

I. Introduction:

- A. The year is 1859; the place is somewhere in the wilds of Northern California.
1. An old, solitary prospector is leading his equally-old donkey through some unchartered wilderness.
 2. The man has a dream, a rifle, a pick and a shovel, and a pot for boiling his coffee – but very little else.
 3. As he walks deep into a box canyon, his well-trained eye sees a little color emanating from a protruding rock face.
 - a. Taking his pick, he chops at it for a few minutes, concluding that it is, indeed, a tiny vein of gold.
 - b. After unloading and hobbling his animal, he begins to investigate his find a little more closely.
 - c. After a further few days of hard work he finds that the tiny vein of gold leads to a bigger artery.
 - d. Then after weeks of back-breaking work he realizes that he has a claim to the richest gold strike in human history.
 4. With each swing of the pick more gold is revealed, and the seam seems to grow, going on for ever.
 5. There is silver, too, and other minerals with which he is unfamiliar.
 6. Almost overnight this once poor prospector has become one of the richest men in the world.
 7. And the fact is, he has no idea exactly how much gold there is in this mountain & how rich he has become.
 8. Unlike every other gold strike ever made, this vein goes on for ever – it is totally unsearchable.
- B. In this letter, the Apostle Paul praises God for permitting him to be a minister of the gospel.
1. He has been called to preach the *“mystery of Christ”* – the message that non-Jewish Ephesians can be made partakers of God’s eternal salvation.
 2. *“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.”*
 3. Notice that Paul calls the subject of his ministry *“the unsearchable riches”* of Christ.
 4. And that is **my** subject this morning, even though I know myself to be totally unworthy of the challenge.
 5. We are speaking of the **riches of CHRIST** – the eternal Son of God; the Second Person of the God-head.
- C. Let’s say that you have a small safe hidden in your house, full of gold coins and silver rounds.
1. There are experts and catalogues which could easily tell me the exact value of your riches.
 2. But the truth is, I don’t need those catalogues to know that, generally speaking, your safe is full of wealth.
 3. On the other hand I have boxes and albums full of collectable postage stamps. What is the value of those?
 4. My riches don’t equal yours, and in fact, my riches aren’t even of the same kind as yours.
 5. Similarly the riches of Christ cannot be compared to any other kind of wealth – gold, silver, old paper.
 6. Not even the Bible contains catalogues with which to estimate the value of *“the unsearchable riches”* of Christ.
- D. Paul was in Roman chains when he wrote this letter back to Asia and the city of Ephesus.
1. I don’t know what he had recently seen or experienced, but for some reason his heart was filled with this idea of *“riches”* – this letter is replete with references to the riches which are in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 2. In **chapter 1** he writes, *“Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **RICHES** of his **GRACE**...” – 1:7.*
 3. Later in that chapter he praises God for those saints, *“making mention of you in my prayers that... the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the **RICHES** of the **GLORY** of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to ward word who believe...” – 1:16-19.*
 4. In **chapter 2** he makes that immortal statement: *“But God, who is **RICH** in **MERCY**, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
 - a. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
 - b. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*
 - c. *That in the ages to come he might shew **the exceeding RICHES** of his **GRACE** in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

