

# Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the profound depths of Christ's riches, emphasizing the significance of grace and the necessity of suffering in the Christian journey.*

**Duration:** 45:20

**Scripture:** Romans 11:33, Ephesians 3:8

**Topics:** "Riches Of Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the finished works of God through Jesus Christ. He explains that God's creation is perfect and beautiful, and He gives us His Son as our inheritance. The speaker emphasizes that we do not need to work for our salvation or try to make ourselves worthy, but rather we should be grateful for the grace of God. He encourages believers to delve deeper into understanding the meaning and vastness of God's grace and to seek spiritual wealth through a deep relationship with Him. The sermon references the Bible to support these teachings.

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## Transcript

Two passages of the Word, firstly in the Letter to the Romans, chapter 11. Letter to the Romans, chapter 11, and thus 33. All the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past tracing out. Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to preach unto the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ. So, with the enablement of the Lord, we are going to move in these deep waters.

Seek to discover a little of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge. The apostle who used these words, striving against the limitations of language, to give expression to something of what he had come to realize as to the Christ, as to the salvation in Christ, into which he had been brought.

He does use these many superlatives, straining to find what is unsearchable, inexhaustible, unfathomable, infinite wealth or riches, all the depth. This man was able to speak in this way just for one reason. And you and I will never be able rightly to use such language unless we go the way that he went.

In order to find things which are deep, you have to go into the depth. You never find deep things in the shallows. You have to go down and down, very low.

And that in itself explains the Lord's dealings with his people. It is the answer to the cry of the heart in deep and dark and difficult places and times. Why? If we could but realize it, we should hear the answer coming back, that you may discover and appropriate spiritual wealth.

These riches do not lie on the surface at all. They are the hidden treasure of dark and secret places. And wealthy souls are ever and always those which have touched something, if not all, of the depth.

In the walk with God, here is a man whom you know by many things that he has placed on record. A man who had many otherwise inexplicable experiences. His catalogue of sufferings and adversities of every kind is written for us, largely in his second letter to the Corinthians, half a chapter taken up with the things which befell him.

And in other places, too, he makes references to his sufferings in Christ. And if ever a man had reason to ask why, it was that man. Why, Lord, are you letting me spend a night and a day in the deep, being again and again and yet again thrashed with rocks, imprisoned, dealt with treacherously by my own brethren, and so on and on.

Why, Lord, I'm devoted to you. I have a heart for you. I am not seeking my own ends, but yours.

I'm utterly committed to your interests. There are many who are not so committed, and they don't have to go the way that I'm going. Why, for such a man, with such a devotion, such an abandon to the interests of his Lord, suffering more than any other man, perhaps of the whole apostolic company.

Not one of us will measure up to this man's sufferings, although we may sometimes think that ours are just about the limit. But very few, and I imagine there are very few in this little company this afternoon, have not had times when they've asked the big why as to the strangeness of the Lord's dealings, the Lord's ways with them. Does it not strike you very possibly, thus very significant, that such a man, such a man, cries for language to express what he has seen in the Lord Jesus, and says, Oh, the depth of the riches, both wisdom and knowledge, how unsearchable.

I'm tossed by the hour. To me, not the greatest of the apostles, to me not the greatest saint, to me not as one more than any other, but less than all, the least of all saints, to me, was this grace given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Riches.

A man whom we know because for two thousand years the church has been drawing upon the riches which he reached and received through trials. Riches which are coming to us from that man. Still, to today, perhaps now, may be so.

Today, for that reason, it may sound discouraging, but there is no other way. Some time ago, one of my visits to India, I came down in the flying boat on the Persian Gulf, and as I stood on the Gulf of Persia, the confluence of the Euphrates, I looked out and saw the pearl fishers way up there in the depths, spending their long, patient hours seeking goodly paths, a lonely and perilous business, for there, as I saw, just leaping out of the water, sharks looking for prey. And then that night, after dark, I went into the Persian market, the bazaar, through the narrow aisles between the stalls, and I saw displayed on those stalls a glorious purse and other gems, almost priceless.

