

Series: Ephesians  
Title: Unsearchable Riches  
Text: Ephesians 3: 8  
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**Ephesians 3:8: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;**

Paul dealt with so much more than I. But I do understand how Paul felt. To preach Christ to sinners bound for eternity is a weight so heavy it just can't be put into words. You are "on-call", so to speak, before God, 24 hours a day, 375 days out of the year. You never know the moment—day or night—when God will drop a word into your heart and draw you to his holy scriptures to search out the things he would have you to preach.

You constantly know that your brethren need you to deliver a word from God to them and to their lost children. We have close to 20 young people in this congregation. In a very short time they will be out of the house. I can't tell you the urgency in my heart to teach these young people the gospel before they are grown and gone. Since we don't have a place to teach them in this building—like so many of our brethren have in the places where they worship—it made me want to have the Fourth Friday bible class for our young people. I would do it every day of the week if we could. It is just that urgent.

Then occasionally there is someone you who the Lord is working on. One who, as scripture calls it—"opposes themselves"—who let you know that they reject the word you preach. So your heart is always aching for them; you are always begging God to have mercy on them; asking him to break their stony hearts and bring them to rejoice in our Redeemer.

Also, there is this—this is something I never knew till I was put in the ministry: as you prepare you have your brethren on your heart. Then you get there to find they have missed the services. I never knew how heavily that weighs on a preacher's heart till I was made one.

Then also you feel that while you are ministering to God's family, you are neglecting your own family; if you are ministering to your own family, you are neglecting God's family.

Simply put, you just have a heart to be faithful to your Master, to serve those he has given you the privilege of serving, and you know time is short, oh, time is short.

In addition to all of this, you constantly become more and more aware of your own total helplessness and total dependence upon Christ—Paul said, "unto me who am the least of all saints is this grace given" I never knew my sinfulness, nor my utter inability, like it has been revealed to me since God put me into the ministry. It grows, the more light Christ gives; it grows, with every new soul that joins us and each time one departs. The Lord told Ezekiel to preach to dry bones. God alone makes them live. Who is sufficient for these things? I stand amazed that Christ would use this sinful, earthen vessel to preach his glorious treasure, his person and work, "**Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.**" (Eph 3: 8)

Yet, with all those things being true, no matter the difficulties, this calling is the greatest privilege and highest honor that God gives. Paul called it "**this grace given that I should preach.**" To leave this calling to be the President of the United States of America would be a demotion. How could it be anything but a great privilege and delight to spend every day searching the unsearchable, mining for precious jewels in Christ, then get to deliver them to those of his household! My favorite time of all is standing here preaching the gospel to you. So I know a little of what the apostle meant when he said, **Ephesians 3:8: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;**

We have but one subject to preach and to spend our life pursuing: **The Unsearchable Riches of Christ**. Not only it that a good subject for the last Sunday of this year but always!

Unsearchable means the riches of Christ are unable to be calculated or fathomed, unable to be measured or comprehended fully, unable to be exhausted ever.

**Proposition:** Christ is an inexhaustible treasure of riches.

**Divisions:** 1) There are the riches of Christ's person; 2) There are the riches of Christ's Mediatorial work; 3) There are the riches he gives through the preaching of the gospel.

## **I. FIRST, BEHOLD THE RICHES OF CHRIST'S PERSON**

### **In the Beginning Before Time**

In the beginning before time when there was only eternity—**John 1: 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** What riches! Jesus Christ is the Essential Word. He was with God from eternity. And he is God.

Application: There are many who deny that Christ is God simply by not declaring this truth. Others outright deny it. If anybody comes knocking on your door claiming to be a Jehovah's witness don't give them an ear. They deny that Jesus Christ is God.

### **In the Beginning When He Made Time**

Then in the beginning when he made time—**John 1: 2: The same was in the beginning with God. 3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.** When the heaven and earth was made Christ was there with God. He made all things that were made.

Application: Behold, the unsearchable riches of Christ! Our Savior is our God, our Creator, our Upholder! He made all things and by him all things consist. He upholds all things by the word of his power. The winds and the sea obey his command, every creature and every law of nature all move at his command. This is our Savior, our Redeemer!

### **In the Fullness of Time**

Then in the fullness of time—**John 1: 14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

The Word was made flesh! Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect Man united in one Person—the GodMan—together in one!

Christ is the God of glory—the glory of the only begotten of the Father—dwelt in human flesh among sinners like us. How rich!

John said, "We beheld his glory." Moses saw God's glory but he saw him from behind, as he passed by. We are given eye-witness testimony from those who personally, face-to-face, beheld the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. Peter said this is not a fable; we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Christ is full of grace and truth—In Christ himself, in his person, is the fullness of the riches of grace and truth! He is grace and truth! The riches of the blessings of grace—justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, persevering, glorifying grace—are in Christ person, from the fullness of Christ's person. The riches of the

promises of grace-- light, life, strength, comfort, peace, joy—these are all in Christ fullness, from the fullness of Christ's person.

