

THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

(Sermon Summary)

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Sunday Evening – 16th October 2022

Reading: Romans 5:12-21. Ephesians 1:7-8

These verses in Ephesians take us to the heart of Christian doctrine. Here we clearly see the plan of God for our salvation and redemption. The passage in these early verses of Ephesians 1 has moved from the Father to the Son. It speaks to us of His blood and His death. Christ's life is vital to our salvation and so is His death. He does not suddenly appear and immediately die. Instead, He lives 33 years before He dies. He has to live a full life in which He is tested.

1. What we have in Him.

These are not just factual statements that Paul is making. This is praise to God. We can see this in v6, v12 and v 14. This passage is not meant to trouble us but to lift our sights and cause us to rejoice. The grand design of God in election is out of our sight. The work of Christ is very much in our sight (See John 12:31-33). Christ is the centre of the Lord's purposes for us. He is the means by which He will bring us into relationship with Himself. Only the Son can do this work in all His uniqueness and singularity. His real life has to be proven to be genuine and His obedience has to be proved under great trials and through sufferings. He has to be tempted and have evil flung at Him. His loyalties have to be fully tested and He has to do His work surrounded by ignorant and hostile people. His life is not to be empty, pampered or sheltered. He has to conduct three years of public ministry.

When it speaks of His blood, this sums up His life that has been given up. The blood is the sign that the life has truly ended. Every act of public worship or private devotion in the old covenant required the shedding of blood (Hebrews 10:3-4). In the Passover there was the shedding of the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12:6-7,13). So too in the daily offerings and the Sabbath offerings. The various public festivals had blood sacrifices and so to did the various public expressions of private devotion such as burnt offerings and peace offerings.

Redemption was the price to be paid to deliver someone who was in debt. It had to be paid by someone other than the person in debt. Here it is the sinner who is in debt to God for all the breaking of His law. The Son pays the price of redemption in His own blood. His life is given as a substitute for ours.

Forgiveness is given by God. He is the offended party who has suffered abuse to Himself, has been insulted and wronged. That forgiveness is given on account of the Son having paid the price to redeem us from our sins. He does not give us this forgiveness in a grudging way but warmly and sincerely. We receive that forgiveness by acknowledging the part that the Lord has paid in securing our redemption. We see that without Him doing that work we are still under the law's curse. The Lord has found this way of salvation, which is lawful, willing, and total. He does it not by denying the true nature of our crimes against Him.

It is not without consequences to us in that we may have to make restoration, apologise, or even go to prison for the things that we have done and are now ready to confess.

2. The riches of His grace.

The benefits we receive from the Lord are measured out to us according to the riches of His grace. Grace is the mainspring for the provision of the blood of Christ for sin. There was and is something fundamental in God's character predisposing Him to be gracious and to do it with great warmth and desire. He has a willingness to show kindness to the supremely undeserving. He is disposed to be like this and to act like this. As such, these are riches of grace, and they abound. He shows a lot of favour, not a little. He forgives totally and freely, not with hesitation and reluctance. Despite the transgressions we have committed His favour removes utterly our guilt. He does not permit our sin to interfere with His desire to show mercy.

His forgiveness is not meant to leave us feeling fearful and insecure as though He might change His mind at any moment. His riches of grace mean that there is a deep and constant supply. God showers us with His love and felt affection. We are meant to feel assured.

The Saviour's blood is given to us out of a heart of deep love. The language of Romans 5 shows us this. It speaks of His mercy being much more than our sin (Romans 5:15). There is an abundance in Romans 5:17 and again a 'much more' to describe how our sins are blotted out. God's just anger is so much more overcome and pacified by our Saviour's obedience in giving up His blood for His people. He is not still frowning at His people, fault-finding and willing their failure, waiting a moment when He can judge them.

This is done with wisdom and prudence as a fruit in us. We are able to recognise and take heart from the clear principles according to which the Lord has acted. As we consider these things, it leads to thanksgiving and praise. We then want to do what is right for His sake out of our love for all the good we now see in His law. We refuse sin and we refuse false teaching. We have made wonderful discoveries and would not part with these for anything.