

The Judgements And Ways Of The Triune God.

Text: Rom 11:33-36

1) His Judgements Are Unsearchable

Suggested Hymns:

2) His Ways Are Past Finding Out

140, 142, 414, 291, 136

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 11:33–36, 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!* ³⁴ *“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?”* ³⁶ *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” In these words of our Epistle the fathers who selected the texts for the Epistles in the church-year saw an allusion to the Holy Trinity. This is the festival of the Holy Trinity, the only festival which does not deal with a historic fact to be commemorated, but with a Christian doctrine and with a divine truth.

On this day, Trinity Sunday, the great truth is to be emphasised, that there is but one God, but that there are three persons in the deity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Of Him are all things,” because to the Father is ascribed the work of the creation. He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

“Through Him are all things,” because to the Son is ascribed the work of redemption. God would surely have destroyed His entire creation after Satan had defiled it with sin, if it were not for His dear Son who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

“To Him are all things,” because to the Holy Spirit is ascribed the sanctification. He brings us sinners to God, calling us by the Gospel,

enlightening us with His gifts, sanctifying and keeping us in the one true faith, and through Him every creature of God is *sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*, as the Apostle says in his First Epistle to Timothy.¹

This doctrine of the Holy Trinity was bitterly assailed by false teachers in the earliest times of the Christian Church. The first man who assailed this doctrine was Cerinthus, who lived in the days of St. John. He denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and this induced John to write the fourth Gospel, the purpose of which is to show that Jesus Christ is true God.

Cerinthus came to a tragic end. He was in a sanatorium, or public bath, with some of his disciples, and John chanced to walk into the same place with some of his friends. But when John saw the man, he fled with his friends because he feared that God's punishment would come upon the blasphemer. Scarcely had he left the place, when the walls caved in, and Cerinthus was buried beneath the ruins.

Later on another man, a highly educated bishop, caused great disturbances by his denial of the divinity of Christ. His name was Arius, and his heresy spread everywhere like wildfire. Arius also met with a sudden death. At length, in the year 325, a council was held in the city of Nice, attended by all the leading men in the Christian Church, and here the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was publicly confessed as the doctrine of the whole Christian Church, and ever since then all those who do not profess their faith in the Triune God are considered outside the pale of the visible Christian Church.

Our Epistle, however, does not deal at length with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In our Epistle Paul speaks of *the judgements and ways of God*. This is the theme for today. May the Lord bless our meditation.

The Judgements And Ways Of The Triune God.

1. His Judgements Are Unsearchable.

As St. Paul considers God's dealings with the children of men, he is led to exclaim,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!*

He does not criticise God, as some people do who are always ready to find fault with what God does, especially when He visits them with dire afflictions, or

when He permits great calamities to come. Paul does not say, as some people do when they hear of such terrible things: *How can there be a loving God in heaven? How can there be an almighty Ruler and Governor of this world?* No; he says: You are far above me, You are the Creator, and I am but a creature, — what have I to say? I cannot attain to Your wisdom and knowledge; they are beyond my comprehension. How unsearchable are Your judgements!

God's judgements are indeed unsearchable. We cannot fathom them. We cannot make them harmonise with our human understanding. We look at them, we see how the Lord God visits this earth with punishments upon the children of men, and often His judgements are of such a convincing character that even atheists and blasphemers stand aghast.

They are forced to admit within themselves that it is God's hand, as when men are struck speechless and dumb when they utter an oath, or when lightning strikes the blasphemer.

But the moment we begin to think over this matter and ask: Why does God punish one evildoer and spare the other? Why does He punish lesser offences, and let greater offences go unpunished? Why does He afflict the innocent and prosper the guilty?— we cannot make God's dealings agree with our sense of justice and what we think is right, and we must say: *His judgements are unsearchable.*

Paul evidently had in mind the terrible judgements of God upon the children of Israel, of which he speaks in the tenth and eleventh chapters of his Epistle to the Romans.

He demonstrates in these two chapters what a terrible doom has come upon God's chosen people, how in blindness and hard-heartedness they rejected their own Messiah, how they perish in unbelief, how the Lord has cast them away, just as He had threatened to do through Moses, if they would not walk in His ways, they should no longer be His chosen people, receiving unto Himself the Gentiles in their stead.

In God's dealings with Israel there are many things which we cannot explain, and no nation has ever been visited with such terrible judgements as Israel. Think of Jerusalem's destruction, of the persecutions waged against the Jews in

all ages, and what a hard thing it is to make a Christian out of a Jew. Here God's judgements are truly unsearchable.

And the same thing we must say when we take into consideration that God has not had the Gospel not proclaimed to various nations of the earth, that He permits millions to live and die in ignorance, that many do not have the slightest chance of being enlightened with the true faith and of being saved, that they are swept away in their sins like flies without the knowledge of the true living God.

