

Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the unsearchable riches of Christ, focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Grace, Power, Wisdom, and Life, and the significance of the resurrection life in our lives.

Duration: 39:17

Scripture: John 16:7

Topics: "Riches Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing that the source of grace is God. They highlight three aspects of grace: the spirit of grace, the spirit of life, and the spirit of power. The speaker acknowledges that sometimes familiar things can lose their power, so it is important to be reminded of them. They encourage the audience to reflect on the teachings and allow them to become a reality in their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. The sermon also touches on the power of darkness and the need for the spirit of power to break through in order to bring light and transformation.

Transcript

O 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. To me, who am the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ. The unsearchable riches of Christ.

Having noted that this word riches is linked with a number of things in the New Testament, we have commenced our meditation with the first of these connections, the riches of his grace. We have said a little about the basic character of grace, something about the works of grace and the works of law, and we have gone on to look at God's work of grace, finishing his work for man before ever man comes into the picture at all, and is then called into the work which God has finished. This is the grace of God.

Now, let us for a few minutes look at the free action of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Grace. We know that the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Grace? It means that the Holy Spirit is that, and the Holy Spirit comes to us as that, and the Holy Spirit is freely given to us through faith as the Spirit of Grace.

Here is the grace of God. We never am or merit the Holy Spirit. He is freely given to faith, and although it may sound like repetition and laboring the point, I do want that we should be impressed with this, that the Holy Spirit, given freely as the Spirit of Grace, brings to us from God all that grace means.

We have the Holy Spirit in possession, in dwelling. We have in himself, his very presence, all that divine grace means. He is the Spirit of Grace.

Now, with him, we have the free action of God, the free action of God. The Bible begins in a very simple way, so simple that you hardly notice it. It is something written, set down, you read it, and you hardly know or notice what you have read.

Now, the earth was without form and void, darkness was over the face of the deep, and on we go, the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the deep, and on you go again. What was there in that condition to merit the presence and action of the Holy Spirit? The initiative was all with the Spirit of God, over and against a set of conditions, utterly contrary to himself, and yet this brooding was a very active thing, a very energetic thing, a very purposeful thing. In a word, the Spirit of God brooding, hovering over that state of things was the presence of God to change the whole situation, because God wanted it changed, that's all.

Just that, God wanted it changed. And he took the matter in hand. There was not only lack of merit, but plenty of demerit.

We don't know, there have been some rising, perhaps guessing, perhaps right guessing that that state of things was due to some judgment which had come upon the creation, which we need not speculate about at all. There was a state which was altogether contrary to the mind of God, and the state could do nothing about it for itself. Free action, just the free, voluntary, unearned initiative and action of the Spirit of God.

Now dear friends, you and I are here, and there are multitudes in our position, as we believe, saved, born anew, children of God, who would say we are a new creation in Christ. How did it happen? Did we go up to heaven to call him down? Did we go into the deep to bring him up? Did we go to the outermost parts of the earth to find him and persuade him? We really did nothing about it. We are where we are and what we are by an action altogether apart from anything that we did in the matter.

He did it. He did it. He did it all.

We did nothing toward it. Indeed, our condition was all against God's thought and God's mind, and yet he took the initiative, and he did it by his Spirit. That is the Spirit of grace, you see, taking things in hand, taking things in hand, to have them to make a beginning, to make a beginning, to have things not as they were, but as God intended and intends them to be.

That's all very simple, isn't it? But there's much more in that for our heart ravishing than perhaps we are aware of because perhaps our salvation is taken too cheaply, taken too much for granted. It's those people who know best and most what a ruin they were, what a chaos they were, what darkness they were in, what disruption there was in their life. Those people who know that most and best, who know that their salvation was nothing of their doing.

It was the free action of the Spirit of grace. We'll get to that in a minute. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has brought God to us.

He has brought God to us. He is God. As God, he has brought God to us.

But what does that mean? In other words, what are the riches of his grace? Now, we're going to dwell upon that this evening, in part at any rate. And we'll begin with other three things with which we are so familiar. First of all, as the Spirit of grace coming as God to us, he comes as the power of God into our

lives to do all that God wants done.

