

DOXOLOGIES

SERMON #5: WHO HE IS, WHAT HE DOES, GLORY! [Hebrews 13:20-21]

Doxologies: To him be glory....

[Note: here I give only sermon notes and a general outline. The personal illustrations I would use in preaching the sermon are not included. I do not give a detailed study of the text. Those tasks belong to the teacher or preacher. Careful exposition and application are always a significant part of the expository sermon.]

Heb. 13:20-21 - Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Introduction

We study a doxology that is not well-known, but it is special, powerful, impressive. The gospel in a nutshell, especially appropriate for the Hebrew believers who were struggling with faith. The God of peace, a unique and interesting description of God. Why does this doxology come at the end of Hebrews? Perhaps it is because of the focus in the book on faithfulness in the midst of persecutions, struggles, faith challenges.

The doxology is complex, sequential. God → prayer → doxology

This “God of peace” acted, the primary action is “leading forth” (the resurrection of) Jesus

- Jesus, the great shepherd
- By the blood of the eternal covenant (which one, Hebrews is about two covenants); the phrase seems to best fit with “equip”
- The Lord Jesus, Jesus is Lord
- The point is to remember forgiveness

The prayer, equip you completely

- By the blood of the eternal covenant
- To do his will
- To work in us that which pleases him
- Which work is through Jesus Christ

The doxology

Have you seen God? Do you know God?

What do you know about God? Here is a picture of God.

There is nothing more important—we must see God. Show us the Father. We must see, understand, comprehend. Until we see and comprehend God, we are hopelessly disoriented. What kind of God do we serve? One passage is not enough. The Bible contains multiple descriptions of God, both of his nature and his actions. One thing we must know: God is the God of peace. He seeks peace. He seeks peace with his creation, among his creation. He brings peace through Jesus, relationship is established; relationships are established. God does something. Here is the only reference to the resurrection of Jesus in the book of Hebrews.

Jesus the great shepherd; the use of this phrase for the Hebrews would recall OT prophecies concerning the coming of another David, another shepherd. Jesus is described in many ways—shepherd is familiar, but unknown. Ps. 23; 1 Pet. 2, 1 Pet. 5. We do not know shepherding, sheep herding. We do not appreciate the picture.

Relationship with God is by the blood of the eternal covenant. The point of Hebrews is that one covenant was temporal, the other eternal. We do not understand covenant dynamics. We speak of

contracts, similarities. What makes a covenant eternal? What is the significance of blood in the eternal covenant?

Jesus is made Lord, Son of God, relationship is established. His identity is confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. The layers just keep coming off, revelation expands and unfolds, so we can see and know God. That is the first point in a doxology, what is God like? What reasons are there to glorify God?

God. God acts in the midst of human history, God does something incredible when he leads forth (brings forth) Jesus from the dead.

Have you seen God at work?

What God did/does can make a difference in our lives.

God has a plan, God has a goal. He has a desired result in our lives.

This God who has acted in history will continue to act. He who invested his Son in our salvation will continue to act on our behalf.

To equip (prepare, mend, make ready for use) you in every good thing.

Unto the doing of his will. God equips us "to do" his will.

God acts "to do" in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ. God empowers us, equips us. We "do" something, we are his workmanship, but he equips us for good works. God does his work. God does his will in Jesus Christ.

The reason to glorify God: he makes it possible for us to act, respond, participate, share, make a difference. He empowers us. Resurrection promises life, abundant life.

Conclusion: recognizing the glory of God. "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

May people do not recognize the glory of God. They have not seen God. They have not seen God's impact in the world, in the lives of others, in their own lives. They cannot see, so they do not trust, depend, believe, worship, glorify.

To whom be glory forever. A question can be raised in this text, who gets the glory? The nearest antecedent is Christ. Nonetheless, it seems preferable to refer back to the subject of the sentence, glory to God. Glory is given to God through Jesus Christ, 13:15.

A simple statement: to God be glory forever! Doxology. The reason precedes the declaration. God is God; God is good. God is powerful, God is life. God raises Jesus, and in doing so he equips us to be his will-doers, to please him, to fulfill his purpose. Not by our own power, by his power.

We respond in faith, dependence. We gladly imitate him as we become disciples. We follow him closely, faithfully, daily.