



Sermon Transcription • Romans 11:33-36

To Only God Be the Glory

Pastor Jeff Bucknam

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

Ah this is the hardest day of the year for me ... my mother died seven years ago this morning. My mom is a - was a delightful woman. She had an eye for beauty and she was always trying to make things easy for us, her kids, and so my mother decided that she was going to die at 11:00 on the 11th day of the 11th month of 2011 - which is easy now for me cause I'm like, "Thanks Mom, that was great." Because every Remembrance Day I remember her especially. So this last week or so I always start thinking about my mom an awful lot and I think about some of the things my father used to tell me about my mom and since. After she died, my dad, I used to go and visit my dad on Thursdays and spend some time with him down at his house just to commiserate to be honest. I used to do my sermon preparation sometimes there and we'd go to lunch together and he showed me during some of that time and actually prior to that time in my life - he showed me some of the flowery letters he used to write to her. My dad's really good with words, he's an excellent writer and some of the things he wrote to her are just lovely - probably should be published. Some of them are funny, but he had a pension for writing poetry and short stories and funny characters and things like that. You know when you're the son, when I first saw those when I was quite a bit younger I remember thinking to myself, "Eww - I don't want to hear about the love between my parents in that kind of detail. It's okay for you to just to tell me Dad that you love her, I don't want to hear about how her eyes flash for you and all the other things that you're writing." But when I got older and I met my bride, it occurred to me that sometimes when you fall deeply in love with somebody, the only kind of language that's appropriate to describe that love is poetry, is art. I never thought of myself as being somebody who would write a song for another person. But when I met Jeanie my wife, I found myself overwhelmed with joy, and I wanted to express it in words that were greater than, "Hey you're kind of neat." So I would, seriously, I would write songs for my wife and now I will perform one for you. [Laughter] No, no...you wish. Those of you who are in love or think about the people in your life who mean the most to you, you know that, that the best way for you to respond to something that means a lot to you, something magnificent in your life is for you to respond with poetry, with art - sculpt something, paint it, write it.

This is the way it works quite honestly in Scripture, when you find people in the Bible who have seen God move in a remarkable way, or have understood something uniquely wonderful about the Lord that they didn't know prior, they respond with what we call, doxology - with a glorying in God. And it usually shows up in the form of poetry. So for example, Adam, when he sees Eve for the first time in Genesis 2, right - God puts him to sleep, wakes him up says, "Adam here's ... here's your wife." And this is Genesis 2:23,



“[Then] The man said, ‘This is [at last] now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman,” for she was taken out of man.’”

It’s a Hebrew poetry there. “She makes my heart want to sing a song.” Right - he sings a song. When the people of Israel come across the Red Sea and they see God deliver them from the strongest military power in the world at the time, out of slavery, and the people of Israel - the chariots and the horses they’re all swallowed up in the Red Sea - they stand and the opposite shore. How do you respond to that? Well they sing a song, Exodus 15:1-3,

“Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, ‘I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.’”

I used to think of that as a Reggae tune. You understand what I mean, like here’s this majestic thing that I’ve seen God do, he’s created a wife for me out of my side, or he’s delivered us from slavery. So now what do I say in response? Let me sing a song, let me write a poem, “Oh God you’re like this.” So what is Paul say at the end of Romans 11 after having gone through the entire first part of the book of Romans, describing the glories of God in salvation. Romans 11:33-36,

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

He writes a poem. This is some of the richest verses in the Bible about the character of God. There is a lot we can learn here, but I just want to point out three things out of these verses that Paul is saying about God. So in other words, as you finish this section in the book of Romans, the first part of it, what should your mind be focused on about the God that Paul has described to you. Well you should learn number one that God is wiser, number two that God is better, and number three that God is the point. He’s wiser, he’s better, and he’s ultimately the point - of what ... everything.

[God is Wiser]

So here, here’s the first of those. God is wiser, again Romans 11:33-34,

“Oh, [Now that word is important. I know we skip over it, it’s the first word, you’re just like, ‘Oh,’ yeah whatever. Oh] the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’”

Have you ever had just a moment where you’ve seen the creation of God and it takes your breath away? “Oh,” you don’t talk, you see something and you don’t have words to speak, but instead you just kind of exalt in how gloriously beautiful it is. I’ve been to the Grand Canyon once in my life, my



wife and I went in there. We drove to the edge of the treeline - get to the edge of the treeline - drove our car there, I got out of the car, walked to the edge of the Grand Canyon where they didn't have a fence, I think that's crazy - I was expecting a fence for some reason. I walked up there and I put my toes over the edge of the Grand Canyon and straight down is about whatever 2,000 feet. For the first time in years I was silent. [Laughter] You know you've got tears start coming to your eyes. There's a place in New Zealand in the South Island of New Zealand where you can drive out toward a place called Mt. Cook, there's a lake there called Lake Tekapo, you get to the end of Lake Tekapo you keep going into this valley. You can go across the valley, and walk across it and on the other side of the valley you can put one foot on the valley floor, which is very flat, right, river bed, very flat - you can put your other foot on the side of the mountain because it goes straight up. When you stand there at the foot of the mountain, "Oh."