Now, that's a simple statement. But he has come to do it. He has come to do it.

It's no more of ourselves than it was of the first natural material creation that brought about the change. No more of us. It's the power of God that has taken this thing up.

Is it too commonplace as to evoke no response in our hearts? Are we not more and more and ever more aware that whatever has been done or is being done or has got to be done is by the power of God? The power of God. And what power? What power? Isn't darkness a power? Isn't it a power? Well, perhaps you have some experience to make it possible for you to say yes. I know.

When you've got to move into this world where the Lord is neither known nor recognized nor acknowledged, apparently not wanted, and you realize that darkness is an awful power. Darkness covers the earth and across darkness the people, they're in darkness. And what can you do about it? You can't talk.

You can do all that is in your power. You cannot break this thing until the spirit of power, as the spirit of light breaks in on that soul, on that life, in that realm. It wants the power of God.

Darkness is an awful power. If that is true in this side of the world where there has been so much light given, so much truth given, there is so much Christian tradition, you go to the other side of the world. You go to those dark places of heathendom.

You have only got to move in such a place, such a country as India, where the gospel has not touched. And you can feel the darkness. It's evil.

It's positively evil. It's like that. You may feel it in the traditionally Christian world.

I'll never forget my first visit to the city of Rome and wanting to see the various things. I went to the Colosseum, to see the place where the Christians were flung to the lions. And I went to this and that, and then I went into St. Peter's Church.

And you know, I couldn't stay. After a very short time I had to go out. I felt ill, physically ill.

A sense of awful death came on me physically. I was glad to get out of the place. There was an atmosphere of death, darkness to the spirit.

But that's true there. As I say, you go to other parts of the world and you can't cut the darkness. It's so strong.

It's a terrible thing. When the spirit of God, the spirit of light, entered into this darkness which was over the face of the earth, it made an awful power. It was dealing with an awful power.

And it called for the exercise of the infinite power of God to break that reign of darkness. It called for the divine fear. Let there be light.

The word of his power. Oh, did our hearts cry and crave for the knowledge of that power in his word more. If the smallest percentage of all our speaking had the real power of God in it, something would happen.

Something would happen. It would be a fear, an act of God to speak. That is why the Lord Jesus is called the word.

Because where he comes, the word, something happens. Something happens. The devil is exposed as when he was here and cried out, I know thee whom thou art, holy one of God.

Hell helped the impact of the word. Man, sinful man, cried out in his presence. Like that.

Point is, darkness is a terrible power. The disruption in our humanity is a terribly strong thing. We are every day, almost every moment of our lives, up against that breakup in the humanity which is ours.

Or the breakdown of it. The disorder of it. Disintegration of it.

The disruption of it. We know that our humanity is a broken down thing. With all those times, trying to pick it up and build it up and hold it up.

We know it's a power. A terrible power. Disorder.

Chaos in ourselves. The spirit of God came of his own accord. Of his own accord.

As the spirit of power to deal with what no other power in this universe could deal with. To change it. And that's where we are in the new creation.

It's what the spirit of God has undertaken to do with us. And surely there are few, if any, in this place tonight who would not echo the words of the apostle. Kept by the power of God.

You know you would not be a Christian today. You would not be going on with the Lord. You would not be standing true.

But for the keeping power of God. In a world like this. There is such a power against what is the Lord.

Well, this is the spirit of grace, you see, that has come to take it over. The Holy Spirit, as the spirit of grace, is the custodian of the divine perfection. Has taken responsibility for realizing God's end.

Oh, thank God for that. Knowing ourselves and the awful forces that there are in our nature. Knowing the world or something of it and the awful forces that there are in this world.

And knowing the devil and something of his inimical hatred and opposition to what is of God, anything that's of God. We say, well, the only possibility is if God Almighty doesn't cease to it. And that is the spirit of grace that has come to take it up.

To do it. Free action of the Holy Spirit. See, we read, you know, we read John 16.

You read John 16? And if I asked you, what's in John 16? You'd have the answer. Well, you know, that John 16 is, I'm going away, I'm going away. You see me now, you won't see me anymore.

