

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

JARED MELLINGER

“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

I grew up watching the Disney cartoon DuckTales, with Uncle Scrooge diving into his vault full of gold. He was the richest duck in the world, and he kept his three cubic acres of gold in a large storage building called the money bin. He had unimaginable riches, but even Scrooge McDuck’s money bin had a bottom. His wealth was measurable.

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul uses one of the greatest phrases in all of Scripture when he refers to “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” To say that the riches of Christ are *unsearchable* means they are immeasurable, unfathomable, unable to be exhausted. The riches of this world are limited, but the riches to be found in Christ are without limit.

And these are the riches God wants us to spend our lives diving into as believers.

Ordinary, Unimpressive Leaders

To become more impressed with Christ, we need to become less unimpressed with ourselves. I find it remarkable and instructive that Paul refers to himself as “the very least of all the saints.” Here is a man of unique importance in world history: confronted and called by the risen Christ, an author of New

Testament letters, an apostle to the gentiles. Yet he considers himself not only least among the apostles but also the very least of all the saints.

This is an honest and God-honoring self-assessment. Mature Christians will always see more weakness, sin, and shortcomings in ourselves than we do in others. The gospel teaches us to take a low view of ourselves and our accomplishments. We do not feign humility; true humility is simply a matter of being honest about how lowly, unworthy, and unimpressive we really are.

There is blessing and freedom in knowing ourselves to be the very least. I love that the first generation of Sovereign Grace leaders has often spoken of being ordinary pastors. As a second-generation leader, I am prepared to take pastoral leadership to whole new levels of ordinary and unimpressive. Each

one of us should strive to see ourselves accurately, as the least of all the saints.

*No one ever has
or ever will tire
of delighting in
Christ.*

We Preach Christ

Thankfully, “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord” (2 Cor. 4:5). We are weak and unworthy; Jesus is majestic and awesome. We are poor and needy; he is full of abundant provision. And to every minister of the gospel, this unmerited privilege

has been given to *preach* the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The most challenging part of my job as a pastor, and the task at which I most encounter my weakness and inability, is seeking to unfold the beauty of Christ and the depths of his love for sinners. No ministry task is more exhilarating, challenging, and daunting than attempting to convey the unsearchable riches of the Savior. And yet, grace has been given for this purpose.

When Paul wrote letters to churches, his writings were full of Christ. When he preached, his sermons were full of “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). Richard Sibbes once said that the primary work of a pastor is to lay open Christ. The Puritans filled volumes with sermons describing the glory of Christ in the gospel because this is the pastor’s calling and the message most needed by Christians and non-Christians alike.

A Treasure of Great Beauty

This is why we are commanded to look to Jesus (Heb. 12:2), to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4), to come to him (Matt. 11:28) and to abide in him (John 15:4), and to seek the things that are above, where Christ is (Col. 3:1). The Christian life is lived believing, studying, and enjoying the riches of Christ. Are you applying your mind and heart to the study of the unsearchable riches of Christ? There is no greater theme.

Consider the unsearchable riches of *the person of Christ*—we are not dealing with abstract ideas and dry propositions, but with an actual living person. Consider the unsearchable riches of *Christ crucified*—the Son of God loved you and gave himself for you! Consider the unsearchable riches of *the risen Christ*, who triumphed over death that we too would rise with him. Consider the riches of his glory, the riches of his grace, the riches of his offices and names, the riches of his return, and his eternal reign.

He is preeminent in everything (Col. 1:18), the one in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), the one in whom the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily (Col. 2:9), the Savior who is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

He is a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, a stream of water in a dry place, and shade in a weary land (Isa. 32:2). He is the beautiful king (Isa. 33:17; Ps. 27:4), the beloved Son in whom the Father eternally delights (Matt. 3:17), the soul-satisfying bread of life (John 6:35), the treasure hidden in a field that we in our joy have sold all we have to attain (Matt. 13:44).

There's a treasure great in beauty
Far surpassing earth's great wealth
He is Jesus, Prince of Glory
Source of all grace, peace, and health
There's a fountain ever-flowing
Satisfying all who drink
He is Jesus, spring of joy
To all who hail Him as their King.¹

1. "HE IS JESUS." MUSIC AND WORDS BY STEPHEN ALTROGGE, 2003 SOVEREIGN GRACE PRAISE (BMI).

Searching Out the Unsearchable

The Christian's greatest responsibility is also his greatest privilege: to search out the unsearchable riches of Christ. No one ever has or ever will tire of delighting in Christ. The well of his glory will never run dry. Trends come and go in culture and ministry, but Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We must pray that our hearts would daily be directed, not toward the things of earth or passing trends, but to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ (2 Thess. 3:5).

There is simply no better way to spend our time and energy. No subject will ever be more glorious, more soul-strengthening, and more satisfying. Jesus lives forever to satisfy us with his love, to comfort us with his presence, to fill us with his joy.

God is calling the churches of Sovereign Grace to behold even more of the excellency of Christ than we ever have before. Let's press on to cultivate a deeper sense of the preciousness of Christ and the greatness of his love for us. Let's count everything as loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ (Phil. 3:8), and pray that we would grow in the knowledge of him (2 Pet. 3:18) for the glory of his name.

How do we view ourselves? The very least of all the saints. How do we view the pastor's calling? To preach Christ. And how do we view Christ? He is the king of unsearchable riches. Praise God; all that we need is found in Christ our treasure.

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