

Romans 11:36

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Romans 11 and the words of verse 36.

Romans 11 and verse 36. For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen. Amen. Paul is now coming to the end of this mighty epistle.

I discovered all the great themes of our Christian faith. He's spoken of reconciliation, of justification, of sanctification, predestination, and the rest.

Some great mysteries regard to God's sovereignty and our responsibility. And issues again with regard to the way God has dealt with his ancient people of Israel.

[1 : 08] And now like a man who's climbed a mountain. Paul pauses and looks down to see what ground he's covered. And we have those great gaps of astonishment.

Oh, the depth. Those great themes, those great mysteries that he has been exploring.

And how awesome they seem as he now contemplates them from this great vantage point. And somewhere in Paul's mind there is a question.

What can we give to God? How can we repay, repay God in the light of all those great things that he has done for us? What can we give to God?

What can we give to God? What can we give? Because we always feel that somehow we should be able to put God in our debt. And that's Paul's question.

[2 : 11] How can I repay this debt? What can I give? And then he sees that there's nothing you can give, he says, because from him and through him and to him are all things.

And so there's nothing that we can give. It's a very practical issue, but I want to go first of all to its great foundations as exposed for us in those words.

This from him and this through him and this to him. First of all then, God is the source of all things for from him or out of him are all things.

And even the phrase here for all things is very carefully chosen because it's not just all things in some kind of random mass, some itemized elements in some disorder, but it is all things in us, the universe in their totality, this great order system that we call the cosmos.

And Paul is saying that it is out of God that this ordered universe, this everything, this coherent entity, the universe has come out of God.

[3 : 45] All those elements and all those great bodies, each in its own place. All those stars where God has put them.

All those atoms where God has put them. All those genes and chromosomes where God has put them. Everything where God has put them.

And this universe in itself in relation to us, where God has put it, this universe that tells us, tells scientists about itself.

And they listen and they learn about it. It's an important point. The world itself, the cosmos, have an initiative in science.

Because we know it only as it tells about itself to us. And we listen and we learn from it. There is a current television series, *The Body of Proof*.

[4 : 46] And it's a story of a pathologist who deals with criminal cases. And the underlying theme always is that the body has a message.

The body tells us, listen to the body. Listen to the body. What's the body telling us? And that's how science proceeds, the universe tells us, about itself.

It is a matter of ongoing and increasing wonder to me. That the world is intelligible. That was Einstein's great point.

The wonder is, he says, that anything makes sense. That is the great miracle. That this world is intelligible. And that we are adapted ourselves to understanding it.

It is, from our standpoint, cognitively friendly. It is intelligible. And we are intelligent. And those two things, its intelligibility and our intelligence, correspond the one to the other.

[5 : 57] And so, this universe, this cosmos, this coherent, ordered reality, whatever it is on its own, it's exactly in position. That world is out of God.

That question has occupied human minds from the very beginning. Where does the world come from? The ancients had their own myths.

Those myths of competing deities. And as they struggled and fought, the world came into being. And then classical man had his own mythology.

It all came from nature. And we've gone back today to that same mythology. That nature, this wonderful thing, nature, made it all.

What is nature? It is the totality of things that exist. That is what nature is. That totality can't explain why the totality exists.

[7 : 00] Are we saying that somehow non-existent things got together and by some accident created, precipitated this universe with all its ordered parts and components.

All things are out of God. That's what Paul wants to emphasize for us. This whole universe has come from him. And it's not thinking simply of some abstract or some unknown deity.

But this very specific God. The God of Genesis 1. In the beginning God. Who is also the God of Abraham.

Who is also the God of Moses. And the God of David. And the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God who came as a child to the manger.

The God who was afraid in Gethsemane. The God who hung upon the cross for those long hours. Obeid in the sin of the world.

[8 : 09] The God who is your father. The God who loves you. The God who works all things for your particular personal good. The God who lives in your heart.

And whom you brought with you to the church this morning. You brought him with you. Because everywhere you go you bring him with you. And all things are from him as the source.

You are God. You are God and father. All things are out of God. And then he says again to us. And all things are through him.

This God had his own plan. But he didn't leave that plan to someone else to execute. But he himself executes it. He is a great agency behind all that transpires.

He originates. And he plans and he executes. He acts as the agent. And that again is so comprehensive.

[9 : 16] And again it's your God, your father. He clothes the grass of the field. He feeds the birds of the air.

He causes the hinds to calve. He sends the sun. And he sends the rain. This is the God through whom are all things.

This vibrant, vibrant, vibrant pulsating universe. And it's every movement the result of divine agency.

God of course is distinct from it. He is not himself the universe. And yet it lives and moves and has its being in him.

So all things are through him. And our creation itself, not some remote thing. As if God made you or made this human race in some remote way.