I return unto my Father. If I go not away, the comforter will not come. If I go away, I will send him to you.

Then on and on and on, what he will do, what he will do when he is come, when he is come, when he is come. It's all so natural. All so effortless, you see.

It's just going to be. It's just in the order of things. He's coming.

And he's going to do this and that. And that's all there is to it. It's just that he's coming, I'm going to send him.

We read it, we know the content of the word. But do we realize that all this just means that the Holy Spirit is taking over all that Christ came to initiate to carry it right through to its end. He's going to do it.

That's what he's come for. He's the spirit of grace. And grace is just God doing all that God can do without asking for any merit or any payment.

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of that grace. As the power of God. But that's one of the riches.

The riches of his power through grace. We ought, you see, to get down to our Bibles and have a word study and a passage study here and there and there. Perhaps if I only just remind you, it will start off something.

Have you not noticed that grace is many-sided in the New Testament? And one of the sides or aspects of grace is that it is an energy. It's an energy. It's a power, it's a force in our lives.

There was a messenger of Satan given me to buffet me. And although these are not the words that the apostle used, this is what he meant. I cried out to the Lord, take this away because I can't endure it, I shan't be able to go on with this thing, I'll not be able to get through.

This is too much, this is too strong, this is too great a burden. It's going to limit me. It's going to spoil my life.

And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient. My grace is sufficient. My strength is made perfect in which this grace there is introduced as over against the conscious inability of the apostle to go on with what had been called for from him, what had been put on him.

His natural reaction was, I just cannot. If I've got to have this thing, I'll just not be able to. Take it away Lord.

He said, I asked him three times, take it away Lord, take it away Lord, take it away. Life's impossible. He said, my grace is sufficient for thee.

Everything is possible to grace. It's a power, you see. It's a power.

An energy in the life. We do know this in measure, not as we ought to. We've had to say many times, but for the grace of God, I should have acted very differently from what I did.

But for the grace of God. Grace saved me. Grace kept me.

Grace held me. The power of God is the spirit of grace. But there is where the riches begin.

But what next? He is called the spirit of wisdom. Spirit of wisdom. Later we'll have something more to say about wisdom, but just for the moment.

What does that mean? What is wisdom? To begin with, what is wisdom? Wisdom is more than knowledge, you know. You may have a lot of knowledge and have no wisdom. And the people who have most knowledge have got the least wisdom.

They're the most foolish people with all their knowledge. What is wisdom? It is knowing how to do things. Or how to do it.

Knowing how to do it. That's a simple formula for wisdom. As I said, there's more to say in another connection.

Here it is. I remember many years ago, I heard or read a little incident of a firm of engineers who were given a contract to do a certain job. And when it was done, they sent in their account.

More or less general. And it was a very big account. And the people who had to pay the bill sent it back and said, look here, this is not good enough.

We want you to explain this. Tell us how you make up this bill. The firm sent back materials, so much.

Time of workmen, so much. One or two other practical things like, so much. And when those were added together, it didn't come up to the whole account.

And they wrote underneath, knowing how to do it, for balance. Ah, well. Knowing how to do it.

It's quite a big part, you see. It's a whole business, isn't it? They might have had the materials and they might have had the workmen and they might have had all the other things, but not knowing how to do it, what would have been the good at all? They'd never have done it. Wisdom is knowing how to do it.

And here's the spirit of grace. In this way, grace knows how to do it. We've got to learn a lot about that, have we not? But grace knows how to do it.

To take up the problems. Handle them and solve them. Negotiate the situation to a successful, triumphant issue.

Handle the people concerned. How to handle them. Oh, and a thousand other things which require knowing how to do it.

Now I do say, and I'm quite sure that I'm speaking the truth now, that you and I are many times brought to the place where we don't know how to do it or what to do. We just do not know. So we haven't got the wisdom for the situation.

Perhaps you're in it now. I am. But the spirit of grace is the spirit of wisdom.

He knows how to do it. We have some experience upon which we can say, I never thought it would be done and I never imagined it would be done like that. The way the Lord has done it.

What the Lord has done. How he has done it. That never occurred to me.