Likewise, Christ is the fullness of Truth. Christ is Truth. Truth personified. Christ himself is the Promise of God—2 Cor 1:20: For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Christ himself is the Righteousness of the law. The law was given to bring God's elect to its end, to its fullness—Christ is that end!—Ro 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Christ himself is the Gospel. He is the good news! He said, "I am the Truth!" Christ himself is the substance of the shadows and types of the ceremonial law (Heb 1: 3; 10: 1) Christ is the fulfillment of all prophecy. He said, John 5:39: Search the scriptures...they are they which testify of me.

Application: So here are some of the riches of his person. First, Christ himself, in his very person, is the fullness of the Godhead-bodily—he is God—all attributes of God so we can receive and understand God are in Christ; he is perfect Man—all the attributes that God requires so he can receive us are in Christ. Second, Christ himself, in his very person, is the glory of the Father. Christ is God the Father's delight! Thirdly, Christ himself, in his very person, is the fullness of grace and truth. And every believer can say, John 1: 16: And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. This is only a light survey of the unsearchable riches of Christ's person! Who can search the riches of Christ's person to the end? Not one.

Brethren, you've heard me say often that salvation is not in WHAT you know but in WHO you know. Our gospel is Christ himself. Our righteousness is Christ himself. Our salvation is Christ himself. We have been made rich by the unsearchable riches of Christ himself! Don't come to a system of doctrine, come to Christ himself! We will never exhaust his unsearchable riches.

**Illustration:** The first message I ever preached was, "Behold, the Lamb of God." That was 15 years ago. Every message I have preached since then has been, "Behold the Lamb of God." Yet, I have not scratched the surface. And after a lifetime, still, I will not have scratched the surface.

## **II. NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE RICHES OF CHRIST AS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND GOD'S ELECT: THE RICHES OF HIS WORK.**

### **Riches of His Suretyship**

From eternity, Christ promised God the Father that he would lay down his life for God's elect. Like Judah became Surety for Benjamin, Christ said of each elect child given him of God the Father.

Genesis 43:9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

This is why: he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; why the works were finished from the foundation of the world; how the kingdom was prepared for you, believer, from the foundation of the world. (Mt 25: 34; Heb 4: 3; Rev 13: 8) What priceless love for the second person of the Three in One to become the surety for God's elect!

### **Riches of His Unchanging Love**

Christ beheld us ruined in sin in Adam's fall. For generations, he beheld us hating him. He knew that even after he saved us sin would still be in us. At our best state we would be altogether vanity.

Application: When is the last time you or I laid down our life for the enemy who hated you most? Listen to these riches of Christ Jesus whose love changes not:

Romans 5: 6: When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Oh, the riches of Christ's unchanging, unchangeable, sovereign love for his people!

### **Riches of His Condescension**

Then there are the riches of his condescension to save his people. The infinite became incarnate! The Lord came down, down, down to be made a Man—the last Adam—to live as the representative of his people and to die as our substitute.

Hebrews 2: 14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him the seed of Abraham*.

What amazing riches of grace toward us are found in these words! **2 Corinthians 8: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.** Christ is the eternal, immutable, infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God who made all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible.

**2 Corinthians 8: 9:...yet for your sakes he became poor**—For the sake of all God's elect the owner of heaven and earth voluntarily became poor. He who is Spirit was made flesh; He who could not be touched was touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He who alone is worthy of all praise, made himself of no reputation; He who owned the foxes and the birds said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head"; He who is the Savior of men, was despised and rejected of men; He who holds the only joy there is became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Worst of all was the poverty and shame of the cross. It was utter poverty to be made sin for us and to be made a curse for his people. No other poverty involves such agony. He bore the wrath of God for a people who did not even love him. **THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A STEP DOWN SO LOW THAT WAS AT THE SAME TIME THE MOST GOD-HONORING, GOD GLORIFYING STEP OF ALL TIME!** Why did he do it?

**2 Corinthians 8: 9:...that ye through his poverty might be rich."** He makes his people rich in full, free pardon; in full, free righteousness; in full, free holiness; in full, free redemption.

Application: Brethren, can you put a price on these riches? Precious blood? Can you plumb the depth's of this rich love?

### **Riches of His Resurrection**

Now, behold the riches of his resurrection. By becoming least he highly exalted God. Therefore, God also highly exalted him by making him the greatest.

Philippians 2: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11: And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Though we did not know it, this is what he did for us in raising him from the dead.

Ephesians 2: 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:  
7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

His rising secured eternal life for his people in this life. And it guarantees our bodies shall receive a glorious resurrection after this life. He is the firstfruits of them that sleep. Because he arose we shall arise.

**Illustration:** We could go on and on. Preaching Christ is to preach the face of a diamond. When you turn a diamond there are all these many, many faces of the same diamond. So it is with Christ. Every word of this book, every subject we look into, is another face of the unspeakable gift. We will be studying Christ for eternity and never exhaust these riches.

