

29. Unsearchable, unfathomable, unmatched

November 2, 2008

The highest mountain on earth is located at the border of Nepal, Tibet and China. You all know that it is Mount Everest. It also has a nickname 'Head of the Sky' and the height is 29,035 ft – 5.5 miles. The mountain is part of the Himalaya range in High Asia.

Because of its imposing height and beauty, the mountain has a constant flow of climbers from novice climbers to experts. By the end of the 2007 climbing season, there had been 3,679 ascents to the summit by 2,436 individuals. 210 lives have already been lost during their expeditions on Mount Everest, including eight who perished during a 1996 storm high on the mountain.

The deepest sea in the world is located in the southeast of the Mariana Islands, near Guam in Pacific Ocean. It is known as 'Mariana Trench'. It has a maximum depth of about 6.8 miles – 35,827 ft. In other words, Mount Everest can be put in there upside down and still have some 6,000 feet to spare.

You may say, "OK, preacher. A nice geography lesson, but what is your point?" I am getting there. When people get older, it takes awhile for them to get to the point.

The depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God is deeper than the Mariana Trench. The compassion and mercy of God is higher than the Mount Everest. As a matter of fact, they are unsearchable, unfathomable and unquestionable.

If you have any doubt about His love, just simply look at that old rugged cross where God died for the sinful humans.

Some might say, "If I were God and knew that I could raise myself from death, I would die on the cross, no problem." I say, "You are absolutely right in that sense." But you have not thought about what the spiritual implication is here for God. The Holy God had to take all the sins of humankind from Adam to the last human being including yours and mine.

Since we were born with sinful nature and cannot really understand being completely holy like our God, please allow me to explain in this way: How would you like to be whipped with a cat-o-nine tail until you totally pass out and submerge your whipped open wound body all the way into a pit that is filled with all the human excrement, all the known diseases including cancer and HIV AIDS virus and any other gross things anyone can imagine? And you are doing all of this to save the very one who is torturing you. If you can fathom what it is like to go through that, you've just comprehended one in a hundred trillionth of what our Holy God Jesus went through for us.

A. THE MERCY OF GOD – UNSEARCHABLE

Romans 11:30-32 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

In this morning's study, apostle Paul is reemphasizing the fact that since Israel refused the salvation through Jesus Christ, the Lord passed the blessing of salvation to the Gentiles. By doing so, it would arouse jealousy from the nation of Israel and in results they might get saved at the end of the Time of the Gentiles.

The word 'Mercy' was mentioned four times in these three verses underscoring its significance. Dr. Dwight Pentecost, a great theologian, said, "Mercy is God's ministry to the miserable", that is us. God's mercy – His active compassion – extends to all people, whether Jews or Gentiles.

When the Lord extended His mercy to the Gentiles, did they deserve His mercy? Absolutely not, nobody does. The Gentiles' spiritual pedigree has no godly bloodlines and their former master was none other than the devil himself.

Our own pasts before the salvation through Christ are not much better. We all deserved hell and His judgment.

On this pitch-dark canvas of our lives, God shed a single stroke of pure light – His Son Jesus Christ. Only a God of unsearchable mercy would have reached so low to lift us up so high.

Some theologians interpret the Jews in v31 as the 'church' in light of their own doctrine – the Replacement Theology. As I've mentioned before, this Replacement Theology is completely wrong within context. So don't even go there.

The mercy God has shown to the unworthy Gentiles will be the tool He uses to redeem the equally unworthy Jews who turn in faith to Jesus, the Messiah.

John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

B. THE MIND OF GOD – UNFATHOMABLE

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

I asked you to underline these three words that are thick with theological meanings. Even apostle Paul, in my opinion, who was one of the brightest minds in his contemporary times, could not figure out the wisdom and knowledge of God.

The word 'depth' is 'bathos' in Greek. It does not describe just deep, but extreme deep, like bottomless.

