

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Romans 11:33–36

³³ 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!

³⁴ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has become His counselor?”*

³⁵ *“Or who has first given to Him
And it shall be repaid to him?”*

³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

A “Truly Reformed” Life

Main idea: Being truly Reformed means overflowing with praise about and unto God with the lip and the life.

Introduction: How should we sound, when we talk about the current and future condition of Israel? How should we sound, when we talk how it is that believers come to faith? How should we sound, when we talk about the only righteousness that we can have? We should sound like worshipers: full of God’s glory, not our own

1. Glorifying God, v33

1. Marveling at the depth (Oh, the depth)
2. As those who cannot see the bottom (“unsearchable”... “past finding out”)
3. The “riches” of His glory in the plan of redemption

2. Humbling Ourselves, v34–35

1. Isaiah: God doesn’t need our approval. We are too ignorant to give it, anyway.
2. Job: God doesn’t owe us anything. We are too sinful to earn it, anyway.

3. Living for His Glory, v36

1. “Of Him are all things”: give Him all gratitude
2. “Through Him are all things”: depend entirely upon His grace
3. “To Him are all things”: aim entirely at His glory

4. This is how believers act/respond. But not only believers. A new heavens and new earth will respond this way forever.

Conclusion: Are you truly Reformed? Then what wonder, and humility, and joy and strength and dignity you live with!

(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? Then his way is past finding out. For who has known the mind of the Lord. Or who has become his counselor. Or. Who has first given to him. And it shall be repaid to him. For of him and through him. And to him. Are all things.

To whom be glory forever. Amen.

Is the Apostle. Now, concludes not just Chapter 11. Where he has? Uh, been opening up for us. Wisdom of God. The plan for what has come of Israel, nationally corporately. And how God is saving all of his elect Israel, whether From among the Israelites or from among the Nations that there is And Israel of God and he's saving all of them, the fullness of them.

Every last elect Israelite every last elect Gentile and he has done. So, shutting up all under Disobedience so that when he saves them, It is a display of the riches of his glory in vessels prepared for mercy. And so now he's, he's coming to conclude that chapter is concluding also the the last three chapters Uh, where he had begun by asking the question or rather answering the question.

Of whether or not the word of God has failed. Because you remember, at the end of chapter 8, he had said, nothing can separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ and and that those who are called shall surely be glorified. But then there was a question, what of Israel then?

If the salvation of God is so inviolable. So unbreakable, so Unstoppable, so uninterrupted Then how is it that we see? So many Israelites. Rejecting the Lord Jesus. And he covered that. And in the three chapters 9 through 11, and now he is concluding that And it's also a conclusion, even to the first 11 chapters in, which he has Explained and proclaimed and expounded upon The gospel of God.

The power of God, for salvation. And these are precious doctrines to us. The first three chapters. That we are saved, only by the righteousness that is through faith, in Jesus Christ. An alien righteousness, accounted for us through faith and The fact that he whom the Lord saves in this way by the accounted righteousness of Jesus shall be brought at last to be perfectly, holy and perfectly happy.

In in the Lord. And that this is because even the faith that we have is a gift of God, coming from electing love. These are precious doctrines and they're doctrines that many in what professes to be the visible. Uh, they don't believe these things. Many believe in a righteousness that is by faith plus by the righteousness of Jesus outside of us, plus many.

Who believe that it's only the righteousness of Christ yet. Yet, have some Some form of theology that that says the faith comes from us. That the thing that makes the difference is Free Will. And so, when reasoning With those who hold to such errors have been so decisively answered in the book of Romans so far.

It is possible. To reason in a manner that Entirely inconsistent. With the doctrine. That the Apostle. Has opened up for us by the Holy. And so does a help to us. That when we come to the conclusion here of chapter 11, and of chapters 9 through 11, and of chapters 1 through 11, The Apostle under the inspiration of the Holy.

Suddenly explodes, with praise All the depth. Of the riches both of the wisdom. And the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past founding out. He glorifies God. And rather than being proud or sensorious. He is humble before God. Who has known the mind of the Lord.

Who has become his counselor. Who has first given to him. We don't have the ability. From ourselves to know these things. We can only know these things by his telling us. We don't deserve. Any good thing he he doesn't owe us anything. It doesn't owe us righteousness. He doesn't owe us, the faith through which we would be made righteous.

