

March 5, 2023

“Vision - Glory”
Romans 11:33-36

FCF: Our self-centered delusion

PROPOSITION: (anchor) God is due everlasting glory
(magnet) for He encompasses all things.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

You may have heard of the recent discovery of a new core at the center of the Earth - a 400-mile wide metallic ball. That story reminded me another discovery - that of Copernicus and the orbits of our solar system. For centuries, the model had the earth at the center with the sun, moon, and planets moving around it. Then, in the 16th century, came Copernicus and the notion of the sun at the center with the earth and the planets revolving around it. This was a dramatic shift, a tremendous discovery, a revolution. It was right, true to what actually is. And needed.

But what is at the center of the universe? Or better yet, who? It's not us. It's God. And that brings us to this last installment in our series looking at our new Vision Statement. Here is the short summary sentence at the top of the statement, taking it down to its bare essence (**READ**): “Christ Presbyterian Church exists for the glory of God and the joy of all people.”

Just below that, there is a summary paragraph, rolling out what this means (**READ**):

We are a **COVENANT FAMILY**
Being **TRANSFORMED** to the likeness of Christ
Rejoicing in and **DISPLAYING** His truth, goodness, and grace
Growing in love, service, and relationship to God and our **COMMUNITY**
For the **GLORY** of God and His kingdom, present and eternal

Each word in that section in bold is explained in a paragraph below. Today, we are looking at the fifth and last line, “For the glory of God and His kingdom, present and eternal” (**READ**):

We earnestly long for the time when God will make all things new. While we wait for that day, we will interact with our world in a way that displays the glorious reality that Christ has died and risen. We will build His kingdom rather than our own.

From there, this particular paragraph is unpacked further so as to flesh out the intent (**READ**):

His glory is His and we will humble ourselves before Him and each other.
His glory is evident in creation and we will care for it.
His glory is evident in His word and we will cherish it and hide it in our hearts.
His glory is coming in full and we will pray for and encourage each other to wait for Him in faith.

This is our vision. How is this seen in the Scriptures? What does the Lord say to us about this?

SCRIPTURE READING: **Romans 11:33-36**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

The context is worth knowing. In chapters 9-11, Paul has set forth the assurance that God will fulfill the promises laid out in chapter 8. That being the gift of the Holy Spirit, our adoption as God's children, our future glory, our election, and everlasting security in His love. We can rejoice and rest in those promises. Before he goes any further, before he presses the implications of all this, Paul pauses. He drops his pen, catches his breath, and breaks into poetry and praise.

Listen to his astonished exclamations (**READ Romans 11:33**). Such wealth and wisdom! It is unfathomable, beyond our reaching. Then listen to his rhetorical questions (**READ Romans 11:34-35**). We have nothing to give or teach God. We are not His counselors or His creditors.

Then after the exclamations and the questions comes a summation, a doxology (**READ Romans 11:36**). God is due everlasting glory for He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is due everlasting glory for He encompasses the beginning and the end. All is included and comprehended in Him.

What does it mean to say God encompasses “all things”? First, all of creation is traced to Him. And second, all of salvation is traced to Him. That’s all that there is. Let’s take a look.

I. ALL OF CREATION

First, God encompasses all things in terms of all creation.

A) From Him

1. The question

All is from Him. Where did all this come from? What is source of all that there is?

2. The answer

It’s God. He created all that exists (**READ Genesis 1:1**). This universe is the result of His making all things of nothing (with no raw materials at all) by simply speaking it into being.

B) Through Him

1. The question

All is from and through Him. How does it all hold together? What keeps it from disintegrating?

2. The answer

God is the sole means. He alone sustains and directs all things. Providence is described as His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all His creatures and all their actions.

C) To Him

1. The question

All is from and through and to Him. Why? Why is there any and every thing that there is?

2. The answer

God is the goal of all things. All that there is is, it exists, for His purposes and for His glory.

(READ Romans 11:36) God is the source, the means, and the goal of all creation. He is the creator, the sustainer, and the heir of the seen and unseen worlds. All that there is, all that there was, and all that every will be is tied utterly solely to His will, His action, and His glory.

