

September 14, 2014
Pentecost 14

"Oh, the Depth of the Riches of God's Wisdom and Knowledge"

ROMANS 11:33-36

O*h, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

"Oh, the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge." Let me say this again but this time put the emphasis on the word "Oh." "**OH!**" the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge." You see Paul is not using the word oh to introduce something he had forgotten to say as we would when we say, "Oh, I almost forgot." He is using this word "Oh" to proclaim loudly and clearly and the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge.

Our God is a great God. We see his glory in the beauty of his creation and say, "OH, what a wonderful God we have." We see his glory in the way he sent his Son Jesus to die for us and rescue us, and we say, "Oh, living, loving, dying, rising Jesus did it all for me." We see his glory in the way the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to bring people into the kingdom of God from all over the world. Sometimes you are so overwhelmed at how God is orchestrating your life to bring the gospel to the lost you just want to say, "OH! OH! OH!" As we heard in our sermon last week from Romans 11:32 our God desperately wants to bind up people and show them their disobedience so they will rely on him for mercy.

"Oh, the **DEPTHS** of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of our God. Our God is deep. He is very deep. The Greek word for deep is bathos. A bathysphere is small submarine used to explore the deepest ocean depths. God is so deep, so very deep, in the riches of his wisdom and knowledge.

There are things so deep about our God that our human minds just cannot understand them. "How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out." God's judgments and his decisions go beyond our comprehension. Daniel 2:21,22 says, "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." Our God is deep. He reveals deep and hidden things about himself. He tells us he is three person and yet one God. We cannot comprehend it, yet we believe it is true.

Isaiah says of the Lord, "Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel," Verse 34 says, "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" Our God is deep, he is very deep. He does not tell us why he waited as long as he did to send Jesus into the world. He does not tell us why he has not done more to stop the message of Islam from winning more converts in the world. God is deep. So much is hidden.

Our God who is so deep allows us to peer into the depths his glorious riches of wisdom and knowledge so we can see what he has planned to rescue us and save us. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "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." God does not give us everything we want to know but he does give us everything we need to know. 1 Corinthians tells us how it is that we are able to see what he has done to save us. "'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,' but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

A well known theologian was once asked what it was about God that he found to be most profound. He said, "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so." Martin Luther said of the Bible that it is so deep in some places an elephant can swim in it, and so shallow in other places a child can wade in it. Every time we open the Bible we peer into the deep things of God. Some parts are hard to understand but others are so simple such as "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Oh, the depths of the **RICHES** of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Our God is rich. He is so rich. Psalm 24 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." In Psalm 50 the Lord says, "For every animal of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine." Our God is so deep. He is so rich. Bill Gates is worth billions but he is a pitifully poor pauper compared to our God and his riches. To think that we who are his children are heirs and co-heirs with Christ of all these riches.

Our God is so deep in his pockets that he is able to supply all our needs. Psalm 104 says, "He makes grass grow for the cattle and plants for man cultivate, bringing forth feed from the earth." Psalm 145 says, "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." God is rich, so rich he made all things from nothing. God is rich. He continues to supply all our needs by creating life as Paul says in verse 36, "From him, and through him and to him are all things."

And yet we have not fully plumbed the depths of God's riches. Our God is rich just because of who he is. He wants all people to see how poor they are without him. In Romans 9:23 it says that God wants to make "the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy." The night before he died our Lord Jesus spoke of the riches of glory he had with his Father from all eternity. He prayed, "And now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." Imagine for a moment the Father, Son and Holy Spirit luxuriating in the riches of glory they had with each other before the world began. Jesus wants us to enjoy these riches that our God offers. He prayed, "I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

The riches you have in Christ are so deep, so very, very deep. You cannot help but crying out, not in pain but in joy, "Oh! the depths of the riches." In Ephesians 3:8 Paul spoke of the grace given to him to preach to the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches in Christ." And God is yours. Yes, I know the Bible says that you are God's but did you know that

it also says you are God's? Psalm 73 says, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." The Hebrew word for portion has the thought of property lines. By God's grace you have staked your claim on God and now share in his riches. All of these riches of God and his love and his glory are yours through Jesus who for a time emptied himself of his glory to die for you and save you.

"Oh, the depth of the riches of wisdom and **KNOWLEDGE** of God. There is so much depth to God's wisdom and God's knowledge it takes our breath away. There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom. I know this hammer in my hand is for pounding and this nail is meant to be driven into a piece of wood. Wisdom tells me how to hold the nail and hammer and pound carefully without hitting my finger.

God knows everything. His knowledge is so unfathomably deep. He knows the facts stored in every hard drive in every computer in every part of the world. He knows the course of the billions of stars in our galaxy and the courses and colors and shapes of the stars in the billions of galaxies in the universe. Isaiah 40, "He brings them out one by one, calls them each by name." He looks into the tiny atoms and knows their interaction with each other, protons, neutrons, electrons and quarks. He knows all the events of the past and the events of the present and the events of the future.

He knows everything about me. Psalm 139 says, "Oh, Lord you have searched me and know me..Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely...Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain." God knows the depth of the corruption of my heart and the corruption of every human heart on the face of this planet. God knows exactly what was necessary to rescue people from sin, the blood of his own Son sent into the world to become one of us.

God's knowledge is deep, very deep, and so is his wisdom. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the **WISDOM** and knowledge of God." Our God does not look at the facts and then ignore them. He uses his wisdom as God to make the right judgments and follow the right paths necessary to save us. "How unsearchable are his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out."

Consider the wisdom of God in creation. God made squirrels with bushy tails and monkeys with long tails. He created eagles with sharp beaks to tear meat and parrots with strong beaks to crack even the hardest nuts. There are billions of cells in your body receiving life giving nourishment of food and oxygen pumped by the heart muscle through thousands of miles of blood vessels. If your eyes are brown, in his wisdom God gave you brown eyes. If your eyes are blue God in his wisdom gave you blue eyes.

Consider the wisdom of God exhibited in the way Jesus came down to this earth to save us. In his infinite knowledge God sees our lost condition, but then in his wisdom he develops the perfect plan to save us. Paul asks the question, "Who has ever give to God that he should repay him?" God knows no one can come up with the price to pay for even one sin that screams out for punishment forever. God in his wisdom plans the perfect plan. "All we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." God's plan to have Jesus go to the cross seems like foolishly to people, but this is the ultimate wisdom of God. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1,

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Consider the wisdom of God that carefully and strategically plans how people will be brought into the kingdom of God through his Word and through people like you and me. Some once said, "I am just a nobody, telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody." God's wisdom means I am more than just a nobody, I am one special body being orchestrated by God to give glory to him and to lead others to know about him. Ephesians says we are "God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus, to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Even when tragedies come into our lives, the Lord uses his wisdom to work good out of the bad. Oh! Oh! Oh!, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Amen.