

SALVATION: FROM THEOLOGY TO DOXOLOGY **(Jude 24-25)**

In the year 2000, 21 years ago, when I was the pastor of another church, I preached through Paul's letter to the Church at Rome. The letter we call Romans, is the finest expression of Christian theology to be found in the New Testament. It profoundly and beautifully teaches us about who we are without Christ, and who we become in Christ.

Like many of Paul's letters, it can be divided into two sections. The first section is theological, and the second is practical. The first part teaches us what we need to know and the second, what we are to do based on what we know.

After dealing with some weighty and deep truths and before tackling street-level issues of how to live the Christian life, there are four verses that are different from what came before and different from what comes after. Those four verses are a buffer zone between those two sections of Romans.

So, years ago, when I was preparing a message on those verses, I read commentaries and expositions of those verses. I came across Kent Hughes' expositional commentary on Romans, and he had an entire chapter just on those four verses. I borrowed his chapter title as the title for my message: "From Theology to Doxology."

Let me read to you Romans 11:33-36. After dealing with some of the most difficult theological ideas in the NT, listen to what Paul wrote:

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"

³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

That 36th verse of Romans 11 is one of my favorite verses in the NT. Life is all about God. Listen to how Pastor H.B. Charles explains that verse:

What is it that makes God, God? Verse 36 answers, "For from him and through him and to him are all things." Here is the unfolding of history, the way of salvation, and the story of your life in one sentence. God is the first cause, the effective cause, and the final cause of all things.

God deserves the glory at all times. In his comments on this passage, William Barclay asks, "If a man can say that all things come from God, that all things have their being through him, and that all things end in him, what more is left to say?" Barclay is right and wrong. The fact that God is in control of all things ends the argument. But there is one more thing that must be said. It is the final ascription of this doxology: "To him be glory forever."

Let me say a word about the difference between theology and doxology. Theology comes from the word for *God* and the word for *word*. So, our word *theology* literally means, “Words about God.” When reading theology, you are reading words about God. When speaking theologically, you are speaking words about God. Theology is God talk. In one sense, everybody is a theologian. Now, a person may be a bad theologian or he could be a good theologian. It all depends on how well what he says about God matches up with what the Bible says about God.

The word *doxology* comes from the Greek word for *glory* and the Greek word for *word*. Doxology is using words to praise and glorify God. While theology is God talk, doxology is, specifically, praise talk about God.

If your theology doesn’t lead you to doxology, you have a deficient theology. If what you say about God or if what you hear about God doesn’t cause you to want to glorify and magnify His name, then it is quite likely that what you are saying and hearing about God is seriously lacking.

If a preacher can preach about Jesus for 30 minutes and you don’t want to stand up and shout, “Hallelujah! Praise God!”, something is wrong. Either, something is wrong with him and what he is saying or something is wrong in your own heart and mind.

Good theology should always lead to heart-felt doxology.

There are numerous doxologies that pop up in the NT. This often happens in the writings of Paul. You are reading along, and all of a sudden, Paul breaks out in praise. In my mind, Paul is writing about God; he is writing about Jesus; he is thinking about what he is writing; before long, he can’t contain himself any longer, and he erupts in praise.

That is how it should be in the life of a believer. That is how it should be in your life. You read God’s word; you listen to others talk about God; you are thinking about Him, and all of sudden, you glorify God. You can’t help but do so.

We have been examining the little letter of Jude. Over the last several weeks, we have been looking at some wonderful theology, some inspiring God-talk about what it means to live by truth.

Jude ends his letter with doxology. At the beginning of his letter, Jude said, “I wanted to write to you a letter about our common salvation.” His original intention, however, was interrupted because he became aware of the presence and teaching of false teachers. He changed his letter to one of warning and to one of exhortation. He exhorts us to fight for the faith by standing for the truth.

I think, however, that in the next to last verse of his letter, Jude gives us a hint of his original intention. He writes to us about one important aspect of our salvation, and then in the last verse of the letter, he praises God.

The title of today’s message is: “Salvation: From Theology to Doxology.” There are three things that I want you to catch.

We Are Saved and Kept Because God Is Able

There are many aspects and ways of viewing the grand subject of salvation. Much like how a diamond sparkles and you see different things as you turn it, the NT highlights the

radiance of salvation by focusing on different themes or doctrines related to salvation.