I've been to the Notre Dame in Paris where you walk through the doors of that building and you see the elevated ceilings and the stained glass and takes your breath away, "Oh!" you say. That's what Pau's getting at here, right, when he says, "Oh, the depth of the riches," after looking at what God has done. What has he done? Well God in his wisdom has hardened the Israelites so that the Gentiles can come in and then he is going to unhardened the Israelites and save them. Nobody would have thought of this plan. Nobody would have come up with this and said, "Yeah this is the way that God is going to extend the gospel to the entire world and yet still hold his promises to his people." It's magnificent, majestic, it's brilliant. What do you say when you see it? "Oh." Look at the providence of God. "Oh." It says that God's judgments are unsearchable and his ways are inscrutable - that doesn't mean that they are beyond finding out, that means that they're immeasurably better, immeasurably wiser. What we've learned about God through the book of Romans is that his ways, his knowledge, his approach to your life and my life is better than you and I could ever have imagined. And we stand back and we say, "Oh." Have you ever read a book or seen a film where halfway through the book or halfway through the film it seems like the author or the director has a jumbled mess of threads that make no sense at all and the bad guys are winning and the good guys are in a hole and there's no way out but at the end all of the threads come together and the good guys win and you close the book at the end and you say to your friend who's sitting near you, your spouse or whatever, "You've got to read this book it's amazing." Why's it amazing? Because the author brought all this chaos together in this beautiful end. Oh you should see it. Oh."

Actually Paul in the middle here he quotes out of Isaiah 40, just to give you an idea about the majesty and size of the God that he's talking about, the one before whom you lose your breath. He quotes from Isaiah 40:12, actually quotes the end of it. But here's what those verses say, just think about this,

"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?"

The first time I ever came to Northview I actually talked about this passage. I travelled from New Zealand and I gave a little message right here in late August when I was kind of candidating as the Young Adults pastor, and I'll tell you now what I said then - I want you to imagine for a minute that we're able to create a light speed plane, okay, Elon Musk is our buddy and we've figured out how to make this plane and we can travel now light speed. We're all going to get on and now we're going to



travel to different parts of the galaxy and universe. So how long is it going to take for us to travel from Abbotsford, British Columbia, to say the Moon. Well, here are the times to different locations in the universe

- to the Moon it's going to take us 1.2 seconds
- to Mars it will take 4 minutes
- to the Sun it'll take 8.4 minutes
- to Jupiter 35 minutes
- to Pluto 5.4 hours
- to Alpha Centauri, which is the closest star system to our solar system, it's going to take 4 years
- the center of our galaxy, the Milky Way, it's going to take 38,000 years in our light speed plane
- and to go to the next galaxy over, which is the Andromeda Galaxy it's going to take us 2.2 million years

Have you ever seen a picture from the Hubble Space telescope when it looks out into deep space? You know how many galaxies they see? They estimate there's a couple billion. How big is the universe? If you ask God that question, "How big is the universe?"

"Ah it's about that big [holding out hand] - the breadth of my hand there." Isaiah 40:12,

"Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance."

God carries the dust of the earth around in his little basket - that's how significant the earth is to him. Isaiah 40:13,

"Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor?"

See there's the quote Paul's picking up, God is immeasurably large in terms of his size but his wisdom is matched by his size, his knowledge, who can instruct him? Do you have something that you have in your mind right now that you could tell God that God doesn't know. Could you sit him down and give him some kind of lesson on how the world functions. The God who says the universe is that big. Isaiah 40:14,

"Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?"

You get the point right? God is incomparable, he's enormously bigger in his size and in every way and he's enormously wiser than you and me. And every once and a while you and I get to see how God's wisdom works out in our lives where he takes all the threads of the stories and he pulls them together and you stand back when those moments, in your life and when you see it other's lives and you say, "Oh God. I never imagined that all this chaos would create such beauty."



One of my favourite stories *anywhere* about seeing those threads come together is from Helen Roseveare, she was a medical missionary in central Africa in the mid twentieth century. And she tells this story in her little book called, *Living Faith*, which is a book you should read. Helen Roseveare, *Living Faith*,

“One night,” she writes, “in Central Africa, I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all that we could do, [the mother] she died leaving us with a tiny, premature baby and a crying, two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive. We had no incubator. We had no electricity to run an incubator, and no special feeding facilities. Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts.