He doesn't owe us. To be part of his church, or To be regenerated or to be elect in the first place. He doesn't owe us anything. And so the Apostle at the conclusion of these of opening up these doctrines he glorifies God. He humbles himself. And he resolves. He resolves to live.

Unto the glory of God, four of him and through him. And to him are all things. To whom be glory forever. A. And so, How should we sound? When we reason from scripture, About the condition of Israel. As a nation. And The reality of an elect Israel. How should we sound when we engage with others about how Believers come to?

How should we? When we talk about, Christ's alien righteousness being the only righteousness. That a sinner could ever have. We should sound like worshipers. Full of How marvelous goddess? And not at all full of ourselves. Amazed that we could be brought to know. Such a thing. Not proud. Of what we know.

And therefore resolved that For such lowly creatures as we are. Who have? Been brought into such a Salvation by such a glorious God. What we ought to do with our lives. Is devote ourselves unto the glory. Of him who has thus saved us. So, I don't know. Whether you have discussions.

With people or even. About people. Uh, who disbelieve? Any of these doctrines that we've heard thus far throughout the Throughout the letter to the Romans. But if you do, This is a challenge for you in your secret heart. This is a challenge for you. Does it move you to worship?

Would someone who hears you? Or perhaps, who could hear your thoughts? Say, oh, there is one. There's one who's amazed. At the god of the Salvation. There's one. Not for themselves. Who knows that these things aren't just true. Generally. Abstractly But who knows that they are true about themselves.

That they are the ones who are ignorant that they are the ones who are wicked. That they are the ones who are entirely dependent. Upon Grace. Well, very briefly. Then let's consider these three aspects of a proper response. To reformed Doctrine. Glorifying. God. In verse 33. Humbling ourselves. In verse 34 and 35.

And living for his glory. In verse 36 first verse 33. Oh, the depth. Of the rich. Both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable? Are his judgments and his ways past. Finding out. Note that In verse 33. You don't have a glimpse all the way to the bottom.

God has led us in a little bit to his counsels. He's led us in a little bit to how he has foreknown. Those whom he set his love upon, and how in that. Loving election. He has determined to conform them to the image of his son. He has Let us know a little bit about the course of history.

How he would bring Christ through Israel. According to his flesh. And, Uh shut Israel up in a Disobedience as he gathers in the Gentiles who had been in darkness. Not having the word and the worship like Israel had had. And this outpouring of Mercy on the Gentiles, then being an instrument by which he provokes elect Israelites.

To repent of their rejection. Of the Lord Jesus. What we have seen is. Just a glimpse, a window in. And we look and we don't see it. All what we see is glorious and we praise because it's glorious. But here, it's not just all the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

It's all the depth. Of the riches. Both of the wisdom. And knowledge of God. That we would come and we would say, The counsels of God are too deep for me too great. How wonderful they are. And so here, he's marveling. Even at the depth. And he's marveling at at the depth as one who cannot see the bottom.

If you think you are marveling at the wisdom and knowledge of God and and in your marveling at the wisdom and knowledge of God, you somehow think you have understood it all. The that you have every last part of it. Uh, worked out. Then you're not marveling the way, the Apostle Marvels.

Because, The apostles calls his judgments unsearchable. And calls his ways past finding out. Now, if we just had his ways our past finding out, We might. We might say, yes. But he's told us now and now that he's told me, I understand it entirely. But the word judgments here is.

Is a word about words. Even that which he has told us. Is unsearchable. That is we can't get Uh, to the bottom of it. And so, even in the way that he glorifies God before he gets to verse 34, This marveling at the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God is one in which we don't think that we have arrived.

But we Rejoice that we have discovered something. That we will continue to study. Forever. And find new and great riches. And never exhausted. We will never even in eternity, even with our glorified Minds, Come to the point where we have exhausted the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

And how he saves us. It will be our joy. To continue. Plumbing, those depths mining those depths. Forever. And so there are indeed these riches here. The riches of his glory. This is why. Enduring, patiently vessels prepared. For Destruction. That he might make known verse 23 of chapter 9, The Riches of his glory.

On the vessels of Mercy. Which he had prepared beforehand for Glory. And so glorifying God as those who have discovered in him, An exhaustible riches. But then, humbling ourselves.

Humbling ourselves. Especially When? It seems like God's ways. Are not. Uh, what we would have chosen, they rub us the wrong way.

And here he quotes from Isaiah. Uh, chapter 40 in verse 34. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his counselor. Almost. Word for word. From the Greek translation. Of Isaiah 40. A little bit of a paraphrase, but the point is in Isaiah 14-66 and we're right in the middle of it and our readings through Isaiah.

