

Text: Romans 11:33-36 Oh, 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 them?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Do you like mysteries? For instance, a book or movie that presents to us a mystery? Generally, we do. But we usually do not like a mystery that is never solved. That is not only true regarding books or movies, but it is true regarding mysteries in life. We often hear the question, why did this happen to me? A person suddenly is confronted with an un expected problem or a difficulty, like an accident; they ask why did this happen to me? And many times in life, we don't have an answer to that. Even we Christians struggle with this. God loves us, then why this problem? God often doesn't answer this for us either.

Because this is a reality in life, it is good to study about God's will. St. Paul speaks of God's will in our text. He presents the solution to a mystery. It involves God's will. He praises God for his good and gracious will. We too should **Praise God for His Good and Gracious Will**. Why? Because Paul speaks of a mystery and solution that involves you and me. He speaks of the salvation of the gentiles. This includes all who are not of Jewish descent. As we look at our text let's first talk about the mysteries to which God does not give us a solution. This is true because God has a hidden will. Secondly, we will praise God for his revealed will, our salvation.

Our text is what we call a doxology. A doxology is a hymn of praise. There are several doxologies in the Scriptures. Each one has a purpose. What is the purpose of this doxology? To praise God for saving both the Jews and the Gentiles believers. Beginning with chapter 9 Paul laments how so many Jews of his day have refused to believe in Christ. Paul, a Jew himself, once persecuted the Christians. He did not believe that Jesus was the promised Savior. But the Lord converted Paul. After his conversion the Lord made Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul on his missionary journeys would usually go to a Jewish synagogue when arriving in a new city. Only a few, if any, of the Jews would believe. But the gentiles did believe. They would invite Paul and his companion to their homes. Thus, Paul started many congregations in many different places. Paul speaks of how the Jews were thus cut out of the tree and the gentiles were grafted into it. Why? Because God wanted all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. It was too small a thing for Jesus to die for just the Jews. No, he would die for all people. People from every tribe, nation and people would be brought in to the kingdom of God.

But what about the Jews of that day? Why were they so hard hearted? Why did they keep on resisting when God desperately wanted them to be saved? That's a mystery. The answer is not revealed to us. In a similar way, there are many mysteries for us. A family raise five children in the Lord, but two turn away from the Lord. Why? We don't know. A man is a faithful member of the congregation. He even serves on the church council. Later he turns from the Lord and is seemingly lost. Why? The Lord doesn't reveal to us the answer. We are to live as Christians and also tell others of Jesus as we have the opportunity. It perhaps seems that few really understand and come to believe in Jesus. Why? We don't know the answer. Our text says, "**How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known**

the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"

God's way is often different than our way. Often he does not reveal to us why he does something. Nor can we find out on our own. Our problem is we speculate and that's bad. We come up with the wrong answer. It's better to acknowledge we just don't know why God does something. Job is a perfect example. His long patience finally gave out and he criticized God. So God spoke to him and said something similar to what is in our text, Where were you when I created the World? Our text says, **"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor?"** In other words, don't question what God does; don't question the will of God. You haven't given anything to God, he does not owe you anything in return.

Rather than question God about what he hasn't told you, listen to what he has revealed to you. Instead of looking for what can't be found, study what God has done. If you do that, you will echo Paul's words, **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!"** What do we know about God? He in love is good to us in every way. He especially in love forgives us miserable sinners all our sins. This is God's revealed will! You and I are blessed to know and believe this!

Paul says God's wisdom and knowledge are deep and rich. He reveals some of both to you. Spend a life time learning of God and his actions in His Word. You will keep on learning a little bit each time of how good and gracious God is in every way and in everything. Paul says, **"For from him and through him and for him are all things."** Consider creation, contemplate the heavens, the earth, your body and all its parts.* Consider your redemption in Jesus. Mankind didn't know how God was going to fulfill his promises and save mankind. The Jews had the wrong conception of who and what the Messiah would be. But you know. The Holy Spirit has revealed Jesus to you in the Bible. The depth and riches of God's love are partially revealed step by step in the Gospels. God's own Son is born in a manger. He displays love to all in his ministry. He suffers ridicule and hate. Yet Jesus prays for those that persecute and crucify him. In the thief on the cross we see ourselves, hopeless, lost sinners, soon to die and suffer in hell. He was saved. So, the Holy Spirit has come to you and taught you, sharing with the knowledge and wisdom of God; he overcame your resistance to that very Word. So now Jesus is YOUR GOOD Shepherd. You know his voice and you follow him. In him you have the good life.

Do you see why Paul sings a hymn of praise to God? **"To him be the glory forever! Amen."** You and I also need to sing such praises. Why? Peter writes and says, **"Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."** (1st, 2:10). You and I, mostly gentiles, have salvation through Jesus. We know the wonderful works of God. Why? Because God has revealed it to you! Keep on studying these revealed rich revelations from God in his Word. It is far better than asking questions to which there is no answer given. Just know this, God's hidden will must work out for your good. And it should, for he has revealed his rich love and mercy for you in Jesus. That is sufficient; in fact, it ought to bring forth a hymn of praise from us each and every day. To Him be glory now and forever! Amen.