

Romans 11:25-36, A Promise Celebrated, 11/29/20

Romans 11:25-36

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

*“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.*

²⁷ *And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”*

²⁸ *As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience,*

³¹ *so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*

³³ *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.*

How often do you marvel? Boys who are watching right now say, “all the time. The Avengers, X-men” not that marvel. I mean stand in awe and wonder. Where you are moved in a breath-taking kind of way that simultaneously brings feelings of fear and exhilaration? Snorkeling in Aruba we came across the 400ft. shipwreck of the [German Uboat, the SS Antilla \(Picture\)](#), one of the largest shipwrecks in the Caribbean. There was something so enormous, so haunting, so beautiful about it that I had to catch my breath again. That’s marvel.

Let me tell you my goal for this message: **To bring us by the Spirit through His Word to marvel at the grandeur of God.** To bring you closer to the edge of the Grand Canyon, up to the peak of Mt. Everest that is God so that a glimpse of Him takes your breath away. This is my goal and duty if I’m being true to the text because this is where Paul leads us at the end of chapter 11, and it is where the Spirit has taken me in my study this week.

Marveling at the Grandeur of God

#1 Why we need it.

#2 How Paul experienced it.

#3 Our response.

#1 Why we need it.

Our hearts were made to worship. To ascribe ultimate value, meaning, pleasure, worth in something. Are hearts were made to marvel at something infinitely more grand, more captivating than anything in creation. Of course that something is a someone, God. But the problem with man, is that we “exchange the worship of God for the worship of created things.” Romans 1:25. Why is our culture so obsessed with sex and all kinds of perversions of this beautiful thing that God created? Why do we spend so many hours in front of screens needing to be constantly entertained? Why would so many do almost anything to get that next promotion? Why every year to we break the previous year’s record of drug addiction? Our hearts are disconnected from the grandeur of God.

“It is inevitable that the human heart, which was made to be staggered by an infinitely untouchable, embracing God—it is inevitable that such a heart, drowning in the all-pervasive, blurry boredom of banal entertainment, will reach for the best buzz that life can give.

The deepest cure to our pitiful addictions...is to be intellectually and emotionally staggered by the infinite, everlasting, unchanging sovereignty, holiness, wrath, justice, wisdom, truth, and mercy of God.” -John Piper.¹

Filling our lives with these cheap substitutes is like playing with matchbox cars when right in front of us is a Ferrari with keys in the ignition! God has made us to worship and marvel at Him. That’s just one of the reasons why we need to marvel at the grandeur of God, but that is reason enough.

#2 How Paul experienced it.

Did you notice that suddenly at the end of this passage Paul breaks out in song? It’s probably not every day that you are in the middle of a conversation and you get so excited you start singing. But this is what Paul does. Something made Paul so moved that it would cause Him to break out in spontaneous worship of God. God revealed to Paul a mystery. A mystery is truth about God that has been hidden until it is now revealed.

Romans 11:25-26

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved.

¹ Quote for John Piper Sermon on Romans 11:25-32

³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Let me summarize what Paul is marveling at this way: Over the course of human history God sovereignly acts in ways to maximize his display of mercy on both Jews and Gentiles so that no one can boast in human achievement but only in the glory of God.

Let's break down this incredible revelation of salvation history in these verses. Paul is looking are large epochs of human history and describing those epochs as a whole.

The Epoch of Gentile Disobedience and Jewish Mercy: *³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God.* Remember what we said last week, Paul was speaking to the Gentiles here saying the history of your ancestors could be described here as mass rebellion against their creator. He is describing Romans 1 here in one half sentence- God gave them over to their rebellious, hard hearts. God allowed them to walk in their own way. During this time of Gentile disobedience, God was purposefully using their rebellion to extend mercy on the Jewish people by making a covenant with them and saving them.

The Epoch of Jewish Disobedience and Gentile Mercy: *³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience.* This describes the time from Jesus up until when ethnic Israel as a whole (not individuals) rejected their Messiah and God gave them up to hardness. Likewise, God used Jewish rebellion to extend mercy on the Gentiles (the millions who have believed not all) through the new covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ. In God's infinity wisdom, He did not plan the Great Commission to happen until after the hardness of Israel. He waited until there were 2,000 years of God's interaction with Israel so that the mercy of God would be more fully intelligible to the gentile nations as the Gospel spreads.

The Epoch of God's Mercy to both Jews and Gentiles: *³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you.* Paul here is referencing v.26, this mystery that God revealed to Him through the Spirit that there is coming a time, in God's mercy, where he will remove the hardening and there will a massive revival of the Jewish people who will look upon their Messiah, Jesus and believe.