[10 : 18] As if it was some hands off operation. But he forms us. He made us as the potter. Creates and forms this great artist.

This hands on. Who breathes into the nostrils. The breath of life. And Adam becomes a living soul. So direct.

And as you contemplate that. And the model that God used in making your human race. This great artist. Creating this incomparable creature.

The human species. And as God's hands work. And God's eyes observe. The emergent human being.

He looks and looks and looks at the model. And that model is himself. Other things made. According to their kind.

[11 : 17] Genesis says. But not you. Not even me. But this other blueprint. This model. God himself. The artist.

Always looking. As he formed Adam and Eve. Looking to the great. To the great model. The great type. The great template. To himself. And saw this God.

Who claws the fields. As God creates. So directly. Through him. On all things. But above all. Our salvation.

And our redemption. Not only. That great moment. On the cross of Calvary. Where the one. Who has taken our nature. And become my substitute.

Bears our sin. On the cross. Endures the curse. In my place. Conquers. The devil. At close quarters. Away down there. In the darkness.

[12:13] Of that hell. To which he went. Not after he died. But before he died. And there for you. And for me. He redeemed us. From sin. But also we know.

That. Our salvation. Means that God. Dealt with us. So intimately. Came down. So near us. And dealt with.

The problems. Of our spiritual hearts. Because that was. The real cardiac problem. Our hearts of stone.

We were dead. In trespasses. And sins. And God. Came not only. To the manger. And to the cross. Of Calvary. But God.

Touched you. In the very core. Of your being. And God. Put. Life. Where there is death. And light.

[13:11] Where there was nothing. But darkness. And God. Gave you faith. And God. Gave you repentance. And God. Gave you. A new heart. And all.

That you are. As a believer. Comes. From that great. Fact. From this. Great intimacy. That was. The great insight. Of the. Reformation. Sola.

Sola. Gratia. By grace alone. We all know the phrase. But what did it mean? It meant the touch. Of omnipotence. At the core. Of your being. As God.

In some remarkable way. Went right. In there. And as I said. Put life. Where there was death. And light. Where there was darkness. And God. Gave you. The gift.

Of faith. All things. Are. Through him. His act. Of creation. His acts. Of providence. His acts. Of redemption. All those.

[14:06] So hands on. And all those. So very. Very intimate. All things. Through. Our heavenly father. And so God. Came.

And God. Acted. All things. Through him. Out of him. And through him. And then. There is this. All things. Are. For him.

Or all things. Are to him. God himself. As the end. Of all things. The great. Objective. Somehow. He is the intended. Outcome.

He is the goal. And the purpose. Of the whole. It's all. Out of him. It's all. Through him. And it's all. For him.

And to him. And of course. You know. At once. What I'm going to say. And I'm going to say it. That it's all. For the glory. Of God.

[15:00] This is the great end. For which. God. Created the world. Jonathan Edwards said. He created the world. For his own glory. And of course.

It's true. That the world. Will be for God's glory. And one day. The world. Will glorify him. As Paul says. In Ephesians. To him.

Be glory. In the church. Through Christ. Jesus. World without end. So yes. God. Will have glory. In Revelation. Five. When the Lamb.

Opens a scroll. We hear those great songs. As the. Elders. The church. Sings a song. And the angels sing.

And at last. The whole universe. Is singing. They're all singing. The glory of God. Glory to God. And to the Lamb. So yes. God. Is glorified. One day.

[15:58] It will all. Issue. In those great. Hallelujahs. Praise. Be to God. Praise the Lord. The universe will sing. The glory of God.

And yet. Somehow. I find it hard. To relax with that. Or to stop with it. Because. Somehow. It doesn't seem.

To me. Exactly right. That God does it. Simply. For his own glory. Because. I cannot. But feel. That it is.

That one level. So. So vain. And. As if. God simply.

Wanted. To be a celebrity. That. God. Fights. For fulfillment. Depends. For fulfillment. Upon. Our human response. That God's.

[16:56] Joy. God's contentment. Depends. Depends. On how well. The universe. Sings. As if. Somehow. He. Depends.

On us. And as if. Some of them. With this. Element. Of. Almost selfish. And vanity. Somewhere. At the very heart. Of God's purposes. Well yes.

One day. The world. Will sing. And the world. Will glorify God. But there's something. More profound. Than the fact. That one day.

God. Will have glory. And there is. That one day. God. Will have satisfaction. In his own work. Of creation.

In his own work. Of redemption. And he would need you. And me. To tell him. How great it is. Or how well he has done.

[17:53] But he will know. And that's where I want. My mind to rest. That God is satisfied. Remember in Genesis 1.

The great refrain. After all those. Creation moments. And God saw. That it was very good. Where then did God.

