

## The Surpassing Greatness Of God.

Text: Rom 11:33-36

Suggested Hymns:

142, 469, 141, 286, 140

- 1) His Wisdom
- 2) His knowledge
- 3) His creation
- 4) His providence and care
- 5) His plan of salvation

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 11:33-36, <sup>33</sup> *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!* <sup>34</sup> *“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”* <sup>35</sup> *“Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”* <sup>36</sup> *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

One of the most common failings of man, is that he underestimates God. If I gave a pencil and paper to each one of you, and if I gave you ten minutes to write all the wonderful things about God that you know or have experienced, I am sure that none of us would be able to describe the greatness of God adequately or completely.

Perhaps some of us would not know what to say. Others might not be able to write more than three minutes, although some would need more than ten minutes. But even if we wrote for twenty-four hours, nobody would be able to turn in a perfect description of the grandeur of God.

Did you ever ask yourself whether God is even greater than you suppose? Well, the answer, of course, is that He is! God cannot be measured by man's yardstick. His splendour and glory is greater than that of any earthly monarch. His reign is eternal. His resources are inexhaustible. He is greater than any challenge. He cannot be baffled by any problem.

<sup>33</sup> *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!* <sup>34</sup> *“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”* <sup>35</sup> *“Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”* <sup>36</sup> *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.*

Today I ask you to consider with me the “*Surpassing Greatness of God.*” The purpose of this sermon is to impart to you a stronger confidence, a more genuine respect, and a deeper thankfulness towards God. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. The Surpassing Greatness of God is Demonstrated By His Wisdom**

In our text Paul bursts into praise and adoration as he considers the sheer magnificence of God. *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* Paul praises God for His great wisdom. God is wise. He is absolutely competent to deal with this world, ourselves, and our needs.

And this wisdom is deep. Paul says, “*Oh, the depth of the ... wisdom of God!*” We do not have a weak, shallow, temperamental God, who is guided by sudden impulses. The wisdom of God is sure, steady, and inexhaustible. God is not limited in His wisdom. He is never at a loss as to what to do. His wisdom and understanding never run thin.

Today, people say, we are living in an age of specialisation. We have specialists in medicine, science, industry, engineering, teaching, and even in theology. Every one of us has at least one talent, but there are very few people who are proficient in all things. A good musician may know nothing about mechanics. A good salesman may know little about history. A good psychologist may be a very poor mathematician. But God is a Specialist in whatever He does. His wisdom is inexhaustible.

## **2. The Surpassing Greatness Of God Is Demonstrated By His Knowledge**

But Paul goes further, *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* God knows how to apply His wisdom. He is limitless in His

knowledge. God puts His wisdom to good use. He is thoroughly at home in every situation.

The Apostle points out that God's wisdom and knowledge is great not only in quantity but also in quality. He says, "*Oh, the depth of the riches ...*" God is good and generous in using His wisdom and knowledge. The help that God can give us with His wisdom and knowledge is always the best possible.

### **3. The Surpassing Greatness Of God Is Demonstrated By His Creation**

God has demonstrated the greatness of His wisdom and knowledge in several ways. For example, there is His creative activity. The whole world, the whole universe, bears testimony to the creative genius of God. Just look around, and see the lovely countryside in springtime, and you will see the result of the artistic wisdom of God.

Look at the starry skies through a telescope, or study a tiny speck of plant or animal life under a microscope, and you will realise that there is a thorough and consistent plan of order in God's creation. And yet, in spite of this overwhelming testimony, we frequently overlook this greatness of God.

Again, every person has two hands, each of which is a greater work of art than anything else that human ingenuity has created. But the trouble is that people become obsessed with their own accomplishments, acclaim every human invention, and make a great fuss over their own activities, but then fail to discern God's wonderful deeds.

Everyone has two eyes. Have you ever thought of how astounding a miracle is a seeing eye, the window of your life? Who has co-ordinated the hundreds of millions of rod and cone cells which enter into seeing that they can give sight? It is the God of wisdom and knowledge. And yet, as we go about in this world, we Christians so often fail to use these very eyes to really see God as the Creator and Jesus as our Saviour.

To use a clumsy illustration, we behave in this God-created world like dogs in a great art gallery. We see the pictures, and yet we fail to see them. For if we really saw them rightly, we would see the creative wisdom and knowledge of God.

