

Unsearchable Riches

Ephesians 3: 8-13

In our text today, Paul continues to expound upon the great mystery of grace, offered by the loving and gracious Lord to those who are undeserving. Having discussed the expanse of such grace and the obligation to be a good steward of the grace received, Paul goes on to discuss the gracious provision and purpose of the grace of God. Seemingly at a loss to adequately describe such grace, Paul declares it as the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Although written nearly 2,000 years ago, the text before us remains relevant and radiant to all who pause to ponder these words. Like Paul, those who are in relationship with Christ through salvation have received the unsearchable riches of His grace and are obligated to be good stewards of such grace. I pray, as we move through these verses, we will be reminded of the gracious provision we have received and renewed in our commitment to share this grace with those who have yet to receive this gift of God. As we examine the [realities](#) within the text, I want to consider the thought: [Unsearchable Riches](#).

I. A Devoted Passion (8-9) – Here we discover Paul’s passion for the grace he had received through his awareness of such grace and his commitment to share it with the world. Notice:

A. Paul’s Amazement (8a) – [Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given](#). We must not see this as a veiled attempt to appear pious and humble – Paul was genuinely amazed at the grace he had received. Being fully aware of the righteousness of God, Paul became keenly aware of his frailty and propensity to please the flesh. He remembered the man he was prior to salvation and the graciousness of God in coming to Him in salvation. In essence, Paul is utterly amazed at the grace of God being offered to sinful men, of whom he viewed himself as chief of sinners.

- That is quite humbling and convicting. If Paul viewed himself as the least of all saints, being keenly aware of the grace he received, how much more should we stand in amazement at the grace of God in our lives? Grace was extended to those who are undeserving. All that we are, or ever hope to be, is dependent upon His grace. Our standing with the Father is acceptable because of His grace.

B. Paul’s Discernment (8b) – [that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ](#). Paul was aware that this grace he had received was special. He described it as unsearchable riches. This has the idea of being “*unfathomable, unable to be traced out,*

inscrutable.” Rom.11:33 – O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (As we pause to consider such grace, it truly is unfathomable!)

➤ Again, one must consider the urgency Paul felt in regard to such unsearchable riches. This was a treasure beyond comprehension, and yet he was compelled to share the wealth he had received with the Gentiles. This grace was a free gift, graciously provided in Christ, but it was not a treasure to be kept to himself; he was obligated to share the treasure with others!

C. Paul’s Excitement (9) – And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. I love to examine the Epistles verse by verse. Bear in mind, this is a prison epistle, and yet one can sense the excitement and dedication of Paul through reading his words. Having received the unsearchable riches in Christ, he was compelled to share this treasure with the world, that all might see this treasure for what it is and experience the fellowship of the mystery – fellowship with the Father, through the provision of the Son! (Isn’t that an amazing thought? We have experienced such grace in Christ! We have the privilege and obligation to share this treasure with the world.)

➤ Paul affirms a core, biblical doctrine in the later part of the verse. As we discussed last week, this mystery had been hidden for generations. However, following the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan through the finished work of Christ on the cross, this mystery had been revealed for all to see by faith. One can also see that the provision of Christ, in His sacrificial, atoning death and triumphant resurrection, was not an afterthought with God – this was not Plan B. This had been hidden from the beginning of the world and was revealed in Christ as He fulfilled redemption’s plan! This great treasure of grace is centered in Christ!

II. A Divine Purpose (10-11) – As Paul continues to discuss the unsearchable riches, he reveals the divine purpose in such grace. Consider:

A. The Revelation of Truth (10) – To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. Prior to the work of redemption being completed in Christ, and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, the grace of God remained a mystery. Through the Old Testament, types and pictures pointed to the coming of Christ and the outpouring of grace, but these were just shadows of the fulfillment. While humanity, and even the angels in heaven, failed to fully grasp the redeeming work of Christ, now through the church this plan of mysterious grace had been revealed.