Find a satisfaction. Was it in the. Hosannas. Or hallelujahs. Of the angels. The acclamations. Of those great.

Created beings. Nor he looked. And he saw. And it was so. So beautiful. And it was so.

So good. It was. An exact transcript. Of the idea. In his mind. What we. As humans. Can ever achieve.

[18:50] That exact translation. From the concept. To the reality. That God looked. And it was. Really good. Good.

And then. We know. God. Created. Adam and Eve. The human species. And God. Put them. In this good.

Good. Good. Place. And then. God's face lit up. And then. God said. It is very good.

It is very. Very. Very. Good. Good. And it was very. Very. Very good. Not because somebody told him. Or someone. Composed. Alluding to that effect.

But because God saw. He was a great judge. And he said. I am satisfied. That was the whole point of it all.

[19:45] God found. The satisfaction. In the work that he had made. And I want to move from that. To the great word of Isaiah 53.

With regard to. The suffering servant. And the work of Christ on the cross. He shall see. All the travel of his soul.

And shall be satisfied. And that to me is more important. Than God getting glory from a song. That one day. I am going to sing.

I want to say. Yes. Father. Abba. But are you satisfied? And he says. Yes. I have seen the travel of my soul.

And I am satisfied. That is such a tremendous thing. Satisfied. With the number of the redeemed. A great multitude.

[20:41] That no one can number. Satisfied with that. From every kindred language. Nation and tongue. Satisfied with that.

But also with the quality. Lord. Abba. Are you happy with them now? With what your grace has made them? Are you happy with the outcome?

With what your blood has bought? And what your blood has secured? Are you happy? Are you happy with them now? When you see them. Perfect in holiness. In their glorious resurrection bodies.

Are you happy with them now? Are you happy with them? In this great glorious new heavenly environment. In this new heaven. On this new earth. Where they hear music.

Such as they never heard before. And see colors. Such as they never saw before. And feel textures. Such as they never felt before.

[21:40] Yes I just love it. I love it. That there are so many of them. And I love them the way they are. I love the resurrection bodies.

And I love their shining happy faces. In this glory. In which I have placed them. And that's where God finds satisfaction. Not simply in people telling him he's great.

And announce. Its verdict. To the whole. Whole world. How unsearchable. How unsearchable. His judgments. Why. Has my.

38 year old son. Died of motor neuron disease. Why. Why. Why. Why. Lord. Why. Why. Why. Why. Has my child. Suffered.

[28 : 29] This disabling illness. Why. Why. Why. Why. How unsearchable. His judgments. And his ways. Past finding out. His ways.

The strange. Strange. Ways. With Israel. The strange. Strange ways. With Paul. This man. Is a chosen vessel.

To me. To bear. My name. And I will use. The mighty. As the apostle. The Gentiles. To bring my gospel.

To the whole. Whole world. I will listen. And I will free him. To be my ambassador. Thank you Lord. And if that's the case.

Well why. Am I here. In this Roman prison. And why. Am I here. With this thorn. In my flesh. If I am a chosen vessel.

[29 : 32] Why is it that way. You are of your own ways. As to. Your own whys. As to the ways. That the Lord has led you. And. The ways he's taken you.

And you've said. Sometimes. Does it have to be. This way. I want certain. His judgments. And his paths.

Beyond. This. Now. Sometimes. Even afterwards. We don't understand. And must.

Defend. Until God. Himself. Tells us. What I do. You know not now. But you will know. Hereafter.

That is. God's promise.

Blind unbelief. Is bound to air. And scan his works. In vain. God is his own interpreter. And he will. Make it plain.

[30 : 33] All we can do is. Sing the words. Of that great hymn. Oh Lord. My God. When I in awesome wonder. Consider all the works.

Thine hands have made. Then sings my soul. Almighty God. To thee. How great thou art.

Our recurrent. Privilege. It's not answers. But doxology. Oh the depth.

Of the riches. How unsearchable. How great thou art. Those two exclamations. That Paul offers us.

Oh the depth. And how unsearchable. But notice the last word. Of the chapter. Amen. And.

[31 : 33] There is. Such power. In that. As a last word. Amen.

So. Let it be. At the end of Revelation 5. When the universe has sung its song. The living creatures.

Say simply. Amen. And. The challenge to us is. Whether by grace. Whether by anticipation.

By anticipation. We can say. Amen. Our own satisfaction. With the way it's been.

Can we ourselves. Acquiesce today. In God's will for us. I won't blame you. If you cannot. But I do very much hope.

[32 : 35] That you can. Say this. Amen. I think I can say it. It's been goodness and mercy. All the days. Of.

My life. And this great hope. We shall dwell. In the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

So let it be. May God bless this world. Let's join in prayer.