- In eternity past, the Father predestined and elected.
- In time, the Holy Spirit calls and regenerates.
- Along a well-traveled road outside the walls of Jerusalem almost 2000 years ago, Jesus made atonement for sin, and three days later, He arose victoriously from the grave.
- In time, you bowed your heart and your head, and you placed your faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord. At that moment, you were justified.
- The Spirit of God is presently at work sanctifying you.
- At some moment in the future, Jesus will come back, and all who are His will be given resurrection bodies. You will be glorified.

There are other doctrines related to salvation, like adoption, reconciliation, and the one that is highlighted in today's text: perseverance or security. Baptists commonly use the phrase, "Once saved, always saved."

Our God is able to keep you from stumbling. He is able to keep you from falling. He is able to keep you from losing what He gives you, namely, salvation.

I read recently that a woman called her local, volunteer, fire department when her cat got stuck in a tree outside her home. This is a true story. There was a group of new recruits who had not yet gotten much training, but they figured they could handle this call. The truck rolled. They got to the lady's house, and they successfully rescued her cat. The lady was so pleased that she invited them in to her house. She fed them tea and cookies. As they were leaving her place, they backed the truck up and ran over her cat.

That is a terrible story, but I share it to say that God did not rescue you only to let you perish in the end.

You may be looking at yourself and thinking to yourself, "I don't have what it takes. I don't have it within me to stay the course, to live out the Christian life and do what God expects of me. I'm not capable. I'm too unreliable. I'm too undependable. I don't think I can make it."

If you are thinking that, I want you to know that you are exactly right. On your own, you can't do it. But I have good news, you are not on your own. Jesus came to save us because we can't save ourselves. He is the One who is able.

We Are Saved and Kept Because God Is Willing

Not only is God able to save and keep you, but He is also willing. How do I know that God is willing? He has said so. In our text, we read that God is able to present us "blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy." Whose joy is in view? Obviously, we will have great joy when we are received into God's glorious presence without any guilt or stain of sin. I think, also, the case could be made that God will be joyful. We read in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus, "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." We read in Zephaniah 3:17 these words:

The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

As a parent, I have great joy when my children are at home. I believe God experiences that, too. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints," wrote the psalmist in Psalm 116:15. God will have great joy when we are home with Him. That is why He is willing to save and keep us.

Where else does God say this? I have said on a couple of occasions that there is great similarity between Jude and Peter's second letter. Look at 2 Peter 3:9. The text says that God is patient with *you*. Who is the *you*? Look at the latter half of 1:1 to see who the letter is addressed to. If you have obtained faith in Jesus, this letter is meant for you. Peter wants you to know that the Lord is patient with you. Time will continue until everyone who is meant to enter into God's family does so through repentance and faith.

Where else do we discover that God is willing to save and keep us? Look at what Jesus said in John 6. Read John 6:39-40, 44. It is Jesus' intention to receive, keep, and raise everyone that God gives to Him. When you place your faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, you can be assured that Jesus will receive you, keep you, and raise you. When He returns, He will give you a resurrection body fit for eternity.

I wonder, is there anything you used to do that you no longer do? Maybe you used to play a musical instrument, but you don't do that any longer. Maybe you used to play sports, but you gave that up long ago. Maybe you used to have a hobby, like stamp collecting, coin collecting, or woodworking, but you haven't done that in years.

This also applies to relationship. Is there someone that you used to be good friends with, but one of you moved away, you lost touch?

Is that going to happen with your faith? Are you going to outgrow it? Is your interest going to fade over time? Is this just a temporary phase of life?

That might be the case if salvation was your idea, but we are told in Scripture that God is the one who sought us; we didn't seek Him. He found us; we didn't find Him.

Jude ends his letter much the way he began it. Look at the latter half of v. 1. We are called by God, loved by God, and kept by God. Praise God! He is both able and willing to save us and keep us.

That brings us to Jude's final statement and mine.

Because We Are Saved and Kept, Let God Be Praised

Look at v. 25. Jude addressed his doxology "to the only God." Have you heard people talk about the Christian God, the Jewish god, the Muslim god, the Hindu and Buddhist gods? Listen, there is only one God.

The first semester of my freshman year in college, some friends and I went to a used bookstore in Shawnee. I found and bought a slim book entitled, *The Attributes of God* by

Arthur Pink. Up to that point in my life, I had never heard of Arthur Pink. I'm thankful that I made my acquaintance with him by reading that book because God used that book to change my life. Arthur Pink was used of God to expand my view of who God truly is. I have a bigger God because of what I read.