- One might ask – what is the ultimate purpose in all of this? Why does Paul reveal that the wisdom of God, the multi-colored, infinitely diverse wisdom of God, is made known by the church. I would offer two suggestions. 1) This was purposed for God’s glory and His alone. Who else but God could have provided redemption for fallen man, through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son? Mankind stood condemned in sin and had no way of reconciliation to God. God, in His grace, provided for our salvation. 2) The church stands as the culmination of God’s redemptive work. This was the plan since before time began. Through the church, the redeeming work of God is displayed for the world and all of heaven to see. [1 Tim.3:16 – And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.](#)

B. The Intention of Truth (11) – [According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.](#) Paul declares this revelation of God’s wisdom through the church was purposed of God in Christ Jesus. As with every aspect of creation and redemption, all goes according to the plan and will of God. As mentioned a moment ago, this is all done for the glory of God. Really, one should not expect anything different. Creation offers glory to God. The redeemed, the church offer glory to God. The angels in heaven offer glory to God. God’s eternal plan of redemption being fulfilled in Christ and the birth of the church reveal God’s wisdom in such a way that all of creation, humans and angelic beings alike stand in awe of Him and offer Him praise and worship! [1 Cor.8:6 – But to us *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*](#)

- This raises a compelling question. What is the primary purpose of the church? Is it evangelizing the lost? Is it edifying and equipping the saints? While these are important and even commanded in Scripture, I would argue they are secondary to the church’s primary purpose. Ultimately, the church must worship the Lord and reveal His wisdom for all to see.

III. A Devout Provision (12-13) – In the closing verses of our text, Paul reveals the provision available to all believers in Christ. This includes:

A. Assurance in Christ (12a) – [In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.](#) Paul declared that those in Christ possess boldness in Him. This does not refer to an arrogant or disrespectful boldness, but complete assurance in Christ. Being the recipients of His grace, we can approach the Lord with assurance for any and every need in life. Through Christ our Lord, we have the privilege of approaching the throne of grace with assurance that we will be welcomed and our prayers will be heard. [Heb.4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.](#) [Heb.10:19-20 – Having therefore,](#)

brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

B. Access to Christ (12b) – In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. This goes hand in hand with boldness, but it also reveals the abundant nature of this provision. We are not limited in our access to Christ. The high priest was limited in that he was only allowed within the Holy of Holies once per year on the Day of Atonement. We have access with confidence by faith in Christ – we are welcome to bring our requests before Him at any moment for any reason. Believers have unlimited access to the Lord and can commune with Him as often as we like. There is no fear of rejection when coming before the Lord. He stands as our Mediator and invites us to come before Him, making our requests known to Him.

C. Adequacy in Christ (13) – Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. It appears some of the believers in Ephesus were distressed over Paul's continued imprisonment and the difficulties he faced. Paul urged them not to faint over his tribulations; there was no need for discouragement or despair. While it may have appeared that things were out of control, Paul knew the Lord was working all things for His glory and the good of Paul and the church. This may not have been a desirable position, but the Lord remained sovereign and He would work through this situation for their benefit. Paul realized the struggles of this life were not to be compared to the glory that would eventually be revealed. *Rom.8:18 – For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

▪ In light of all we have discussed today, one can appreciate Paul's perspective. Life is difficult at best. Even the strongest of believers face adversity and pain. However, we one views these difficulties through the lens of the unsearchable riches of Christ, the struggles pale in comparison. Regardless of the storms we encounter, we are kept by His power and surrounded by His matchless grace. In fact, the storms we encounter and endure may be for the benefit of others. We are more than conquerors through Christ our Lord.

Conclusion: We have not even scratched the surface of the unsearchable riches in Christ, but I trust you have been encouraged today. We have received much in our Lord, and we must remember that to whom much is given, much is required. May we, as Paul, desire to share this great treasure we have received. Have you received this abundant gift of grace? Do you share in the unsearchable riches of Christ? If not, I urge you to respond the gospel, repent of sin and believe on Christ for salvation.