

Romans 11:33-36

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Pastor Sam Rodebaugh

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways!³⁴ ***“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his adviser?”***³⁵ ***“Or who has first given to God that he will be repaid?”***³⁶ ***For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.***

Are any of you familiar with Calvin and Hobbes? That was the title of a beloved American comic strip that ran in the 80's and 90's. It follows the adventures of a mischievous 6-year-old boy named Calvin along with his imaginary friend, a tiger named Hobbes. One recurring joke in the comics is when Calvin goes to ask his dad about how things work. He asks him about ATM's, and where the sun sets, and the theory of relativity. And his dad always responds in a very assured manner, with answers that are always comically incorrect. He always gives absurd responses. The comic strips usually end with Calvin's mom getting upset with her husband, "If you don't know the answer, just tell him!"

It's a funny premise when we read it in a comic, it's a lot less funny when people do that very same thing with God. There are a lot of mysteries about God. There's also a lot that God reveals about Himself in His Word! But sadly, so many people in our world are uninterested in looking for the answers that God provides. So, instead of letting God describe Himself, people will describe God in their own way. They say, "My God is like this!" Or, "My God would never do that!" They turn God into a god of their own creation—explaining His *ways* for Him, declaring His *thoughts* for Him, making His *judgments* for Him—all the while, suiting their own selfish purposes. They pretend that God is not only understandable, but that He's actually just like them.

Dear friends in Christ, let's *avoid* doing the same. If we cannot comprehend *everything* about God, that's to be expected. After all, listen to how Paul describes Him in our text: ***“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways!”*** We need God to explain Himself and thankfully, He has done so! Let's read how God describes Himself, and then we can simply praise Him in response. Today's theme is:

Glory Be to Our Unsearchable God

- I. *From* Him comes everything
- II. *Through* Him I have everything
- III. *To* Him belongs my everything

If you want a readily-seen proof of the unsearchable wisdom of God, just look around you. We are surrounded by *God's* Creation. **From Him comes everything**, and it all testifies to that wisdom of God. Just take a look in the mirror at a small part of God's Creation. Look at your eyes. Get close, and even with just a superficial look, you can see the complexity and beauty of the human eye. Beyond what you *can* see, is a super-clear lens, that is the best lens to be found anywhere. Unlike camera lenses that need to be manually focused and are often *out-of-focus*, your eye's lens does the focusing for you. You can quickly look at any object at any distance, and your lens will automatically flex to bring those objects into immediate focus. In the retina (that colored part of your eye) there are 10 million photoreceptor cells. These cells capture the light pattern passing through the lens and convert that

light into complex electrical signals, which are then sent to a special area of the brain where those signals are transformed into what we call “vision.” And all this is done instantaneously, no need to wait for any calculations or buffering to be done. And even when the amount of light passing through the lens changes, you can still see. That’s because you have a special muscle inside your eyeball that automatically opens and closes the iris diaphragm to admit different amounts of light.

Consider all this complexity found *just* in the human eyeball, all of the *wisdom* that went into designing it; and what is it good for? It’s designed so that you can use those eyes and look around and marvel at the rest of God’s Creation! You can look at the plants and the trees and marvel at the complex processes by which those living things *grow*—utilizing the other elements of God’s Creation. You can look at the clouds and marvel at God’s automatic recycling process, the self-sustaining process of providing water—that most important resource of life. You can look beyond the clouds to the stars and marvel at the infinite scope of God’s beautiful creation. Using your eyeballs and looking there, you can come to the conclusion that David did: **“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”** (Psalm 8:3-4)

And that *truly* is the most difficult thing to understand about God, especially when you consider what God understands about *us*. God asks through the Psalmist, **“He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?”** (Psalm 94:9) Do you think the God *from* whom comes everything, including your amazing eyes—do you think *He* can see well? He can! He can see so well that He can see right into our hearts to understand the motivations which we so cleverly hide from one another. He can see the thoughts that form in our minds, many of which we’re mortified to even think and would never want anyone else to know about! But God knows. God understands.

Paul writes in our text, **“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his adviser?”** God needed no outside council when He created the world. He does not need to consult any resources or experts as He decides what is best for His creation. But we sure would like to be His advisers! We certainly *do* have ideas about what would be best, and we take exception to those times when God doesn’t follow our plans! And God knows that about us too. He sees every time we arrogantly shake our fists at Him, not content with what He’s given us, always thinking that we know best.

And He *sees* as the world *at large* dismisses Him. He sees as the world explains away His creation and attributes its magnificent complexity to random chance. He sees it all as His name is dragged through the mud, as words are put into His mouth, as His love is used as justification for all manner of sin.

And seeing it *all*, what does God do? Even still, **from Him comes everything.** Jesus once said, **“He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”** (Matthew 5:45) He provides daily bread, daily protection, daily continues to uphold all the forces of nature just so, so that our lives may be extended. He extends the time of grace for the people of earth, so that sinners might have time to come to Him in repentance and receive forgiveness for all that He sees. **“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways!”** That God would show such undeserved love to a world of sinners is beyond our understanding, yet God has explained it to us and shown it to be so.