So, if you've been paying attention and taking it to heart, you're you're prepared now for this Israel did not like God's plan. For exiling them or his plan, for bringing them back from Exile. That he would use a man named Cyrus, that's a Persian name. That's not a king from the line of David.

And so, there is There is a response that we see God, a response in Israel's hearts and perhaps on their lips that we see God responding to in the section of Isaiah that we're in. And God is demanding his right as the one who created the Heaven and the Earth and all that is in them to create a new thing now.

And to save his people from Babylon by the hand of a Persian king. It's his right. He's the Creator. This is the section of Isaiah from which we got in chapter nine. The language of the Potter and the clay. He says God doesn't consult you. To find out if you're okay with how he intends to save Whether you're okay with a justification by grace alone, through faith alone, Whether you're okay by a faith that comes only by the effectual, calling of God in Those whom he, he doesn't consider.

He's not interested in your opinion. Just in your submission. And your obedience. That you come and you find that the difference between you and God. Doesn't make you stiffen your neck and bristle. What makes you say? Truly, you are a God who hides yourself o savior of Israel? Like we have just seen him see like we have just seen Israel respond when he is teaching them that this is not just how he is going to bring Israel back to the land.

That's a small thing. This is how he is going to bring elect Israelites to repentance. And oh yeah, Egyptians and cushites and sabians who discover that God is to be found among Israel and who are eager than to come and be Israelites themselves. That's the section of Isaiah that he's quoting.

And so we should humble ourselves. And not expect that God's way is is going to Um, please our minds in ourselves but rather expect that, Our minds need to be corrected. We need to be made alive. We need to be given light. We need our hearts conformed. To the Lord's word, to the Lord's, mind opened to us in his word.

God doesn't need our approval and we are too ignorant to give it anyway. And then he quotes from job. Or who has first given to him, and it shall be repaid to him. And this is one of the main points of the Book of Job. God doesn't owe us anything.

God didn't oh job, anything he was so confused. He, he Confessed. The Lord gives the Lord takes away blessed, be the name of the Lord. And, and yet, it seemed to him that That he was not receiving the favor and blessing of God and And he was judging whether or not things were going rightly by his experience of them.

And you remember he was crying out, that he would have an audience with God. And you have the three friends and and then eventually you have Alihu. Who after everyone else is done talking? He was apparently young. He claims to have given deference to the older ones. He gives us big long speech.

And the theme of the last part of his speech. God will not answer. A walking talking bag of dirt, like you job, He'll not answer you. But as soon as Alihu shuts, his mouth. God, answers job. And this is out of that section of the Book of Job. The answer.

However was not what job expected. It's gird up, your loins. I will ask and you will answer. And the first question is where were you? When I laid the foundations of the earth, And it is in that discourse from chapter 41 of The Book of Job, specifically that verse 35 quotes Or who has first given to him.

And it shall be repaid to him. God doesn't owe us anything. You can't earn anything from God. And, Even if it was hypothetically possible, we are too sinful to earn it anyway.

And so, when we are responding rightly to the truths that we've had opened up, Uh, in Romans so far. We respond by marveling at the depth. Of the riches that are in God's wisdom that are in God's knowledge. He has opened to Uh, delighting to have discovered an inexhaustible mind and an exhaustible treasure Trove.

Uh, and yet, with respect to ourselves. We know that we are ignorant and we are sinful. And so we are not puffed up in ourselves but dwarfed by him. And then, We live for his glory verse 36. For of him and through him, and to him. Are all things.

To whom be glory forever. Amen. If there is, Application. That reformed theology teaches you It is this. Your life is not about you. Your existence is not about you. In fact, no one's life. And nothing's existence is about him or about it. It is all about the Lord. And so, since your life is not about you, here is how you are to live.

First, you With gratitude. Of him are all things. What do you have that? You did not receive. And since you have received it, Not be puffed up, but be grateful. Pride is unthankful. But worship and humility. Are grateful without of him are all things. Of him, is everything good?

In me of him is all that. I see all of the creation and also all of Providence Even when those who are evil, do evil of him is good. In the midst of it of him are all things. It all comes from him, I must be thankful for all of it.

You say, well, does that mean I should be thankful for evil? Not for the evilness of evil. But for the goodness of God and the good that he does, in the midst of the evil, And even. By superintending means of it. So that he is not the author of it, but he is so great and author of good.

