

TO HIM BE GLORY!

Ephesians 3:20-21

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is all about the glory God in the life of His church. In particular, this epistle teaches us these three foundational Christian truths: the greatness of our salvation in Christ (1:1-2:10); the glory of the church as the one body of Christ (2:11-3:21); and the godly conduct that should characterize the Christian life (4:1-6:24). Our passage, Ephesians 3:20-21 concludes the doctrinal section of this epistle. This is Paul's doxology or ascription of praise to God. Biblical doctrine must lead to joyful doxology. Christian truth must culminate in church worship. Paul bursts forth in triumphant praise of doxology to God after his pastoral prayer for the Ephesian believers (Eph. 3:14-19). The ultimate purpose of prayer is the praise of God. The goal of our prayer is the glory of God (Psalm 50:15). Paul's doxology presents two compelling reasons why we must ascribe the highest praise to God.

1. We must ascribe praise to God for His _____.

In his doxology, Paul ascribes praise to our God who is able (Eph. 3:20). He calls our attention to the unlimited power of God. God's divine power speaks of His divine ability to do what He purposes to accomplish. What makes God God is that He is able to do whatever He intends to do and whatever He decides to accomplish. And no one can stop our all-powerful God from fulfilling His holy purposes (2 Chron. 20:6; Isa. 43:13; Prov. 21:30; Dan. 4:35; Jer. 32:17; Luke 1:37; 18:27). The good news is that our omnipotent God exercises His infinite power to bless His people. Ephesians 3:20 shows us two ways by which God's power blesses our lives. First, God's unlimited power exceeds our own prayers and expectations. Paul says, "*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.*" The power of God goes above, over and beyond our boldest and biggest prayers. It exceeds our greatest desires and highest expectations (Jer. 32:27; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gen. 2:2-3; 1 Chron. 7:14; 1 Kings 12:12-13; Luke 18:13). Second, God's unlimited power is constantly at work within us (Eph. 3:20). The resurrection power of God in Christ is at work in us constantly, permanently and completely (Eph. 1:19-20). God's power is made perfect even in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

2. We must ascribe praise to God for His _____.

The Bible speaks of God's glory in two ways: God's intrinsic glory which is the sum and total of God's perfect attributes and God's ascribed glory which is the believer's response to the revelation of God's glory. When God reveals the glory of Himself to us (through His holiness, power, grace, goodness), we acknowledge God for who He is and ascribe Him the praise He deserves. This is what Paul is calling us to do in his doxology. When God demonstrates His glory to us through His power in answering our prayers and in working so mightily in our lives, we must respond to God by giving Him the glory that is rightfully His. Paul declares, "*To Him be glory!*" (Eph. 3:21). Paul also teaches us that God's glory is displayed in His church and in Christ Jesus. God's glory in the church cannot be separated from God's glory in Christ Jesus. Paul reminds us of the unbreakable bond of Jesus and His church. We cannot glorify God without honoring and loving His church. God's glory in His church will never fail because Jesus promises perfect glory for His church (Eph. 5:25-27). God's glory is unfailing because God's glory will endure throughout all generations forever and ever. Along with Paul, all of God's people must say, Amen!
