

The Glory of God pt2

REVIEW: Last week we began a new series that will be taking a long look at salvation - in fact, that is the series title. To begin this long look, we started with looking at some of who God is. Last week we saw that God was transcendently creative. That means that God is not bound by the regulations and laws of this universe. The implication is that when God creates, He does not need raw materials like you or I would. He creates the raw materials out of nothing. Which also makes God the richest Person ever.

We also looked at the fact that God owns everything in the universe. There is not one thing He does not declare His. Further, we looked God's knowledge. We began to break it down from the grand statement of "God knows everything" into parts we often do not think about. Then we considered the idea that if God really knows all of that and far more (everything), then who are we to think we can question, or counsel God.

INTRO: Today we want to look at a few more parts of the character of God. Some of this may not be completely new to you, hopefully we will look at it in a fresh way that sparks more thoughts in your minds.

Romans 11:33-36

I. Refresher

- A. Remember from last week that we said that what we have here is an unusual scene
 - 1. Paul, the intellectual, the serious, almost stoic person that he was suddenly, after some strong theology bursts out into this doxology
 - 2. Essentially its a song - which is very unusual for a man like Paul
- B. Paul extols the riches, the wisdom and knowledge of God
- C. He reminds us that God's ways are unsearchable, or inscrutable (beyond scrutiny)
- D. In short, Paul is reminding us of our place before God
 - 1. Do you remember this verse: Ecc. 5:2 "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few."
 - 2. Loose translation: "Remember your place junior! He is God, you are far from it, so hold your tongue!"
- E. We will pick up in Romans 11 with verse 35

II. God is self sufficient - v. 35

- A. So last week we talked about the fact that God owns everything - absolutely everything in the universe

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- B. So in light of that knowledge and this verse, “Who has ever given to God that God should repay them?” what could that mean for us?
1. Well first off that means you have nothing to give to God
 - a) He owns it all
 - b) You try to give Him something, all you are doing is giving Him what is already His
 - (1) Which by the way is a great lesson about tithing too
 - (2) Everything you have is already God’s
 - (a) You can live with an open hand and allow God to use what you have to be a blessing to others and for His glory
 - (b) Or you can lived close fistted, missing the blessings, missing glorifying God, and have God take back what is already His
 2. But think about that verse even further, “Who has given to God that He should repay them?”
 - a) Can you ever put God in your debt where He would owe you anything? NO!
 - b) God owes you nothing!!!
 - (1) And this is something I think we choke on a bit, and we really should not
 - (a) Not as Christians, because we know that God is superior in every way, and when we realize the facts, we submit to His loving sovereignty
 - (b) But even as non believers - humanity has this “I am human, hear me roar” quality about us which is completely against evolution - evolution says that someone or something more evolved than us will supplant us - yet every sci-fi movie we watch has us sticking it to the invading aliens
 - i) You know what I want to see, a movie in which the aliens kick our tails and Hollywood and the rest of the world finally begin to live within their own system of thought
 - (2) If God is REALLY what HE SAYS HE IS - Loving, and Sovereign, then we can rest in that love and rest in that sovereignty
 3. Now, for the scary part, if God really owns it all, and we cannot put God in our debt, we have nothing to bargain with
 - a) We cannot tell God, “I’ll do this for you if you do this for me.”
 - b) Those foxhole bargains with God are meaningless, and my apologies if I am stepping on toes here, but the “If you get me out of this God I will serve you” promises are meaningless
 - (1) God never entered into that agreement with you

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- (2) God did what He did because He is God and He is sovereign, not because you bargained for your life
- (3) Would that negate the fact that you should serve Him? Not at all! If anything that means you should serve Him all the more, because God made a sovereign choice apart from your deal to keep you alive
- c) What this comes down to is us trying to buy off God with stuff that is already His
 - (1) “God, I will donate my money to the poor if you will just bring my kid back from the edge of this disease.”
 - (2) “I will give you whatever you ask God if you repair my marriage”
 - (3) “If you spare my life God, I will give you my life”
 - (4) Do you think for one second that God does not own every part of those scenarios?
 - (a) He owns your money - does not need it either, what He wants is you
 - (b) Do you not think God wants you to have a good marriage - and yet you try to barter with what is not yours
 - (c) God gave you the life you have - God has numbered your days as we looked at a few weeks ago, our lives our a very gift from God and when God wants to retrieve the gift He gave you, He is well within His right
 - (d) What can you bargain with God for that He does not already own - NOTHING!
- 4. The sad part is what this really reveals about our hearts
 - a) We live as if we are helping God along by what we do
 - b) As if there is a give and take in this relationship and we are actually contributing something that God is lacking
 - c) What a joke!
 - d) God lacks nothing. God needs nothing you have or can offer.
 - (1) That puts God squarely in the drivers seat
 - (2) That puts us in a position to simply follow His lead
- 5. So many will ask about serving God at this point
 - a) Obviously God is seeking those that will serve Him - Scripture is full of examples
 - b) But the motivation is never to repay God as if He needs us
 - c) The motivation is to serve God because of how amazing He is
 - (1) When God reveals Himself: gracious, loving, strong, forgiving, and amazingly saving who would not want to serve this God
 - (2) Who would go back to serving anything or anyone inferior to God