A student-midwife went for the box we had for such babies and for the cotton wool that the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly, in distress, to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst. Rubber perishes easily in tropical climates. ‘...and it is our last hot water bottle!’ she exclaimed. As in the West, it is no good crying over spilled milk; so, in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over a burst [hot] water bottle. They do not grow on trees, and there are no drugstores down forest pathways. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘Put the baby as near the fire as you safely can; sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job [tonight, your only job tonight] is to keep the baby warm [and hopefully alive].’

The following [day at] noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with many of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle. The baby could so easily die if it got chilled. I also told them about the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died. During the prayer time, one ten-year-old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt consciousness of our African children. ‘Please, God,’ she prayed, ‘Send us a water bottle. It’ll be no good tomorrow, God, the baby’ll be dead; so, please send it this afternoon.’ While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added by way of corollary, ‘...And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she’ll know You really love her?’ As often with children’s prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, ‘Amen?’ I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes [of course], I know that He can do everything: The Bible says so, but there are limits, aren’t there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending a parcel from the homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send a parcel, who [in the world] would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses’ training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time that I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the veranda, was a large twenty-two pound parcel! I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone; so, I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it



unduly. Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box.

From the top, I lifted out brightly colored, knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then, there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children [of course] began to look a little bored. Next, came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas - - that would make a nice batch of buns for the weekend. As I put my hand in again, I felt the...[oh no] could it really be? I grasped it, and pulled it out. [And there it was] Yes, 'A brand-new rubber, hot water bottle!' I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had not truly believed that He could. [Little] Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, 'If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!' Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. Her eyes shone: She had never doubted! Looking up at me, she asked, 'Can I go over with you, Mummy, and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?'

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months, packed up by my former Sunday School class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. One of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child -- five months earlier in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it 'That afternoon!'

"Oh." The biggest challenge that you and I are going to have in our lives is trusting that God is wise. Is trusting that all the chaos that you and I see in our present situation, somehow was working together to create a beautiful masterpiece that he alone knows, and in the midst of this chaos you and I have a responsibility toward this God, this wiser God, to repeatedly tell ourselves when we want to shake our fist at heaven, "God you are wiser than me. And even though I don't know what's happening right now and I can't see it working out the way that you can, I'm going to trust that someday here or there I will see it all and I will say, 'Oh the riches, the wisdom and knowledge of God.'"

[God is Better]

God is wiser, second God is better. Romans 11:35,

"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

So see Paul goes from quoting Isaiah 40 now and he quotes this straight from the end of Job. And at great risk of repeating myself for like the third time in 4 months about the book of Job, I'm just going to give you a *Reader's Digest* version, right the *Coles Notes* version of the book of Job again to give you an idea as to what Paul's after here. So story of Job, Job's a righteous man, he's got a good family, everything's going well in his life, there is a discussion had in heaven between God and Satan - don't ask how it works. And Satan says, "Look God, the only way, the only reason why Job is faithful to you is cause you coddle him, you've made it so his life is really comfortable, if his life was not comfortable - if a whole bunch of bad things happen to him say in like one day, he would curse you to your face." So God says, "Alright, I'll take that bet." Satan goes down and in seriously, one, two minute, five minute, experience Job answers the door of his house and a messenger says, "All of your animals are



gone.” The messenger behind him says, “All of your wealth, all of your servants are dead.” Behind him, all of your family is dead.” What’s he going to do? Well he says to the Lord, “The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” So we shift back up to heaven. God says, “Hey Job’s pretty faithful, you were wrong Satan, right? It’s not because I coddle him.”

“Well actually it still is because you coddle him, you wouldn’t let me touch his body. People will complain an awful lot if they have like a twisted ankle or a hangnail. So let me, let me give his man some *physical infirmity* and then he’ll curse you to your face.”

“Alright, I’ll take that bet.” Satan goes down and he afflicts Job with all sorts of problems. There’s this scene actually where Job is sitting on top of a pile of ashes, nearly naked, with a piece of broken pottery in his hand and he’s scraping the puss out of the sores on his body. Eeww. His wife comes to him and says, “Curse God and die.” She’s a great woman, [laughter] “Curse God and die man! Are you crazy? Haven’t you had enough? Our kids are dead, everything we ever had is gone and now you’re nearly dead. Turn away from him.” Will Job do it? No, he remains faithful. What are you talking about man? He’s God.

