

Theme: **Our Life's Doxology**

Text: Romans 16:17 – 27

Date: November 26, 2017

Season: Last Sunday in Church Year A

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you let God prepare you for eternal life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

On this last Sunday in the Church year I want to talk to you about your last days in this world. What do you want those days to be like? Do you want them to be filled with the joy of having your family and friends around you remembering all the good times that you have share with each other? Though most of us don't get a choice on what our last days in this world will be like, we do have some desires. So, what are your desires for those last days?

Elinor Fix was in her 90's and though she had many health problems she loved being at church. I would visit her often at her home when her health wouldn't let her get out of bed and I would read her the scripture reading for that Sunday and we would talk. On day while we were talking she told me, "Pastor my wish is to die in the church. I think that it would be so pleasant to be worshiping in a church service and then have God take you from that worship of Him to be in worship of Him in heaven." I agreed with her thought and we talked about that last day here in this world and the good and bad feelings that come with it. After I left her that day I didn't think much about her words, as I got busy with life. Later that year her health got better and her son brought her to church every time that we had a service. It was that New Year's Eve service, Elinor and her son were right there sitting in their usual seat and enjoying the service, after the sermon I prayed as I usually do and as I finished the prayer I looked up and out upon the congregation and was going to announce the offering when notice that Elinor was slumped over upon her son's lap. Instead of saying anything I quickly moved from the pulpit down the outside aisle to their pews was. Elinor's son was trying to get his mom to respond. Before I got there one of the ladies of the congregation had him lay Elinor down on the pew and began CPR on her as she ordered someone else to call the ambulance. As several people worked on giving Elinor CPR, I moved the congregation attention away from Elinor and back up to the Altar where we all began praying for Elinor and her life. As the ambulance arrived I dismissed the service and the EMT's took over trying to get Elinor's heart and breathing to start again. Elinor got her heart's desire to die in the midst of a worship service or as she put it, to leave this world in worship of God to go

up to her heavenly home to worship God in His home forever. That was in many ways her doxology and God granted it to her on that New Year's Eve service I will never forget.

What is your life's Doxology, that is how does your life give praise and all glory to God? The Apostle Paul's Doxology for the book of Romans goes like this: **"Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen."** (Rom. 16: 25-27)

Who gives you strength? As we have been reading through the book of Romans through this past Pentecost season we have heard the Apostle Paul remind us that true strength only come from God. The Holy Spirit works in our lives through God's Word and Sacraments to give us that strength of faith. That's the Gospel that the Apostle Paul is talking about. That's the preaching of Jesus Christ that He proclaimed. That's what the prophetic writings of the Old Testament are telling us about. God is the source of strength that allows us to live in this world, that brings us to the love of God for us and it is the only way we are able to find joy and peace in this world as we wait for the coming of our new home with God.

From the beginning of time God has wanted us to live with Him in His love, peace and joy, but we rebel against God and that rebellion, our sins, led us to death and destruction, not to the peace and joy that God wanted us to have with Him for all eternity. God did something about our dreadful situation, He sent His Only Son, Jesus Christ to live a perfect life in this world for us and then He took all our sins upon Himself and died on the accursed Cross for us and rose again on the third day to give us the assurance that the gates of heaven are open for us to live with Him for all eternity by faith in Him.

The secret of God's perfect plan was revealed in Jesus Christ and God sent His Holy Spirit to be in our lives through His Word and Sacraments to bring us to faith in all that God has done for us. The Triune God is the only wise God that we should ever give all glory and honor to now and for all eternity. This is the glory and honor that Apostle Paul gives to God in his doxology to us as a witness of God's love, grace and mercy. But is this our doxology of God to the world?

The Apostle Paul says to us, **“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites—and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”** (Rom. 16:17- 20)

Over the years, I have heard members and none members of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod say that the LCMS is a quarreling or arguing church. I would disagree with that statement, we are not quarreling and arguing church, but we are debating and questioning church dealing with the truth of God’s Word. We are watching out for those working for the Old Evil Foe from taking us away from the truth of God’s Word. God’s Word in all its truth is important because that is where we get the strength to move on in this world and deal with all the problems and trials that we have to face. When we don’t understand the doctrine of God’s Word we dismiss it and eventually lose it. What a horrible thing, to lose the truth of God’s Word by the smooth talk and flattery of the world. That’s not the legacy that I want to leave my children, grandchildren and all you in this world, but instead I would wish that we all would hang onto the truth of God’s Word. For it is the truth of God’s Word that gives us the full love, grace and mercy of God now and for all eternity. I don’t want a watered-down version of God’s Word because it loses its ability to defend us against the Old Evil Foe and causes us to fall out of God’s love, grace and mercy and into the traps and the pit falls of our Old Evil Foe.

God’s Love, grace and mercy is important for each of us to have now and for all eternity. Now I can’t force you to let the Holy Spirit go to work in your life to give you faith and the strength to resist the tricks of the Old Evil Foe, but I can encourage you to hold onto the truth of God’s Word, I can share my life’s doxology with you as an example and I can pray for that you will let the truth of God’s Word work in your life now so that it can take you to be with God in heavenly home that He has prepared for you to live in with Him in love, peace and joy for all eternity.

Yes, I give all glory and honor to God for He was the one who made me, His Child and He has keeps me as His child even when I didn’t deserve or merit it. It is God, who loves each of us

so much that He was willing to die for you and me so that we could live in His Love, peace and joy for all eternity. It is the truth of God's Word and Sacrament that God works through to give us His love, grace and mercy. Without God, I would only have pain and suffering to live in forever, but with God, I have His love, grace and mercy and that's what I want to share with you now and for all eternity when the end of the world come. That's my doxology to you about God. Amen.