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The Roman Road: Take Time to Worship God

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Romans 11:33-36 (ESV)

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

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

Psalms 100 (ESV)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Well, I don't know if you've ever thought about it or not, but you and I were literally made to praise and worship. I mean, this is a part of the core of our being. It comes very naturally to us when we encounter something that we value highly, or something that impresses us, praise. And even the level of worship just comes effusively out of us. My children have both been involved in high-level sports, and when you get up to the collegiate and professional level of sports, you have some phenomenal athletes. I mean, athletes who can do amazing things. And when you sit in the stands and watch, a great feat accomplished on an athletic field or on a court or something like that, or even in gymnastics, sometimes the crowd erupts with praise and adoration of what just happened. It just flows naturally out of people. The same thing happens when you're at a play where something deeply moving happens by those presenting

the play, or you're at a concert where the song is performed in such a way that hearts are touched all over the auditorium, praise, and sometimes standing ovations take place, and a sense of awe and wonder overcomes a place. This is something we're designed to do, to give praise to that which we see as impressive, or that which we see as worthwhile, that which is amazing. This is actually a part of what separates you and me from all other living things. I don't suppose you've ever seen a giraffe praising something or someone, or you've ever seen a tiger rise up and clap hands for another tiger.

This is a part of the spiritual nature of who you and I are, made in the image of God, the *imago Dei*. And God has put this in the core of our being, the ability to see things, be amazed by them, wonder and marvel at them, and then become effusive in praise and worship. He's put this in the core of our being because he made us for himself, and he wants us to see who he is and be amazed by him because we were created by him and for him. And this is not unloving of God. It's the most loving thing he can do to create us. To be caught up in him. Because in him is life, the fullness of life. And so we have this bent towards worship. But as Tim Keller says, this worship is something that comes from the deep affections of our heart, the core of our being beyond our mind, into our will and emotions. And this worshiping God that we're created to do is an instinct that's gone awry, and as a result, we aim it towards other things we worship. As Paul wrote to those in Rome, created things rather than the Creator who is forever to be praised. And so I want to encourage you today in taking time to do the very deep thing that you and I were created to do, and that is turn our hearts towards God in worship and praise.

For in the end, he is the only one truly worthy of the deepest affections of our hearts. All the depth and the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. There is no one else like him. When we praise God, when we begin to acknowledge God for who he is, and turn towards him and marvel and wonder and begin to praise him not just in the spirit of our being, but for the truth of who he is. Something happens inside of us. First of all, our eyes begin to be focused not on ourselves, but on him. Our eyes come off of ourselves and our troubles, and we start to gaze into who he is. And when this happens, something begins to happen in our hearts. Our hearts start to see the greatness of God, the power of God. When we worship him in the truth that's revealed to us about him in the scriptures, something happens in our hearts and we get perspective over the challenges of this life, the problems that we're facing, the worries, the concerns. And we start to sense his power and his greatness. And as we get caught up in him, our hearts grow more humble. Worship of the one true God puts us in a position of humility before one that is far greater than ourselves. And this is exactly where

God wants us to be. Because, as the Scripture says, a sense of humility before God and us bowing down before him puts us in a position where he can touch us in new ways.

Because the Bible says God opposes the proud. James wrote it this way. He said, "Don't you know that friendship towards the world and your idolatry of things of this world lead you away from God and put you at enmity with God or at odds with God?" And it's clear in His word. God does not want to play second fiddle to anyone or anything. Do you think the Scripture says James continues without reason, that he jealously longs for the spirit he's caused to dwell in us? And then he says this. That is why the Scripture says he gives us more grace. He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. When you and I worship God, we take our eyes off of our problems, our pains, our suffering. We begin to see the power and the majesty, the ability of God in our lives. We can be overcome with that, and that can grow a sense of humility in us. And then we're starting to position ourselves in a place, in a way, in a spiritual stature that brings favor from God. Humility brings his grace into our lives. And then James says, if you submit yourselves then to God and you resist the devil, the distraction, the temptations of this world, he will flee from you. The devil will. And as we come near to God, he will come near to us. And I don't know what else a person could want more of in this life than more of God infusing their lives.

As the Scripture says in him we live and move and have our being. He is our life friend. He's the one who sent His Son among us to pay the penalty for our sin so we could be made right with him, declared innocent before him, become friends with him, and then we could be empowered by his very spirit within us. And to get in touch with His Spirit, we need to lay down our idols, turn away from our idols, and turn towards him in worship and praise. And then the humility that that brings will burst forth his grace, his power, his might, the work of His Spirit in our lives. So I ask you today, friend, is it time for you to worship God more? Set aside more time to come before him and give him the praise and honor that's due him. Maybe you don't even know him, and you're hearing this as an invitation to come and see that God is good. He is holy and righteous and powerful and loving. And as we get caught up in his presence and worshiping him, something changes inside of us. The very core of our being can be moved from being idolatrous towards things of this world, worshipful towards things of this world, to becoming worshipful of him which opens us up to his power and his strength.

