



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B) – Romans 16:25-27

Focus: *To God be the Glory Forever!*

word of life

“Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages. . .” Romans 16: 25 (NRSV)

Read Romans 16:25-27

Paul spent years on his missionary trips, stopping to plant churches and nurture faith. Before he traveled to Rome at the end of his life, Paul wrote his letter to the Romans to introduce himself. In the letter, Paul offers a theological summary of the good news of Jesus as a basis for his life’s work as a missionary. This letter significantly shaped Martin Luther’s life and theology.

1. *What do you know about Paul’s letter to the Romans?*
2. *What verse(s) from Romans can you recite from memory?*

The letter to the Romans concludes with a beautiful doxology praising God. Some of these final verses are classic Paul – pointing to God who strengthens faith. But the phrasing about the “prophetic writings” is less typical of his writing.

All of us, including Paul, have favorite phrases and words woven into our writings. Sometimes, we don’t even realize our patterns. Biblical scholars scrutinize the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, searching for nuances and patterns of the writer.

3. *What phrases do you frequently use when you talk or write?*
4. *How would you describe Paul’s writing style?*

Copies of the Paul’s letters would be rewritten by hand by a scribe and disbursed. It is interesting to note the doxology of Romans 16:25-27 appears in a number of places. This text can be found in ancient Greek manuscripts at the end of Romans 14:23 as well as Romans 15:33. Some scholars wonder if Romans 16:25-27 was the conclusion of one of Paul’s other letters, but the manuscripts might have gotten mixed up.

Take a moment to find a Bible with footnotes.

5. *What does it say about Romans 16:25-27?*
6. *Do you think Paul would disagree with the content of these verses? Explain your answer.*

Other scholars suggest a scribe added these verses in the margin of the manuscript when he was making a copy. The next time the manuscript was copied, the verses were included in the text as part of the manuscript.

Whoever wrote these words gives sole praise to God and God alone, the One who has done amazing things through Jesus Christ. Glory be given to the “only wise God through Jesus Christ”.

7. *Does it matter to you if Paul wrote Romans 16:25-27?*
8. *What words of praise summarize God’s actions through Jesus Christ?*
9. *How is God to be glorified?*

word among us

Advent provides four weeks to anticipate the coming of Christ with all his glory. Since the birth of Jesus, artists and musicians have tried to capture a glimpse of God's glory.

1. *What are your favorite images from art to depict God's glory?*
2. *What music draws you close to God's glory?*
3. *In your opinion, what form of art best captures God's glory?*

A doxology is a phrase giving God glory. Many times these words are put to music in a hymn or chant. Ken Thomas wrote the popular doxology "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" as part of a longer hymn in 1674. If there is time, browse through your hymnal and search for doxologies.

4. *What music used at worship includes a doxology?*
5. *What does it feel like to say or sing a doxology?*

The core of a doxology is praise. We give glory to God who is more magnificent than we can comprehend. Romans 6:27 gives glory to an only wise God.

6. *Describe the wisdom of God.*
7. *Do you ever question God's wisdom? If so, when?*
8. *How difficult is it for you to acknowledge God as "only wise"?*

Romans 6:27 also includes a reference to the mystery of God. It is our human nature to want to understand as a means to control. Our text reminds us that God is beyond our human comprehension.

faith practice in daily life

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper

Soon Christmas will be here. Now is a perfect time to write your own personal doxology. This can be done alone or with others.

9. *Think about your past week, month, year, or life. Select words of praise to God and record your doxology on paper.*

It is significant to write, sing or read a doxology, but imagine your life as a doxology. Imagine if your life becomes a singular praise to God. Imagine.

10. *How might your life become a doxology?*

Prayer

Create my life to be a doxology to you, only wise God, through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever. Amen

last word

Each time
you open a door,
offer a doxology to God,
through whom be the glory forever.