- d. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*
e. *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*"
5. Then here in **chapter 3** after saying "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," he adds,
a. *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
b. *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
c. *That he would grant you, according to the **RICHES** of his **GLORY**, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man..."*
- E. As born again and adopted children of God, we have been made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
1. That means all which Christ possesses, as the eternal Son of God, He is sharing with us – the fortune of eternity – the riches of Heaven.
2. Our name is associated with wealth of a universe a billion times bigger than this tiny planet.
3. But.... the wealth of the universe is not to be compare to the riches of **God's grace**, the riches of His mercy and riches of **His glory**.
4. This is wealth a different kind and quality than gold and silver.
- F. And they are further described as "*unsearchable.*"
1. This Greek word is used only twice in God's word – here and in **Romans 11**.
2. In **Romans**, after reminding us that God hath concluded the whole world in unbelief, and before saying "*who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*"
3. Paul said, "*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.***"
4. The riches of Christ are "*past finding out;*" they are "*unsearchable;*" they are so deep and so rich that there is no way to measure them.
5. **These** were the riches Paul was sharing with Gentile sinners like us.
6. **These** are riches **available to you** if you will just surrender to God's will in repentance and faith.
a. But the truth is, none of us will ever come to fully understand them.
b. We will never know how fortunate we really are.
c. They are beyond us, and probably will remain so – even after we are glorified and taken into the Lord's physical presence.
- G. In my fictitious story, I said that our prospector found a vein of gold, along with silver and some other stuff.
1. The man knows and recognizes only gold and silver; he casts aside the other material as interesting but unimportant.
2. As the years pass, and he digs deeper into his mine, his wealth continues to increase.
3. He has more of the things of this world than he could ever use, spend or even judiciously share.
4. And then in 1870 a college professor comes by and tells him that he has a pile of **Californium** at the mouth of his mine.
5. The man tells him that the stuff is worth approximately \$25 million per gram.
6. What had been an inestimable fortune, now has exceeded all logic.
- H. This begins, perhaps, to illustrate the spiritual riches to which Paul is referring.
1. Not only is there **the obvious** – the **forgiveness** of sin and **eternity** in heaven – things of **infinite value**.
2. But the actual riches of Christ are infinitely beyond that.
3. They are truly unsearchable, unfathomable, unknowable, inscrutable.
4. And yet the child of God will enjoy these blessings for ten thousand years, ten million years and into ultimate eternity.

- I. I will not pretend to be able to describe or explain what the Lord says is *“unexplainable.”*
 1. In fact I should conclude my message right now, because I have made my desired point.
 2. But for the sake of a Sunday Morning Sermon, let me take you back to the three great riches which Paul has said are *“unsearchable.”*
 3. I probably can’t add anything to what you already know about them, but I highlight them nevertheless.
 4. With what little we **can know**, and with what we **do know**, let us **praise God** for His unsearchable riches.

II. The RICHES of CHRIST HIMSELF are unsearchable.

- A. Please cast your eye down the chapter to ***Ephesians 3:14-19*** – *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
 - 1. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*
 - 2. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*
 - 3. And to know the love of CHRIST, which PASSETH knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”*
 4. Here Paul points to the **unsearchable love of Christ** – it passes the **extent** of human knowledge and passes even the **ability** of human knowledge.
 5. But other than the Biblical glimpse we have of Christ’s 3½ year ministry, it’s not just His love which is a mystery, it is everything about Him.
- B. What can you tell me about the **beauty** of Christ, or His **sense of humor**, or the depths of His **knowledge**?
 1. And what about His **hatred**? Can you grasp His hatred?
 2. I don’t believe that I can, because I don’t fully understand His love or His holiness.
 3. Don’t we as human beings all hate different things in different ways and to different degrees?
 4. You hate *“abortion,”* but do you hate it the same way as the mother-in-law whose daughter was forced to have an abortion by her husband? Do you hate that husband? With what kind of hatred do you hate him?
 5. You say that you hate *“bullying,”* but what about that man who bullied your son into committing suicide? Don’t you despise **that bully** differently than you do other bullies?
 6. You and I love and hate through sin-corrupted hearts.
 7. We can’t begin to understand what must flow through the holy and perfect heart of the Son of God.
 8. He hates those sins which He sees in you.
 9. Hell is an expression of His hatred, but so is the cross. Can you explain the hatred contained in the cross?
- C. *“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.”*
 1. What was our Saviour doing in the eternity before He created of the world?
 2. What was in His mind when He spoke the universe into existence, and what was His purpose?
 3. Was He our Saviour before His crucifixion? As a matter of fact He was. Now explain that.
 4. What was it in the heart of the Son to agree to become a blood-covered sacrifice to save your soul?
 5. Was it logic; was it entirely emotional? Explain the emotions of God if you can.
- D. I have a 23 volume set of books, occupying 5 feet of my library shelf, called *“The Biblical Illustrator.”*
 1. Those books contain 95,000 references to sermons and illustrations on every verse in the Bible.
 2. It took Joseph Excell 30 years toward the close of the 19th century to bring all those references together.
 3. On ***Ephesians 3:8*** he has 22 pages of notes in tiny 7 or 8 point type.
 4. I skimmed through those notes and came away with as blank a mind as had before I began.
 5. There has never been a scholar, theologian or preacher who has been able satisfactorily expose the unsearchable riches of Christ.
 6. I thought about reading to you some of the three dozen outlines that Spurgeon, Martin, Ryle, Mitchell, Stratton and the others put together.
 7. But what would be the point? They only scratch the surface as I am doing.