Such things are unexplainable to us, and all we can do is to bow our heads and to say with St. Paul, ³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments.* But one thing is true. God's judgements are always right and just, although we do not see it.

Has not God plainly revealed that He does not desire the sinner's death? Has He not sworn and said in the prophecies of Ezekiel, '*As I live,*' *says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live'?*²

Are we not told that in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God *desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* And in 2 Peter 3:9, that *The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance?* Did He not have His beloved Son suffer and die for all and redeem all from sin and death and hell?

Did not God *so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life?*³ Has not the Lord Jesus Christ purchased with His holy, precious blood even those who deny Him and bring upon themselves swift destruction?⁴

And how can we say that God is unjust in anything which He does? How can we say that He is not right, even if He visits the children of men with the greatest punishments? Are not all people sinners who deserve nothing but God's wrath and displeasure? Should we not rather be surprised that there are so many whom God does not punish?

Is God under obligations to any one? The Apostle asks, ³⁵ *"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"* Who can say that God owes

anything to him, and that He must protect him against danger, and guard him from evil, and keep away from him everything that is hurtful?

Realise, then, that God's judgements always are, and of necessity must be, right and just, and never can we worms of the dust say what God should do, or what He should not do.

We must simply bow our heads before Him in reverence and awe, and say with St. Paul, "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments!*"

2. His Ways Are Past Finding Out.

The Apostle says, *and His ways past finding out!* ³⁴ "*For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?* And must we not truly say, "*His ways are past finding out*" when we stop and consider God's wonderful dealings with entire nations, with single families, and with individuals?

Do not apparently insignificant things often lead to the greatest results under the ruling of divine Providence, and does any one know what the Lord has in mind and, what He intends to do and accomplish when He permits these seemingly insignificant things to come to pass?

Who could know the mind of the Lord when to Abraham He gave the promise that his descendants should possess the land of Canaan? Who could tell then in what manner God's promise would come true?

Or when Moses was drawn out of the water and saved from death in the river Nile by King Pharaoh's daughter, who could know the mind of the Lord? Who could know God's intention when He had Moses brought up in the king's court and instructed in all the arts and mysteries of the Egyptians?

Who could tell then that God had all this done to reveal His power, to save His chosen people Israel from bondage and extermination, and to lead them out of Egypt through His servant Moses?

Or when Esther, the beautiful Jewess, was made queen to King Ahasuerus, who could know the mind of the Lord? Who could tell that she was made queen for this purpose, that she might discover the plot of blood-thirsty Haman and save her people from annihilation?

Or when Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites as a slave by his own brothers, and brought to Egypt, and sold again to Potiphar, and innocently cast into prison.

Who could know that God permitted all this misfortune to come upon Joseph that he might be made the greatest man in Egypt next to the king, and save his father and all his brothers and their families from starvation in the seven years of famine. Joseph himself said to his brothers when he made himself known to them, *you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive?*

God's ways are past finding out. Must you not admit this, my friends, when you view your life so far and consider how wonderfully God has dealt with you, and guided, and led you to this day?

How can you account for it that you were not born in a heathen land, but in a Christian country? That you have been brought up within the pale of the Church? That you did not drift away into the barren field of unbelief and godless-ness, but that you came to the knowledge of Christ?

That you were brought to the faith? That, in spite of all the temptations around you, you have persevered in the faith to this day? That you have not dropped off to the world as so many do, who believe only for a while and in time of temptation fall away? That you live by the faith of the Son of God, and walk in the hope of eternal life?

Why have you deserved all this grace and mercy which God has shown to you? Must you not say, *"His ways are past finding out"*?

And so His ways are past finding out when He visits us who trust in Him and believe in His dear Son with afflictions, when He lets evil come upon us, when poverty raps at our doors, when all manner of evil is spoken against us, when disease fastens upon us, or when death enters our peaceful homes, and deprives us of those who have been near and dear to us in this life.

These are not judgements, or punishments. For how could God punish those in whom He sees nothing to punish, whom He has mercifully forgiven all their sins for the sake of His dear Son Jesus Christ in whom they believe?

These afflictions which come to the Christians are nothing but wholesome chastenings which God imposes on them for their own eternal good; for as we

read in Romans 8:28, *all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

When these afflictions are upon us, our faith is tried and tested, and we must hold out and persevere, and not lose patience, or murmur against our merciful God, but remember what Jesus said to Peter in John 13:7, *“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”*

And remember what God says in Isaiah 55:8–9, ⁸ *“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.*

May the Lord, then, grant us all, His grace that we will not be offended in God’s dealings with the children of men, but always view His judgements and His ways rightly, owning with St. Paul that His judgements are unsearchable and His ways past finding out.

Then shall we render unto the Triune God the honour which is due to Him; ³⁶ *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 1 Timothy 4:1

² Ezekiel 33:11

³ John 3:16

⁴ 2 Peter 2:1