

**Ephesians 1: 7-10; “The Riches of His Grace”, Message # 3 in a series entitled –
“The Exceeding Greatness of His Power”, Delivered by Pastor Paul
Rendall on August 6th, 2023, in the Morning Worship Service.**

All of the blessings that we have been given as Christians, are given to us according to the riches of Christ's grace. In Christ, every Christian is a spiritual rich man. What does this mean for you personally? Let me give you 3 observations on what it means for every believer in Christ to have the riches of His grace.

1st of all – In Christ we have the riches of redemption; the forgiveness of our sins.

Verse 7 says – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...” From this verse, we need to see that Redemption is a doctrine which is very rich in meaning. It has its roots in Old Testament, in Israel's being brought out of their slavery in Egypt. Turn with me to Exodus chapter 6, and verses 6-8. “Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.’ “I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.” “Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” “And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.”

Notice how it was only the Lord who could bring the children of Israel out from under the burden of their slavery. It was only He who could rescue them from their bondage. He says that He would redeem them with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Pharaoh would not let the people go, even after Moses and Aaron went to confront him with the message from the Lord. But the Lord had promised that he would rescue them. We need to see that this is a picture of how we are redeemed from our sins. We are in bondage and slavery to sin. We need to be rescued, not only from sin's power and reign over our lives, but also Satan's power and His rule over our lives. In New Testament times, since Christ has come, God's promise is for all men everywhere. He can do this great thing and give you grace when you repent and believe in Christ.

When you repent, you are turning away from your sins, in order to begin to live a life of faith. By faith in Christ you take up receiving Christ's grace. As you receive this grace you can then follow Christ. When you believe in Christ, you are not only brought out from under the burdens of your sin, and being held captive by Satan. But God will also bring you into the “land” of your inheritance. He will bring you into the kingdom of God where all the blessings of salvation shall be communicated to you. These verses that we are studying are telling us that all believers in Christ really will come to realize that they have been redeemed and they are being redeemed.

This is what the Lord Jesus alone can do for you. He has laid down His life on your behalf, it is saying here, to give to you the riches of His grace. There was a very real need for Christ to purchase all these riches for you. Only He could satisfy the righteousness and justice of God, so that He could convey His mercy and His love to you. Look with me over at Psalm 49, verses 5-9. “Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?” “Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him – for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever – that he should continue to live eternally, and not see the Pit.”

Now, I want you to notice the confidence of these believers who are saying these things. That is, the sons of Korah. They were not trusting in their earthly wealth. They were only trusting in the fact that God had done this great work to redeem them. They are saying to us here today that no mere man is able to give to God a ransom for your soul. No mere man is able to pay the purchase price so that you would be released from your captivity and bondage to sin. No one could paid the price for all of your sins to be forgiven. No mere man can give you the prospect of God's helping you continually, in relation to your being becoming a New Creature.

The sons of Korah want us to understand, that we will not need to fear in the days of evil, when there is iniquity at our heels, which surrounds us. What does this phrase mean anyway? – The iniquity at our heels? Well, we know that it doesn't mean the effects of original sin. For original sin is something, the effects of which, we inherited from Adam. It is inherent in us from the moment that we are born, and it will continue in us until the day that we die. Indeed, it is the reason that all of us do die. Rather, I believe that the iniquity at our heels is the sins which we commit as believers, when we are actually walking through this life, and trying to keep God's commandments.

As we do so, we are sometimes still being troubled by the indwelling remaining corruption of our own heart in our walk with Christ. It bites at our heels as dog would who chases us. You are troubled by rich people who seem to have no problems. But you are troubled by your own sins also, as you reflect upon some of your actions which fall short of perfect obedience. Day by day you find these sins in your heart. And it is true that sometimes you will find these sins in your words and in your actions at certain points. Why is it that you do not have to fear in regard to this iniquity at your heels? It is because you are trusting in your strong Redeemer. It is because you are trusting in His great redemption, and you know that you are clothed in His righteousness.

It is good to remember the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 130, verse 3 – “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” “But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” And in verses 7 and 8 it says – “O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption” “And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” So I am trying to show you that it is only by the riches of God's grace that this confidence comes. No matter how much money or earthly riches you may possess, you will not be able to buy this great salvation of your soul. Nor can you expect the redemption of your body on the last day; the Day when Christ returns if you have not been redeemed.

But on that great Day, all of those who have been redeemed by Christ shall know the redemption of their body. All of the righteous shall receive their glorified bodies. Why? It is all because of Jesus Christ's Person and His work. The infinite value of His Person gives infinite value to His work. And His Person and work give infinite merit and power and glory to the great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf, through His obedience and His sufferings. In John chapter 1, verses 16-18 John says – “And of Christ's fullness we have all received, and grace for grace”, or “grace upon grace.” “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” “No one has seen God at any time.” “The only begotten Son, or the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

So it is the riches of God's grace which redeems your life from all distress. Your distress of thinking about your remaining corruption will depart, time and time again when it comes up, when you will think about Christ. Your distress will leave you when you will reflect upon the fact that Christ has fulfilled the law as your great Redeemer. Your disobedience at every single little or great point is covered by Christ's obedience at every point. Galatians 3: 13 says – “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.”