No human vocabulary can articulate the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, with precision. We just simply don't have the capacity to comprehend God and His ways.

It would be like asking a gerbil to understand and explain the mass-energy equivalence formula, a.k.a. $E=mc^2$. Gerbil is more interested in where next food block is coming from than some physics formula, because it is not in the same label with human. Just like that humans are not in the same label with God.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

C. QUESTIONS THAT NEED NO ANSWER

Romans 11:34-35 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?" 35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"

After his glorious exclamations in v33, Paul asks three questions – questions that need no answer.

Apostle Paul was quoting these verses from Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11. Many of you have read the Book of Job. You can pretty much sum up in four words: "Did not, did too." Job and his so-called "counselors" argued all the way through the Book, each presuming to understand God's ways. When God finally spoke to Job, he lost words to answer:

Job 42:2-6 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' 5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

If you are like me, you often whine, beg, cry or even threaten our God with our prayers. Here is a good example:

A little boy wanted to have a bicycle as a Christmas gift so bad that he has been praying to God everyday for last two months.

As Christmas was fast approaching, he felt that he had to do something drastic to insure his prayer request to be answered by God. Then he remembered the Christmas story and also remembered seeing a little statue of the Virgin Mary from his neighbor's yard.

Before he went to sleep that evening, he went over to his yard and took the Virgin Mary statue and brought it to his home and put it under his clothing in his closet. Then he got on his knees and said to God, "Jesus, if You ever want to see Your mom again, you'd better give me a bicycle for this Christmas."

If we don't threaten God with some silly things, we even try to counsel Him with our puny wisdom how He should conduct the affairs of people, especially ours.

Does it ever occur to us that it is totally pathetic for us to even consider counseling God? Obviously, it doesn't. That is why we continue. I am learning not to do that. But in light of the Presidential Election in less than 48 hours, it is hard not to. So, I pray for His will to be done over mine.

Here is my suggestion for all of us: Don't question God's way. Just watch Him.

D. THE MAJESTY OF GOD - UNMATCHABLE

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.

The Greek version of this phrase contains no verb. Modern translators have added "are" for clarity and rightly so, since proper English requires it. But whatever the Greek lacks in verbs, it more than makes up for in prepositions. Let's look at them one at a time:

1) Of Him

In my opinion, KJV and NKJV did not translate this preposition correctly. It should be 'from' rather than 'of' like all the other versions. When we look at it in the original Greek, it is 'ek' which is a primary preposition denoting origin. So it should be translated as 'from' or 'out of'.

This means that all things are originated from God, having their source in Him.

2) Through Him

All things are 'through God'. Everything happening around us within the sphere of what we can know, see and hear and even beyond these are through Him. In other words, nothing escapes His acknowledgement.

If that does not make you to say, "Our God is an awesome God," here is another astounding thing. The Lord Jesus put His signature in human bodies everywhere when He created us.

Colossians 1:16-17 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. NIV

There are protein molecule called 'Laminin'. Cells are organized in certain molecular structures. That controls what protein they are. Scientists are guessing that there are 10000-16000 proteins in a human body. Laminin is vital to making sure overall body structures hold together. Improper production of laminin can cause muscles to form improperly. Would you like to see Jesus' signature in your bodies? This is the one which holds our bodies together. Can anyone tell me that it has nothing to do with the Lord Jesus?

3) To Him

All things are to God. He is our destiny. Someday, every single human being who has ever lived on the earth will say one common phrase:

Romans 14:11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

Apostle Paul is declaring that our God is the Originator, the Sustainer and the Goal of all creation. His majesty in temporal events is unmatched. But it doesn't end there. His majesty extends beyond this world. One day, this earth and the heavens will be burned up with a great roar and fervent heat according to 2 Peter 3:10. Then, God will make everything new. But His glory will never end.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Don't question God's way. Just watch Him.

2) When we understand some of the greatness of God, we worship Him all the more passionately.