

Monday, March 11, 2024 ▫ Read Romans 11:33–36

Questions from the Scripture text: How does the beginning of v33 express astonishment? At what is the apostle astonished? What is it that is so astonishingly deep? Of what are these riches? Whose wisdom and knowledge? What can't be done to His judgments? What can't be done to His ways? What is the expected answer of the rhetorical question in v34? In v35? What two different things can man never do with respect to God? Why can't man either inform or indebt God (v36)? For what, then, does man exist?

How should we respond to the doctrine of God's sovereign grace? Romans 11:33–36 prepares us for the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **we should respond to the doctrine of God's sovereign grace with wonder, worship, and humility.**

This passage concludes chapter 11's explanation of God's redemptive plan and Israel's place in it. It also concludes chapters 9–11 and their explanation of election and reprobation. It also concludes chapters 1–11 and their explanation of how all of salvation is all by God's grace. So this is a key passage for teaching us how to respond to these things. There will be no "offering our bodies as a living sacrifice" (12:1) unless we are compelled by the mercies of God. So, how are we to respond to that mercy? Wonder, humility, and worship.

Wonder, v33. It is appropriate that v34 quotes Isa 40 and v35 quotes Job 41. In each of those books, God's sovereign grace brings His saint to his knees in wonder and adoration.

In Isaiah, God announces His plan to save through the Christ, which includes in the near term a plan to restore Israel from exile by means of Cyrus. Some of His people are offended at this, but in 45:15, when He has just explained that this is a means by which He will save even elect from among the nations, the response is to be amazed at the God of salvation.

And Job discovers that, ultimately, God was doing him good all along—bringing him to such a knowledge of God through affliction that his prior knowledge of God was like a whisper or a rumor by comparison. As God asks the question about indebted God, He is bringing Job to put his hand over his mouth, to repent, and to worship.

This is how we, too, ought to respond to God's sovereign grace. What He has taught us in Romans doesn't give us to "have it all figured out." But as much as He does tell us rings true and beautiful, and it gives us just a glimpse of God's glory in His sovereign grace. It is a glimpse into "the depth." We see the depths, even though we cannot see to the bottom. And the depth makes us to cry out in praise.

He shows the riches of His glory in mercy (cf. 9:23), and He shows the riches of His glory in the perfection of His plan for applying that mercy (cf. 11:30–32). If we have begun to see the depth of those riches, let our hearts cry out with the apostle's in wonder and worship!

Humility, v34–35. There is a gross creature that I have seen from time to time, even in the mirror for much of a season of my life: someone who takes a posture of superiority as a result of knowledge and conviction about the truth of sovereign grace. What a sad, sinful contradiction! It is that very doctrine that should have brought us to our knees and put us onto our faces!

The answer to each of the rhetorical questions in this series is, "no one!" When we believe the marvelous truth that the Lord has taught us, that we could not have known any other way, the proper response is not pride but humiliation. Here is something that was entirely beyond my reach, and there is nothing more than this that I can reach, because I can only know about it whatever God is pleased to tell me! This is the point of the worship in v34.

If I am to be humble with respect to my knowledge, how much more with respect to my actions. Have I ever done one thing that would put God into my debt? Even if I do all that is required, and properly say that I am a servant who has done as I should and have not profited God by it (cf. Lk 17:10), I must still also admit that everything that I have done has depended upon His grace!

No, the essence of true, Christian humility is gratitude. God has always done me nothing but good. And He will always do me nothing but good. And there is nothing that I have ever done that earned a particle of this goodness. It was never debt, but always grace (cf. 4:2–4, 11:6). And this is the point of the worship in v35.

Worship, v36. And so, what are we to do? We're to give him glory. Because He's the one who created all things at the beginning. And the only way we know about the beginning is by whatever He tells us. For, "of Him are all things."

To give him glory because we are depending upon Him in every moment, now. If He was not sustaining us, helping us by his grace, we wouldn't have anything, understand anything, or be able to do anything. He's the one who upholds, all things by the word of His power. "Through him are all things."

We give Him glory because, He's the One who created all and upholds all and gives to all their good. And whatever glory there is in whatever happens, that glory belongs to Him. "To Him are all things."

And so the apostle concludes, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen." Worship is the proper response to the mercy of God—both stated worship times, and also that worship that we will be thinking about in 12:1, offering our bodies as a living sacrifice.

When was the last time that you were so taken with the wisdom of God's plan of sovereign grace that you just marveled at the depth of the riches of that wisdom? How often do you dwell upon that wisdom and that salvation so as to wonder at the depths? In what circumstances are you most given to pride about theological knowledge or the good that grace has produced in you? In what circumstances are you least given to that pride? As you attend upon God by way of His means, what would it look like for humility to penetrate into those formerly proud times?

