same table, either one of them serving the elements. You would see rich and poor, cultured and barbarian. At the foot of the cross is the only equality that exists in the human race. It was evident among the various categories of people and social levels in Corinth.

Then he also mentioned one other person, "Quartus," the brother." This is an unknown Christian in Corinth. He may or may not have had some contacts with Rome, we don't know. But he is called a "brother," which indicates that he was a Christian. It doesn't mean he was somebody's relative, but apparently he was known to Christians in Rome. Quartus asked to be added to this greeting, no doubt, because as a brother in Christ, he loved these people in Rome who were believers and he sent them his fraternal greetings.

**Dealing With Romans 16:24**

Romans 16:24 is a verse that we believe should not be there. Romans 16:24 in some of the best Greek manuscripts does not appear. We suspect, if you will look over to the latter part of verse 20, you will see that it's almost identical. We suspect that somehow a copyist inserted it there at that point for some reason. Or as often happened, he would insert it in the margins of the manuscript he was copying. The next person would think he made a mistake and left it out, would stick it in to the text, the full text, and then it would get inserted and copied thereafter. But because we have, remember, more ancient manuscripts of the Bible than any other piece of ancient literature, I mean, it's in the thousands, we have ample manuscripts with which to survey, to research, to match the manuscript with manuscripts. The scholars have certain principles that they follow that they can determine whether a questionable verse or statement belongs in there or not. This one, it's OK what it says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be with you all. Amen." But as you can see, it's sort of out of place there because Paul is about ready now to begin his benediction, and this would be an awkward place for that to be inserted.

**Paul Presents the Doxology**

But verses 25-27 now present the doxology. Paul is going to close down this letter now and bring it to a conclusion. Tertius is now listening carefully. His pen is in hand. God the Holy Spirit is hovering over the whole operation, guiding Paul's mentality so that his tongue does not say anything that is false or untrue, or that his tongue does not use wrong words that do not accurately convey what God the Holy Spirit wants to put down on that paper. So, Paul says "now," which is a word indicating coming to a conclusion, and with which he introduces a doxology.

A doxology is an expression of praise to God. "To Him who is able," this Greek word looks like this, it's the word "dunamai," d u n a m a i. "Dunamai" is a word for the effective power to accomplish something. It is the Greek word, indeed, from which we get our English word dynamite. The word "dunamai" is a word that indicates great power available. He is speaking about someone who has great omnipotent power, to Him, who has dynamite power to do something. You have to look down to verse 27 to see "to Him" is; "to Him" is the only wise God. He doesn't identify of whom he is speaking until he gets to the last verse.

**To Stabilize**

So, he is speaking about God the Father who has the enormous capacity to do something very important, and that is to "sterizo" Christians. S t e r i z o, "sterizo" means to stabilize, to strengthen. It refers now to Paul's stated objective when he began writing this book. In Romans 1:11, he says to the Christians, "For I long to see you, [I want to come to Rome to minister to you] in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established." When he says spiritual gift, he means to use some spiritual ability that he has, which was mainly that of the teacher, and that he is going to impart to them doctorial understanding for the purpose of stabilizing them.

If there's anything Christians need, it is that they need to be stabilized in spiritual things. They need to be under control. They need to know their way through the world today. We live in a world which has turned increasingly with the dignifying of Hinduism under the presentation of the New Age movement into the old occult realm. The basic teaching of Hinduism and of New Age is that man is a god. Mormonism unashamedly tells you that you are a God evolving, if you prove yourself worthy, you too will have a world to rule, just as Jesus did. So that Christians indeed need to know their way around in spiritual things. Paul said 'I want to come to Rome to help believers to build a spiritual maturity structure in their souls. I want to give you the capacity to live victoriously in Satan's world.' And Paul recognized that only God can do this. So, he says, 'I am now commending you to the God who is able to establish you.' This is in the aorist tense, this word "sterizo," so, "to establish it" means 'at any point in time that you face the attack in Satan's world.' It's in the active voice, which means that it will be the work of God the Holy Spirit in your life. And it's in the infinitive mood which tells us that this is the purpose of God. It is not the purpose of God, folks, for Christians to be a bunch of wishy washy wimps who don't know their way around or who are blown to and fro with every wind of new doctrine that comes along.

Christians should be able to analyze what you hear on nightly news. Christians should see through what people are doing. You should understand all of the misconceptions that are directed toward you through the media and a variety of ways through entertainment. You should have a second sense of knowing that you are being deceived and you are being degraded. Have you noticed that the politicians can't get over degrading themselves? It's bad enough that the Republicans have done it here in the state? Now the Democrats in the news this past week have done the same thing. These guys are vulgar, crude, obscene idiots. I'm wondering why anybody even sits there and listens to them or even walks in and gives them any respect or any authority. I would walk out of a place like that. I would pull a jerk like that down out of a place of representing me as a group. I mean, they're not just saying cute little nonsense. They're saying vulgarities, obscenities. They're laughing at things that are sinful. You see what I mean by framing the issues in the right words? One guy said, 'oh, this was just a silly remark.' It was a sinful statement! 'It was just a foolish idea.' It was a gross evil. Let's get the statements right. Let's frame it in what they're really doing.

Now, there are a lot of Christians who are going to laugh. That's what the sad part is. There are Christians who are going to listen and say, oh, that's funny. Nothing is so sad as to see a Christian who laughs at a dirty remark. I loved Dr. Armady at Dallas Seminary when he was our teacher in English Bible. One of the things he had was big ears. Strange people.... there are some strange people that have big ears in the human race. "These people," he said, "I go to the barbershop and Mr. Jones," he said, "I tolerated this for a while. And Mr. Jones would start cutting my hair. And he'd tell me the latest, dirtiest, sexiest joke he'd heard. I tried to be polite." He says, "Finally, I went in there one day and he started the same thing. I said to him 'Excuse me Mr. Jones,'" and he caught his enormous ear. He said "'Does this look like a sewer?' Mr. Jones was taken aback. 'Well, no!' He said, 'Well, then please don't pour your filth and garbage into it!'" Boy was it silent in that barber shop after that! But you see, finally, a Christian has to say 'enough is enough.' But you're not going to have the courage to do that unless you are "sterizoed" in the faith, you are established and stable, and you're nobody's fool, and you're nobody's sitting duck! "To him who is able to establish you."

And then Paul goes on to explain the basis by which you can be established, the basis that God has provided for you to be stable. He's not just telling you to be stable in the Christian life, be a solid believer. He says, 'You can be that because here's what God has given you to make that possible.'

Then, of all things, in verse 25, God the Holy Spirit, knowing the enormous resistance and confusion that is going to come down the line, at a critical point of doctrine, the apostle Paul after all he said, I can't believe the 3 verses from the end. He touches on this major doctrine and he does it because the Holy Spirit says, 'Paul hit this one more time. If Christians do not understand this issue, Satan will be able to neutralize and Satan will be able to win. Satan will keep people from access to the Word of God. Satan will insert such confusion among Christians that there will be a bunch of worthless ninnies chasing rabbits. Paul stick this in one more time so that when the preachers come to it, they can have another chance to alert people to this crucial watershed doctrine,' which we shall look at next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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