There they were, being brought in from the depths, polished and displayed. And then as I boarded the flying boat to go on to India, a pearl merchant came on with his cabinets of gems and pearls. These were bound in iron, with strong padlocks on them, and as that sheik sat in his seat, he kept his eye on those cabinets and would not take his eye off them all the time until we landed.

And he delivered them to the merchants in India, valuables, precious things from the depths. They were costly because they had cost. They were valuable because there was painful and lonely vigil behind their obtaining.

Pearls had been associated with securing them. This is a parable. This is what Paul is really talking about.

Pearls, the loneliness, the long drawn-out vigil, the sufferings and the afflictions to obtain the riches. And that, not for himself, but for the Church. He says, I fill up that which comes short of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, which is the Church.

I say there is no other way for us to do more than talk about and read about and use the language of the riches. No other way for us to possess them than to go into the depths and find them, the unsearchable riches. Does that sound like a contradiction? You have them and they're unsearchable? You have them and yet they're too deep to lay hold of? Sounds like that.

But Paul simply means all the meaning, all the value, all the wealth that is here, only a little of which we may know in this life. All that wealth is really beyond us, too great, past finding out. Well, that is where we begin.

But we don't end there. We're going to look, as the Lord will help us, at some of these riches, these unsearchable riches. And if you at any time care to look into your New Testament with that word in hand, riches, you will see how it is connected with different things.

The riches of this and the riches of that. The riches of another thing. The riches are of.

Well, the riches of his grace. The riches of his glory. The riches of his inheritance in the saints.

The riches of full assurance of understanding, and so on. These are many-sided riches. I don't know how far the Lord will lead us.

We can begin where the riches do begin, where we have to begin. The riches of his grace. The riches of his grace.

There's another word linked with that. Riches of his grace and goodness. Despises thou us, the apostles, the riches of his grace and goodness.

That word itself will always be beyond us. We may as well settle it now, throw up our hands in utter despair, right at the beginning. You and I are never going to fathom that depth, comprehend that fullness, understand that grace.

I don't hope for a moment to be able to plumb the depth of that word. Here, we can only just dip into these depths of riches of his grace and goodness. And we have a very hackneyed way of defining grace.

It's been put into a phrase, and we throw it off, and we don't get very much further than that. Asked what is the meaning of grace, the traditional answer is, grace is unmerited favor. Yes, it is.

It is unmerited favor. That very definition does introduce us to the basic character of grace. But it's weak.

It's a weak definition. Unmerited favor. Yes, thank God for that.

But what do you mean by that? You have no merit, and God just comes to you because you have no merit. Nothing to merit, grace. But I want to say to you, dear friends, that it's more than that.

It's worse than that, on one side, on our side. Grace does not only come to where there is no merit. Grace comes where there is a great deal of demerit.

Demerit. That's stronger than no merit. No merit may be negative.

Demerit is positive. Everything that is not only without merit, but of the nature and character that is perfect demerit. You and I are not only without worthiness.

You and I are worse than that. Everything, everything positive that we should not be. If you turn again to the man who is speaking this way, not only does he say to me, Who am less than the least of all sin? He said, I am the chief of sinners, of whom I am chief.

That's positive. Not only less than the least, but positively the chief of sinners. I prosecuted the church.

I gave my consent to the murder of his beloved servant Stephen. And he'll tell you a great deal more about his demerit. Not only his lack of merit.

Everything that was there, that was an offense to God. And that stood, if it could stand, if anything could stand in the way of grace, it was there. But you see, grace just means that demerit, not only no merit, but demerit does not set grace aside.

Grace is just grace. Whatever the conditions, however great the demerit, that is grace. You and I as Christians have got to learn that.

