

“Who Really Gets the Glory?”—Romans 11:33-36

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Who Really Gets the Glory?”, is Romans 11:33-36 → *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?” For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

King David prayed to Yahweh in Psalm 139:14 → *I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.* David was able to recognize something which many people in our day and age recognize as well: *the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.*

Well, even if they do not acknowledge God, in the midst of centuries of studies, cases and research physicians still cannot completely understand or control all the facets of the human body. Psychologists and psychiatrists still cannot completely understand and control the human mind and emotions. Scientists still cannot completely understand or control the universe. At best they can work with what they have

observed and/or function on the basis of theoretical conclusions, making their best educated guesses. I believe it is still common practice for you to sign a paper releasing the hospital and staff from all the possible liabilities related to surgery, including death. They recognize the human body is so complex that perfection while treating it is impossible on their part.

In our text we hear Paul break forth in doxological praise, glorifying God because of *the depth of His riches and wisdom and knowledge and His unsearchable . . . judgments and . . . inscrutable ways.* (cf. Verse 33) It is following an involved discourse about God's working in the lives of disobedient sinners to show them mercy in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ. Since it has to do with God's divine and eternal will for all people to be saved through faith in Jesus, God gets all the glory for your salvation!

Actually, this is a very difficult "pill" for us sinners to swallow. We look for validation, attention and recognition in virtually every area of our lives. Whether blatantly or subtly our sinful natures seek praise and validation so much so that if some recognition does not come my way on my terms then I will seek that validation through other avenues and venues. You can immediately see what kind of affect this will have on your understanding of commitment in various ways of service, including commitment to the Lord Jesus and His Church. Who really gets the

glory? Our text tells us how God gets the glory.

To give God **all** the glory we must first realize our **absolute** dependance upon Him. Notice verse 36 of our text says that *all things are from Him and through Him*. God is the source of any good we are or have! It is what you confess in the first article of the Apostles' Creed (i.e. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"). It is also what you pray for in the 4th petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread. What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayer, even to all evil people, but **we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving**. Did you notice? It's not an issue of God not providing the daily bread. It's the issue of recognizing that it comes from His hand and receiving it with thanksgiving.

"What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like." You notice it's not even an exhaustive list—"and the like." James 1:17 puts it this way: *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming*

down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. God is the One Who sustains every aspect of His creation!

Even though *the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God* can be seen in His creating and sustaining activity, sadly many working with His creation refuse to recognize God's hand in it all. The sinful, stubborn heart does not want to admit total dependence upon the LORD by faith and so it refuses to give glory where glory is due. Instead, we want to take credit for our great discoveries as we come to our own conclusions about life. Actually, once you confess complete dependence upon the LORD in your life by faith in Jesus Christ, *the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God* become even more fantastic! Then you can confess along with Psalm 19:1 → *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims **His handiwork!***

God's *unsearchable . . . judgments and . . . inscrutable . . . ways* can especially be seen in His plan of salvation for you. Even though you deserve the judgment of God's wrath upon you because of your sins, He chose to take it upon Himself in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus was punished so you could be set free, forgiven of all your sins! An unsearchable judgment and inscrutable way indeed! In Christ God made a way to meet the demands of both His justice and His love for sinners such as you and I!

Thus, realizing your **absolute** dependance upon the LORD can only happen when you come before Him in humility, confessing your sins to Him and clinging to His working faith in your heart by the Holy Spirit to trust in the work of Jesus for you! This, in fact, is how God is primarily glorified—when people come to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord—His desire for all people! (cf. Ezekiel 18:23,32; 1 Timothy 2:4)

When you realize your total dependance upon God the Holy Spirit empowers you to recognize your true “human-ness” and then **truly** give God all the glory. Verse 36 of our text also says that *all things are to Him*. In other words, God is the goal for His whole creation. It exists to serve Him and bring Him glory! Just as the world was created to reflect God’s glory (cf. Psalm 19:1), everyone in it have been created to praise God. Psalm 150:6 says: *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!*

In order to truly praise God one must admit his total helplessness before Him, as the rhetorical questions of verses 34-35 of our text reflect: *“Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?”* Obviously no one! Yet many seem to *known the mind of the Lord* as they tell Him what they think His Word means rather than simply submit to it in faith! People imagine their life of faith as a pay back to God as well. Any offering you give Yahweh is simply giving back what He already owns out of gratitude of His gifts of love, mercy and forgiveness in

Jesus. Simple trust clings to the work of Jesus and lets God be God **on His terms** and not the basis of our own “imagination.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 says *we cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* (KJV) Who really gets the glory? Ourselves with our own imaginations or Yahweh with His revealed Word and Will for our lives?

Because God is our Source, Power and Goal, there is no one else in all creation who **deserves** the glory forever! Thus giving God the glory in our daily lives happens as we live as Christ’s people in all the vocations of life. It is the desire to be faithful to the Lord Jesus in our homes, our schools, our communities, our jobs, our friendships, our marriages, our recreation, our relationships and conversations on all levels of life. In a world filled with all kinds of “imagination” about God and life, He is glorified when people see Christ reflected in our relationships, conversations and actions. We depend **totally** upon Him in life, in death and in eternity. Soli Deo Gloria! To God alone the glory! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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