

Theology and Doxology
Romans 11:33-36

This morning we are going to answer a critical question: *How do we find hope when trials and difficulties weigh us down?*

Have you felt weighed down lately?

I'd like to tell you I never struggle.

I'd like to tell you that I am always filled with compassion and tenderness toward the problems of our members. *Sometimes I just want to say, "Get over it!"*

I'd like to tell you that I am always confident in God's plans.

I'd like to tell you that I am always eager to worship.

I'd like to tell you that I always wake up and say, "God morning, Lord!" *When sometimes I wake up and say, "Good Lord, it's morning!"*

What do we do when our hearts are weary, our spirit is dry and our problems are bigger than yesterday?

Our The hope goes beyond an optimism that says, "*someday, things will get better.*"
Our hope is grounded in the GREATNESS of GOD!

I remember once reading a cartoon with two ice fishermen comparing their fish. One proudly held up his tiny two fish. The other pointed to his whale of a catch laid out on the ice. The fisherman who only caught small fish stood over his typical 12 inch hole in the ice and asked "How can you catch fish so big?" The novice fisherman pointed to his mammoth hole, shaped like a whale, "I cut a bigger hole!"

Some of us never seem to get beyond our problems because **our God is too small!**

The doxology of Romans 11:33-36 is an exclamation of the greatness of God in light of the truth's we have discovered in Romans 1-11.

For the past 2 years we have been studying Romans 1-11

Here are just a few of the highlight we have studied in our journey.

- God's righteousness is explained in Romans **1:16-17**.
- The NEED for God's righteousness is revealed in **3:20**.
- We learn that the righteousness God offers is a different kind of righteousness. It is a Righteousness apart from the Law **3:21**.
- This Imputed righteousness puts us at peace with God. **5:1**.
- Through this righteousness we have hope that we can fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law. **8:3-4**
- the **SPIRIT** and **JESUS** himself help us in our daily sanctification. **Romans 8**
- We also learned about the Justification of God. **Rom 9:6, 19**, meaning that God is

- just in all that he does when it comes to the offer of salvation.
- There is hope for the **World. 10:13** (all can be saved)
- There is hope for **Israel. 11:26** (The Jewish people will eventually return to God and receive Jesus as their Messiah)

It is as if we have been climbing a great theological mountain. It reminds me of my climb up Priest Mountain. It is the Longest climb on the Appalachian Trail. After several miles of difficult climbing, I thought that I would never reach the top. When I finally reached the summit, my response was an exclamation. There was a powerful view, and the reward of having reached my destination.

When you get to the top of the mountain you can see where you've come from.

You can see the view!

The response is awe.

That is what Paul is saying here in Romans 11:33-36.

After eleven chapters of deep theology. After 11 chapters of difficult climbing and powerful theological themes, Paul's only response is a great **Doxology of Praise to God**. He is saying, "What a GREAT GOD!"

Three distinct thoughts in Paul's DOXOLOGY. They will form the structure of our outline this morning.

- I. **The first is that God is Greater Than our Understanding of Things. 11:33**
 - A. **"O the Depth."** This is the Greek word *bathos*. It refers to the ocean depths, a DEPTH that has not been discovered. The word is used in this way in (Luke 5:4) *"When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."* It refers to the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10) *"but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."*
 - B. **This depth is UNSEARCHABLE**
 1. It is Incomprehensible
 2. This word is used only here and (Ephesians 3:8) *"Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the **unsearchable** riches of Christ,"*
 - C. **The depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God is also UNTRACEABLE**
 1. NIV says "paths beyond tracing out"
 2. KJV "ways past finding out"
 3. This deals with the THINGS that GOD DOES
 - a. Spiritually, **God reveals SOME things.** (Daniel 2:21-22) *"He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the*

discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him."

- b. But there are **SOME THINGS Known only to God!**
- (1) "Who has known the mind of the Lord..."
 - (2) "Some of God's wisdom can be known but not all"
(A.T. Robertson)
 - (3) (Psalm 36:6) *"Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O Lord, you preserve both man and beast."*
 - (4) **(Deuteronomy 29:29)** *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."*

From Ray Pritchard, 8/31/2006. USA Today A few years ago **Michael Gartner** wrote in USA Today about the **sudden death of his 17-year-old adopted son Christopher.**

"He died on Thursday. He was a healthy, robust boy on Tuesday. He got sick on Wednesday. And he died on Thursday." Then he said, *"You would have liked him. Everyone did."*

He died of a **sudden attack of juvenile diabetes.** Despite heroic medical efforts Christopher was suddenly gone.

