

The One True God

Romans 11:33-36 (ESV)

Grace, mercy, and peace to unto you from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of God for you today is from the 11th chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans: **"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".**

Let us pray:

Implant your Word in us that, with good and honest hearts, we may keep it and bring forth the fruits of faith. Amen.

Everyone has to face this reality: there are things outside of his own control. If someone is honest with himself, this is an easy thing to admit. I have a hard time controlling myself, my behaviors and my actions. I do the things I do not want to do; and the things I want to do, I do not do them. If I do not even have power over myself, how can I claim power over things outside of myself? I didn't even have any control of whether or not I was born! Yet, I am no different than every other human. I am not uniquely inept (I know what you're thinking). I haven't encountered anyone who can master himself, his own life, or even the lives of others. If man is not in control, who is in control?

Only a fool says, "There is no God." Only someone whom you can see has messed up his life and doesn't understand a thing, only he can say "There is nobody in control. There is nobody in charge of life. There is nobody in charge of the world and the cosmos." Creation testifies to a Creator. The size of the world, the complexity of life, the expanse of time, all these speak to us little humans that someone bigger is in control. St. Paul gives words to what we have observed. He helps us to say what the testimony of creation says. He says, **"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"** In my search for someone who is in control of everything, in my search of seeing this amazing system that I have played no part in making, I will be led to say, "The Creator of all this is spectacular!" Mark two important things about what Paul has to say of God. One, who he is compared to us. Two, how we should relate to him.

Paul says of God, “Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” God does not have some riches, or some wisdom, or some knowledge. He has the depths: *all* the riches, *all* the wisdom, *all* the knowledge! What we can see (and not see) of creation speaks to this. Since he has made everything, everything belongs to God. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein.” (Ps 24:1). God says, “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.” (Ps 50:12). The billions of the billionaires, the trillions of the world’s greatest powers do not compare to the depth of the riches of God. Through observing all God has preserved, God’s wisdom is displayed. The wisdom of God can be seen in how magnificent everything is; even the stain of sin and death cannot ruin its beauty. “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” (Ps 104:24). The fact that the earth and the cosmos have been upheld for thousands of years, that there stands many varied and awesome ecosystems, that hundreds of generations of men and women have continued, all this speaks to the order and arrangement of the Almighty one. Lastly, since God has created and preserved all things, he knows and understands all things. Nothing is outside of God’s grasp or reach. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” (Prov 15:3). And, “no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of God to whom we must give account.” (Heb 4:13).

When you contemplate the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, you can recognize your proper place. You must say with St. Paul: “**How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are 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?**” Paul asks these questions to lead you to say “I have *not* known the mind of the Lord. I have *not* given him counsel and advice. I have *never* had any right over him that he owes me anything. I am *not* over him, but he is over me. I am the creature; he the Creator.” While God has made it obvious (so that all are accountable to God) through creation that there is a Creator, I would never know this fact without God wishing to reveal this. God must tell me of himself; otherwise I would be ignorant. Of course, God did make you and me to know him. He made us in his image; he made us to reflect what he himself is; God made man to know and worship his Creator. But, this has always been a one way street: from God to us.

So, where has God revealed himself to you? First, he showed himself in your Baptism. God the Father showed you his loving heart when he poured on you his Holy Spirit through his Son Jesus Christ. There he opened up your eyes to see just who this Creator is. The one who created all things has become your heavenly Father. He did this through his own eternal Son because of the Son's obedience to the Father in your place. And the heavenly Father made your sonship a guarantee through the seal of the Holy Spirit, whom God richly poured into your heart as a guarantee. So here in these baptismal waters, God tells you everything you need to know about him: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But, God doesn't end there. Second, God reveals himself to you through his precious word and testimony. Through the prophets and the apostles, God tells you everything that you need to know about him. He speaks of who he is in himself and he speaks of what he has done for you: creating you, redeeming you, and making you holy.

So, who are these three (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)? And, how do they relate to each other? As we learn from God's self-revelation, the Father begets the Son; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. We can't speak of one person without mentioning the others. The Father begets the Son and sends forth the Holy Spirit; the Son is begotten of the Father and sends forth the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. But, you cannot mix and confuse Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; they are separate. St. Paul gives us the words to make this clear, that these three persons are separate. He says of God, "**For from him and through him and to him are all things.**" All things were made from the Father, were made through Jesus the eternal Son, and were made into the Holy Spirit. All who are saved are born again from the Father, are born again through the Son Jesus, and are born again into the Holy Spirit.

Just because the three persons are separate, doesn't mean they are unequal. The Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God. This goes back to what we began with: who is the one in control? God who created all things. So are the three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) all at the beginning? Are they all responsible for creation? Yes! Of Jesus, Paul says in his letter to the Colossians, "For by Jesus all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him". The Father made everything through the Son; both the Father and the Son created all things. Did the Holy Spirit create too? Of course! Moses says in his record of creation, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters". The Spirit of God helped bring order to the formless void as the Father and the Son made everything out of nothing. All three were in the beginning; all three made all things; all three are in control.

Do not make this mistake: thinking that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit only came into being later in time. Do not think that Jesus didn't exist before he was born of the virgin Mary. Do not think that the Holy Spirit didn't exist before his outpouring on Pentecost. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the one God. All three persons have always existed; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are found throughout the Bible. Now, before the Son of God's appearance in human flesh, the three persons did not brightly shine in the Scriptures, with the same clarity that we see now. When Jesus came in the flesh, he spoke very plainly. What was hidden before, is now manifest for all to see. But, if you notice, when the apostles seek to show who the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, they always point to the Old Testament Scriptures. There is plenty of evidence there!

Here is one last way that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are treated as co-equal in majesty and power; that you indeed treat them as co-equal, just as the Church has throughout its ages. You just sang a prayer to each person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You asked each to protect you, provide for you, and grant you to trust in each. You said, "God the Father, let me not perish! Jesus Christ, let me not perish! Holy Spirit, let me not perish!" You prayed to each person equally. Whether Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, you trust that each person has the power and might to accomplish your prayer. You have worshiped each person as the true God. There is only one in control: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Why does this all matter? Why the precision and exactness of my speech concerning who God is? Listen to Jesus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Whoever believes in the Son will have eternal life. If you would believe and trust in the Son, you must know who the Son is; you must know who the Father is who sends him; you must know who the Spirit is who allows you to do such. This is not an academic test. This knowledge of God is very practical. It has consequences for your life. It is the difference between life and death. Yet, it is more than that. By knowing who God is, you have received a vision into the heavenly throne room. You can behold the majesty of God, the majesty of the one in control of everything. You are able to sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the holy, blessed Trinity. Amen.