

Rev George Macaskill - Ephesians 3:8

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Preacher: Guest Preacher

[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to Paul's letter to the Ephesians and we'll read chapter 3.

The Epistle to the Ephesians chapter 3.

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation as I have written briefly.

When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

[1 : 33] Of this Gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of his power.

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.

And to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his spirit in your inner being.

[3 : 15] So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and granted in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who was able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. And may God bless to us the very reading of his word.

We'll sing once more to God's praise this time from St. Sam's, Psalm 30, verses 1 to 8 if you're using the praise book, it's page 34.

O Lord, I will exalt your name, for you have rescued me, you did not let my foes rejoice and gloat triumphantly.

[4 : 51] Psalm 30, verses 1 to 8.

You did not let my foes rejoice and gloat triumphantly.

Lord God in need I cry to you, a new rich toward my health.

O Lord, you brought me from the grave, I saved my soul from death.

You holy ones sing to the Lord, sing out with joy through a voice.

[6 : 12] When you grateful this holy name, then praise him, Lord, great George.

Ponder God, a moment, life long his favor sings, no tears shed us throughout that night.

Joy comes with morning trace, I never shall be moved, I say, in my cross-pity.

You made my mountain firm and strong, when you, Lord, favored me.

But when you hid your face from me, my heart was terrified.

[7 : 48] To you, O Lord, I call the Lord, for mercy, Lord, I cry.

Let's turn in our Bibles to the chapter of God's Word which we read, the letter to the Ephesians chapter 3 and we'll read again verse 8.

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.

What exactly does unsearchable mean?

The original word is only twice in the Bible, once translated here unsearchable and on the other occasion it's translated past finding out, as it were beyond full discovery.

[9 : 37] The dictionaries give us alternative or the antonyms to give unfathomable, untraceable, inexplicable, inexhaustible, inscrutable, incalculable, ill-little.

Jesus Christ is God. Therefore, as we try to point out this morning, His attributes are infinite and eternal.

Without limit and without end, they cannot be measured. You cannot say they're this great or otherwise you're limiting it to that greatness.

It cannot be measured. There's no boundary and there's no limit and that applies to His riches, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Think of the riches of His knowledge. Jesus Christ knows everything there is to know about everything there is.

[11 : 07] Think of that. Christ knows everything there is to know about everything there is.

Christ knows everything there is to know about history. Imagine secret things that no one else has discovered.

Unsolved murders. False convictions.

Christ knows every little detail about everything there is to know about history.

Christ knows everything there is to know about the future. Unveiled events, international affairs, global crisis and as Christ himself said, the sparrow falling from the treetop.

[12 : 21] He knows everything there is to know about the future. Now, if Christ's knowledge was, if that was all of Christ's knowledge, then His knowledge is not infinite.

It would be limited to that. But as we said already, it's not limited. It's not quantifiable. It's knowledge.

I read some time ago that Jesus Christ knows all about every living cell in the human body.

Every living cell in the human body. Christ made it. He knows everything about it. Let me tell me, one cell is more complex than all the intricacies involved in the running of New York City.

One cell is more intricate, more complicated than all that's involved in running New York City. And how many cells are in the human body?

[13 : 56] I read 10,000 billion. 10,000 billion cells.

More involved, more intricate than all that's involved in running New York City. Christ knows every detail about every movement, every situation of every human cell in every human being.

So you can understand, can't you? If you question if Christ knows your problem, that's getting pretty near blasphemy.

What an insult to such a person, to question if he knows what you're going through.

What about the power? What about his power? Christ, God created everything simply by speaking.

[15 : 13] He just said, let there be, and there was. He called matter into existence.

Isn't that what you call power? All the energy in the North Sea was placed exactly where it is by Christ.

Exactly where it is in the North Sea, Christ placed it there. We were singing in Psalm 29 for a purpose.

He sang there of the power of his voice. He just spoke and he stilled storms.

And note what the scriptures say, the wind and the waves. He calmed the wind and the seas.

[16 : 18] Those of us who use the ferry often know that the sea is still stormy 24 hours, or at least it can be stormy 24 hours after the wind stops.

So Christ didn't just calm the wind, the wind and the sea, just by speaking.

Just by speaking. He called matter into existence, stills storms, cast out demons.

His voice, we sang it there in Psalm 29 verses 3, 4, 5, 7, check it up. Christ's voice, you remember when you raised Lazarus from the dead.

He didn't say, I see unto you, arise. He said, Lazarus, I see unto you, arise.

[17 : 21] Because if he did not limit the power of his words, the whole cemetery as it were would have arisen.

In fact, all the dead in every cemetery would have risen. He had to limit the power of his voice to Lazarus.