### **III. HERE IS OUR LAST POINT THE RICHES HE BESTOWS THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THESE RICHES OF CHRIST.**

#### **Riches of His Gift of Preachers**

As he ascended, he gave gifts to men—oh what riches! He gave “some apostles, some pastors and teachers,” for the building up of his church till all his redeemed be brought into the unity of the faith. (Eph 4: 10-16)

#### **Riches of His Advocacy with the Father**

How about these riches! There he sits at the right hand of the Father advocating for his people. He says, “Father, that one is mine. Don’t destroy him. I’m about to send my gospel to him and make him a new creature in my blood.” What a treasure house of riches is his intercession for us!

#### **Vain Riches**

So he sends us the gospel. There we are seeking this world’s riches. This world promises all kinds of “fools gold”: money, gold, silver, houses, cars, stuff, stuff, and more stuff; the riches of: power, honor, position, applause, prestige before men; the riches of vain religion: power and position in religion, self-obtained righteousnesses, mercenary rewards, and on and on. Having these earthly riches we had no need of Christ. We were like the man in the parable:

Luke 12: 19: And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20: But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21: So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

This is why Christ said,

Matthew 19:24: It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Yet, all the riches of this world—combined—are worthless compared to the riches of Christ. Die without Christ and all your earthly riches shall be a witness against you.

James 5: 3: Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.

Listen to Christ’s words,

Revelation 3: 17: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;

## **Riches of His Grace**

The very purpose for which Christ sends his preacher to declare these unsearchable riches of Christ is to tell poor, bankrupt, sinners in the poverty of sin, that all Christ's riches shall be yours freely through faith in Christ.

**Illustration:** Take one of the richest men in the world—Bill Gates for instance. Imagine he sends messengers throughout the world seeking the poorest men they can find. He says, “Tell these poor, poor people that if they will turn from trying to make a living for themselves, turn from their savings accounts and put all their trust in me then I will freely provide all they need all their lives; I will freely give to them all my riches.” You look at what you call your wealth, your earnings—then look at his. You say, “Nobody in his right mind would reject this good news.”

Christ is more rich than all the Bill Gates' of this world combined. He sent me to you with this good news: turn from your self-enriching works, turn from what you call life, turn from your savings account of law-keeping and religious works and vain thoughts that you call riches. Repent and believe on Christ and all the unsearchable riches of Christ shall be yours.

As I am declaring this good news, when my Master speaks in power to your heart, he purges the conscious of his child: you look at your filthy-rag righteousnesses then you look at his riches of perfect righteousness and holiness. He makes you come to yourself, saying, “I have been a madman to reject the unsearchable riches of Christ for this nothingness that I call riches.” You fall at his feet in thankful praise and adoration for his unspeakable gift.

This is the purpose for which I am sent to declare the riches of Christ. I am sent to tell you that by simply turning from your tattered rags, by simply believing on Christ, his riches shall be your riches. As I am preaching the Holy Spirit comes and decks his child in his riches: the riches of light and life and faith, the riches of free justification, the riches of his perfect righteousness, the riches of his perfect holiness, the riches of adoption and sanctification, the riches of his sovereign power to protect and guide you persevering riches, the riches of strength, comfort, peace, and joy, and at last the riches of glorifying grace, eternal glory with Christ himself.

Romans 8: 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

## **Let me wrap this up by speaking to everyone under the sound of my voice.**

First, if there is a sinner, here who thinks, “I am too lost? Too sinful? Too powerless?” Then you are perfectly qualified to come to Christ. Christ said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Mark 2: 17)

“What do I need, preacher, to come to Christ? Do I need tears?” No, you don't need fake tears. “Do I need to prepare myself?” No, Christ has done it all for his people and in you if you can come to Christ. “Do I walk an aisle and confess my sins to you preacher?” No, flee to Christ in your heart, confess your sins to him and ask him to have mercy on you. You need nothing but Christ himself.

“Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream,  
All the fitness he requireth,  
Is to feel your need of him:  
This he gives you;  
'Tis his Spirit's rising beam.”

He commands all who believe on him to make it known publicly in believer's baptism. If you would like to confess Christ in water baptism then tell me; we will set a date.

Secondly, if there is a sinner here who still lusts after the riches of this world rather than Christ, let me just say, how foolish you are! Christ said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mt 16: 26) Oh, may God grant you a right mind! Go home and download this message and listen again. Perhaps the Lord will turn you from your "fools gold" to the Pearl of great price!

Lastly, to you believer, let me ask this, "Has your life become cluttered?" Let me give you one word to simplify it: "Make Christ the one pursuit of your life." All the unsearchable riches of God are found in Christ himself. He says to you who believe on him, "all things are yours;...And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Set your affection on nothing but the unsearchable riches of Christ himself. (1 Cor 3: 21-23; Col 3: 1-3; Mt 6: 33)

Brethren, we will spend eternity learning of Christ's riches. They will still appear unsearchable, even then, when we behold how greatly Christ has dispensed grace to his people; when we behold how large Christ's kingdom is; when we behold how many sinners he has saved and maintained by his riches; when we behold how richly and fully Christ has provided for his people all our days; we stand amazed at the honor and glory to which Christ shall raise us and adorn us by his riches. We have been made rich in his unsearchable riches. All in Christ our Treasure! Oh, Thank God for his unspeakable gift!

**Amen!**