Illustration:

That’s humbling. It’s like sitting in your house on a Friday afternoon, watching the trees sway in the gusts, hearing limbs crack and fall, knowing you can’t stop a bit of it. None of it.

Application:

Over what do we have control? Our health, relationships, career, investments, or just in how an ordinary day goes? Yes, we play a role and that is real. But it’s not decisive. How much sway do we have over world events, the economy, the culture, calamities, or the weather? Are we in charge? Is anyone? (**READ Psalm 46:1-3**) So, yes, this is humbling. But so comforting.

God is due everlasting glory for He encompasses all things. All of creation.

II. ALL OF SALVATION

And in the context of Romans 11, He encompasses all things in salvation as well.

A) From Him

1. The question

Again, it is all from Him. Who is the author of our salvation? Who is the Savior?

2. The answer

God is. He ordained the plan - the timetable of promises and how they would come to pass. And, in His grace, brought us into that plan. He predestined His own as heirs of those promises.

B) Through Him

1. The question

It is all from Him and through Him. How does this come about? Who is the agent?

2. The answer

God is. The Son was sent to accomplish our salvation - living the life we should have lived and dying the death we deserved to die. And the Spirit was sent to apply this, enabling us to believe.

C) To Him

1. The question

It is all from Him, through Him, to Him. To whom is the credit and praise? Who is the hero?

2. The answer

God is. Any creature that would grasp for that praise due to Him alone will be forever silenced.

This is all from Him, through Him, and to Him - both in creation and salvation.

Illustration:

C. S. Lewis alludes to this in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy* ([READ](#)):

Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about 'man's search for God.' To me as I then was, they might as well have talked about the mouse's search for a cat.

Application:

This is not the first time we find such God-centered, God-exalting language in Romans. It pours from every paragraph ([READ Romans 8:28](#)). That's quite a promise. How can we know for sure? Paul tells us ([READ Romans 8:29-30](#)). There is a driver at the wheel. There is a captain on the bridge. There is a king upon the throne. All things are from, through, and to Him.

Such is His greatness. And goodness. We owe Him absolutely everything. And not just that. We can turn to Him in absolutely anything. Which is such great encouragement to prayer.

God is due everlasting glory for He encompasses all things. All creation and salvation.

CONCLUSION:

Have you ever gotten quiet enough to ask the question, "Why am I here? What's the point? What am I chasing after?" Here's an NPR story from 2018 that drives at this ([READ](#)):

Last summer, 53-year-old Jeff Murphy was hiking in Yellowstone National Park when he disappeared. Park investigators found his body on June 9, where Murphy had fallen 500 feet from Turkey Pen Peak, after accidentally stepping into a chute.

But he wasn't on just any hike. He was [looking for a treasure box of gold and jewels](#) worth up to \$2 million, buried somewhere in the Rocky Mountains by an eccentric millionaire named Forrest Fenn.

Fenn, an art dealer and millionaire in his 80s, lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In his self-published memoir, Fenn included a poem that supposedly leads to the treasure he hid in the mountains.

"The ornate, Romanesque box is 10-by-10 inches and weighs about 40 pounds when loaded," NPR's John Burnett reported in 2016. "Fenn has only revealed that it is hidden in the Rocky Mountains, somewhere between Santa Fe and the Canadian border at an elevation above 5,000 feet. It's not in a mine, a graveyard, or near a structure."

Murphy is the fourth man to die while searching for the chest.

What is the thing we are to seek and strive to obtain, our chief aim, our great design and desire?

Why do we exist as people, as disciples of Jesus, and as a church? It's to live for God's glory.

Stealing some language from Thomas Vincent, we are - individually and corporately - to have the highest estimation of God, the greatest confidence in Him, and the strongest affections towards Him. We are to take in and take to heart what He has said of Himself, to trust His promises, proclaim His praise, promote His desires, and obey His commands. We are to glorify God. That's why we are here - again individually and corporately - recognizing we cannot do this on our own. The only way we can do what He calls us to do is to humbly acknowledge our weakness and to live daily in reliance and dependence on Him. And that too is to His glory.

God is due everlasting glory for He encompasses all things. This is why we say ([READ](#)):

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His glory is to be the point of starting and ending of all we are and do ([READ Romans 11:36](#)).

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