

Romans/Missions
The Glory of God Drives Missions
Romans 11:33-36

I want to read from, the Gospel account of Romans. If you have been here lately, we've been looking at Romans 8-11 for a few months, and now we come to the doxology at the end of his account of the gospel, before he says how we live as Christians, Paul describes the glory of God and His unsearchable ness, and how it leads to praise.

Listen as I read God's Word to you from Romans 11.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways for he who has known the mind of Christ, or who has been his counselor, or who has given him a gift that he might be repaid, for from him and through him, and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Let's pray for one more moment. Heavenly father, give us. We pray not only ears to hear, but a heart to respond to all that you're saying to us. And we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Please be seated.

The theme today is very simple and that is the praise of God drives missions or the gospel, and the glory of God revealed in the gospel. His justice and his mercy drives us to missions throughout the entire world. We're going to focus on doxology for a while. First. Nine years ago. Almost exactly. We were singing one day in our family before supper with our children and grandchildren nearby, and we had at that moment a two year old, two years and plus maybe a month.

And she heard us sing the doxology as our blessing before the meal for the first time. First time it really registered. That is to say, you know, little children love music and she loves music. And she heard the harmonies in her ear and you could see her eyes grow wide. And as we finished singing, she said, Praise God again, meaning, that was awesome.

Let's do that again. That's what little children do. Let's do that again. Let's praise God again. Yes. Let us praise God again. Praise God for your family. And if you have no family, praise God for your friends. Praise God for health. And if your health is poor. Praise God for the medical establishment. Praise God if death looms because you have the hope of eternal life through Christ.

Praise God! Some people find that difficult. Secular people say, how can I praise God when the universe is fundamentally tragic? You know, the hero always dies at the end. And by the way, did you hear that the sun is going to explode in 7 billion years and swallow up all the planets and burn away the atmosphere? We praise God in such a time.

Well, Paul didn't know about that. He didn't know about the sun exploding or puffing out expanding. But he knew trouble. Paul did not praise God in some airy, frivolous, thoughtless manner. Paul knew personal tragedy. Paul, commissioned to preach the gospel throughout the world, was shipwrecked not once, but twice. God, how can you how can you let me be shipwrecked?

He still praise God. He was put in jail for no good reason. One person held him for close to two years, hoping for a bribe, and he praise God. In first Corinthians seven, Paul uses a word to describe himself. The word is unmarried. People think, oh, that means Paul's never married. No, unmarried means married and unmarried. It means either his wife died or his wife left him when he became a believer.

Still, he prays God. In Romans chapter nine, he catalogs the follies of Israel, the sin of the nations. Pharaoh hardened his heart toward God again and again and again, and the Israelites who heard the promises, the covenants, the decrees, the law saw the glory of God wanted no part of the gospel. And still Paul. Praise God in chapter ten, Paul said all day long.

God says, I have held up my hands to an obstinate and rebellious people. Look at our look at our banners. For everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13. We talked about it two weeks ago. Romans 10:15. How beautiful the feet of those who preach the good news. And Paul says, and yet somehow God's own people.

So I want no part of this, by and large, at that time. And Paul says, let us still praise God in chapter 11. In chapter nine, he recounts the tragedy of a family divided, you know, two children Jacob believed he saw did not Isaac, child of the promise. Ishmael not still he says, Praise God, when most of the people of Israel at that time rejected the gospel, Paul said, you know what?

When the Israelites see the Gentiles coming to faith, they're angry. And Paul says, Praise God! At least they're noticing. You don't get angry if you don't pay attention. Now, he says in this passage, you don't want to focus on this. God's ways are unsearchable. That doesn't mean we don't know anything about God. When Jeremiah describes human vanity and also describes who God is.

He says this let the wise man not boast in his wisdom, nor the strong man boast in his strength, nor the rich man boast of his riches. But let him who boast about this, that he knows me, that I am the Lord. That is to say, Jeremiah says, people boast about all kinds of things, but the best thing to know, to boast about is that you know God, which means God can be known.