The first chapter of that book is called, "The Solitariness of God." Pink pointed out that before the world was created, before the universe existed, before time began, God has always been. There was never a time when God was not. It is difficult enough to grasp the fact that we will be with God in an eternal future, but what boggles my mind is to consider that in the eternal past, God has always been.

On page 11, Pink wrote of God: "He is solitary in His majesty, unique in His excellency, peerless in His perfections. He sustains all, but is Himself independent of all. He gives to all, but is enriched by none."

There is nothing we can give to God that He does not have. There is nothing we can provide God that He lacks or needs.

Of this only God, Jude calls Him *Savior*. The word *Savior* is more often used of Jesus than God. In the NT, Jesus is called *Savior* 15 times while God is referred to as *Savior* just 8 times. God is our Savior because He is the One who sent His only Son to save us and rescue us from our sin. Jude wrote that God is our Savior "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In his doxology, Jude attributes four things to God. It is not that Jude is giving these things to God as though God did not possess them. What he is doing is recognizing these truths about God and vocalizing them.

The first is glory. H.B. Charles said:

Scripture speaks of the glory of God in two ways. There is the inherent glory of God that is essential to his nature. It is the weight of his being, the brilliance of his presence, the sum total of his attributes. In a real sense, the glory of God is God . . .

There is also the ascribed glory of God. Ascribed glory is when we recognize the inherent glory of God and give credit where credit is due. When we ascribe glory to God, we are not making God greater than he is. We only recognize and respond to who God is and what God has done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

After recognizing God's glory, Jude acknowledges **God's majesty**. The majesty of God is His kingliness. Our God sits upon the throne of universe and is resplendent.

Related to that is **His dominion**. That refers to His power.

In his book, *The Attributes of God*, Pink has a chapter on "The Power of God." In that chapter, Pink observed, "Before man can work, he must have both tools and materials, but God began with nothing, and by His word alone out of nothing made all things. The intellect cannot grasp it."

Think about that. Before there was matter or light or energy or anything, God said, "Let there be," and there was. That is power.

In the last paragraph of that chapter, Pink applies the truth of God's power in a wonderful way. He wrote:

But seeing that He is clothed with omnipotence, no prayer is too hard for Him to answer, no need is too great for Him to supply, no passion is too strong for Him to subdue, no temptation is too powerful for Him to deliver from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve.

That is the power of our God.

Finally, Jude brings to mind **the authority of our God**. This is God's right to rule over all things. You and I are included in the phrase "over all things." That means, He is Lord, and we are not.

When my mother would tell me to do something and I asked, "Why?" she would answer, "Because I'm the momma, and you're the kid."

When God tells you to do something, don't bother to ask why, just remember, He's the Lord, and you are His subject, but also, He is your Father, and you are His child.

Jude gave us the time frame for God's glory, majesty, dominion, and authority. Those things have been in place before time began. They will be in place forever, and they are in place right now.

Our job is to recognize those things and affirm those things. Our motivation for doing so is that God has saved us, and He is and will always keep us.

History tells us that Joseph Parker and Charles Spurgeon were two of the greatest preachers in the 19th century. It just so happens that they lived in the same city and their preaching ministries overlapped.

Parker preached at the magnificent City Temple in London while Spurgeon at the even larger Metropolitan Tabernacle in London.

I read that Parker was so egotistical that he could strut sitting down. There is a story that a pastor search committee from a smaller church wanted to talk to Parker about becoming their pastor. He dismissed them by saying, "An eagle does not roost in a sparrow's nest."

This past week, I heard that a group of preachers from America were once in London. They decided they wanted to hear these two famous preachers. On Sunday morning, they went to City Temple. There were about 2000 people in attendance. The pastor had a strong voice. At the end of his message, these men said, "Wow! What a preacher!"

That evening, they went to the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and even though it was Sunday evening, the attendance was far greater. The voice was even stronger. At the end of the message, those men said, "Wow! What a Savior!"

That was Jude's goal for his letter, that you would join him in saying, "What a Savior!" He ended his letter with the word, "Amen." It means, "Let it be so."

My hope, my prayer is that Jesus is your Savior and that you would come to know what a Savior He is. Let it be so!