He'd do it like that. And when you think of it, was there any better way? Could it have been done better? No. No.

The riches of his grace is the riches of his wisdom. Grace. In the wisdom of God.

If you and I do believe in the grace of God, brought to us by the spirit of wisdom, and I almost hesitate to say it because I know I'm involving myself, whereas you, we ought never to despair of a situation. He knows how to handle that. How to get us through that.

How to resolve that. We do not know. And in the presence of this quandary, this problem, we cry out.

It wants something so deep and so great that it's altogether beyond us. And it may be in time, but certainly in eternity we'll say, oh, the depth of the wisdom. The depth of the wisdom.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. The spirit of grace is the spirit of power. The spirit of grace is the spirit of wisdom.

The spirit of grace is the spirit of life. He is called the spirit of life. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

By the spirit we are told Jesus was raised from the dead. Raised from the dead. Through the eternal spirit.

Through the eternal spirit. Spirit of life. We need not go back again for our analogy to the first creation.

The operation of the brooding spirit and the resultant life in the creation. Both in the animate creation and in man. The other kind of life.

It's all the result of the presence of the spirit. In the new creation it's like that. But here again it's not just a Christian truth.

A Christian doctrine. The gift of eternal life is just not one of those things that we come into when we become Christian. This resurrection life is a continuous abiding from day to day power and experience.

It's put in all the tenses of the Christian life and salvation. We were raised together with him that we should walk in unison life. That's the past tense.

We are now living in the good of that that the life whereby Jesus conquered death should be manifested in our mortal flesh. That's present tense. And this goes on to the future.

The future. Great revelation of life in it's final, full, perfect expression. This resurrection life is not something only that happened when we were saved.

It's a power to work in us continually now. Well you know it so well in theory and teaching. But this is the spirit of grace.

Oh thank God for the power of this divine life which is demonstrating itself continually. And it seems to me, it does seem to me, I often said this in the past, but it seems more and more to be the case that the further you go on the deeper this life has to go simply because you are taken so much deeper, more deeply into death. The experiences of going down become deeper and greater than ever they have been before.

The experiences of going down become deeper and greater than ever they have been before. So it seems. And therefore the power of his resurrection becomes greater all the way along.

This is a very hopeful thing for us. Perhaps some of you are feeling today that well you're touching bottom. And perhaps you're saying well this is the end.

But do not forget that resurrection is a reality, it's not a theory. It is not just a doctrine, it's an experience and a continuous experience. And dear friends, the great revelation in the world of God is that in the end, in the end, it's going to be up and not down.

I usually, when I go into a lift and there's a lift man there and I have a little joke with him and say your life is full of ups and downs isn't it? He says yes it is. I say how's he going to finish? Up or down? And he looks rather wise and knows that there's something coming. We know how it's going to finish.

We know how it's going to finish. It's an elevation life that we have. And we may from time to time descend but we are going to ascend as many times as we descend as the Lord's people and the final movement is an ascension movement.

This life is that way. It must seek out and find its own source. Where it began it will end.

It began in God, it will end in God. This is the spirit of grace, the spirit of life. And I know dear friends that I have only said things with which you are familiar but sometimes our most familiar things because of their familiarity lose their power.

And it's as well to be reminded of. Now I've mentioned these three aspects of grace as three great and primary riches of grace and how rich they are. What I have next to say, if the Lord wills would take considerably longer than we would have time for this evening because they really do take us into the depths.

So I'll leave it there but you've enough to get on with. You've enough to get on with with what I have said this evening or what I trust the Lord has said. You go away and let your hearts as well as your minds dwell upon this.

You know we miss a lot, dear friends, we miss a lot because we hear we hear, we go away and do nothing. Be very good. Always for our good real value if after tonight you just recall these things and went to the Lord very quickly said, Our Lord this is what is said, this is the truth I look to you to make that good in me.

Spirit of power Spirit of wisdom Spirit of life It's said that these are features of your grace brought in the person of the Holy Spirit. This is the teaching of the Word of God. It mustn't stay in the book.

It must come into reality into my own life. Lord, I count on you to make this true, make this real and so more than ever May peace.

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