Sample prayer: O the depth of the riches, both of Your wisdom and knowledge, O God! How unsearchable are Your judgments and Your ways past finding out! No one has known Your mind, O Lord. No one could be Your counselor. You are the giver of every good gift and every perfect gift, and none can add to You. From You, and through You, and to You are all things. To You be the glory forever in Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP98 "O Sing a New Song to the LORD" or TPH226 "O The Deep, Unbounded Riches"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. **PLEASE BE AWARE** of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 11 verses 33-36. These are God's words. Oh, the depth of the riches. Both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For who has known the mind of Yahweh or who has become his counselor. Or who has first given to him.

That it shall be repaid to him. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen. So, for the reading of gods inspired and therein twerked. Is important for us when we come to questions, like, Who is getting saved and why are things happening that we remember?

That these things happen under the Sovereign provenance of God and especially the question of who is getting saved and how people are responding to the gospel. it comes out of the very specific. Providence or part of God's decree that flows out of his electing love. That it is his for knowing That has.

caused or that is Source of his predestining, those who will be conformed to the image of his son. And that as those who are predestined, thus unto the adoption. Who are called not only with the external call. Of the hearing of the Gospel, the hearing of the preacher.

To the internal call. And the Holy Spirit, making them to hear the Lord Jesus and obtain that faith that comes by hearing. That's what we've been learning about in chapters 9 through 11 and particularly towards the end of chapter 11. With respect to in what order and in what way God brings the fullness of both elect Israelites and elect Gentiles.

To be the fullness of elect Israel. The Israel of God. Bringing them to Faith. Gathering them to himself in Jesus Christ. And we should come by the end of chapter 11 hearing. The wisdom of God. to make it clear that all of the Saving Grace, all of the sanctifying and glorifying Grace comes in, and through, and by and from our Lord Jesus Christ, and That the reason.

For all Disobedience, even that Disobedience, which is sometimes in a partial partial hardening towards the Gospel that the reason for that is so that it would be evident that it is all from God's mercy. So he shuts up all under Disobedience so that all would be saved by Mercy so that he would show Mercy to all just as he began in the first three chapters of the letter.

describing to us how all have sinned and they have sinned in despising, the glory of God. So that when he does save, when he does give righteousness, That righteousness is all in Christ, and is only through faith. In Jesus Christ, who is not only the righteous one, but the propitiation.

For all our sins. And so it's in response to this. Mechanism of Salvation and in response to his plan for how to bring that salvation to every last one upon whom. He has set his electing love That we now respond with two. Great things. Praise And humility. Praise of God, recognizing who God is?

Humility about ourselves. Recognizing what? And We are. And so very appropriately. As the Apostle comes to do this. In the conclusion, not just chapter 11, not just to chapters 9 through 11. But in this conclusion to the first 11 chapters, as a whole that he quotes from two particular books One from Isaiah.

And one from Job. Now it is God's good Providence to us. That we took. just the right amount of time in each book and I had not sat down and planned this out. So it happened to us in the goodness of God's Providence. That we are in that section of Isaiah where he keeps saying.

Yeah, I alone am Yahweh, I alone am God and I show it by declaring from the beginning, how I'm going to save and then bringing it about as I actually save. So that this first for the Jew, and then for the Greek, or the first for the Jew, and then for the Gentiles, both formulations appear a few different times.

In the Book of Romans. Is part of the theme. Right from The beginning of his Declaration of the Gospel. I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

For, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to Salvation For everyone who believes first for the Jew and also for the Greek For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed. And so forth. and this is the whole point of the section of Isaiah that we are in.

That not only is God, employing the Cyrus plan. And he's using a man who it's not entirely clear that he's brought to Faith. Indeed, he may not be brought to Faith, but he's using him to restore Israel from Babylon. But God is going to employ the servant plan. Where Christ, the suffering servant the servant who is the Lord and who is pleasing to the Lord.

Gathers All Nations to himself and to the Lord, as the one true God, as the one true Savior. Unto whom every knee bows. And every tongue confesses That Yahweh alone is Lord. And we learn that this bowing of knees and confessing of tongues that Yahweh alone is Lord is actually a bowing of knees and confessing of tongues Philippians chapter 2 That Jesus alone.

Is Lord. And so, the Nations streaming into Zion. To be ruled by the servant to be ruled by the Christ be saved. By the Lord. Who is also? The Christ is a great theme of Isaiah. and so when We come to the end of Romans 11. We hear very similarly to what we heard, in Isaiah, 45 and verse 8, just this week where the Lord explains that as a consequence of the Cyrus plan, Egypt, and Cush and Seba are also going to be gathered in as willing subjects of Yahweh the king.

