

GOD'S GREAT WISDOM, POWER, AND PLAN

(SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2014)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 115; Rev. 5

INTRODUCTION

1. When Gary DeMar was last with us, he used an illustration that you might remember.
 - A. Number 10 pennies, 1-10 and put them in your pocket.
 - B. The chance of pulling them out in order is 1 chance in 3,628,800.
 - C. Yet think how vastly more complex your life is.
 - D. Consider how God has ordained countless thousands of events in your life for His glory and your good.
2. Continuing in part with the message from last week, I want to direct us to marvel in God's incredible wisdom, power, and plan.
3. I think it likely true for all of us, that we do not often focus properly on the incredible majesty of the God we worship and serve.
4. It is so easy either to focus more on our own comforts or problems.
5. So through God's Word and through the wonders of His creation and salvation, I want our attention to be directed to God's wisdom, power, and plan.
6. Our response is to humble ourselves before God and seek to praise and trust in Him.
7. First, then we will focus on God's wisdom, power, and plan. Second, we will give attention to our proper response to our great God.

1. GOD'S WISDOM, POWER, AND PLAN

1. Near the end of Romans 11, the Apostle Paul in considering God's plan of salvation and the destinies of Jews and Gentiles declared:

Rom. 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!

2. God's wisdom is His perfect execution of the perfect plan He made in eternity past.

3. We see God’s wisdom displayed in creation, in His rule over creation, and in His work of salvation.

4. Frequently Scripture directs your attention to these areas so that you will consider God’s wisdom.

Psa. 104:24 O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In **wisdom** You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—

Psa. 136:5 To Him who by **wisdom** made the heavens, For His mercy *endures* forever;

5. I love reading Michael Behe’s book, *Darwin’s Black Box*.

A. In one of the chapters, Behe discusses the amazing process of how your body forms blood clots to keep you from bleeding to death.

B. I am sure everyone here has gotten a cut somehow.

C. We naturally just assume that our body forms a clot and in a few days in most cases we forget about the entire incident.

D. As Behe explains in considerable detail, the process of forming blood clots involves at least 31 different proteins.

E. And it is not simply just a mix of chemicals, but very precise steps that the body uses to form a clot and also to stop the clotting process.¹

6. Charles Darwin once stated:

“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”²

7. Another aspect where we marvel at God’s wisdom is in the design of tiny, tiny creatures He has made called bacteria.

A. Some bacteria have a tail or flagellum that they spin in order to move.

B. Some of these discoveries were made starting in 1973.

¹ Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, 82.

² *Ibid.*, 39.

C. The process of how bacteria can use their flagella to move has been called the universe's most efficient machine.

D. We use revolutions per minute to measure the speed of motors today.

1) Car engines run typically from 1,000 to 6,000 revolutions per minute.

2) These tiny motors that move bacteria move at similar and even greater speeds, many from 6,000 to 17,000 rpm and some as high as 100,000 rpm.

3) Unlike any motor that men have built, these bacteria can reverse direction within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a turn.

4) God designed this in the some of the tiniest creatures He has made.

8. Our goal should be to appreciate the wisdom of God wherever we look.

9. In order to properly do this we must know the source of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

10. In Colossians 2:3 we read of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Col. 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge.

11. Here we see why so many people who are very intelligent and smart are in reality very stupid men and women.

A. Unless you are in Jesus Christ, you have no access truly to wisdom and knowledge.

Prov. 21:30 *There is no **wisdom** or understanding Or counsel against the LORD.*

12. Listen to an amazing passage from Ephesians 3:8-11.

Eph. 3:8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, **9** and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; **10** to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, **11** according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Let us consider further God's power.

13. God's power is so great that we speak of His Omnipotence.

A. God can do anything He pleases.

B. Nothing is too hard for God.³

14. Where do we see God's power? We see it again in creation, in His rule over all creation, and in salvation.

15. Job at the end of chapter 26 declared so profoundly,

Job 26:14 Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways, And how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His **power** who can understand?"
[End of the words of Job in this chapter]

16. We only can grasp just a little bit of God's power.

A. This is a very important thing for us to constantly keep in mind.

B. As much as we appreciate the power of God, we can only take in a whisper of it in comparison to the mighty thunder of its totality.

17. It is not in vain that we seek to appreciate God's power.

Psa. 147:5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in **power**; His understanding *is* infinite.

18. We see God's power on display in history as God states of Pharaoh.

Ex. 9:16 But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My **power** *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.

19. Later the children of Israel were to sing:

Ex. 15:6 "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in **power**; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.

20. Listen to Jeremiah 32:17

³ John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 337-338.

Jer. 32:17 “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great **power** and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

21. It is for good reason that Isaiah 40:26 calls us especially to consider the vastness of space in contemplating the power of God.

Is. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these *things*, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of *His power*; Not one is missing.

