

Romans 11:33-36

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[0 : 00] A very good morning to everybody. It's very good to see you this Lord's Day. Let me ask you to tape your copy of God's Word, which I hope you have with you this day, and turn to Paul's epistle to the Romans chapter 11.

We've been working our way through Romans now for quite some time, and we have finally arrived at verse 33 of chapter 11, which starts a doxology. Many people call this the doxology. In fact, the song that we sang earlier, which I hope is actually getting this ingrained in your mind, that you've even possibly memorized these four verses as a result of that song, is called the doxology, but it in fact is just a doxology in the Scriptures, which translated in Greek means literally glory saying. It's a phrasing that ascribes praise to God, and we find them all throughout the Scriptures. Paul, on numerous occasions, kind of bursts into these doxologies as he's writing his letters. And here we come in Romans to the end of 9, 10, and 11, working through the sovereign grace of God in his purpose of election, what that means for both Gentiles and for Jews, and here he bursts into this one.

Let's read it together, beginning in verse 33. He says, Amen.

[1 : 45] 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.

Pray with me. Father, I pray this morning you bless the preaching of your word. That as I prepared this week and studied it, that you will, by your spirit, have true words come from my mouth. That you will help us to understand and apply the truths contained herein, appropriately in our lives. That we might serve you and advance the kingdom as you're working and moving through us. By the truth. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So as I said, he's coming to the end of this, these great truths that he's presented.

We're about to turn in Romans. The last five chapters become a much more practical outworking of our faith in Christ. I don't believe that the response in 33 through 36 is just simply to chapters 9, 10, and 11.

[2 : 46] Although it certainly has fueled it on. But from the whole book. He starts out in the beginning talking about man's fallen state. The fact that no man, Jew or Gentile, before God can be justified by his works.

By anything. His lineage. His blood. His blood. Any of those things. But must be justified by faith alone. Through grace alone. In Christ alone. Chapter 3.

Martin Luther called the center of the whole Bible. We see that our justification comes by Christ alone. He is the propitiation for our sin. The replacement for our sin.

Then he moves into talking about what it means to live by the Spirit. And that then he moves to talk about the sovereign saving and keeping power of God in chapter 8.

And then he wrestles through 9, 10, and 11 with the implications of God's sovereignty over all things. Including our salvation. And then he comes to verse 33.

[3 : 48] But before we talk in more depth about 33 through 36. Let me just draw your attention to some of Paul's other doxologies in his writing. He always writes in this way, springing forth from some great exclamation of truth about who God is.

And my question for you as we look at these doxologies is, does the truth do the same for you? I picture Paul, this is total conjecture, but I picture Paul as he's pinning these letters.

Suddenly getting very exciting as he's writing these great truths about who God is. And he picks up his pace a little bit and he bears down a little bit harder. And he writes out these doxological statements for us.

Great excitement. Probably stood up and kicked back his chair and had to just walk around the room a little bit. He was so excited. And then he sat back down. Does the truth bring forth praise from you in that way?

We have sang two beautifully true songs already this morning. We won't count the sheep song. The two following that. Beautiful, beautiful truths contained therein.

[5 : 00] And how often do we stand numb to the songs that we sing? Gospel songs. You notice that the songs we sing here are always gospel presentations.

Thematically, exactly alike. And it ought to cause us great joy. The same should be true of any good sermon. And I will not say that every sermon I've ever preached has been a good sermon.

But a good sermon presents the gospel truth to you. And it ought to cause you to praise. It ought to spring forth from within you these great and glorious truths.

So, he does this quite often in his writing. From speaking of who God is and God's provision in his life for the spiritual provision of saving faith and strength for obedience.

As well as the temporal provision. So, usually this time of year, today is going to be our Thanksgiving Sunday as a church before many of you will go home to celebrate the actual day of Thanksgiving.

[6 : 03] And around that time, we often as families share things that we're thankful for. And what do we typically share? Typically temporal things, right? We're thankful for the food. We're thankful for our families.

We're thankful for the homes we get to live in. Which are certainly things that we should be thankful for, right? We're thankful for turkey, right? Today, you're not allowed to be thankful for turkey.