They're glad to bring their treasures and bring their labors and be joined to Israel become part of Israel. And, That they will be these among all of these quote unquote, descendants of Israel. The Offspring, the seed of Israel who are saved and in response believing Israelites say truly, you are God who hid yourself? Oh God of Israel, the Savior. And they put their hands over their mouths. Because they had been complaining about the Cyrus plan and they see how much bigger and greater and perfect faithful and wise, and loving and Powerful is the actual plan of God, over against what they would have done.

They put their hands over their mouths and say, are you not going to hide yourself or God of Israel? Their savior talking about an Israel that includes Egypt and Kushan Siva. And so they glorify God's wisdom. And they humble themselves. Before him. And, The quote here. in verse 34.

That actually comes from the beginning of the section of Isaiah that we are in when he turned and began talking about the restoration and not just restoration from Babylon which would come under. Cyrus but restoration unto God himself, which would come under the servant, which is the Christ.

And he quotes from Isaiah 42 is known the mind of y'all. Has become his counsel. The other book he quotes from is the Book of Job. In which the wisdom of God, is far beyond, what Job can understand and although he does not sin against God. complaining or denouncing him.

He is perplexed and pleading for an audience with God, so that he can ask to understand why all this has happened to him. and in the midst of The back and forth between him and his friends so-called friends. Um,

He makes several professions of. Believing that even after he is dead and decayed. He's going to rise again from the dead. And see his Redeemer with his eyes and he pleads. Now, oh, that there were a mediator, someone who was of such nature that he could put a hand not only on man, but could put a hand on God.

Who is big enough to lay hands on God while only God himself? And it seems like a problem to Job, but we know of course that that's God's solution. That. that God the son would become the God, man. And, When the Lord does finally give Job the audience that Elihu said he could never have.

Is that God will never answer such dirt like you and then As soon as Elihu shuts, his mouth. The next thing is then, Yahweh answered Job. Praise God. but the answer was Yeah, here's how the interview is going to go, you gird up your loins because I'm going to ask you questions and you answer And the first question is, where were you Bert?

I laid the foundations of the earth. Very similar to what we have in the entire section of the book of Isaiah. that we're in where he says, I alone lay the foundations of the earth, I alone stretched out the heavens. and so forth that God has declared the end from the beginning.

And the purpose of creating was for redeeming and of course, Job puts his hand over his mouth and repents and dusts his ashes. Because, He has been reminded by God. He's just a creature. God is the Creator. Of course, he has wisdom with what he does, with his creatures and he has the right.

With what he does, with his creatures, and it's especially that right. That is being quoted in verse 35, out of Job 41, who has first given to him and it shall be repaid to him. So, of course, God has wisdom and God has the right, but of course, God is also good.

And he has been doing job good that entire time. what came out of his suffering? Well, similar to what Psalm 119 describes coming out of suffering. Suffering. I was sanctifying and gave him a knowledge of God and knowing of God that made the previous knowing by comparison, like the hearing of a rumor versus knowing someone face to face.

That was how much greater now job, who is already the most blameless man in all the Earth before, that's how much greater he now. Knows God. End of his suffering. And so the wisdom of God in these two, great things that trouble man. The two great things that trouble, Believers won.

Unbelief in the history of redemption and what seems to us to go slow or not to be going well at various times and then the other the suffering of Believers in both of these God has vindicated his name. As the infinitely, wise, infinitely, good infinitely, power perfectly faithful. God and savior of all of his elect.

And so having come to the same conclusion now? At the end of chapter 11, discussing the Historical. Way in which the salvation of elect Israelites and the salvation of elect Gentiles interacts for the Salvation of all of elect Israel which includes Israelites. And Gentiles having come to that conclusion, the end of chapter 11, in the history of that, Romans 9 through 11.

And the particular moment in history and And God. Bearing patiently with vessels of Wrath prepared for Destruction so that he may show the riches of his glory upon vessels prepared for Mercy. The end of Romans 1 through 11, in this great, Exposition of the gospel of God in Jesus Christ.

Of course, then he responds. In the same way as from Isaiah in the same way is from job. He says all the depth Of the riches. Now, if this is what and why God is doing it, His showing Riches of Mercy, unto all having shut up all in Disobedience.

For all have sinned and fallen short to the glory of God. But are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, for there is no, there is no difference for all have sinned. and found sword of the glory of God if we see the riches of his mercy. And if we know that this is why he saves this way by this mechanism through Christ and in this order that comes in the Providence of his wisdom, what are we supposed to see?