He only wanted Lazarus to rise from the dead on that occasion. The power of his voice. But you know, Jesus doesn't even need to speak to do something.

He just needs to will it. If I will, he said, to John, if I will, that you tarry till I come.

That's all that's necessary. I don't need to issue the command. I just need to want it. I just need to will it.

[18 : 18] All power, you see, resides in him. He may delegate it, and he does delegate it.

He gives power to people, physical power. He gives power to, well, to not see all the energy in you.

But you remember in that mock trial that Christ went through, which wasn't really a trial, it was a plot.

But you remember, on one occasion, someone had the temerity to lift his hand and strike the savior in the face.

You remember? Where did that person get the energy, the power to lift his hand and strike the innocent son of God in the face?

[19 : 17] Where did he get that energy? Where did he get that power? He got it from the one he was striking. Isn't that something?

There's humility. Christ gave him power to strike him in the face. The riches of his knowledge, riches of his power.

What about the riches of his wisdom? Wisdom is more than knowledge. It's the correct response to knowledge.

It's a correct action, behaviour, having received knowledge. You receive knowledge, you know, I've known people, very, very smart, very smart, highly intelligent, very, very clever, very clever.

But not wise. Not wise. Didn't use their intelligence to live a wise life.

[20 : 35] Christ doesn't simply have knowledge and power. He's got wisdom, every event of providence is monitored, as it were, by the wisdom of Christ.

From sparrows falling from treetops to what Donald Trump is going to say next.

U.S. presidents are under Christ's control. He's controlling everything and everything. He's letting out in providence is wise.

It's his wisdom. He's monitoring life in providence. He's running providence. He's ruling by his providence.

Let me say, nothing is out of sync. Nothing is behind schedule.

[21 : 39] Nothing surprises Christ. Surprises us. Surprises us. Not Christ, not Jesus.

No shocks in heaven. No surprises in heaven. It's all been planned. It's all been monitored.

There's a purpose in every detail of providence. You may not get your head around it. I may not understand what he's doing, but there is a providence, a sense, a purpose, and it will be reviewed one day.

Why is Christ called the wisdom of God? Because Christ was the way God solved the problem, as it were, in a past eternity.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were communing and communing together, discussing how the world would run, as it were.

[22 : 49] And they had agreed. Sin must be punished by death.

And Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loved every human being.

And they wanted human beings to be in heaven. But how could that now be?

How could that be? They had sworn a soul that sins shall die, but they also wanted souls which sinned in heaven.

How can it happen though? Without contradiction, without God going against his own principles, without them changing their mind about sin, how could it happen?

[23 : 59] What's the answer? Christ, the richest Christ is the richest of the wisdom of God.

That's the wisdom. Now you see the planet in the councils of a past eternity. What could substitute for the payment, for the punishment of all the sins of all the people that will be in heaven?

And the discoverer, they realised they knew only one thing. The death of the second person of the Godhead.

Only the death of the second person of the Godhead would suffice and atone for all the sins of all that will be in heaven.

But then, God can't die. See the problem?

[25 : 07] How is it solved? Christ, the wisdom of God. If the second person, Jesus Christ, takes human nature, that human nature can die.

Christ, the wisdom of God. And then I'm sure another assume was focused on that these sinners that rebelled against us, these human beings, they're not even interested in us.

They don't want to spend eternity with us. They don't like us. They don't want us.

How could you solve that problem? Christ, the wisdom of God. Christ can send his Holy Spirit.

In fact some theologians think that was part of the price of Calvary. He purchased his blood, been poured out, purchased the release of the Holy Spirit from heaven to work on earth and change human nature, change human beings so that they become interested in heaven, so that they become interested in having their sin forgiven, so that they first of all realize they can't get into heaven until first they realize they've sinned against this Holy God.

[26 : 51] What's the answer? The Holy Spirit can renew them, can open their eyes and open their hearts and turn their feet to walk toward Christ.

If they're in Christ as we try to say in the morning, they become new creatures, different creations, new creation in Christ Jesus.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Christ, the wisdom of God.

If you're here tonight and you're a Christian, that wisdom, that power, that knowledge, it's all working on your behalf.

If you're here tonight and you are not a Christian, all that power, all that knowledge, all that wisdom is working against you until you come to Christ, until you surrender to him.

[28 : 15] What about the riches of his goodness? Just imagine, imagine that if such a powerful person, such a knowledgeable person, such a wise person, imagine such a person, if such a person was biased and prejudiced.

What a danger, what a danger. Imagine such a person, if it is spiked against human beings.

Imagine. But our Bible speaks about the riches of Christ's goodness.

Christ is good. Christ is good. Holy, harmless, innocent, undefiled, separate, distinct from sinners altogether.

But he can't overlook sin because he's holy. He can't just say, look, it's a pity we said that, but I suppose it was right at the time.