All this, as we shall see perhaps as we go on, is something that perhaps the Christian has to reckon with even more than the unsaved. Say that and leave it for the time being. But if you and I are really moving with God, you and I are coming more and more to the place where we do say from the depth of our being, but for the grace of God.

For me, a Christian, after all these years, but for the grace of God, I will not be saved. I will not get through. It takes, as I understand it and see it, a great deal more grace for me now as a Christian than it did to save me at the beginning.

Now that may seem strange to say that. But I'm returning to it again. For are we not discovering what we didn't know even at the beginning, the presence of the demerit in ourselves? But that is just the character of grace.

That is what grace means. Grace has no meaning unless that is true. And then let us note this other thing about grace.

Grace never recognizes any debt. Grace is not a payment of any debt. Grace is not in our debt at all.

God is not dealing with us in grace because he owes us something. It's only another way of speaking about absence of merit and presence of demerit. No, no one has a claim upon the grace.

This God is not our debtor. Grace doesn't recognize any such thing as being in debt and having to pay its way with us. Grace, and here is our superficial language again, grace is free grace, free grace.

It is not something with which God is trying to pay us back for something. It's all the other way around, isn't it? We are the debtors. God is the creditor.

And grace is just grace. There is nothing else to say about it. It's just his free, spontaneous movement without any obligation, without any obligation.

That is the basic nature, character of grace. When we realize that, when we realize that, the demerit about ourselves, and God is under no obligation to us, and then we just make grace abound where sin abounded, grace does so much more abound, then we begin to understand what the debt of the riches may be. We are introduced into a realm that is beyond us, isn't it? Beyond us.

And any soul that has not come to the time and state of just wandering in amazement at God's voluntary, spontaneous, free, unmerited favor, any soul who has not come there, hasn't begun to know the meaning of such words as the riches of his grace. That can never be a wealthy soul. So much for the present, at any rate, about the character of grace.

But you know that grace is always set over against wax. And although we are so familiar with this truth, let us just dwell upon it for the moment, upon wax and grace. See, this represents a change, a complete change and rebuttal of position.

Of position. Grace changes place with wax, or changes the place of wax. Grace does not obliterate wax.

Grace does not say there are never to be wax. Grace will demand wax, and if it is rightly appreciated, will get much more, much better wax than any before. But grace does just change the place of wax.

You see, wax, the wax of the law. What were the wax of the law, are the wax of the law. They are the wax in order to get married, are they not? To get married.

The idea? To get married. To obtain marriage, to pay God back with your marriage. So look at the scribes and the pharisees.

Oh, how abhorrent, obnoxious was their behavior, their activities and pretenses to the law of Jesus himself. Merit by works, giving God something for his enrichment. Yes.

Works of the law to obtain merit, with which merit to give as currency to pay God. Putting God into our debt, making him our debtor, and we doing all these things, you see, to get ourselves out of discredit, discredit, and give our credit to God. Works of the law.

In order to obtain merit, to present to God our merit. Works in that place for merit. When grace comes in, you see, grace puts the works in another place altogether.

Takes it out, takes them out of the first place and puts them into the last place. And instead of law being first, it's grace first. It's grace first.

Instead of works for merit being first, it's just God's own grace. Without any works whatsoever to obtain any satisfaction and pleasure of God. And then what? All works haven't been ruled out of the universe.

When grace has come in, you and I, if we have really grasped the meaning of grace, we'll work more than anyone else has ever worked. But now, the works of appreciation of grace, not to obtain it, not to merit it, but the works of thanks to God for his unspeakable gift of grace. Changes the place of things, puts things right round the other way.

Someone has put this into a rather cryptic phrase. Works do not justify, but the justified person works. That is quite true.

I labor, said the apostle, more abundantly than them all. I labor, said the apostle, more abundantly than them all. And that was true.

That was true. But was he seeking merit? Then he had no right to talk about grace. But he's the man who does talk about grace.

And he labored more abundantly than all because the overwhelming grace of God to him. The position was entirely with us. Not law and works to obtain favor, but works of love and devotion because our favor obtained.