Now Paul also says God is unsearchable, which means that we can know God, and yet we cannot fully know God. We can know that he is loving and just and merciful, but it's impossible to fully track his ways. God is simply too deep. His ways are not wholly hidden, but they're partially hidden from us. We cannot fathom or fully comprehend.

He's knowable, but not fully knowable. That's what the Bible says. Now, what do we know about God? We know certain things. Or stated over and over again, God is my shield and my great reward. God is my fortress. God is my strength. God is my rock. We know that God is strong and protect his people. He is my helper.

He's exalted in power. He's my everlasting rock. We know that God is good to his people. We also know that God is a judge. He is a consuming fire. The Bible says he's a righteous judge, yet he's also merciful. In the prophets, for example, in Josiah's call, he wasn't a prophet. He's a king. But he's speaking prophetically when he said to the people of Israel who were so rebellious in his day, he said, O people of Israel, return to God, return to God.

And he says, if you return to God the Lord your God, then he will not turn his face away from you, for he is merciful. We know that God is merciful, but we can't fully fathom God. We know certain things. We don't have to praise. Now, my children gave me a gift for Father's Day. That is surely the most intriguing gift they've ever given me.

It's something called story worth and I get on every Monday morning a prompt, and it's going to become a book. As I write an answer to 52 questions, they put to me, you know, about my childhood, about my hopes, my dreams, etc. and, and, you know, they're smart people. They know how to ask questions that kind of dig in.

And, and this weeks or last weeks was, what do people get wrong about you? Now, I'm not going to tell you what they get wrong. I'm going to tell you what I said. And what I said was, everybody gets everything wrong about everybody all the time because people are mysterious. We surprise ourselves. We see things like, why did I say that?

Don't we? Why did I do that? And you're married for five years or 25 years or 55 years, and your spouse still has the capacity to completely surprise you. You say things like, who are you? And what did you do with my husband? Who is this guy standing in? He looks a lot like my husband. He's like my husband.

My husband doesn't behave like that. So we're mysterious. We're mysterious to ourselves, into each other. And there reasons for it. Life is complex. We're after. We're after ways of life that seem contradictory sometimes where we hope to be both confident and humble. Don't we? We hope to be both tender and tough, and it's hard to work it out.

And so we don't understand ourselves so much. And if we don't understand ourselves, how can we possibly search the depths of God Himself? So we live in mystery, and yet we do not live entirely. Mr.. Because God gives us enough knowledge of himself and of us to tell us how to live in this world. So, for example, if you're at work and you have somebody who's underused somehow and you don't know how to handle it, how to handle their poor form, you know, well, I need to be merciful.

I need to be just. But how exactly you show mercy. Look, you've made this mistake. I need to tell you, I need to correct you. But try it again. Or when you say, for the sake of

this enterprise, I need to tell you you're being moved to another department or demoted or even we'll say goodbye to you. It's hard to tell.

We don't know how to live. We know that God is loving and just and merciful, and we try to follow it as best we can. Now for this sermon. I was rereading a book, a wonderful older book, 50 years old, called Knowing God by Jack Packer, and early in the book he cites something that came from another theologian named John McKay that gave a really helpful image, I think, of how much we know and how much we don't know and how it works together goes like this.

McKay says. Parasites. Imagine yourself living in a house that's by a trail or a road that many pilgrims or journeying people take, and you live in the house and it's a big house and it has a second story porch, and you can look down upon the travelers, and as they go by, you can tell them things.

You can say, listen, there's a Ford you're going to encounter, and the water is going to be like this, and you want to go around over there and you'll find a way to get through it. And there's supposed to be storms. If the storms come, there's a really thick forest up ahead, and you could take shelter in if the storm hits you.

And the trail is going to grow thin up ahead and you'll have to decide which way to go. And here's some hints about where to go. And so the person who's sitting up on the porch can say many things. He calls them Balkan ears, people commenting with their knowledge. But the people on the road are the ones who really know and have to make the decisions.

