

Intro: It is hard to believe we are on the brink of transitioning our Sunday morning worship location next week. We understand that while change can be challenging, change also presents unique opportunities.

My life has been full of change, and I'm sure to a lesser or greater degree, you have experienced considerable change as well. I moved four times before I graduated HS, went to college, then to seminary. Marriage was a pretty big change. Having two beautiful little girls has brought change. Moving to the NE to this great city and planting this church has brought some beautiful changes to my life. Change can be extremely profitable for us because what typically accompanies moments of transition are the fundamental questions that help us process what the change is all about. Why am I doing this? What is this all for?

Not only do we ask that question for the smaller, seasonal changes of life, I believe we ask this question on the grandest scale: "Why are we here? Why am I on this planet? What is my purpose? What should my life be about?"

These questions were behind a fairly short but incredibly dense work by Jonathan Edwards, who many consider to be one of the greatest theologians and philosophers America has ever known. That work is titled, "The End for Which God Created the World." His question is implied in title: Why did God create the world? What is the ultimate goal, the ultimate end, the final end to which all of creation is pointing?

His answer is the answer of the Bible, and it is the answer I would like to present to you this morning. And before we dive into the text, I want to contend that this is the question of all questions. This is the question every person should ask and answer, and this is the question every church must ask and answer. To put a small twist on Edwards' title, this morning I want us to consider:

### **"The End for Which God Created this Church" Romans 11:33-36**

Romans 11:33-36 is the exclamation point on Romans 1:1-11:32. What Paul does in the book of Romans is lays out the gospel... Romans 1:16... "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God..." Outline...of Romans... Now, in light of all of this, the only way Paul knows to respond is by erupting in praise: Romans 11:33.

#### **I. Recognize God alone is inexhaustibly glorious (11:33-35).**

- "Oh, the depths" Paul begins by using a word that points to the inexhaustibility of the attributes of God. When we talk about God, we are not chilling in the shallow end of the pool. It's middle of the ocean, thousands of feet deep, instantaneously.
- Paul lists three of God's attributes. An attribute of God is any quality of his character that conveys his essence. So we could talk about God's love, mercy, holiness, justice, wrath; his beauty, goodness, grace, omnipotence, omnipresence. These are all attributes of God.
- God is infinite. Every attribute of God carries an infinite quality. (unity of his attributes)

Paul's point here is that the greatness of God his limitless. All earthly greatness certainly has its limits, but in the words of Psalm 145:3, "God's greatness is unsearchable."

- **The Depths of his Riches:** It is noteworthy that the only two times we have references to the absolute riches of God are here and in Ephesians 3:8 where Paul talks about his privilege of preaching the "surpassing riches of Christ." Both verses highlight the depth of the riches of God in bringing salvation to both Jews & Gentiles. God's grace is global grace.

- **The Depths of his Wisdom.** God not only possesses the ability to accomplish his intended purpose, but his wisdom involves his ability to orchestrate the means to the end. That's why Paul goes on to say: "How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" No one could have conceived that God would work to save in this way.
- **The Depths of his Knowledge.** God has all knowledge. He knows you better than you know you. That's why no one can care for you like God. He gets you when no one else does.
- God possesses riches, wisdom, and knowledge in their "fullest excellence." All of this points to and is part of his glory!
- We could say: ***The glory of God is display of his manifold perfections. It is the going public of his intrinsic worth.***

To make these depths unmistakably clear, Paul cites two texts from the OT in vv. 34-35.

The first is Isaiah 40:13: For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"

- Who has been his counselor? We need counsel, which is one reason we have started a counseling ministry, BUT God is never in need of counsel. He does not need us to weigh in on how he should run the universe.
- This is good news: sometimes I can't even pick out a box of cereal from the grocery store!
- What is worse, many times we give God counsel. God, if you were truly wise, you would have done things according to my plan. God, you should never let that happen. When you think like that, look to the cross. A crucified Messiah? Never.
- What a great word for Bostonians. Some of you are among the most intellectually gifted in the world. Guess what? All of your intellectual power is complete folly compared to the infinite wisdom of God.

The second OT text is found in Job 41:11, "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"

- Who has given to God? Answer: Nobody. You can't give God any piece of knowledge that is not already his, nor can you give him anything that he does not already own.
- God will never be in our debt. God initiates his salvation because of his sheer mercy and grace.

Trans: When we see God for who he is and what he is done, praise is the only imaginable response. But our response of worship always begins with a revelation of who God is. The rhythm is: revelation then response. God is far more glorious than we have the ability to articulate, and yet this is what we try to do when we praise his great name!

In light of this, verse 36 should move us to #2.

## **II. Spend your life to glorify God in all things. (11:36)**

This is the goal! Why are you here? The glory of God! Why does this church exist? The glory of God! v.36.

**"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."**

These are words, not only worth memorizing. These words are worth staking your life on. Let's break them down.

*"For from him"* Everything in your life is a gift from God. You were born because God brought you into this world. Your gifts, skills, desires, relational capacity... it's all a gift from God. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is found in 1 Cor. 4:7 where Paul asked the puffed up Corinthians a rhetorical question to humble them: "For what do you have that you have not received?" Nothing!

*"and through him"* Not only does everything come as a gracious gift from God, but the strength to live for him, the power to perform his will, is also a gift from God. Grace gives us life and grace sustains us through life. One of the reasons we become so tired and frustrated in life, is the curse of self-reliance.

Rather than recognizing we must operate in the strength God supplies, we muster up our own resources and find that we are soon running on empty again. For from him and through him . . .

*“and to him. To him be glory forever. Amen.”* Everything for his glory! We see this throughout Scripture.

