

Week of July 1-7

## **WOW!**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Romans chapter 11

**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!**

**"Who has known the mind of the Lord?  
Or who has been his counselor?"**

**"Who has ever given to God,  
that God should repay him?"**

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

This is Paul's response to the amazing mercy of God displayed through Jesus Christ. For eleven chapters, Paul has laid out a masterful argument about how God takes sinners and puts them in right relationship with himself. He began with showing us our need for righteousness by making sure we knew that all have sinned and come short of God's glory. Everyone has missed it and no amount of good deeds will outweigh our bad deeds.

Having shown us our need, he turned to the cure: Jesus Christ. Through his death on the cross, Jesus made a way for our sins to be washed clean and for us to be declared righteous in God's sight through faith.

The blessing of being declared righteous is not the end, however, but the beginning of God developing the character of righteousness in us. As we worked through Romans 6-8, we came to see that not only did Jesus die for our sin but that our old self died with him unto sin. As I count myself dead to sin and alive to God, the Holy Spirit renders the old man powerless. I am freed to live and serve under grace, energized by the Holy Spirit to live in newness of life where nothing can separate me from the love of God, where God works everything together for my good, and where I am more than a conqueror in Christ.

Sadly, according to Paul, the righteous-by-faith salvation has temporarily been rejected by the Jewish nation, but this has not nullified God's plan and purposes. Rather, their temporary rejection has opened the door for the Gentiles to pour into the church and experience God's salvation. The outsiders have now become insiders. In time, though, Israel will see her error and return to faith in the Messiah and she, who has been temporarily on the outside, will come back inside. God's righteous-by-faith salvation is vindicated, for, as Paul notes in 11:32, "*God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*" No wonder Paul burst into praise. God's grace, wisdom, power and mercy are simply amazing.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** When's the last time you stopped and pondered God's amazing wisdom and mercy? Take some time to do so today and give God a standing ovation. Include Romans 11:33-36 (quoted at the top) in your praise response to God!

**Take-a-way:** *Sometimes, the best response to God's amazing grace is just WOW!*