You know, another way that the majority of people in our world explain God is in terms of why He would have this type of loving relationship with us in the first place. And like Calvin's dad from Calvin and Hobbes—so many people speak in a very assured manner about the reason why God would love us. And it's not that undeserved love that the Bible speaks of; no, it's described as deserved love. Earned love. So many people believe that God's love is simply the *payment* for our own goodness.

Think about the monks living away in their monasteries. Monks will cloister themselves in a monastery, and the whole idea behind this lifestyle is that there are certain ways to live your life that go above and beyond as an offering to God. So, for instance, God calls for us to repent of our sins, right? That's why He continues to provide everything for the people of the world, extending their lives, as Peter writes, ***"The Lord... is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*** (2 Peter 3:9) Well, monks will take this invitation and not only repent, but they'll also beat themselves and deny themselves comforts and abuse themselves, with the thought this will make God even *more* happy than "regular old repentance."

Consider another example: God warns us against the love of money. So, what monks do is forsake *all* earthly possessions and give up all claims to money or inheritance. And there's not really anything *wrong* with that per se, but the idea behind it is totally misguided. The idea behind it is that they're doing this for God so *that* He will be *more* pleased with them. It's done as a sort of bribe. But Paul says in our text, ***"Who has first given to God that he will be repaid?"*** Can anyone do anything for God or give anything *to* God that will put God in debt to that person? It's impossible! Can't be done.

But so *often* the world's focus, and even our focus, is on what *we* are doing for God. You can see another example of this in mainstream Christianity. It's this idea that, *"I* accepted God into *my* heart." *"I* accepted Jesus as *my* Savior." But just think about how ridiculous that concept is. Jesus—true God—became man. He humbled Himself under the law so that He might die and pay for the sins of the whole world. He has given His own blood as the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of everyone who ever lived. And yet mere humans will look at that and say, *"I* decide that Jesus is *my* Savior"? It's the height of arrogance! But it's so easy for us to slip into similar lines of thought, that what *we* do for God is so important, that it's even more important than what God does for us.

Hey, ***"The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein."*** (Psalm 24:1) So, is there anything that we can give to God that He doesn't already have? Is there anything God needs so much that we can give it to Him and expect to be repaid? Not at all. God doesn't *need* anything from us. God doesn't *need* us! But herein lies another one of those unsearchable aspects of God: He doesn't *need* us or anything from us. But still, He *wants* us. And so, He gives it all in order to *have* us. That question that Paul asks, ***"Who has first given to God that he will be repaid?"*** The opposite is really true: God first gives to us, and God treats *His* giving as reason for our reward. This is why I say: **Through Him I have everything.**

Consider all that God has given us! We can look right at the pages of God's Word, and see gifts plastered all over Scripture: ***"When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."*** (Galatians 4:4) God has given us His Son, He's bought us back from death and hell,

He's adopted us into His family as His precious children. God declares to us, ***"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."*** (Isaiah 43:25) All of those terrible truths within us that God can see, God chooses not to remember them. And He does better than forget them, He actually forgives them—all of our thoughts, all of our arrogance, all of our sins. And he also informs us about our future: ***"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."*** (1 Cor. 15:51-52)

Thanks be to God that He has revealed all of this about Himself to us so that we can know who God really is. Because if He did *not* do so, we'd all be making up gods of our own creation and single-handedly plunging ourselves into an eternity separated from God. But God has brought us to see the truth, right in the pages of Scripture. Because of Him, it can be said about us what Jesus said to Peter: ***"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."*** (Matthew 16:17)

Blessed are each of you. Blessed are you because God has shown Himself to you. Blessed are you because the faith in your hearts which latches on to this God's love was planted there by God Himself. Blessed are you, because when you stand before God, God will not *see* you, instead He will see His Son. He will see His Son who did not make up His own way, but who followed His Father's way. He put you first so that **Through Him you'd have everything**. And the result of this is that with those magnificent eyes in our head, you will see God. After your skin has been destroyed, yet in your flesh *you* shall see God, whom you shall see for yourselves, and *your* eyes shall behold. (cf. Job 19:26-27)

Until that day comes, what are you going to do with your time? You have a lot more time on your hands now that you don't have to try to figure out what God is like; now that you don't have to guess at what He thinks or how He feels about you. So instead of wasting your time with that as the rest of the world is, let's spend our time listening to God. And *then*, we can respond, the way our next hymn does: ***"Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee; Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise."*** (TLH #400:1) **To Him belongs our everything!**

If you are able to speak, share the good news of Christ crucified for sinners, invite someone to church. If your gift is encouraging, then encourage. If your gift is wealth, then give it! If leadership, then lead! God has given us a lifetime of everything, what else could we do than to use it all for His glory! ***"To Him be glory forever. Amen."***

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Amen.