They may not know as much as the people on the balconies, but they know enough that when they come to the fork in the road, they make a choice. And they make usually a good choice. And when the trail goes through and they know the signs of which way the trail is, is going, and so they make their way, he says.

That's what it's like to know enough about God, enough about God's Word to live in this world. It's not enough to know the theory. You live it out day by day as you go through life, as you consider who is God and how do I live in front of him? Or knowledge, in other words, is essentially practical.

No matter how much theoretical or theological knowledge we may have. It's knowledge that teaches us how to live. We know how to live because we've seen God in action. We've seen God in action. The page of Scripture, which is not just an account of what he did, but it's also an account of what he meant by what he did.

The Bible gives us prophets and apostles to explain what God did. So we know, as in, you know, maybe you're watching a leader watching someone who's more gifted than you are at something. And we take in what they're doing. We say, that was interesting. Why did you do that? And then the leader who's trying to mentor you says, well, I did it because that's what God does with us.

He does things and he teaches us how to make sense of it. Now that humbles us because we don't know as much as we would like. And it consoles us because even if we don't know everything, we certainly don't. God knows more than we do. We can trust him when things turn in a strange direction. The first service we heard a different testimony from one of our missionaries who's in Ukraine and in Ukraine.

The churches are under attack by the Russians who invaded three years ago, and our missionary, who's here this week had to leave his church and go to Romania. What is God doing? The churches are just getting strong. What's going to happen? I've been kicked out of the place where I've been doing ministry for dozens of years. Well, what happened is he found that the churches were strong, and as much as his work is important, they can live without him for a while.

That's good news. He's also started churches in Romania and Transylvania, so that's good news. So we don't know what God is doing, but we know enough to trust him. We know enough to say, look, Lord, this doesn't make any sense. How could you allow this invasion to occur as the church in Ukraine is growing? How could you permit this?

And yet the church is remaining and other churches are being planted, and this consoles us and it guides us. God's ways guide us. We know enough from God's ways to live our life in front of him. Let me illustrate this way. The most common question I get here in Birmingham is this how long are you staying with us now the answer is, and I've only answered this question 14,700 times.

The answer is till July of 2025. That's been the answer for 15 months. And it remains the answer. And I will tell you why. Because in the vacillations of events, people say, well, what will happen if you really like us? Will you stay longer? No, I'm leaving in July of 2025. No matter how much I like you, I'm leaving and what if you get homesick and you just miss your family so much?

Will you leave us early? No, I'm staying till July of 2025. And the reason is very straightforward. God is a promise maker and a covenant maker, and he keeps his promises. And it's immensely clarifying for somebody like me living not at home for, you know, close to two years, because I said to my children, I'll be back in July of 2000, 25.

And I said to my grandchildren, at least the ones who are old enough to understand these things, I'll be back in July of 2025. And when I left Covenant Seminary, they said, doctor, do you're coming back? I said, yes, I am. I'm coming back in together now, July of 2025. And then somebody said, well, what if you really like to minister here, would you stay with us?

And I say, no, because I made a promise with the elders that I would vacate when or before the new pastor comes in July of 2025. So, you see, I'm not just doing this. Life is easy for me because I know who God is. He says he'll do things and he does them. And so if I say I'll, I'll do something unless, you know, providentially hindered then following my Lord, I don't know all about God.

I don't know why he makes all of his promises. I know enough to conduct my life even though God is unsearchable. There's enough that he reveals that we can live faithfully in front of him. Now there are many things we don't know. Somebody asked me just the other day, please explain to me then how it is that God grieves.

How can God grieve? He's all powerful. He knows all things. He ordains all things. How can he grieve at what he sees? He knew it was going to happen to you and say, well, I didn't see. I didn't see that coming. I said, I don't know, but I do know that when it says he grieves, he does respond to events in history and he is pleased when we love him and serve him and are kind to each other.

And he grieves one word, the opposite. We know enough, we know enough. We know enough to praise God and say to him, be the glory forever. We know that he is far greater than us. We know. But Paul says, who has known the mind of the Lord to be his counselor? The answer is no one. We can't say to him, hey, Lord, I notice something that I really think you ought to know.

