

Romans 11:33-36

How much do we know about **wisdom**? If we wanted to find out about wisdom, where would we look? While there are lots of places which claim to offer wisdom, I would look in the Old Testament Book of **Proverbs**. In regard to the Book of Proverbs a friend of mine once commented, "It's a good book." Now that's a real **understatement**. The Book of Proverbs is probably the **greatest** collection of wisdom which is available **anywhere**. In these Proverbs we can learn much about **wisdom** itself, as well as about the **benefits** it brings. And perhaps one of the greatest **plusses**, is that the great majority of these Proverbs were written by wise King **Solomon** - a man whom God had **blessed** with **extraordinary** wisdom - wisdom **beyond** that of any other person. However, as good as it is, the Book of Proverbs only gives us advice about **human** wisdom - the **application** of human **knowledge** to the countless situations people encounter in their lives. But what if we were looking for **more**? What if we were looking for **God's** wisdom - where can we find out more about **that**? The answer is, only from **God Himself**. You see, **our** wisdom simply doesn't **measure up** to God's - not in **volume**, or in **scope**. A man, even a man as wise as Solomon, has very **little** wisdom - and what he **has** quickly **passes away**. But God has **boundless** wisdom - and it lasts **forever**. **Everything** God does is done with wisdom - wisdom which we can't even **comprehend**, because **God's Wisdom Is Deep**.

Trying to explain God's wisdom itself is **impossible**. It's like trying to explain how far is **up** or **down** - or where the **east** ends and the **west** begins. We can't explain God's wisdom because it is **perfect**, and ours is **not**. Yet, God does show us **glimpses** of His wisdom through His dealings with men. The Apostle Paul points to some of the areas with which God is concerned in the **doxology** which we have before us today. He shows us **God's Deep Wisdom** concerning **salvation** - concerning **giving** - and concerning **praise**.

Paul is totally **astonished** at the wisdom of God. He describes it as having **riches** - a **wealth** of wisdom and knowledge - a wealth which is so **deep** that it is virtually **endless**. Paul actually seems to have difficulty trying to find the **right words** which will effectively **say** what he is feeling. The problem is that there is nothing among us, which is quite like the wisdom of God. For example, everything we experience in our earthly existence eventually comes to an **end**. Long ago in Old Testament times, Methuselah lived to be **969** years old, but he still **died**. In more recent times, men like Warren Buffet, Ted Turner, and Bill

Gates have seemingly endless **wealth** - but that comes to an end too. Everything, from the deepest **sea** to the highest **mountain top**, has an end - but **not** the wisdom of God. His wisdom is **infinite** and **unfathomable** - and perhaps the deepest part of His deep wisdom, involves God's plan of **salvation**.

God shows us this infinite wisdom through His **judgments**. When we look at all the different shapes and sizes of people in the world, and we see all the different kinds of **sins** they commit (including of course the ones which **we** commit), we may wonder why the **end of the world** didn't come a long time ago! Certainly television, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the internet have brought many forms of **corruption** into clear focus for all. I happen to believe that this increased exposure to illicit sex and violence is one of the primary causes for the **break up** of America's **families** - as well as many **other** problems which our society faces. But in spite of the fact that people **enjoy sinning** so much, God in His wisdom still deals **patiently** with them. He gathers both Jews and Gentiles into His fold, and He turns people toward **salvation**, by using both the **faith** and the **unbelief** of others. Why God wants to do good by **allowing evil** is an incomprehensible mystery to me, but **God's Wisdom Is Deep**. I don't have to know **why** God does what He does, as long as it **works** - and it always **does!**

We have Bible History to back up that statement. For example, isn't it strange that God used wicked **kings** and cruel, godless **empires** to bring His people back to Him? Yet, that's what He did. And isn't it strange that God used a man like **Saul** of Tarsus - a **hater** and **persecutor** of the Church of Christ - to become the Apostle **Paul**, the world's greatest **missionary**? Yet, He did that too. God in His wisdom **knows** the ones who belong to Him, even when we **don't**. And God in His love patiently brings those people into His **family**, and uses them for His **purposes**. We know that God would be perfectly justified in **condemning** us all - in leaving us to **rot** through our own self-chosen **corruption** - and in some cases He **does** just that. But on the **other** hand, out of **love** for us and for His Son Jesus, God **rescues** us from our corruption, and makes us His **children**. Any reasons and motives for doing so, beyond His **love**, remain hidden. God's paths in this matter are **beyond** our reach - we are **unable** to trace them out - after all, **God's Wisdom Is Deep**.