We attempted to do turkey in a hole. And I will say, I'm thankful for how much fun we had trying to pull it off. But they were raw this morning. And we are not feeding them to you.

We scrambled and replaced them with some ham this morning. But just the same. So, those are things that we ought to be thankful for. Certainly, all of the things that we have, all of the things that we experience, the relationships that we have, which are temporal, should be praised.

We should be thankful for them. But ultimately, we should praise the one who provides those things. So, Philippians 4, 19 and 20. Paul says, And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 11] And then he says in verse 20, To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. So, you're picturing him talking about the provision of God to us for our temporal needs in Christ.

And then he pins quickly, and I think bearing down harder, To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. For the temporal blessings that he's given us. How about saving faith?

Galatians 1, 3-5. You can turn that with me if you want to. It's okay if you don't. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, According to the will of God our Father.

And here it is, verse 5. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Because of the provision of saving faith, We ascribe to him glory forever and ever.

Amen. Ephesians 3. Do turn to this one. Verse 20. I'm sorry, let's start in 14.

[8 : 25] Chapter 3, verse 14. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power Through his spirit in your inner being, So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, That you, being rooted and grounded in love, May have strength to comprehend with all the saints What is the breadth and length and height and depth, And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

And there's the great proclamation of truth, And then the doxology. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, According to the power at work within us, To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, Forever and ever.

Amen. Does it warm your heart to hear such truths? Last week we finished the last week of our CFC 101, Our new members class.

And that week I shared with them, I was just glancing back over our statement of faith, And I was reading the statement on the freeness of salvation. And I cried. It was so moving the word, Because it was the gospel presented there in our words, Pinned down as a statement of faith for our church. Does it move you in that way? About the provision, The spiritual provision of strength for obedience. We've been given a high calling in Christ, To be set apart, And to be holy.

[9 : 56] Right? But God provides for all that he asks. 1 Timothy, Chapter 6, Beginning in verse 13, I charge you in the presence of God, Who gives life to all things, And of Christ Jesus, Who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, To keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach, And to the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which he will display at the proper time.

And here it is again. He who is the blessed and only sovereign, The King of kings, And the Lord of lords, Who alone has immortality, Who dwells in unapproachable light, Who no one has ever seen or can see, To him be honor and eternal dominion.

Amen. Isn't that good? And again in Hebrews, Chapter 13, Verse 20, 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 every 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. And the last one, 2 Timothy 4.18, The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, And bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom, To him be the glory forever and ever.

Amen. So these truths, And these are just a sampling, Of just Paul's doxologies, Much less all the ones contained in the scriptures, These truths move him, To ascribe to God, All the glory, All the dominion, All the honor, Forever and ever.

[11 : 40] Amen. Let it be the case. And that's what happens here, In verse 33. Some beautiful truths, Contained herein.

He begins in verse 33, By saying, Oh, The depth of the riches, And wisdom and knowledge of God, How unsearchable are his judgments, And how inscrutable his ways. Now some have said, That what Paul is saying, Is that it's impossible to know, God's purpose in sovereign salvation.

We can't really fully understand it. It's really, It's really not ours to have. But that is not what Paul is saying. Right? Paul is saying, The things that we can understand about God, Have been given to us.

It's the mystery that he refers to, Earlier in chapter 11. We have been shown, Aspects of God's saving grace. We can know those things.

But oh, The depth of such knowledge. How can we possibly know, The beginning from the end? How can we possibly know enough, To stand in judgment, Over God's word?

[12 : 49] Romans chapter 9. But he has spoken, By his word. And if you are a believer, You have a spirit, And you can understand, The words here. Will we know all things?

No. But we certainly can know, The purposes of sovereign salvation. We can see it. He's written it down for us. He just got done explaining it to us. Did he not?

And we ought to search it out. We ought to seek to understand. The word inscrutable, If you're looking in the ESV, In other translations, May say, Unknowable, His ways.

Refers to tracks. I say tracks in the snow, Or in the sand. You can see the tracks, That are before you, But you don't know, From where they came, Or to where they're going.

So we've come to that place. We've seen here, Justification by faith alone, That God is entirely, Sovereign over. We can see that, And we can know it to be true.