[29 : 37] And the councils of the past eternity, it couldn't just say, well, well, well, just overlook it. Well, just pretend it didn't happen.

In that case, God would no longer be holy. No longer good. No longer righteous.

No longer just. God cannot overlook sin.

But blessed be his name, he can forgive it and overrule it. Can't overlook it.

He can't pretend it didn't happen. There has to be a scapegoat. One must pay for sin and Christ with all this power, all this knowledge, all this wisdom, all this goodness, he must be the one who pays it.

[30 : 56] The riches of his goodness. But you know, the Bible also speaks about the riches of his grace.

How do we explain that? The older I get, the more difficult it is to define grace. Wonderful, wonderful thing it is.

I was going to say the gracious thing it is. The starting point is God. We must understand God is under no obligation to show mercy.

He's not obliged to. And yet he chose to.

He chose to exercise his mercy toward human beings. He did not do so when angels fell, when angels sinned, he just passed by.

[32 : 09] That's why the angels can't understand us. That's why they're amazed at us. Are you just taking that for granted?

He didn't provide a savior for angels in the time when they fell. But when human beings fell, he sent his son to be the scapegoat.

No wonder the Bible tells us the angels desire to look into these things. But here's the wonders of his grace, you know.

Christ accomplished so much at Calvary when he was scapegoat, atoning, pain God for the sins of all who be in heaven.

He purchased as he said the release of the Holy Spirit, but he also made grace available. So that, so that, the most unworthy sinner, the most unworthy sinner can in one moment glorify God more than if they had obeyed God perfectly all their lives.

[33 : 42] Maybe you were here tonight, can you see? How can I glorify God? OK, I was made for that purpose, but I below it, I've blown it a hundred times, a thousand times, a million times.

How can I glorify God? You can. You can glorify God by believing on Christ.

I mean everything the Bible says about Jesus. Isn't that amazing? Supposing you spend your life in sin, simply believing in Christ makes you more righteous than if you had kept God's law perfectly all your life.

It's hard to get our head around that. But it is. It's true. It's real. It's for you. In one moment, in one moment, the grace of Christ can undo a lifetime of curse.

I've got an example in the Bible, the thief on the cross. His life was so bad that society said, better rid of such kind.

[35 : 13] There was two of them that Friday afternoon. One repented.

One believed. One didn't. The one who repented. You remember, he said, we indeed, justly.

He had his eyes opened. He saw sin in its true light. He saw himself in his true light.

He saw Christ in his true light. Imagine. Imagine. You're on a cross. In your last hours. You're agony. And on that cross, you recognise the man on the next cross as a kingdom.

Remember me when you come into your kingdom. What an insight into who Christ was. He must have got wracked with pain in these last hours.

[36 : 20] Now tell me, his prayer. Was it profound? Was it profound? Was it long? What was it? Remember me when you come into your kingdom. Oh, it must have been wonderful to hear the Savior say, today.

Today you will be with me in paradise. And all he said was, remember me.

Have you ever said that? Have you ever said that to Christ, the riches of his grace?

Remember me, Lord. And he was in glory. And society said, well, better rid of that kind.

Well, if you're beginning to say, I can't get my head around all that, then you're probably just beginning to understand.

[37 : 36] It is, humanly speaking, unbelievable. It's so good. It's so easy. It's so simple. It's so powerful.

His life changed for him. He said, I can hardly believe that. Of course you can't unless. And as the Spirit opens your eyes to see Christ's riches in all his glory and all his beauty, and all his love.

Thankfully, we don't need to understand it. But we do need to believe it. We do need to believe it.

Lay down your arms and surrender to Christ. Remember me, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Just two things in conclusion. If you are not a Christian, remember this.

[38 : 51] One day you will have to meet this Jesus face to face and tell him exactly why you weren't interested in him.

Have you got that? If you're not a Christian, one day you'll have to face Jesus face to face and explain why you weren't interested in him.

But the last thing I have to say is wonderful. It's just a text of scripture. There's power in it.

Life changing power. Romans 10 verse 12. Christ can bestow his riches upon to all that call upon him.

Isn't that something? Do you believe him? Do you believe him? Do you believe Romans 10 verse 12?

[40 : 15] He bestows his riches on all, not some, not most, on all. You will call him, would you?

Don't let the midnight bells toll tonight without calling on Christ. He can bestow his riches on all that call upon him.

Test him. Try him out. Take him at his word. Believe to the saving of your soul. May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word effectual to every one of us.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would take the things of Christ and make them ours tonight, here in this building.

Open our eyes. Open our hearts. Burn our feet to God in him.

[41 : 35] Bestow your riches by faith to your Son. We humbly pray for we pray in his name and for your glory.

Amen.