



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do *"Proestablishmentarianism"*

Romans 16:25-27

We talk about getting established in a home or in a business. We mean that there is a lot of work especially in the beginning but, afterwards, we can enjoy the benefits.

Paul ends his letter to the Romans telling them God "is able to establish" them. Notice it is a work God does, not something you do. It's like a father turning over his successful business to his son.

What is the work He has done to establish you? That is what we are going to focus on as we close out Romans.

[Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ...](#)

The word "gospel" here is a reference to the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It reminds us of the early chapters of Romans where Paul let us know that believing sinners are justified - declared righteous - based on the finished work of Jesus on the Cross. Our part is simply to believe - and believing is not a work.

Why does he call it "my gospel?"

One reason could be simply to emphasize how much he loved the good news about Jesus. The gospel is a universal message given to meet a universal need. When it is received, its power and effectiveness become yours personally. Calling it "my gospel" is an endearing way of saying Jesus is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe - **and that's me!**

"My gospel" also reminds us that Paul was often attacked by legalistic Judaizing teachers of preaching an incomplete gospel message. He preached grace alone while they added works of righteousness as being necessary for salvation. "My gospel" was a way Paul had of referring to his grace-alone message, which was the correct message, the true gospel, taught by him and the other apostles.

You can never be established until and unless you are saved. It's bedrock.

And you won't be truly established unless the gospel you've received is Paul's gospel, the message of grace alone. If you start adding works of any kind you will lose your solid footing and begin to trust in your own self-righteousness.

You are established by the gospel, Paul went on, "by the preaching of Jesus Christ," i.e., by hearing preaching *about* Him. He must be the content of the message.

I think a lot of Christians lack depth because the content of the messages they hear, and prefer to hear, are not really centered in Christ. Think of the recent most popular Christian books. A lot of them are about what you should or should not be doing. Or they suggest some program, some system, by which you become more spiritual.

Modern devotionals are geared towards reforming your life, with making improvements to your behavior. Again, they are not really centered on Jesus Himself but, rather, on you and bettering yourself.

We've been quoting Mathew Henry who said, "it's easier to build the temple than to be the temple." Jesus wants you to be the temple, His temple. It's a love affair not life couching.

Christ needs to be preached, and Him crucified and risen from the dead, and you and I sharing in the fellowship of His sufferings until that glorious day we see Him face-to-face.

God establishes you according to the revelation of a mystery.

Romans 16:25 according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began
Romans 16:26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations...

The word "mystery" appears twenty eight times in the New Testament, mostly in the writings of Paul. It is not found in the Old Testament. The Greek word *musterion*, translated "mystery" did not mean something that is obscure or incomprehensible; rather it meant a truth given and

The men who wrote the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures did not fully understand all that they wrote. All the details that lay between the first coming of Jesus Christ and the second coming of Jesus Christ were a mystery to them and to the Old Testament saints. Paul was chosen by God to reveal these mysteries. Today, wherever the gospel that proclaims Jesus is preached, these mysteries are being made known to all.

The great mystery Paul revealed to the Romans was the church of Jesus Christ. He explained how God has set aside Israel but only temporarily. He will turn His attention to Israel again and fulfill all His promises to them.

Mean time God is calling all men - Jew and Gentile - into the church. There was no need to convert to Judaism. To do so, for Gentiles, was wrong. We take it for granted but this was something mysterious - formerly unknown but now revealed.

Notice Paul's big heart for evangelism. He said the gospel "was made known to all nations." He himself wanted to go further, to places the gospel had not gone, so he didn't mean that every nation had the gospel. He did mean that the gospel was for every nation, people, tribe and tongue. Jesus was and is the Savior of all men everywhere. He was confident the gospel is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (1:16).

When you think of the church, the gathering of believers, you might tend to think of it as a lot of work! That's partially true. There *is* work to be done, building to be specific. The New Testament describes the first century apostles and prophets as laying the foundation for the church. Then it is "edified," built-up, by pastors who teach the saints. Within the church there is a lot of serving to be done as we minister one to another. In the end believers will be rewarded at the Bema of Jesus Christ based on the building that they have done. More precisely, they will be rewarded based on whether they built within the church using precious, godly materials or common, worldly materials.

But there is another way of looking at the mystery of the church. Jesus, when He first introduced the idea of the church to His followers, said plainly that He would build His church on earth.

The apostle Peter picked up on this idea of building and called believers "living stones."

You've probably seen a commemorative or memorial wall of some kind. Over at the King's County YMCA they have one as you enter the building. If memory serves me right, they are individual stones or bricks with the names of donors on them.

In a spiritual but very real sense, when you get saved you are fit into the church of Jesus Christ as one of its unique living stones. I'm not talking about your work helping to build a local church. I'm not talking about having your name on a plaque or a brick in a physical church building. No, I'm talking about the fact you are a living stone in the universal church. God puts you in, all on His own.

We've now said that you are established by God as a Christian in the church. How does it happen?

Romans 16:26 ...according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith;

What commandment? I'd say it's the great commission. Believers are told to "go and make disciples of all the nations." The gospel came to you through someone walking in obedience to that great commission.

Lots of someone's, actually. Even if one person led you to the Lord, someone led them first. And it may have been through a tract someone wrote and someone else funded.

Or maybe it was your hearing the gospel in church where perhaps hundreds of people over decades supported the work so you could sit there one day and hear about Jesus.

There are no end to the connections you can make that result in any one person hearing the gospel!

"Obedience to the faith," then, would be obeying the great commission. But even this is not a work, per se. You see, the command to "go" means *as you are going*. It means that wherever you are, you are to witness and you do that in power Jesus Christ supplied Christians on the Day of Pentecost when He sent the Holy Spirit in a special way to baptize us for boldness.

God has established you. You are a Christian, the church, in the chain of connection of the gospel with every believer before you and after you, with the Holy Spirit in you and upon you to be a witness.

God has done all the work. It's like walking into an established business and simply reaping the benefits.

What you do with it - that's up to you. More than one son has taken over his father's established business only to run it into the ground.

You could make a modern parable out of the illustration of the established business being wrecked.

- In some cases it's because the son has no work ethic. For us, although works of righteousness are not necessary for salvation, we ought to yield ourselves to righteousness and do

those things that are pleasing to our Lord. He has saved us so we could make something of our lives, not ruin them.

- In some cases the established business fails because the son treats the patrons badly. We certainly can forget all the "one another" verses and mistreat one another.
- In some cases the son who takes over takes all he can get from the business to spend it on his own pursuits. It's sad to say but there are believers who are looking to God only for material and physical prosperity.

We know that Paul dictated most of his letters earlier, in verse twenty-two, he mentioned that Tertius had written down the letter. He often at the end of the letters said he was signing it in his own hand.

Likely at this point in dictating the letter Paul took the pen and wrote the following as his signature.

Romans 16:27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

God is "alone wise" in that He is God of both Jew and Gentile, with a provision for both groups in the gospel of his Son.

Marines say *Semper Fi* - Always Faithful. The Coast Guard motto is *Semper Paratus* - Always Ready.

"Be glory through Jesus Christ forever." This would make a great motto for you and I. No matter what happens, no matter where we are, "Be glory through Jesus Christ forever."