[13 : 51] And it can benefit our living. But yet we don't know, The beginning of that. And we don't know, Ultimately, The end of that. How unsearchable, Are His judgments, And inscrutable, His ways.

A reference, A great cross reference for this, Is Psalm 77, 19. It says, Your way, Your way was through the sea, Your path through the great waters, Yet your footprints were unseen.

So we ought to seek. Many have used this as a, As an excuse to go, Well, I can't know anything about God. Right? There's so much, Of the great depth, Of God's character, Contained in the scriptures.

And we ought to seek it, And we ought to know it, For all that it has, Herein. We ought to say with Paul, Oh, The depths, Of the riches, Of the wisdom, And knowledge of God. And then accept, That we're not going to know, It all.

Right? God has given to us, A very specific amount, Of revelation. And it's perfect, Sufficient.

Right? The sufficiency of scripture, Is a doctrine you ought to, Take hold of.

[14 : 57] And as such, You ought to know, Your scriptures. And then he asks, Two rhetorical questions, In verse 34, And 35. Right? He asks, For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been, His counselor? The obvious answer to which is, No one. Or who has given a gift to him, That he might be repaid?

No one. Right? He's quoting roughly, In verse 34, Isaiah 40, 13. Who has measured the spirit of the Lord? Or what man shows him, His counsel?

Job 15, 8 says, Have you listened, In the counsel of God? And do you limit wisdom, To yourself? Right? God, Is, God.

If you can, Know his mind entirely, And counsel him, He ceases by definition, To be God. Right? God's wisdom is a great theme, In the scriptures.

[15:56] His wisdom, Set against ours, Makes us, Foolish, Foolish, Men. Who has given a gift, To him, That he might, Be repaid?

Job 35, 7 says, If you are righteous, What do you give to him? Or what does he receive, From your hand? Job 41, 11, Which is the, Citation, Who has first given to me, That I should repay him, Whatever is under the whole heaven, Is mine.

All that we have, All that we possess physically, Our giftedness, Our mental astuteness, Any talents that you possess, Were given to you, As a gift, By God.

Don't think you have, Anything within yourself, That puts you above him, To serve him. Right? He doesn't need, You.

He uses you, Because he loves you. You've become a means, To his ends, And you ought to employ, All of the things, That he's given you, To his service. But not because, He needs it.

[17:04] Right? It's his. If he really needed it, And you weren't willing, To give it to him, He would take it away, And he would use it, Some place else. Right? Don't think, Don't elevate yourself, To be a God.

It's the great sin, Of Adam and Eve. The great sin of Satan, That they wanted to be, Like God. God is God, And you are not.

Verse 36, Connects into, This is the reason that, Verse 34, 33, 34, And 35, Are realities. For from him, And through him, And to him, Are all things, To him be glory, Forever.

Amen. For from him, And through him, And to him, Are all things. In God's great revelation, Of his name, To Moses. When Moses says, The scene with the burning bush, Who shall I tell them, Sending me?

He says, I am. Tell them, I am, Is sending you. Isn't that an odd name, To give yourself? I am.

[18:16] It speaks to the, Self-sustaining power, Of God. Right? God is, Everything. And everything, Then flows out of him.

You've heard me say, That everything plugs into God, God plugs into nothing. God needs, No one. God needs no thing, To sustain his power. Right? He is God, And he is at the center of, Everything. Right? If you take something with you, I want you to hear this. From, Through, And to. From him, Through him, To him. The Greek words here are, Ek, Dea, Ice.

You remember that? Ek, Dea, Ice. He is the source, He is the sustainer, And he, Is the goal. Right? God came down from heaven, And died, Not ultimately for us.

We're the great byproduct, Of his character. We're the wonderful recipients, Of his grace, Because he is gracious. Right? It's meant to point back, To him.

[19:22] Right? The glorious proclamation, Of the gospel, And the conversion of sinners, The building of the church, The final perfection of it, Is meant to cause, Praise, And honor, To him. Not to us.

Right? Ek, Dea, Ice. He's a source, The sustainer, And the goal, Of all, Things.

First Corinthians, Eight, Six. Paul writes, For us, There is one God, The Father, From whom are all things, And for whom we exist, And one Lord, Jesus Christ, Through whom are all things, And through whom we exist.