Complete with us. Now then, what about God's work of grace? And we'll begin this part and leave it for the time being. God's work of grace.

What was true in the first material, natural creation is true spiritually in the new creation. And you know it so well, only needs to be mentioned and at once you'll jump to it. There was chaos.

There was darkness. There was the absence of God. God moved in, dispelled the darkness, turned the chaos into cosmos order, and got to work.

Got to work step by step and stage by stage, upward, upward all the time, creating, ordering, providing a beautiful earth. A beautiful earth, now. A wonderful place.

So is the description. And then, when he could look upon all his work and pass his verdict, the verdict of an infinitely perfect God, so meticulous, so exacting, who will never pass anything that is imperfect, when he has finished it all, he puts man right into the middle of it, and says, there you are, that's your inheritance. Your inheritance is what I have already done.

What you come into is something, not that you have got to make, but I have already made. Not that you have to do, but I have already done. You begin your vocation in gratitude, where I end my work, on your behalf, for you.

You can clearly see the corresponding truth in the new creation. It's not working unto something. It's working after everything has been done.

You and I come into God's perfect work. Of course, the simple form of preaching the gospel is to speak about the finished work of Christ, but do we understand these glib phrases? All that God has done in and through and by his Son, Jesus Christ, in the perfecting of salvation, of redemption, of his work, so that the reception of his Son back to heaven is simply because God has nothing more to do so far as providing the ground is concerned. He could never have gone back to heaven unless the work was full and final and perfect.

If there had been one further touch or stroke, he would not have gone back. They would not have received him in heaven if we may so speak. They would have said, look here, you've left undone something.

I have not found thy works perfect before my God. And he would have had to come back again, but he didn't. God had, in him, perfected and finished his new creation.

And then he began with us, to bring us into it, and say, look here, you haven't got to work unto this. You've got to inherit it. Take possession of it.

Live in the good of it. Learn to understand what you've got, and appreciate it. These are the works of God.

They're finished. They're finished, so far as the law of Jesus is concerned. The works of grace.

If that garden of that creation is something grand, beautiful and glorious, from the hand of God, which wholly satisfies his heart, his Son is more than that. More than a symbolic creation, an earthly thing. His Son is the final fullness of perfection.

And he gives us his Son. Gives us his Son. You and I have not grasped, and this is where we are in so much trouble, dear friends.

There's no doubt about it. I would go as far as to say that nine-tenths of our spiritual troubles are here. That we are listening all the time to the accuser and the condemner when things go hard, difficult, contrary and against us.

And the devil is saying it's because of something about you. Your demerit. Something's wrong with you.

When you go and you plead for the Lord, and say, Lord, what is it that you've got against me? You spend your hours pleading with God to show you what he's got against you and why it is. What the thing is that he has against you that is resulting in his dealings with you in this way. And so the enemy is just turning us aside from this.

But while there's a work of grace going to be done, and we've to come to that presently, to conform us, to change us, we are not now under judgment and condemnation. We are under grace. And Satan would never cease in this life to try and undercut grace and bring us back under law to bondage.

What you and I really do need, are we seeing, is to grasp these unsearchable riches of his grace. The riches of his grace. God's work is completed for us to inherit.

There'll be a battle, a tremendous battle as there was with Israel in the land after they crossed the Jordan, got through the death of Calvary. A battle in the land to get the possession of our inheritance. But does it not hackneyed again and so familiar, that forever we get a foothold.

The Lord has said, I have given it to you. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given you. I have given you.

It's secured in Christ for us. Now there I must leave it for the present, but I think although these are tools with which we are familiar, the great truth remains. You and I are the Lord's own people.

Beloved of him, I've got to learn, more and more deeply, the meaning of the first thing. The grace of God. The grace of God.

What grace really is, and what grace really means, and with all, how deep, how vast, how unfathomable and unsearchable, are what the word calls the riches of his grace.

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