And so the psalmist breaks into this song. "Shout for joy to the Lord!" Psalm 100: Have you shouted to him lately? Psalm 100 might be considered God's clarion trumpet, calling to us to come before him. How many times have we seen at an athletic event someone shouting praise

or shouting something out? And have you seen someone do this before? The Lord, shout to him, God calling us, shout for joy to the Lord! All the earth worshiped the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful song. God's clarion call wanting us because he knows how good this is for us to come before him, acknowledging His Majesty, his worth, his greatness, his power, his unending love. The psalmist continues, "know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his people, the sheep of his pasture." Know this. He made us. We came from him. He designed us. He breathed into us the breath of life. And we are his people. Of course, the psalmist here is David, who's a member of the Israelite family, God's chosen people, through the Old Testament. But now we're in a time, and even those before Jesus, we look back towards Jesus. And those that trust in Jesus are grafted into the Israelite family and those that hoped in the coming of Christ. Even if they weren't Israelites in the Old Testament, they were saved by the coming of Christ. We're all made by him, and we can all be adopted into his family through our faith in His Son Jesus and his work on the cross and the shed blood of Christ, trusting in the work of Christ.

Then not only are we made by him, we become the sheep of his pasture, those cloaked in the innocence of Christ. We have been bought with a price. The Bible says, "the precious blood of Jesus," and we're clothed in his righteousness. So we stand there as friends of God, children of the Most High God, both now and forever. Know that. The Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his people through Christ, the sheep of his pasture, which simply means that he wants to shepherd us, to guide us, to be our leader, to be our King, to inspire us, direct us, train us, instruct us in living just as a shepherd does their sheep to feed us, to care for us, to nurture us in life so that we might flourish. This is the God who calls forth praise from us, the one who cares so deeply. The psalmist continues. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name." Is this too much to ask? From the one who gave us life, created us, put us here, and then purchased us through the sacrifice of his own son. Give thanks to him, enter his gates with thanksgiving. Enter his courts with praise and praise his name. Friends, you and I were created to do this, and as we do this, our eyes come off of ourselves.

They come onto the matchless power of our King, of the creator of all things, and we position ourselves to experience his grace, his kindness, his mercy, his power. And in so doing, then our lives are transformed by him, and the core of our being moves from idolatry to worship of God. And we're set free. We're set free. For the Lord is good, and his love endures forever. The psalmist ends, his faithfulness continues through all generations. Friend, it's time to worship God, to ask God to help him move the affections of our heart, the deep place of our will, away

from the things of this world toward him where they rightly belong, and in so doing will center ourselves in him. An anchor for the soul. Firm and secure anxieties will fade our fear about worries and stresses and tensions that we have in this life, and insurmountable problems can find their perspective before the power of the Most High God. Are you taking time to worship him? Is your heart turned towards him and worship and praise? Very often? Romans one talks about a time when people, although they knew God, they didn't glorify him nor give thanks to him. So their thinking becomes futile and their foolish hearts are darkened. But if we turn towards him, and we glorify him for who he is, and give him thanks for all he's done for us, light comes into our being and we begin to have an unquenchable optimism and a spirited hope that cannot be snuffed out.

This is the hope that comes to us then, through the power of the resurrection. Friends, in worshiping God, our lives are changed. We're opened up to Him and His grace and the work of His Spirit. If you haven't been taking time to worship him, can I encourage you today to set aside time in your daily life to find some praise music that ministers to you, that calls forth your heart towards worship, or go out into creation and the quietness of creation, and acknowledge that all of creation declares the glory of God, and revel and marvel in the wonder of it all, and have it call forth in you a sense of praise and worship over the goodness and kindness of God. Take time to worship him. Get your eyes off your issues, your concerns, your worries, your problems, and get your eyes on this one. Who is the great I am the Waymaker, the King of Kings, the one who is all powerful, through whom all things are possible. And in praising him the evil one will leave you, anxiety will leave you. Peace can come into your heart and in a time of worship, his power, his joy, his love can burst forth in your in my heart. And as this happens, we're forever changed. The more worshipful we become, the more transformed we are by the power of the spirit. By gazing on him, we're transformed from glory to glory to glory into the image of his glorious son.

Let me read our text again for you today. "All the depth and the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments, his paths beyond tracing out who has known the mind of the Lord, who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay them? For from him and to him, and through him are all things. To him be glory forever and ever." Shout for joy to the Lord. "Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, and praise his name. For the Lord is good, and his love endures forever, and his faithfulness continues through all generations." Father, we thank you.

We praise you for this time. Set aside to listen to your word. You invite us to be a people of praise. May your spirit continue to draw us into a spirit of praise, praising you in spirit and in truth. We thank you for all you've revealed to us about yourself and Your Word. Call us toward you, father, to

be worshippers and praisers of you. Call people into your family through your son Jesus and his shed blood, that your family could grow ever stronger here on the earth and your praise could go forth even more. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.