He says, I already knew it. I thought I should give you some counsel on a decision you have to make. He says. That's fine. Thank you. I do not need counselors. We know enough about God to praise him. We praise him alone morning and evening before meals. After a good time, we praise him in groups. We praise him in our family.

We praise him in church together. We praise him for his creation. We praise him for flora and fauna, for the seasons, for the mountains and for the lakes. We praise him for the potential he put in this world that we have the privilege of developing. We praise him for the grandeur, the massive size, and for the timing us of his creation.

So this week, something prompted me to figure this out. Somebody made a comment about how big the universe is in the Milky Way and so forth, and I decided to calculate it out in terms of people to understand. I hope you understand. Anyway, it goes like this. Let's travel from Orlando to Seattle and back again. It's about 6000 miles now.

You take those 6000 miles and you multiply. You take that trip and then you take it 15,000 more times. And that's how far it would be to drive in your car to the sun, Orlando, to Seattle and back just 15,000 times. Okay, ready? That's 93 million miles. You all know that. Now let's make 93 million miles into a sheet of paper thickness.

This is now 93 million miles. Okay, so how big is the solar system? Well, now you only need 60 sheets to cross the solar system. That's pretty good to think. Okay, 60 times 93 million. That's not much. How far would you have to go in sheets of paper to get to the nearest star? The answer is you would need a stack of paper 100ft high.

And by the way, there's about 1000 sheets for two inches. Now, how many sheets of paper to take to cross the Milky Way? The answer is you would need a stack of paper 300 miles high.

Each one representing 93 million miles just across the Milky Way. Oh, and by the way, there's a whole bunch of galaxies. Like nobody knows how many, but it's in the quadrillions or quintillion, so nobody really knows. But it's a lot. So the universe is big. But here's what I love. Here's what I love. Some people think. Some people think that there are more connections in one human brain between the synapses and all the other features in the human brain. There's more synapses in one human brain than there are stars in the universe. So that's little universes, big and little. What do we say? We say Praise God, the creator. I hope you say that. Praise God now, I read recently about animals. I was visiting some animals and I was in a butterfly house and somehow as I looked at a butterfly, it recalled to me the phrase that animals and mankind stared each other across an abyss of mutual incomprehension.

And I stared at the butterfly and I said, honestly, I don't know what you're up to. I really don't, but I'm certain you don't know what I'm up to. And in terms of comprehension, maybe your pet dog can tell whether you're happy or sad. That's about it. But God has not let us. Let us reside in the darkness.

He has chosen to tell us enough about himself so we can say, I know his purposes. I know his plans.

And we can praise God even when we don't. We can praise God when we hear about a war that's slaying people for no good reason. We can praise God because Paul did as he was languishing in prison thinking, what on earth, God, why are you leaving me in prison? I'm the person who's the evangelist. The nations I know Greek, I know Hebrew, I know Aramaic, I know Latin, I'm the guy.

I'm a Roman citizen. If I get in trouble, I get out. You're leaving me here languishing in prison. But guess what? Paul wrote a few letters when he was in prison. Ephesians. Colossians. Philemon. God was doing something good even while he was in prison. Martin Luther said it this way. He said, look, God knows what is. He knows what should be.

He knows the path from one to the other. And we hate to admit that we're perfectly willing to say that God is more powerful than we are, but we hesitate to admit that he's more wise. We think I would do it better. I wouldn't let that happen. We do. We think that way when we tell a missionary story goes like this.

Short version. There was a woman who was a Bible translator. A lot of what we do is support Bible translation over the years. Bible translator. And she was translating the Bible in one of those languages. A very few people know, you know, Mandarin and Spanish have been covered a long time ago. We're down into the small languages. And so there's a woman who knows this tribal language, and she also knows Spanish.

And the missionary who's from America also knows Spanish. So they're going to operate in Spanish to translate into this language, the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into Spanish and into this language is so she's so happy that she found this woman. And

they started a work, and the woman died. And the woman eventually married another man. And they worked on translation of the Bible into another language.