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6. And this truth, that God is self sufficient is a grace for us as well
 - a) What this truth proves is that while God in NO WAY needs us
 - b) God, in all and every way, wants us
 - (1) I'll share this with you at the risk of an overshare
 - (2) Pastors can feel this play out
 - (a) Many times I can feel that I am needed, and it is nice to feel needed
 - i) But feeling needed has its limits
 - ii) Feeling needed can leave you weary
 - (b) Feeling wanted is a very different thing
 - i) It is not that someone needs you there for support as their pastor
 - ii) It is that they want you there because your are their friend, their brother in Christ
 - c) So while it can be hurtful, off-putting, or even insulting to think that we are not needed by God
 - (1) It is not a statement of our value but of His that He does not need us
 - (2) Which, puts us in the greater position of being wanted by God

III. God's focus is His own glory

- A. If God does not need us, it stands to reason that we are not the focal point - the focal point is somewhere else
- B. Romans 11:36 "For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."
 1. Before we get going on the implications of this verse, I have to be accurate with you
 2. The new NIV translated one word wrong, and I have no idea why, they got it right in the older version of the NIV
 - a) It says "and for Him are all things" - which is wrong
 - b) The Greek word is "eis" which means "in or into"
 - (1) We get a word for biblical interpretation from this word "eisegesis"
 - (2) Which is a method of interpreting the Scriptures that is wrong - it means to lead into, which applied to biblical interpretation means that you are reading your meaning into the biblical text
 - (3) We do not do that here, to the best of our ability - we exegete or take the meaning from the text
 - c) The point in this passage is that the phrase should read "and in Him are all things"

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- (1) “For” makes it sound as if things were made for Him, which in a sense they are
 - (2) However, “in” means that He is holding all things together
- C. The meaning of this verse cannot be understated: The origin of everything that does exist or will exist is God, and God alone
- D. Many of us, myself included, grew up with the idea that God created all that we see, and created us for the express purpose of fellowship with us
1. And while God absolutely desires fellowship with us because we are His creations, it is not because God was lonely
 2. God was perfectly complete and self sufficient
 - a) The three members of the Trinity were complete in fellowship and love
 - b) They needed no one to feel like they were not alone
 - c) This is not “Jerry Maguire” and God is not looking at us all goggly-eyed and saying, “You complete me.”
 3. If that were true, we would be the centerpiece of the universe
- E. Many of us read the Bible in similar fashion
1. We look to the Bible as our guidebook to life
 2. If we want to know if something is right or wrong we look to the Bible
 3. Is that a bad thing? Not completely
 - a) The Bible does have great wisdom and guidance on many life issues
 - b) But, will the Bible answer specific questions for you like who to marry, where to live, what job to take, what career to pursue?
 - (1) Not on your life
 - (2) Why? Because the Bible is not about you!
 - (3) The Bible certainly has commands for us and expects submission
 - (4) The Bible is for us, but it is not about us
- F. The Bible makes it very clear that God’s heart’s desire is not us, or even our salvation, but His glory
1. That make come as a shock to some of us, but it is the truth
 2. The world and the universe did not come into existence so that you and I might be saved
 3. It came into existence for the glory of God
- G. I said a second ago that God’s heart’s desire is not our salvation, which is true
1. But here is how this works
 2. God’s desire is for His own glory
 3. God, in His infinite love, grace and mercy reaches down to sinful man to save Him which displays just how glorious God really is
 4. I know this may be a shock to us, but ask yourself why is it a shock?

