

“The Unsearchable Riches of Christ”
Ephesians 3:7-13
Pastor David Frampton

Introduction:

1. A passage such as our text shows the meaning of true spirituality. As we read these words, we listen to a man of true humility, love for God and others, a deep confidence in the Lord, and a joyous excitement for the message of the gospel. Here is a man who knows the Lord and wants others to know him, too. What makes Paul have such true spirituality?

2. Our text reveals the answer to this question. By God’s grace Paul knew the glory of Jesus Christ and his own desperate unworthiness apart from Christ! On the one hand you can sense his enduring anguish over his former way of life. Here he calls himself “less than the least of all God’s people”, or as he wrote in another place, “the worst of sinners”. On the other hand, he had grasped the glory or significance or value of Christ. He was a man with high Christ-esteem. So he gladly proclaims “the unsearchable riches of Christ”.

Illustration: Consider the prayer that George Whitefield often repeated. “Anoint my stammering tongue to tell thy love immense, unsearchable!”

3. John Calvin began his Institutes of the Christian Religion with the following concept. “Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and ourselves... So long as we do not look beyond the earth, we are quite pleased with our own righteousness, wisdom, and virtue; we address ourselves in the most flattering terms, and seem only less than demigods. But should we once begin to raise ourselves to God, and reflect what kind of Being he is, and how absolute the perfection of that righteousness, and wisdom, and virtue, to which, as a standard, we are bound to be conformed, what formerly delighted us by its false show of righteousness, will become polluted with the greatest iniquity; what strangely imposed upon us under the name of wisdom, will disgust by its extreme folly; and what presented the appearance of virtuous energy, will be condemned as the most miserable impotence.” [Calvin, *Institutes*, Vol. 1, pp. 37-39] May God give us grace to see Christ clearly and ourselves in awesome need of him.

Exposition:

I. The Lord Jesus Christ is very rich!

Comment: The apostle uses a word that is only used three other times in the Scriptures — “unsearchable” (Job 5:9; 9:10; Rm 11:33). It means, “what cannot be tracked out” or “footprints that cannot be tracked out”. [Morris] The Bible gives glimpses of his richness, though we fully cannot know it. Let us think about Christ’s riches.

A. He is rich in himself.

1. The Lord is rich in character—in kindness, tolerance and patience. Rm 2:4
2. Jesus Christ is rich in wisdom and knowledge. Col 2:2-3
3. Our Lord and Savior is rich in grace. Eph 1:7
4. The Lord Christ is rich in glory. Eph 1:18; 3:16; Ph 4:19

B. There are ways the God declares that Christ is exceedingly rich.

1. You know he is rich, because He is the heir of all things. Ps 2:7; Heb 1:2;

Rev 11:15

2. You know he is rich, because He has “an open table” to satisfy all living things. Ps 104:24; 145:16; Is 55:1; Col 1:17
3. You know he is rich, because He is the source of every spiritual blessing. Christ is the life and soul of the Christian’s life and comfort. Col 2:9-10; Jn 1:16
4. You know he is rich, because of the “rent” that is due him. Ac 10:42
5. You know he is rich, because of the sins he is able to forgive. 1 Cor 6:9-11
6. You know he is rich, because of the gift that he gives to his people. Jn 6:35; 7:37-39

II. The task of the church and the Christian ministry is to preach the good news of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

A. The world is filled with ministries and churches that are falling short of their calling. Our job is to preach the good news of Christ. Anything else will lead to spiritual poverty.

1. You can’t build a church around people, because they change, move and die.
2. You can’t build a church around beautiful buildings, because they decay, become dated, or the surrounding neighborhood declines.
3. You can’t build a church around causes, because what interests one generation is BORING to another.
4. You can’t build a church around human traditions and rules, because form with spiritual life is repulsive.
5. You can’t build a church around experiences, because they fade and/or create a lust for greater experiences.
6. You can’t build a church around doctrines, because though they speak of life, they are not life-giving, and because an overemphasis on any particular doctrine produces “spiritual monsters”.
7. You can only build a church around the Lord Jesus Christ, because he is very rich and gives his riches freely to his people.

B. It is the job of every preacher and church to proclaim Jesus Christ.

1. That is the only way to save and to win souls. Ac 4:12; Jn 17:3
2. That is the way to give poor souls the hope of glory. Col 1:27
3. That is the way to oppose sinfulness. Rm 13:14
4. That is the way to have “20/20 vision. Ac 20:20-21
5. That is the way to be free from bloodguilt. Ac 20:26-27

Application:

1. Has God granted to you a spiritual sense or knowledge of the unsearchable riches of Christ? Don’t leave this building without seeking it!
2. Do you have pleasure in the riches of Christ? Are you rejoicing in all that he is for you?
3. Are you telling others the good news of the unsearchable riches of Christ?