And he had all of his notes ready and everything just getting started, and massive notes about how to translate everything in the Bible. And then a flood, sudden flood tore through their property and destroyed all of his notes and set them away. And then he died. And we think to ourselves, you know, I wouldn't let that happen. I don't know what you're up to, Lord, but I wouldn't let tragedies like that occur.

You tell you about an even sadder story was a man who was an excellent disciple maker. He was really good with small groups, you know, one, two, three people at a time. He could do that well, nurtured people. He could do a dozen at a time. He had a group of about a dozen. But he could also speak to crowds.

He was good with few is good with many. In fact, he would attract crowds, sometimes in the thousands. And some of them were interested in what he had to say, and some were just seeking, just wondering what's going on. And he was kind. His tender. He was generous. Also bold. He could also heal people. And he called for reform of his society.

And people were thrilled by that, and other people were opposed to it. In fact, the authorities in this society were choked with rage at his calls for reform, and his mere popularity drove them half crazy with jealousy. And so they killed him. And the three days later he rose from the dead.

And brought God's justice and love together as God has just. And he can't leave sin unpunished. And God is loving, cares for his creation, wants to bring them back. That's the worst thing. It's the most horrific thing that ever happened in human history. And yet it is also the greatest thing that ever happened. God's ways are unsearchable, but he's still always acting according to his nature.

And this, of course, my friends, is what gives us confidence to live as Christians and to live one more time. I said it before. I know this humbles us. It tells us to stop saying things like, I have this figured out when job finished his long cycle of suffering and then commenting about it to God, he said, I have uttered what I did not understand.

Therefore, I repent and dust and ashes. Let's humble ourselves, but let's also take confidence. We may not know what's going on, but God does. And by faith we're his children. And third, let us search the word so we understand his ways and how to live. Romans chapter 12, as you know, follows Romans chapter 11 in Romans chapter 12, just three sentences later, just three sentences after this passage, we're going to put the verses up here in just a second.

Paul says, this is how you live. Now I want you to look at these words and see that these words describe how a Christian lives, how Christian lives. Because this is what God is like, right? What does it say? It says, let love be genuine. Would you agree that God's love is genuine? Can we agree on that? We can, he says, abhor what is evil.

Hate what is evil? Does God hate what is evil? He most certainly does. Let us hold fast to what is good. Certainly the Lord hold fast, holds fast to what is good. So we know God. We know how to live. That's the idea. We don't know God. Per fitly, but we live lives of conformity to God as He reveals himself.

How does God love us? Well, he loves us so we should love one another. He loves us with brotherly affection. Is God's love cool or is it warm? What do you say? It is warm. And so we love each other with brotherly affection. Think about Jesus, who humbled himself and took on human flesh and became a servant, a slave, and died on the cross for our sakes.

The Bible says that Jesus tells us that imitating Christ, it's right there. Philippians chapter two. One of our banners at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. He humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross, and you should outdo one another. Humble yourself before the Lord.

Be humble with each other as the Lord was humble to you. And this is what Jesus tells us to do. Outdo one another in showing honor. We can't know everything about God. His ways are unsearchable, but we know enough to have a good idea about how to live and to praise him individually and collectively. James Boice, commenting on this, says in one of his books, no people ever rise above of their idea of God.

The gods of the Assyrians were cruel and the Assyrians were cruel. The gods of the Aztecs were cruel. The Aztecs were cruel. The gods of the Romans gave laws, and the Romans gave laws. And we worship a God who is loving and just. And so we are loving and just and merciful and faithful. So let's praise God. Humans are prone to praise local heroes.

You know, we praise politicians and athletes and entertainers and thinkers, so forth. They'll let you down every time. God will not let you down. The Lord is the one who deserves praise, and he does all kinds of things that are interesting. There's a man named Luhman Sana. he was born in Gambia and grew up as a Muslim, and he then moved to Ghana, which has a lot more believers, and he met some Christians there.