That he authors Goods, that comes even through those who offer evil. And so, yes. Be thankful for everything. Of him are all things. Give him gratitude live a life of gratitude through him. Are all things. Live a life that is dependent entirely upon his grace. Do not fall into.

That sneaky and subtle trap. Of thinking that you have come to a place. Now, that you've understood so much reformed Doctrine. You've come to a place. Now, that you have these convictions that you don't need Grace quite as much as you used to. You don't need Grace quite as much as those armenians, you don't need Grace quite as much as those dispensationalists.

Or that former Less informed version of yourself. No. Through him are all things. You're a reformed theology teaches you, you are entirely dependent upon his grace. And just like Pride will rob us of worship and gratitude. Pride will also Deprived you of worship and dependence?

We must have humility from God, the Holy Spirit, convincing us of the Twin Treasures, the truth about God and the truth about ourselves.

So that we will live independence upon Grace. Because if you don't and you think you are doing well, you are merely self-deceived, you're deluded. And so, we We must live dependent upon Grace. So we must live. Giving him all gratitude. We must live depending entirely upon his grace. And then we must live devoted.

Entirely to his glory. To him. Are all things to whom be glory. Forever. Amen. You know, the The single greatest. A great obstacle. To living for God's glory. Is hoping that you can. Keep some for yourself along the way.

Hoping that you will have to sacrifice nothing. Along the way. Jesus taught us. That we would be hated. By. For his name's sake, he taught us to Rejoice. And be exceedingly, glad because great is our Lord in heaven. When that happens. He taught us that. We might experience hatred within our own marriage in our own household.

And so, we must Uh, we must learn the lesson of our reformed theology. To him are all things to whom be glory forever and his glory is worth, whatever it costs me. Now to be sure our sanctification, our Holiness is, Whatever it costs. God disciplines children, whom he loves.

And you have not resisted yet to the point of shedding blood, he Gives us that which will produce in. Uh, that which is good. He'll make us righteous. And we are to pursue the peaceful fruit of righteousness and the Holiness without which we will not see If our sanctification, If our Holiness, if our happiness, Is worth.

Whatever difficulty, whatever pain.

Is necessary. How much more God's glory? Which is greater and more valuable. And is the very reason that anyone is saved it all. And so to him are all things live devoted to his glory, not devoted to your comfort. Not devoted to your ease. Not devoted to your Your Earthly pleasure, not devoted to your own praise You can trust your good father.

To give you a rich and abundant portion. Of everything that is pleasant and good. So far as it is good for you, you can leave that to him. And since, you know that you can leave all of that to Heaven. What has he left to you?

He has shown you. What he wants from you. To love Mercy to do, justly. To walk humbly. With him. Live for his glory. Now, this is how Believers act and respond. But notice. The all things. And the forever in verse 36. Because this isn't just how Believers act and respond.

Believers do this because they are the first fruits of a new creation. They have the first fruits of the spirit. All of Heaven and all of Earth for unending ages. Will be full of gratitude to God. And delighted dependence upon his grace. And zealous Devotion to his glory. So indeed, when you respond to all of this reformed theology, That we've seen in Romans 1 through 11 in this way.

That is produced by his spirit and sustained by his God is actually bringing you into his own joy and giving you to enjoy Heaven. Now

By giving him all gratitude, and depending entirely upon his grace. And being devoted entirely. To his glory.

Now, there are Some who? Use the phrase truly reformed sarcastically. About those who do not. Um, demonstrate. This worship and this humility, and there are some whose theology is

just bad. And they use the word. The phrase truly reformed sarcastically. To make fun. Of being so careful. About Theology and then there are others.

Whose theology is accurate but not good. Is accurate. They agree with the propositions. That we have opened up from the book of Romans. But it's not good. It hasn't produced in them. The character that we see. In these four verses before us. But they use the phrase truly reformed like a badge of honor.

But if you are truly reformed, If your theology is not just accurate according to Romans, but good applied to the heart and worked out in the life and this gratitude and dependence upon Grace and Devotion to God's glory. With what wonder? And worship. And humility. And, And confidence. And dignity.

Will your life be felt? By the knowledge of God. In his gospel. That's what we see here. On display in the Apostle. One who is enjoying God himself? As the blessedness of the Gospel. And that's what your reformed theology calls you to do. Enjoy God himself. As the blessedness of the Gospel.

Amen.