He then summarizes all of salvation history with this one statement: *³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.* Notice God's purposeful, sovereign plan using even disobedience and rebellion to maximize the glory of His saving mercy in Jesus Christ to all who believe, both Jew and Gentile. This one sentence shuts every mouth that would attempt to boast in our own goodness, our own seeking of God, our own human achievement and say- from beginning to end, it is all God. And this is why Paul can't help but to spontaneously break out in a doxology of praise to God, marveling at His grandeur, evidenced in salvation history.

#3 Our Response:

Paul's response ought to be our response. The hymn on Paul's lips ought to be on our lips. What else should we do but fall to our knees in awe and wonder, marveling at the grandeur of God. Four Attributes about God to Marvel at:

Marvel at His Boundless Depth:

³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!*

Consider the enormity of the **world's oceans (picture)**. They cover 70% of the Earth's surface, that is 139M square miles, with an average depth of 12k ft. And yet in the thousands of years of human history we have explore less than 20% of the ocean.² We marvel at the vastness of the ocean yet unexplored, greater still the universe. We have explored only **4% of the visible universe (picture)**.³ Shoot- I marvel at how much I have yet to discover about my wife at 20 years knowing her. I wonder what percentage of God's revelation of Himself we have received? And yet it would take many lifetimes to scratch the surface of what God has revealed about Himself. Do you marvel at that?

Slide Have you been content just swimming on the surface of the pond of what you know about God? Is your understanding of God flat and shallow? Many people feel they cannot worship God unless they can understand everything about him. I need to fully grasp who He is, I must have a God in a box, who's nature and acts I can fully explain in our human minds. If so, He would be a limited, puny god of your own creation. Get on the scuba gear, go deeper with God...through pain, suffering, confusion- the deeper you go with God the more you will you have yet to scratch the surface! Marvel at the Boundless depths of God! This leads to the next.

Marvel at His Vast Wisdom

³⁴ *"Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"* ref. Isaiah 40

Do we marvel at the vast wisdom of God or do you marvel at your own wisdom? As one pastor said- "The world is filled with God-advisers."⁴ We love to tell God how we think He should run the universe. If I was in charge I wouldn't allow a pandemic. God I don't think you should have allow this political leader to get elected. God if you really loved me you would give me a new job, or take this pain from me...That's like a child telling their parent- I really don't think this is a good idea that you take me to the doctor to get shots. But his ways are often untraceable, and if your joy and contentment is hinging upon understanding the particulars of His plan, you're going to be miserable, or you are going to be on a constant rollercoaster of emotions. We don't

² <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/facts/explored.html>

³ <https://www.space.com/11642-dark-matter-dark-energy-4-percent-universe-panek.html>

⁴ Quote from John Piper sermon on Romans 11:33-36

advise God. We stand in awe of God's Vast Wisdom. Paul stood in awe the wisdom of God using even rebellion to display His mercy. That the greatest display of man's rebellion and God's mercy would be simultaneously witnessed on the cross of Jesus Christ. None of us would have ever come up with that if we have eternity to put it together. His ways are far above our ways.

Marvel at His Abounding Grace

³⁵ *"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"*

And yet...God repays us pay the truckloads. There has never been a human on the face of the planet who had a right to say to God, "You owe me." He is the creator, the sustainer of all life, "it's your breath in our lungs so we pour out our praise." When we say, "You owe me, God- it reveals that we don't understand the Gospel. The gospel is that the only thing that God owes us is separation from His love and presence in Hell forever. The wages of our sin against a Holy, Perfect God are death. The question, if you understand the gospel, is not "God, why are you letting bad things happen to us good people?" But, "Why have you given such good things to all of us bad people?"⁵

That doesn't mean we don't ask God why bad things happen, or lament the pain and injustices of life. About 1/3 of the Psalms are like that. But behind our questions, we should marvel at the beacon of God's abounding mercy and grace to undeserved sinners.

Marvel at His Infinite Glory.

³⁶ *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Everything in all of creation is for the purpose of displaying God's glory. All creation- the billions of enormous stars lightyears away down to the smallest grain of sand on the beach exists to display the glory of God. You exist for the glory of God, that is why you were born. Yet, we so often what to live like everything is for our own glory. No! It all points to Him. C.S. Lewis once used an illustration that always stuck with me.⁶ If you try to point out something to your dog, your dog thinks you are trying to show him your finger. We do this with Cosmo, "Look at the doggies on the TV" But he just starts to sniff and lick our finger! He doesn't realize the finger has a trajectory. All the glories of the world have a trajectory. **May our lives point to the glory of God.** Church is He worthy? He is.

And so church, there is only one thing left to do in response- sing of His glory!

⁵ Phrasing from J.D. Greear

⁶ C. S. Lewis, "Transposition," in *The Weight of Glory*