He eventually moved to United Kingdom and met more Christians. They moved to America and he met more Christians. He became a Christian himself. In fact, he became a teacher of Christianity and a teacher of Missy ology. And he said, there's a genius about Christianity. The genius about Christianity is that the gospel is the Bible is translatable. Now, why did he say that?

He said it because he grew up a Muslim. And Muslims say you can translate the Quran in other languages, but not really. I mean, if you really want to know the Koran, you got to read it in or in Arabic. There's no such thing as a true translation. A Christian say, no, no, it's not true. The Bible is translatable.

But what happens next? What happens next is that we then busy ourselves as modern Sana watched and saw, translating the Bible in other languages. Now he's a man who's

lived in several nations and in Africa and Europe and America, and he said, you know, what's interesting is as you translate the Bible in other languages, you have to make friends of people in those cultures.

And when you make friends with the people in those cultures, you are sometimes leading them to Christ himself in faith. And certainly you're nurturing them and you're leading them into maturity. And as you lead them in the maturity, you are raising up new local leaders organically. And when you translate the Bible in another language, those organically raised local leaders become more expert in what the Bible means than the translator, because they know the culture better.

And so you're constantly, by God's plan, giving away the faith and giving it to new people, new nations who are going to raise up their own churches. That's the genius. Now, of course, the beauty is not just that it's translatable, but that it must be translated because, you know, it has the gospel, it has God's story. As Paul says in verse 36, from him and through him and to him are all things there from him, because he created it there through him, because he sustains them there to him, because as all to God's glory and the greatest glory of God is the glory of the gospel.

And you know how it's worked out, don't you? I mean, think with me just for a second. What was the first city that was the first center of Christianity? You know the answer, right? Jerusalem. and within about 200 years, where was the center of Christianity? Not Jerusalem anymore. Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, Syria and Antioch. Cities spread around the Roman Empire.

And then where to go next? Well, next it went to Europe. It went to Greece, it went to Athens, it went into Switzerland and Germany and England and Scotland and other places represented here. And then it jumped to the New World. And as the gospel fades in Europe, which we heard about just a few moments ago, sadly it came to America.

And then from America, USA, it went to Canada and Mexico and down to Latin America and Central America, where there are more Christians, probably far more Christians in South America than there are in Europe. And you go to a place like Brazil where there's lots of Christians with lots and growing numbers of evangelical Christians, in fact, lots of Reformed Presbyterians, more there than here.

And they say we speak Portuguese. And right across the ocean is Angola, where they speak Portuguese. So let's take the gospel over there. And then the gospel spreads from Angola to other nations. And there's far more Christians now in Africa than there are in Europe, because it's all translatable. And that's God's wonderful plan. And people lay hold of it and we can lay hold of it.

Now, if you two weeks ago I talked to you about William Carey is called sometimes the founder or father of Modern Missions, that he translated the New Testament in the 35 languages. But a little bit before that, there were two other men that could be called the

Fathers of missions, and they were Danish men who finished seminary, and the king for mixed motives.

The King of Denmark, Frederick the Fourth, said to the seminary leaders, give me two of your best people. And they said, okay, we got two people. We got Heinrich Schell and Bartolomeo second Borg. I want you to say that all after me. Never mind Heinrich, PLU child and Bartolomeo, second Bulgar. And they went together to India. Southwest India, where there was an enclave of Christians, had been there for a long time, but not for a week, and wanted to strengthen the work.

It did not go well at first. They were trying to get a solid foundation and the work was slow.

The second ball, especially the leader, wanted to make sure he understood the mind of the people there very well so that if they converted to Christ, they would know exactly what they were doing, which wasn't always the case. In previous centuries. They said to him, stop studying the natives. The goal is not to understand the people lived there.

The goal is to share the gospel, he said. I can't share the gospel unless I know them. And then he started schools because he wanted people to be there, read the Bible themselves.

He looked for definite conversion and the nurture of indigenous leaders, and wrote all up and letters back home that spread all around Europe and became the forerunner of the missionary letters we have today. Now, he had four principles that we still follow this day the four principles. And I'm throwing them up on the screen for you with my little clicker.