Well his friends show up after a while and then they start arguing with Job, and they say, “Job here’s the thing, you need to understand, the reason people get bad things is cause they’re bad. So if you’re experiencing currently bad things it’s because you must have done something bad, something hidden in your life that you only you know about. It’s a hidden sin.” “No, it’s not the case,” says Job, “I’ve done nothing wrong. In fact if I could just have a few moments in a quiet room with the Lord I would show him, I would instruct him, I would sit him down and show him that the way that he is governed my life is deeply troubling. It’s wrong. Just want an audience with God - just give me a moment Lord.” Well the Lord heard those words, “Okay, let’s have a moment.”

Job 38, God comes to him in a whirlwind. Here’s what it says, Job 38:1-7,

“Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? [That’s a fancy way of saying, ‘Look who knows so much. You’re darkening my counsel, you’re casting shade on my character and the way that I run things out of your ignorance. So before I answer your questions Job, I’ve got a few questions for you.’] Dress for action like a man; [he says in verse 3] I will question you, and you make it known to me. [Alright?] ‘Where were you [Job] when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’”

“When all the angels were there Job, and I was creating the whole world, I was looking for you, cause you’re so smart. Could have used your help.” It goes on and on, 70 questions follow, basically like that. God gets kind of mean to him. Job - halfway through - he’s like, “I’m tapping out right. Get somebody else in here, so they can fight this God.” God’s like, “Wait a minute, you wanted to have a meeting, we’re only halfway through.”



And then God turns his attention to what's called the Leviathan, it was considered to be the most untamable, dangerous animal in the entire world. It lives in the sea, and the sea in those days was a bit of a symbol for chaos. You have to understand, they thought it was a sea monster right. If you go to Loch Ness these days, you don't know what that thing is that's doing this in the water, but in those days people didn't have scuba equipment, so you can imagine you know, if you saw crocodiles eyes down there, you'd be like, "What is that thing?" And occasionally you know sailors would go out and they'd come across a whale. You'd be like, "Oh man!" So there were pictures of the Leviathan, people thought it was like a god, nobody could tame it, it was the most powerful creature, unknowable creature, in the entire world. God says, "Alright, let's talk about the Leviathan, Job 41, this is where the quote comes from that Paul's picking up in Romans 11, Job 41:1-11,

“Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? [Like when you go fishing, can you catch it, like you do a trout?] Can you put a cord through its nose or pierce its jaw with a hook? Will it keep begging you for mercy?[When you catch it does it say, ‘Oh please put me back!'] Will it speak to you with gentle words? Will it make an agreement with you for you to take it as your slave for life? [This is a great one.] Can you make a pet of it like a bird or put it on a leash for the young women in your house? Your daughter, Job, can you go get that Leviathan, put a leash on the thing with the little tag, says Leviathan, in case I'm lost send me back to Job and walk it down the street? Can you do that?] Will traders barter for it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? Can you fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears? [Job,] If you lay a hand on it, [I'm going to tell you,] you will remember the struggle and never do it again! Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse it. Who then is able to stand against me? [Like you can't touch the Leviathan, you have no power over it, what right do you have right do you have to cast shade on me and my wisdom and what I do with my world. And here's the quote that Paul picks up, that he wants all of that knowledge in your mind, all of that story in your mind when he quotes it.] Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.”

You get the point don't ya? No one stands in a position to judge God. There is nobody who has a moral standard above God by which they can judge him by it. This is a very important point for all of us to accept, because one of the temptations that we have when we study theology about God is that we go to the Old Testament for example and we look at the way that God interacts with his world in the Old Testament and we look at and go, "Ew, I don't like that at all." God you're acting badly over here, look at all the things you're doing with your world, I don't like that at all." The people outside the church and sometimes in the church saying, "Yeah, yeah, I can't believe in a God *like that*, I don't like God when he does that sort of thing." So we have to come up with all sorts of explanations for who God is. And our explanations are basically us saying, "Well you know what if I ran the universe, which would be great, then here's how I would do it. God hasn't done it this way because he doesn't really see things my way, he doesn't, he's not as compassionate as I am. He's not as wise as I am, he doesn't work things together quite as well as I do." I deal with people frequently who say things like, "Well I don't like the doctrine of Hell, and I don't like the doctrine of election. If it were me, I wouldn't have done it that way." And who are you to talk back to God? Shall what is made, say to him who



made it, why did you make me like this? There's nobody who stands above God, makes moral judgements about him, nobody. He doesn't have to answer to any of us. He's always wiser, he's always better.