22. It is estimated that the universe is 93 billion light years in size or **550 sextillion miles**.

A. Modern science, far from showing the irrelevance of the message of Scripture, confirms what Scripture teaches.

B. Before God and His power, man is nothing. How the infinite God takes notice of us is one of the most amazing things to consider.

C. In verse 26 the stars are likened to be members of God’s invincible and innumerable army. He calls them all by name.

D. The wonder here is not simply that God knows the total number of the stars and has a name for each of the estimated **300 trillion-billion** stars.

E. Rather the emphasis here is that although God’s army is in size as the number of the stars, He is so mighty and powerful that every member of God’s army without hesitation submits to His orders.⁴

23. Men and women in order to show power often do so through massive buildings.

A. For many years the pyramids stood as the biggest man made structures on earth.

B. There is no doubt that the Burj Khalifa, which stands at 2,717 feet tall, though designed in Chicago, is meant to showcase the supposed might of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates.

24. Consider how totally insignificant these structures are compared to what God has designed and constructed.

A. The largest and most massive structure in the observable universe is called the Hercules-Corona Borealis Great Wall.

⁴ Both John Calvin and E. J. Young note this in their commentaries.

B. It is a massive group of galaxies that is estimated to be 10 billion light years in length, 7.2 billion light years in width, and 900 million light years in thickness.

C. This massive structure was only discovered in November 2013.⁵

25. Scripture directs our attention again to our Lord and Savior who upholds all things by the word of His power.

Heb. 1:3 who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His **power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Let us consider God's plan whereby all that takes place has been designed to show His glory and power.

1. Psalm 33:10 and 11 state the matter so beautifully regarding God's sovereign plan.

Psa. 33:10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.

2. Does God's plan involve all things? Yes, according to Ephesians 1:11.

Eph. 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

3. Many are troubled by God's plan and human responsibility. Some think to the degree God is sovereign, humans end up being robots.

4. Scripture never places God's sovereignty and human responsibility in tension.

5. Indeed Scripture shows God's plan includes even the evil actions of men and women.

6. The greatest example of this is the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A) The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the most wicked act in history.

B) Yet it so beautifully resulted in our salvation according to God's power and plan.

⁵ Taken from Wikipedia.

7. Listen to how Peter proclaims God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— **23** Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

A. We should never shy from exalting God's sovereign power even as we call men and women to repentance for their evil and sin against a holy and righteous God.

8. Acts 2 is not the only passage to set forth God's sovereignty and human responsibility. We see a similar passage in Acts 4:27-28.

Acts 4:27 “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together **28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

9. Hebrews 6:17 shows that God gives to us promises in order to show that what He has determined to be done will be accomplished.

Heb. 6:17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His **counsel**, confirmed *it* by an oath,

2. HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND TO SUCH A GREAT GOD?

1. I think a number of responses are appropriate, but I think there are three main responses that each of us should demonstrate.

A. Humility

B. Praise

C. Trust

2. At the end of the greatest lecture on God's majesty ever given, what did Job say?

Job 40:4 “Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay **my hand over my mouth.**

3. When Isaiah was given a vision of God in His absolute holiness, what was his response?

Is. 6:5 So I said: “Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

4. How did the Apostle John respond in seeing the true glory of our Lord and Savior?

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

5. Recall also the response of the disciples when they witnessed the power of our Lord as he calmed the raging winds and sea.

Matthew 8:27 So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

6. Now it is true that we have not had such a direct experience as did Job, Isaiah, John, and the other disciples.

A. But do we not have the Word of God to direct us in seeing the glory of God and the testimony of His wisdom, power, and plan wherever we look?

B. Scripture therefore commands that you seek to demonstrate this humility before God.

C. Far from driving you from God, a proper fear and humility calls you to Him.

D. Humility doesn't mean you run from God.

1) True humility means you run towards God, because you find in Him all that you need.

7. Psalm 123:1-2 set forth the proper response to God of humility and yet seeking after God.

Psa. 123:1 Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* to the hand of their masters, As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes *look* to the LORD our God, Until He has mercy on us.

8. A chief part of humility is the recognition that God's plans are not to be subject to our critique or that His power is to be questioned based on our own situations.

Isaiah 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God"?

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

9. Humility should be joined with praise.

Psalms 139:17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

18 *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

Psa. 145:1 I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.

Heb. 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of **praise** to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, **giving thanks** to His name.

10. Trust also is an important response in light of the greatness of our God.

Psa. 18:30 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He *is* a shield to all who **trust** in Him.

Psa. 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good; Blessed *is* the man *who trusts* in Him!

Psa. 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD, **Trust** also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass.

11. It is the example of our Lord and Savior that should be that which we seek to demonstrate.

Matt. 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

Heb. 5:7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

12. It is in this attitude of humility, praise, and trust that we are able then to see the world as God sees it.

2Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, **18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Prayer

Hymn: 113

Benediction – 2 Cor. 13:11, 14

Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

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