Were church and school together? Christian is supposed to be able to read the Word of God and it has to be translated. People have to read the Bible in their own language, their mother tongue, their home tongue. And the gospel should be preached with an accurate knowledge of the people who are hearing it. So it's a real conversion, and that will raise up indigenous leaders.

And we still do that to this day. And we say, oh, the depth and the riches of God, because it all started with the gospel, which is transit, which is translatable and must be translated.

And we can be part of that. We can be a part of that. We can be part of that in various ways. We can pray. I hope you pray for your missionaries. We can pray and some of us can serve on a mission team. We have over 100 people on our missions team, and there's room for more. And you can go on a short term mission trip.

And perhaps somebody here might be thinking, well, maybe, maybe God's calling me to work outside of normal bounds, normal places, maybe even outside this country for the sake of the gospel. And by the way, our guide, which you can get if you haven't gotten one yet, has a string of questions, 10 or 15 questions for people who think maybe I'm

called the missions, you can look at that and talk to us about it, but everybody can play a part.

And when I think about playing our part, I think of David the King, who had as one of his great disappointments, a mind to do something for God that God would not let him do. Here's what it was. He wanted to build a temple, a house worthy of God's worship center. He said, I want to build a temple for God.

He told Nathan the prophet that Nathan said, great idea, go, may the Lord be with you. God came back that night and said, Nathan, before you tell people to do things, why don't you consult with me? I do not want David to do this. I want his son to do it because he's a man of blood. Saul was a man of peace, and I want my house to be a house of peace.

And David heard the word. You are not going to build the temple. I've been content to live in a tent all these years. You are not building me a temple. And he said, Praise God. You've also told me that my son would build a temple. And so I'm not going to build a temple, but I am going to accumulate.

You can read it in I Chronicles 29 tons and tons of stone and wood, enormous amounts of gold and silver to build this temple. And I'm going to rally all my people, all my leaders to this project. I'm going to tell them, look, my son is going to build this. Come on, let's go. Let's get it ready.

Let's prepare the way. And he says, this in I Chronicles 29. He says to God, you said no to me, but here's, here's what I want to do. He says, yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory in the majesty. For all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. And now we thank you, our God and praise your glorious name. But who am I and what is my people that we should be able thus to offer willingly? Who am I to accumulate stone and wood and gold and silver for this project? He says, I ask this because all things come from her hand and of our own.

We only give what is yours. You understand, David says. I'm only giving you back what's yours. I'm only giving you back the glory and the honor of the shores. I'm giving you back the riches that are yours. And that's our privilege. I don't know if you know this. I hope you really make good use of this careful, careful document that we have in front of us.

But we support missionaries. Are you ready for this? To 196 nations? There's not many more than that in the world. We get to do that. And right here this week we've had missionaries from Albania and Greece and Iraq. We're 6/10 of the population is now believers. 90% have been forced to flee and have scattered other nations where they're doing gospel life there.

But we still have work there in Iraq, in Europe, we have Albania. We have England in Scotland, an English speaking New Zealand. This week they're here. Greece and Hungary, France, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, also India in Latin America, Belize, Peru. Mexico, Honduras. Haiti, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Japan. This is who we get to support because the gospel has been translated, because it can be translated, because it must be translated, and because we have the privilege of supporting that.

So let's do that, shall we? In prayer, in giving, perhaps in action ourselves. Let's pray about that together.

Heavenly father, I pray that we would continue to be who we are. Missional church, we thank you for those who have gone before for 65 years of faithful leaders promoting the spread of the gospel throughout the world. We thank you for the missionaries that come here. We thank you that we can go to them with material gifts. Sometimes in person. We pray, Lord, that we would be a missional church because we're a gospel driven church. That gospel would transfix us that the desire to praise you would lead us to see that praise go throughout the world. This is our prayer. And Lord, now as we consecrate ourselves to you, may it be from the heart.

We ask in Jesus name, Amen.