Well, so far Paul has been marveling that God in His wisdom devised a way to **save** us, and then carried it through. But God also shows us His wisdom concerning **giving**. Our text asks the question, "*Who has ever given to **God**, that*

God should repay him?" I'm not going to dwell on this too long today, because the answer is so **obvious**. **No one** has! Nobody can give **anything** to God that God has not first given to **them**. Everything we **are** and everything we **have** belongs to the LORD, and when the LORD wants it again to do His work, it will **return** to Him - one way or another. God won't bother to come **begging** to us, because He doesn't need **anything** from us - it's already **His**. But God does give us the opportunity to be a **part** of **His work** here on the earth. He wants us to **share** in the joy of **feeding** the souls who are already in His family - as well as to **share** in the joy of bringing more souls **into** that family. God Himself makes that possible, when He enables us to gladly **surrender** out of the things which we are **managing** for Him, **whatever** He wants, **whenever** He wants it - just as the owner of the colt and donkey in Jerusalem immediately gave them to the disciples on Palm Sunday when they said, "*The LORD needs them.*" Even if they **never saw** those animals again, they would always have the joy of saying, "We **played a part** in the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem!"

That gift was certainly a **generous** one. But there is **another** example, found in the Old Testament, of **extraordinarily** generous giving which never ceases to amaze me. It is the way God's people responded with gifts as King David was making plans to build the LORD's **temple**. Although David was not allowed to actually build the temple because his life had been filled with blood and warfare, King David wanted to be able to say, "I **played a part** in building God's house." So, David, who was far and away the **wealthiest** man in the congregation, **set the pace** for the rest. He **personally** and **willingly** gave for the project: **110 tons** of gold and **260 tons** of silver. That really reinforces the Bible passage which says, "*To whom much has been given, much shall be required!*" But the **rest** of God's people also responded **willingly** and **generously** - giving an **additional 190 tons** of gold, **375 tons** of silver, **675 tons** of bronze, and **3,750 tons** of iron! It is no wonder that the temple built for the LORD under the direction of King Solomon, was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world - not only because of these marvelous gifts, but especially because of the **love** and **devotion** which God's people were returning to Him. From David on down, they had all experienced God's gracious **love** and **forgiveness**. Their offerings for God's temple were just one way in which they could show Him how **thankful** they were.

I think it is significant that even though King David had **spearheaded** the effort, he humbly accepted **no praise** for himself. I'd like to read a portion of David's thanksgiving prayer which really hits the nail on the head. David prayed,

*“Who am **I**, and who are my **people**, that we should be **able** to give as generously as this? Everything comes from **You**, and we have given You only what comes from **Your hand**. We are aliens and strangers in Your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a **shadow**, without hope. O LORD our God, as for all this **abundance** that we have provided for building You a temple for Your Holy Name, it comes from **Your hand**, and all of it belongs to **You**.”*

That's **praise**. David knew that, “**From Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things.**” **All** things have their origin in **God**. All things are **carried out** by God and serve **His** purposes. And all things are for **God's** glory. The people of our text found ways that **they** could glorify God. But what can **you** do to glorify your gracious God? How can you **show** Him how **thankful** you are that He sent His **Son** to **forgive** all your sins? How can you **glorify** Him for His **Word** and **Sacraments** - for the wisdom He has **revealed** to us, as well as for His **hidden** wisdom? **Some** will be able to glorify God with **time** - others with **talents** - and still others with **treasure**. A rare **few** will even be able to give a generous portion of **all three**! The opportunities for doing good in this world, and especially for sharing our Savior with others, are **endless**. And the LORD in His wisdom, will see to it that everything which **needs** to be done, will **get** done. The question is, will we be able to have the satisfaction and the joy of saying, “I played a **part** in it?”

Dear friends, say **thank you** to God today with your hearts and hands and voices. **God's Wisdom Is Deep** concerning **salvation**, and **giving**, and **praise**; but that's just all the more reason to thank Him. Thank God that He has **deep** wisdom - a wisdom which goes far **beyond** ours - a wisdom which leaves no work **undone** - a wisdom which allows us to **share** in God's **joy** - and a wisdom which sees to it that **God** receives all the **glory**. Amen.