And in Galatians 4: 3-5 Paul says – “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” It is because of Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to you when believe. And His awful sufferings, His bleeding on the cross, and His pouring His life out unto death, on your behalf; this is how He paid the penalty for your sins. This is the reason that you are redeemed.

What was it that sustained godly Job in all of the trials that he went through? He lost all 10 of his children, all of his possessions, his health, and the approval of his friends, and even his wife? Listen to his words in Job 19: 25 – “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” “How my heart yearns within me!” This is why we look for Christ's Second Coming. It is that we will see the One who loved us and gave Himself for us, so that

we might be completely redeemed; body, soul, and spirit. But we are also delivered from all distress, even now, when we know that we fall short in so many ways, that Jesus is the perfect Man. He is the Man at God's right hand who intercedes for us.

2nd – The Riches of Christ's Grace abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

Verse 8 – “Which (grace) He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.” This verse shows us what particular care God takes to watch over us, and to watch over His own word to perform it in our lives. He is very wise and prudent because He makes His grace abound toward each one who believes in Him. God knows that we are complete in Christ. He also knows that there is much imparted grace that we need, even after the gift of regeneration is given. This is why He and the Father have sent the Spirit. He sent the Spirit to change and transform our minds, to enliven our hearts, and to establish all good in our actions.

If we are to become mature in living our Christian life to Him and to His glory, we must have the Spirit's working. And the Spirit's working in our hearts is all based upon what Christ purchased in His great redemption. Turn with me over to Titus, chapter 2, verses 11-14. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Now, you can see here that it was the riches of God's grace being shown to us in His mercy, through His sending of Christ into the world, that sets the stage for our being made holy in a greater and greater sense over time. And then our being made completely holy at Christ's 2nd Coming. It is His wisdom and prudence in making Christ the perfect pattern for our being righteous and holy. It was the wisdom of God to purpose to design to make us like Christ. It is the prudence of God to know how He can conform us to Christ's image, in our sanctification. It is because Christ lived the perfect life, and died for us, that we can learn to make progress in holiness.

God's grace, it says here, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. It teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly lives, looking for the 2nd Coming of Christ which will bring us to perfection in holiness. In the meantime, during this time of our earthly pilgrimage, the Lord it says here, will be redeeming us from every lawless deed. In other words, He will be delivering us from every evil deed by keeping watch over our soul, working in our hearts by His power, in connection with the truth of His word. And by His helping us in this profound and mysterious way, we will make progress in holiness.

And He will also be giving us grace so that we will become more zealous for good works. So, the riches of Christ's grace are applied to us in all wisdom and prudence in relation to answering our prayers in regard to our making progress in putting away sin, and learning to do what is right. Look at Psalm 19, verses 12-14. “Who can understand his errors?” “Cleanse me from secret faults.” “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” “Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

How wise our God is! How prudent He is, in making His grace abound to us so that we will actually take an active role in mortifying sin, and the habits of sin, in our lives. So that we pray to be cleansed of secret faults, and understand our errors, and be kept back from presumptuous sins, so that God will not let them have dominion over us. We need to realize that God's grace is greater than all our sin. His Spirit will give you wisdom, based upon the great redemption of Christ, so that you will be one of those who will be fearing God and turning away from evil. He makes His grace to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence, by turning our attention to the end of all of His blessed work of redemption.

He wants us to look the end of all His work in our lives. He wants us see that it is He who will bring us to that blessed and glorious end, of complete redemption. The Father very wisely and very prudently, brings us along in stages. He begins with the gift of regeneration which breaks the power of sin. He sets us free to live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Then there is the imputation of Christ's

righteous to cover all of our sins and all of our efforts at being righteous and holy. And then the last stage of the application of redemption will take place at Christ's Second Coming, at the end of the world. The apostle Paul says over in Romans chapter 8, verses 18-23: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now,"

"Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." "For we are saved in this hope." What is the basis of all this? It is that Christ Jesus has become our strong Redeemer, and will bring us to eternal glory and the perfection of holiness.

Then 3rd – We have the Riches of knowing the Mystery of His Will, which is found in the way that He gathers us together in Him.

Verses 9 and 10 say – "Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which he purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him." A mystery, in the New Testament, is something "that once was hidden and now revealed; a secret now open". (W. Robertson Nicoll) I believe that the mystery of God's will which Paul is talking about here is related to His purposes in how He gathers His people during this present Church age, and how He will bring us all together at the time of Christ's Second Coming. At that time we will be brought together as one body of the redeemed for all eternity.

This gathering began with the apostles and the early Church preaching the gospel to all nations. Look over at Romans 16: 25-27 – "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith – to God alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." "Amen." So, the mystery kept secret was the gospel itself coming to all the nations of the world; not just to the Jews. This was something that had been kept secret since the world began.

There were many hints of it in the Old Testament Scriptures. But it was not until Christ came and broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and making them into one new man in the Church, that the mystery really came to light. Paul says in Ephesians 3: 3 – "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power." This is the dispensation of the fullness of the times of the New Testament; that God might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on the earth – in Him.

And then at the time of the end, there is the mystery of the rapture and the glorification of the Church. 1st Corinthians 15: 51-54 – "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." "So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" This is how we shall all be gathered together as the whole body of Christ's elect people. Let us always be looking forward to that glorious day when we shall see our Redeemer face to face.