We're supposed to see the depths of the riches. That's how we are to respond. And so, on the one hand, the person who argues against these glorious doctrines of God's sovereignty, and salvation, by Grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, And glorious doctrines of election and predestination in that electing love predestination unto everlasting life and Conformity to the son and to the adoption.

Those who argue against those things are missing. The depth of the riches. Of the wisdom and knowledge and goodness and power, and mercy of God. That is displayed in Salvation. But so too are those who agree with these things? In a way that is not. Overwhelmed by Awash in.

The worship of God. Which is why it produces not just The worship of God. On the one hand but it also produces the humility of man. Isaiah 45, 15. Elect Israelites responding to this plan of gathering in the Nations. They do not say oh, we have figured you out.

Oh God! Look at how much better. Our theology is now than the Theology of those who oppose the Cyrus plan. Job, when he realizes. How greatly God is being good to him even in and through and on account of the suffering that he has just went through, doesn't say I uncover my hand from my meth and I speak because now I understand Why?

Why God has let me suffer? He did understand. But I brought him to humility. And so one great error that many have made. As they come to understand these truths. About election and predestination and God's sovereignty and salvation, and salvation only, and entirely by grace, and all these truths, but they're not brought to humility.

They're brought to arrogance. They're brought to Pride. In the theological knowledge that they don't have from themselves that even the theology to, which they have been brought if they would stop and listen to it. Would remind them they didn't get from themselves. And so we need to be brought to both.

Adoration of the riches. Not riches that we can comprehend. But riches that we see and know, But can't get to the bottom of It doesn't say, oh, the bottom of the riches, says, all the depths Like being out in a deep part of the ocean and you look down.

As you can see. Is particularly clear. Maybe you've got your goggles on. Whatever gear and you stick your head in and you look down. And it's like, looking as far As the Horizon, you just see so far or up into space. You look down. I say. You can see the depths.

But you can't see the bottom. And we come to God's mercy and we say, And we come to. His wisdom is displayed in that Mercy, the riches of his glory displayed upon vessels prepared for Mercy. We say all the depths Of the depth of the riches. And so, that's the first thing.

Not, I have searched his judgments and I have found them out but now unsearchable are his judgments And his ways past finding out. And so we come with, That adoration in the first place and humility in the second place. Who has known the mind of Yahweh, who has become His counselor.

We are unable to. To give input. We are unable to comment. We are or we are unable to critique We can just be informed and respond with worship. That's what to do. We may not even speculate. You go as far as he tells you about it and you worship on account of what he has told you.

And anything further, you don't go. Because even as far as he's taken you you wouldn't know Of yourself, and you wouldn't be able to receive You can't go any further than he's taken to you, fall off into the abyss. But we also can't indebt him. Who has first given to him, that it shall be repaid to don't you see?

How good he is to you. How he has given you everything already? And as he's describing how he's going to give you not just everything that you already have, but everything that his love is intended to give to you. The the humility is expressed. not only in your, in your Loneliness.

But in your thankfulness, That everything God gives is not the repayment of debt but just the large ass of his generosity. And so, what are we to do? Well, we're to give him glory. Because he's the one who created all things at the beginning. And the only way we know about the beginning, Is by whatever he tells us for of him or all things.

To give him glory because we are depending upon him in every moment, Now, if he was not sustaining us helping us by his grace, we wouldn't have anything, we wouldn't understand anything. Through him are all things. He's the one who upholds, all things by the word of Spire. We give him glory because as the one who created all and upholds, all and gives to all their good, what any, whatever Glory there is and whatever happens.

That belongs to him to him are all things. And so he concludes for of him. And through him. And to whom are all things. To whom be glory forever.

And so, the right response. Is not Pride. Humility about ourselves gratitude towards God. And especially, Worship. Giving him. The glory that is due his name, especially For all of Salvation. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, not just for It's bringing us to this passage. again and Giving us. Be instructed and prompted and directed to Marvel at the depths of your mercy.

And Adore you with praise and Thanksgiving. To give you all the glory.

We thank you that you have actually done this and that this is who you are to us. And that you have shown us that saving love. That has come from your electing love. And we pray that you would give us the humility. That you would give us not to hold these truths with pride but with praise.

And Thanksgiving. And soft-heartedness towards others. But especially worship to you. And gratitude to, Oh Lord. How much more? We would be able to offer our bodies as Living Sacrifices. If by your spirit, we had such a view. Of your mercies. And so we pray that your spirit would keep your mercies in our view.

On our minds on our hearts. So that we would live these joyful peaceful humble thankful. Devoted lives. Grant that we ask through Christ in his name, we pray. Amen.