III. Paul refers to the inscrutable Person of Christ and also to the unsearchable riches of His GRACE.

- A. **Ephesians 1:3** – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*
1. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*
 2. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the **riches of his grace.**”*
- B. As I was thinking about wealth and riches, it occurred to me that they touch people differently.
1. Let’s say that I have a Canadian stamp worth \$10,000. I don’t, but I’m making an illustration.
 2. What is the value of that stamp to my wife or even to my physical body?
 - a. If I ate it would it sustain my life for a week? It has no **nutritional** value. It has no **intrinsic** value.
 - b. Its value is found only in what someone else would pay for it.
 3. Three years ago, I was spending more time with my collections than I am today.
 4. I was looking for pieces to buy, and pulling out stamps to sell; I was going to philatelic meetings; I was enjoying my collections.
 5. My stamp collecting was of more value to me **then** than it is **today**.
 6. Even though a catalogue might say that my collection is worth \$10,000, it really isn’t.
 7. And the same might be said of that gold and silver you have stashed away in your safe.
 8. It has potential value, but it does not give you any immediate benefit.
- C. Now let’s say that I am planting a garden of vegetables – corn, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peas, etc.
1. There is potential value in that garden even when it is nothing more than seeds and starts in the ground.
 2. And there is the value of the hard work, the sweat it takes to create the garden in the first place.
 3. But when those peas and beans begin to appear, and as I pull them from the vine and eat them, their value changes.
 4. And what’s more, they keep producing, and some of the other plants mature, giving me more variety and more value.
 5. There is a difference between the wealth described in the check book or catalogue, and the wealth in the refrigerator.
 6. Furthermore, there is greater value in what we might call **“on-going wealth.”**
 7. The unsearchable riches of Christ are of the last variety – extending from today and on into eternity.
- D. In Christ, *“we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”*
1. Grace, the unmerited favor of God, is of infinite value for a number of reasons.
 2. Not the least of which is that it will **never diminish, tarnish or run out** of effectiveness.
 3. There is no **“expiry date”** or **“best by”** date on the grace of God.
 4. Again, **Ephesians 2** – *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew **the EXCEEDING riches of his GRACE** in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*
 5. In **Philippians** Paul adds, *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Christ.”*
 6. It is because of grace that we have a mediator, an intercessor, who is still applying the blood of His sacrifice to our on-going needs.
 7. Sinners are **saved by grace** and **kept by grace**; we have been **blessed by grace** and will continue to be blessed by grace – **for all eternity**.
 8. The exceeding riches of Christ’s grace are unsearchable and unending.

IV. And that points me to my last point – the riches of CHRIST’S REWARDING GLORY are unsearchable.

- A. Here in **chapter 3** after saying *“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 adds,
1. *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
 2. *That he would grant you, according to the **RICHES** of his **GLORY**, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...”*
- B. Years ago, on a Monday morning, I walked into the St. Joseph Cathedral in Montreal.
1. First, it was huge, but secondly, just about everywhere I looked I could see nothing but gold, silver and thousands of precious stones.
 2. The life-size statues of the saints were either covered with gold or were made entirely of gold.
 3. The golden altar was enormous and probably had to have a special foundation under it to keep the sanctuary from collapsing in on itself.
 4. But if all that wealth was converted into cash and was spent on the needs of people in Montreal, after a few months or years, there would be nothing left.
 5. How unlike the riches of the glory of Christ.
 6. They are so vast and unsearchable that not a million years of distribution will reduce it a single iota.
- C. What I am trying to say in all this is what Paul was saying.
1. *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you Gentiles...”* minister to you *“my knowledge of the mystery of Christ”*.... that you *“should be fellow heirs... and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*
 2. *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*
 3. *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.”*
- D. There is no greater life to live than that which is shared with us through the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. Laying aside everything else there is to enjoy as a child of God, there is no wealth in the world greater than what you may possess in Christ’s salvation.
 2. In fact, there is **nothing** of **value beyond** your earthly life – if you have nothing in Christ.
 3. But if you are a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, you are an heir of God’s unsearchable riches of grace and glory.
 4. The only alternative to these blessings and wealth is the poverty of an eternity in the Lake of Fire.
 5. *“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”*
 6. *“Repent before God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”*