

Second Hand Preacher 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 8 27 17

Romans 11:33-36

I'm having surgery on my thyroid in a couple of weeks. I met the surgeon yesterday. He was in his late forties or early fifties and he had an air of confidence about him. He was careful to let me know of the risks and that I was in control on whether to have the surgery or not. My thyroid specialist, who was probably in his mid fifties, also came off as very confident. He assured me of the benefits of having surgery now instead of risking that the now a little bigger than a golf ball size was probably only going to grow. Surgery now seemed to be the best bet. The point is I really needed to trust these two doctors who are among the best in the world. I really don't want to have surgery; but if I have to have it, I think I want these guys. They are not God, but I trust they are instruments of God's grace for my thyroid.

God is greater than any human and St. Paul knew that. He is teaching the Roman Christians the power of God. In Rome he is probably talking to a mixed Gentile and Jew community. He quotes both Isaiah and Job about how powerful and even unknowable God is. The Gentiles were used to trusting in many gods. Paul tells them of a God who created all things. The gods of the Romans all had flaws. This was evident in the way they could betray each other and take on too many human characteristics. Many were negative. Paul presupposes that we have an all knowing and all loving God. This God has three persons. He sent the Son who was like us in all ways but sin to save us from our sins. Paul preached repentance and conversion to a God who can handle our every need. Paul preached salvation through Jesus who has ascended to the Father.

As Christians, we hold that there is a first mover. A being who existed for all times that set our universe in motion. He created us out of nothing. He gave us free will that we can make choices. He knew we needed help, so he sent his only Son to be an example of how to live. He was miraculous. Unlike his unknowable Father, he was like us and could relate to our human condition. After the Son died for our salvation, the love of the Father and the Son brought forth the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are there to fulfill us. I pray my medical staff will use those gifts for me and for all they serve.