Colossians 1, 16 and 17, Excuse me, 15 through 17, He is the image, Of the invisible God, The firstborn of all visible, And invisible, Whether thrones, Or dominions, Or rulers, Or authorities, All things were created, Through him, And for him, And he is before all things, And in him, All things hold together.

Have you ever even thought about, What it is that holds you, In the shape of you? Don't say science. Right? That is the means, To his ends.

[20:38] It is the very power, Of God's word, That sustains this shape. Right? Whether or not you like your shape, God is holding you, In that shape. Yet if God ceased, By his word, To have me be

me, All my atoms would just, Expand.

Right? I would no longer exist, To be. He holds it, All, Together. Last night, To fall asleep, To get my brain to disengage, I usually watch, Some sort of boring documentary.

There are a lot of them, Out there, On the computer. And last night, I watched a documentary on, It was essentially on volcanoes, This plate tectonics. Right?

Which is really fascinating. Our earth, If you didn't know this, Is a giant ball, Of revolving magma. And if it's the size, Of a basketball, The crust that we live on, Would be the size, Of a sheet of paper.

So if you can imagine, This huge ball, Of molten rock. And they were talking, About how this, Moves the world, Gravity is created by it, All of these things, The revolution of the earth, Is created by the revolving, Of this magma.

[21 : 46] And they talk about, How it revolves, How it cools, And settles, And does all this stuff. And then, The narrator said, But no scientists know, What sustains, This revolution.

Right? And I was like, Dozing at that time, And I went, I do. I said it out loud, I do. God, By the power of his word, He holds the power, In its sway.

Right? The beginning of Hebrews, That's where we get the word, Providence from. Hebrews chapter, 1 verse 3, I believe. Where we get the word, Providence from. He holds it, By the power, Of his word.

He is God. Ek, Dia, Ice. It all, Springs, Forth, From him. The great, Culmination, Of God's character. We can see it, Expressed, In so many ways. Crazy documentaries, From National Geographic. We can see, That God is in fact, The ruler, The source, Sustainer, And goal, Of all things.

[22 : 48] But the great culmination, Of all of that, Of his character, And everything, Was the cross, That Jesus Christ, Died on. All of it, Came together. This great story, Of who God is.

It compacted, Right into this, Into this scene. And now it's being, Expanded again, In the redemption of the world. All of it, The great display, Of his goodness, His kindness, His severity, His wrath, All came down, In that moment.

Christ, Bleeding, Dying, Being resurrected, That whole scene, Is the great culmination, Of that. In that, In Jesus Christ, All the promises of God, Are yes.

It's in 1 Corinthians. All the promises of God, Are yes, In Christ. The provisions that we have, For the spiritual blessing, Saving faith, Our perpetuation, Our final, Keeping as Christians, Our temporal provision, Everything, That we possess, In Christ.

All of those things. So when we proclaim, The gospel to one another, It ought to cause us, To leap up, With joy. It ought to work in us, An abiding joy, To understand who we are, To know, Beginning in chapter 1 of Romans, That we are sinful, Absolutely.

[24 : 14] We inherited it, And we willingly sin. Enemies of God. To feel the weight of that, I pray that in your life, At some point, You felt the weight, Of your sinfulness.

You have known, What a wretch you are. If you've never felt that, You are a wretch. An enemy of God, Before Christ.

If you're in this room now, And you've never placed, Saving faith in Jesus Christ, That's where you are. An enemy of God. Your final destination, Is destruction. If you have Christ, If you've believed in him, You've been made new.

You're being made back, Into the image, Of your creator. He is working on you, And I know that sometimes, It feels so, Incredibly slow.

You still feel, The baggage, Of your sinful flesh. I know I do. But he's working, By his spirit in you, Bringing about, Regeneration, Change.

[25 : 15] You're being, Sanctified. Finally, Fully, One day, You will, Be perfect. You'll shed the baggage, Of your sin, Your flesh, And we will praise God, Forever, And ever.

This is the reality, Of the world. Ek, Dia, Ice. This is the way, God, Has shown, Chosen to show himself, To us.

As the great source, Sustainer, And goal, Of all things. Let's pray together.