[God is the Point]

Finally, he's the point. Romans 11:36,

“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

How many things? How many things - a couple things, I mean some things are from God and through God and to God and then there's those other things that are from us - right? I mean there's some of the stuff that we're really good at. Now I bring that up because I have this little theory - and here's my little theory. We tend to overstate our contribution to the good things in our lives. We tend, as a rule, to claim that the reason our lives are going better than maybe somebody else's is because we just we follow the rules better or we have organized it better, or little smarter, little bit better, operate it according to a better kind of guidelines, or whatever it is that if people just understood those sorts of things that they would, and follow our example, they would be in the great situations that we're in. Cause ultimately the situations we're in, are largely due to us. We talk about our salvation that way sometimes. Our salvation though is from him, through him, and to him. If there's something you should learn from Romans 9-11 it's that salvation is from him and through him and to him.

J. I. Packer in his wonderful book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, makes this point early on, he basically says, that when you sit down and you pray, when you pray to God - do you say things like, “God I'm just really thankful that I figured this out. Like Lord I, there's a lot of people out there that haven't figured it out, but I'm really thankful that I'm one of the ones.” No you never pray like that. You thank God for your salvation repeatedly. “You oh Lord, thank you for opening my eyes.” From God, through God, he will hold you - who will separate you from the love of Christ. And to him, ultimately, he will be glorified because of the saving of wicked rebels. From him, through him, to him are all things - including your salvation.

Ah how about your material goods, my material goods, and my abilities. Are they from him and through him and to him? Well yeah according to this verse they are. I have this little theory, and my theory is that in whatever little subculture you find yourself, and by subculture I mean, like if you play baseball, or basketball, or you work with a certain group of people, or whatever - these are little subcultures and within each subcultures we have a way determining the pecking order in all of those yeah? So some people in those subcultures are more important than other people in those subcultures and when you get involved in it, you know the people are really important because they can do a particular thing. Say basketball - right that guy over there can dunk, he's amazing. He's like the top of the heap. And then he walks down the hallway a little bit more like this right - “I can dunk, did you know that I could dunk? Let me show you that I can dunk, I'll put it through my legs and then dunk it behind my head, can you do that? No you can't do that, that's why you're lower on the totem pole than I am in this particular subculture.” It's not just basketball, if you make a lot of money and you're in business, you know when you walk into a room, in the back of your mind, sometimes you're thinking -



“Well who’s on the top of the heap here? Well I probably am because I’m richer.” Right, or you go into a room and you think well I’m prettier, I got my life more together, whatever, every subculture’s got a pecking order and we evaluate who’s on top, most of the time the people on top though, and when we’re on top we think of those things that make us on top are result of us. Are they? James 4:13-15,

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’ — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.’”

In other words, man you make such grand claims and yet the very things that you need in order to make the claims are from God. From him they come, and through him you succeed and to him - if you’re smart - the glory will go. Oh but wait a minute, I earned my money through hard work.” Yes who sustained you with that strength? “Yes but I’m really smart.” Who made mens’ minds? “Well I can dunk a basketball.” You’re 7’4” [laughter]. You see my point is all the things that we bank on, all the things we think make us important, or not yours - they’re God’s, given to you to steward well. From him, through him, and to him, are all things.

Speaking of basketball, finish with this, my sons when they were really little. We had basketball hoop in your front yard. And when they were really little I used to lower it down so they could shoot a little bit more easily. And they’d be out there with their little basketballs and they’d be launching them up, and you know of course little kids, they don’t, they don’t, they don’t make it to the hoop because they’re terrible right. So they’re shooting the ball up there and so they’re getting kind of discouraged and down, and so as a father you grab the kids, “So you hold onto the ball and I’m going to lift you.” And you take your kids and you lift them up real high, “Okay you’re going to dunk the ball, put it behind your head ready, throw it down!” And you lift them so that they’re right over the rim. My kids took like three or four tries right cause they’re not good. So anyway, I lift them up there and they’re there and, “Okay, throw it down, throw it down!” And they’re like, “AHHHH!” And they come back down on the ground and they’re walking around, “Ahhhhh!” And my oldest is going to my youngest, “Yeah in your face!” [Laughter] He’s like that. [Laughter] Did he dunk the basketball? Did he do it? Well yeah, but who really did it? To only God be the glory. Romans 11:33-36,

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” [Clapping]

Let me pray. Father, I want to thank you for your grace, I want to thank you, Father for the vision of God that Romans gives us. And ultimately Lord help us never to shrink back from it. We tend to focus on what these things mean for us. We tend to focus on, “Well what’s the application here for me.” Let the application today be God. Help us to dwell on you, help us to think about you, help our hearts to soar at the thought that this great God knows our names. So we pray to that end now in Jesus name, Amen.