The day after he died, **a friend called and said the only thing helped get him through the terrible tragedy:** *"If God had come to you 17 years ago and said, 'I'll make you a bargain. I'll give you a beautiful, wonderful, happy and healthy kid for 17 years, and then I'll take him away,' you would have made that deal in a second."* **"And that was the deal. We just didn't know the terms."** www.usatoday.com/life/people/2008-06-14-russert-appreciation_N.htm

Can you say today, "God is Greater than my Understanding of Things?"

Our second point to bring us comfort from the greatness of God ...

II. God is Greater Than the People who Seem to Have all the Answers. 11:34-35

- A. No one can INSTRUCT the LORD (who has known the mind of the Lord)
- B. No one can COUNSEL the LORD (who has been his counselor)
- C. No one can ASSIST the LORD (who can give anything to him - God is **not indebted** to anyone!!!)
- D. Isn't this what WE do?
 1. When we are angry with God, we are saying that we know better!
 2. When we REFUSE to believe, we are counseling God what to do
 3. When we THINK THAT GOD OWES US SOMETHING, we are saying that He is indebted to us!
 - a. "God, Why are you doing this? I've served you all my life!"
 - b. "God, you MUST help me out here...."
 - c. "God,. If you get me out of this one, I'll serve you."

Finally, as we consider God's greatness, and the doxology that flows from what we learn about Him, we discover that

III. **God Alone Gives Meaning and Purpose in this Life. 11:36**

GREEK prepositions are a powerful literary tool that demonstrate the relationship between one subject and another. This can be illustrated by drawing an imaginary circle. Allow that circle to represent God. (We're only pointing out one aspect of our relationship with him. God cannot be confined to a circle, a concept or limited in any way). The LINE represents LIFE. The ARROW at the end of the line represents YOU.

- A. The first part of this triad of truth concerning us and God, is that everything is FROM HIM. The Greek preposition *ek* is used to demonstrate this relationship.. Here, it means that God is the **SOURCE** of all things. Imagine God as the circle. Put a dot inside the circle and extend a line through the circle to the outside, with a pointer at the end of the line. Everything in life (the line) is FROM God. You and I, and every aspect of our lives originates from Him. This means that there is a purpose in everything.
- B. The second part of this triumphant trilogy is that everything is THROUGH HIM. Here, the Greek preposition *dia* is used to demonstrate that God is the **MEANS** of all things. Once again, draw your circle. Start your line outside the circle and cross all the way through to the other side. This common preposition illustrates to us that everything in life comes to us through the Father. Nothing can happen to you that has not come through him. **Nothing can touch us that has not been approved by God!**
 1. (Psalm 91:9-10) *"If you make the Most High your dwelling— even the Lord, who is my refuge— then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent."*
 2. (Psalm 91:14-15) *"“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.”"*
- C. The third aspect of these prepositions is that everything is TO HIM. The Greek preposition *eis* makes a vivid point here. Your line begins outside the circle and points toward it. God is the END of all things. Your life, and all of creation will serve the purpose of giving glory to God.
 1. (Revelation 4:11) *"“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”"*
 2. (Hebrews 2:10-11) *"In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers."*

- D. Compare (Ephesians 3:16-18) *"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp **how wide and long and high and deep** is the love of Christ,"*
- E. GOD is the SOURCE, the MEANS and the END of all things. Nothing can happen to us that HE has not ordained. Nothing can face us that HE is not greater. No one can Threaten us that HE cannot defeat.

Our problems are great, but our God is greater
Our burdens are heavy, but our God is stronger
Our past is dark, but our God is light
Our world is perishing, but our God lives
our hearts are breaking, but our God is mending them
Our souls are weary, but our God is tireless
Our feet are slipping, but our Rock is sure
Our hands are weak, but GOD's ARM is mighty