- God is absolutely glorious. His chief concern is for his reputation and name known, revered, and embraced. You can neither read the OT nor the NT without seeing God’s ultimate concern for his glory. We see this as he accomplishes his work of Redemption. For example, we hear the refrain “you shall know that I am the Lord.” (10x in Exodus & 67x in Ezekiel).
- Why did he bring his people out of exile in Babylon. Isaiah 48:9-11 tells us in the strongest terms: **“For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”** (Isaiah 48:9-11)

God is not interested in sharing his glory. So when we are tempted to be puffed up with conceit, we should remember that God is jealous, extremely jealous for his glory, and we should be as well. There is no one more passionate for God’s glory than God! That is why the Bible tells us multiple times that we are created for the glory of God:

- “ . . . bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, *whom I created for my glory,*” (Isaiah 43:6-7)
- **“For by him 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.”** (Colossians 1:16)

The greatest gift God could give us is the gift of seeing his glory. We made us that we might know, love, and treasure him. This is why he saved us...

- **“In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace,”** (Ephesians 1:5-6)
- **“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”** (1 Corinthians 10:31) EXPOUND...

At the very end, when all is said and done, God will make his glory known in comprehensive fashion.

- **“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”** (Habakkuk 2:14)
- **“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”** (Revelation 5:13) No one will be touting your greatness or praising your name for all eternity. Not going to happen! The praise is his!
- **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God . . . And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Revelation 21:1-2, 23)**

So, here is the simply thesis of this sermon and the argument of the Bible for your very existence: If God’s greatest goal is the display of his glory, then our goal should be the same.

## **Point 2 Slide again**

- Our problem we want the glory! Everyone says, “Just do you. Do what feels right to you. Don’t worry about what anyone else thinks. Just do your thang. I’m just doing me, dawg. You do you. “I’ll do me.” That’s the entirety of our problem! You were not made to do you. You were made to do him.”

- The essence of sin and idolatry is the exchange of the glory of God for created things. Rather than worshiping God and giving him the glory he richly deserves, we give our allegiance and affection to lesser gods of sex, money, approval, comfort, the praise of men, possessions, you fill in the blank.
- And when we choose worthless idols, which are like broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13), then we trample the glory of God under our feet.
- Paul puts it like this earlier in Romans: **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)** - “and the wages of sin is death” (6:23)
- But here is God’s remedy for our soul-destroying sin: Jesus, the radiance of God’s glory, perfectly glorified the Father through his perfectly righteous life, so that he might be the perfect sacrifice on our behalf, so that through faith in him, we might now be reconciled to God, exchange our idols for the worship him and make our goal in life to live for the purpose for which we were created, namely his glory.
- In fact, our progress in the faith, in large part, rides on our apprehension of the glory of God and as we see him we are transformed into his likeness: **“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)**

All praise belongs to him. Now, at this point, some will object, or at least ask the question: does this make God narcissistic?

- Fundamentally, pride is an inflated view of self. Because God is infinitely valuable and worthy in his person & his work, it is an impossibility that God could have inflated view of himself, because you can’t inflate that which is infinitely inflated. You can overvalue that which is infinitely valuable. You can overestimate, that which is infinitely inestimable. You can’t . . . ok, I’ll stop but that fun...
- The rebuttal to the claim that God is a megalomaniac because he receives eternal praise is simply this: What else would we have him do?
- To withhold the gift of himself, would be to withhold the greatest gift we could ever possess!

We all praise that which is praiseworthy and there is nothing more praiseworthy than God!

- **C. S. Lewis**, in his *Reflections on the Psalms*, talks about how he was at first put off by the idea of God constantly receiving praise, and then he wrote: **“But the most obvious fact about praise—whether of God or anything else—strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that *all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise . . . The world rings with praise lovers praising their mistresses . . . readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their game. . . . I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.*”**
- “Praise is joy’s consummation.” “The delight is incomplete until it is expressed.”
- Daily Bible Reading: Song of Songs ain’t about Songs, unless you’re talking about sheet music of another variety! “Your eyes are like doves.”
- “What is the chief end of man? To glorify God *and* enjoy him forever.”
- This is why God’s glory is not severed from our joy. In fact, we will never be truly joyful until we find our satisfaction in the worship of God. John Piper says, “God is most glorified in me, when I am most satisfied in him.”

**Conclusion: Five Implications for Redemption Hill** as we move to the Club and way, way beyond.

- **The glory of God should drive us to humility:** “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory.” (Psalm 115:1) Everything we have as a church is a gift from God’s gracious hand.
- **The glory of God should provoke gratitude:** Gratitude is a means of glorifying God because the grateful recognize where the provision comes. Him! Can God trust you, can God trust us with his glory?

- **The glory of God cultivates a deeper passion for God.** When we esteem something as supremely valuable, we gotta have more. This is why we are going after Four Weeks of Gospel Renewal by cultivating rhythms of grace. Because God is worthy, his glory is at stake, and we simply want more of him. We read, we pray, we commit to live life with other Christians for mutual encouragement, we steward our lives, for the praise of God. **“Glory renders us intensely zealous.” – Thomas Watson**
- **The glory of God elicits of praise.** Will we be a church that boasts in the Lord? Will we a church that talks about “this is what he did, this is what he did.” Finally.
- **The glory of God is the impetus for mission.** The reason we want to invite people to come and hear the gospel and get connected to our church family is because we want to see more and more people discover the purpose for which they were created. *The goal of missions is worship.*

Here’s **The Point:** **Because God made us for himself, we should give our entire lives for his glory.**