#### **4. The Surpassing Greatness Of God Is Demonstrated By His Providence And Care**

God's great wisdom and knowledge is demonstrated also by the fact that He is able to turn evil into good. It is this fact especially that caused Paul to write this tribute to God in our text. In his Letter to the Romans (chapters 9 to 11) he discusses the matter about the Jews' and the Gentiles' relation to the blessing of salvation. He points out that because the Jews, as a nation, had rejected Christ and His salvation, God saw to it that the Gospel was directed toward the Gentiles. And so, in a very real sense, God turned evil into blessing for the Gentiles.

As far as the Jews are concerned, God wants them to notice how the Gospel has blessed and helped the Gentiles, that they may be moved to turn from their unbelief to their Saviour.

There are many other ways in which God turns evil into good. In world conflicts, in which countries all over the world are affected, God is able to do good in spite of us. In the Armed Forces, some people are brought under the influence of God-fearing chaplains for the first time in their life. More countries have become open to Christian missionaries.

And in our own personal lives God is able to turn evil into good. God is great enough to care about you and to hear your whispered prayers. God is greater than the pain you bear in your heart. He is greater than the loss of a friend or loved ones. He is great enough to mark a sparrow's fall and to number the hairs of your head.

Just look back on the misfortunes of your life and observe how God has blessed you through your trials, perhaps making you wiser, stronger, and more mature in your Christian faith. As our text says, ***How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!***

#### **5. The Surpassing Greatness Of God Is Demonstrated By His Plan Of Salvation**

But this is not all. The depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God is demonstrated especially in His plan of salvation for mankind. Ever since sin came into the world to destroy the beautiful friendship between God and man, the problem of salvation has been a basic one.

Throughout the history of the world, people all over the world have grappled with the problem of freedom from guilt, the assurance of God's love, and the hope of eternal life. You will find in the cultures of people religious rites performed in order to appease the wrath of God and to gain His good will.

And even though some Greek philosophers did renounce pagan idols and maintain that there is only one God, none of them came even close to discovering God's wise plan of salvation. For no one had ever dreamed that it was not man but God who would take the initiative and be the One to restore a friendly and peaceful relationship between Himself and man.

God took the initiative because His very nature is love. His wisdom and knowledge is saturated with love toward us. This fact is borne out in the doctrine of the Trinity. Christians believe in the Triune God. We believe that there is but One God and that there are three equal and distinct Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Today is Trinity Sunday, on which we observe the ancient custom of confessing our faith using the words of the Athanasian Creed.

This confession spells out the historic teaching on the Trinity. Now, it is true that we can never intellectually grasp and understand the fact that God is One and yet three Persons. But it is also true that the doctrine of the Trinity tells us in a very clear and simple way the story of God's great plan and activity of salvation for us.

When sin destroyed the perfect relationship between God and man, man existed under God's wrath and damnation. But God wanted to restore a wholesome and loving friendship. So the Father sent His only Son into the world to become a Man and our Saviour. It was the purpose of the Son to make known to all that God wishes to be our Father and that He has a fatherly heart of love and forgiveness toward us.

By His death and resurrection, Jesus worked out our redemption, procured for us pardon, won the victory over our enemies, and clearly demonstrated to all the mercy of God.

In order that people may have a personal knowledge, certainty, and assurance of this forgiveness, the Father and the Son together send the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Gospel, that we may have the faith which we need. You can therefore readily see that the doctrine of the Trinity tells us a

story of the surpassing greatness of God, who is continually creating, seeking, loving, and comforting His children.

Paul exclaims: *“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”*<sup>35</sup> *“Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”*<sup>36</sup> *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.*

### Look Your God!

The glory and breath-taking wonder of it all is the fact that this great God wishes to be your God and mine. There are times when we feel utterly helpless, alone, at our wits' end, and full of despair. We do not know where to turn, what to do, or to whom to go.

Be assured that this great God has spoken to each of us, *“I am yours, and you are Mine.”* He loved us and gave Himself for us on Calvary. In His Word He keeps on saying, *“Come to Me.”* In Baptism He says, *“You are Mine.”* In the Lord's Supper He confirms His grace to you.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,<sup>1</sup>

Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son,  
Mysterious Godhead, three in one,  
Before Thy throne we sinners bend;  
Grace, pardon, life, to us extend. Amen.

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Hymn 141 v 4