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- a) Because the Pastor has gone nuts and is teaching heresy?
 - b) Or could it be that we as humanity have an inflated idea of who we are and our importance in the universe and the scheme of salvation?
 - c) I would opt for the second
 - (1) The glory is not ours, the glory is God's
 - (2) We are not the point, God is the point, and His glory
- H. I have spoken of the Westminster Confession of Faith before
- 1. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
 - a) Now tell me, from that statement, who is the point?
 - b) Is it us? Or is it God?
 - c) We glorify God, we enjoy Him in all of His glory and perfection forever
 - 2. "But Pastor Keith, that is some man's idea they wrote in a confession. That's not the Bible." Thanks for asking!
- I. The Bible's take on God's glory
- 1. God saves for His name's sake (Psalm 106:8)
 - 2. The Israelite monarchy was about the glory of God (1 Sam. 12)
 - 3. The Temple was dedicated for the glory of God (1 Kings 8)
 - 4. God had mercy on Israel when it deserved destruction because He did not want His name blasphemed (Is. 48:9-11)
 - 5. Jesus ministry was about God's glory (John 7:18)
 - 6. The cross was for the glory of God (John 12:27-28)
 - 7. Ephesians 1:3-6
 - 8. 1 Peter 4:11 - the Christian life is about the glory of God
 - 9. And this is only a small handful of the verses that point to the fact that the Bible and creation, and we ourselves are for the glory of God's great name
 - a) It is not about us
 - b) It is all about God, and His glory
- J. Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."
- 1. Remember this verse?
 - 2. This is what we have to look forward to one day
 - 3. And it will not be the knowledge of how great mankind is
 - a) It will not be the knowledge of how glorious the hottest actor or actresses were
 - b) It will not be the glory of the guy that broke up the pass that allowed his team to go to the Superbowl
 - 4. It will be the knowledge of the glory of the Lord that will fill the earth! Amen?

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- IV. This brings us to the second part of the Westminster Confession “The chief end of man is to glorify God AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER.”
- A. This enjoyment has another name
1. A name that gets watered down
 2. A name that gets reduced from what it really was meant to be into what we made it to be
 3. The other name for this enjoyment of God is: WORSHIP
- B. And let’s face it, this enjoyment, this worship is rooted in all we have been talking about, culminating in the glory of God
1. Matt Chandler puts it this way in his book *Explicit Gospel* “The root of Christian worship...is acknowledging, submitting to, and enjoying the supremacy of God’s glory.”
 2. One of the things this means is that the gifts God has given us for our enjoyment do not terminate with the enjoyment of the gift
 - a) Here’s what I mean: food is an awesome gift from God
 - (1) The variety of flavors (which most of you enjoy a wider variety than I)
 - (2) The sweetness, the juiciness, the crispness, the colors, the textures, the smells - all great and wonderful
 - (a) And many a person has declared “I LOVE (fill in the blank)”
 - (3) However, our enjoyment should not terminate on just the food itself - rather it should lead us to enjoy the giver of that food, the creator of the digestive system and our taste buds
 - (4) It should lead us to enjoying God because of His wonderful, gracious gifts
 - b) Another example: sex
 - (1) It is enjoyable (so I am told)
 - (2) The gift was not given to us only for procreation, or enjoyment
 - (3) It is another gift in which we praise the Creator of the gift
 - (a) He came up with the concept
 - (b) He designed our bodies for gratification and enjoyment
 - (c) It was never meant to be a means to our glory, but to His glory
 3. This makes worship wider than singing songs on Sunday morning
 - a) This explains why Paul could say in Corinthians “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”
 - b) Worship happens when we refuse to let the glory go to God’s good gifts, and instead allow the glory and the enjoyment go out to the Creator of the good gifts

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- c) Worship happens when we understand that the value and meaning we give everything in this life is nothing until we understand the driving force behind it
 - (1) From food, to sex, to marriage, to kids, all the meaning we ascribe to things is finite and terminates here in this created order
 - (2) But when we understand that food is a gift from the Creator, our spouse is a gift from the Creator, our kids (no matter how much they make us want to pull our hair out) are gifts from the Creator
 - (3) When we understand life that way, there is an infinite and eternal amount of joy, and pleasure because we do not end at the glory of the gift, but on the glory of the Giver of that gift!
- C. That we are designed to worship is no secret
 - 1. Let me show you some pictures
 - a) I had to show the cheese grater one since I am not a Packers fan
 - b) But do these people look like they are worshipping?
 - c) They are - in fact they are whole-heartedly committed to worship
 - 2. Which leads us into next week's message
 - a) Something has gone wrong with our worship
 - b) We are wired for worship, but somehow the wiring was done by a person with WAY too much coffee one morning
 - c) That is where we will be going next - what went wrong with us