

Riches

ODCC 08/11/09 (x.pages)

Text: Eph 3:14-21 & 8

Introduction

1. This chapter twice speaks about riches: v 8 mentions the “unsearchable riches of Christ” and v 16 “His [i.e. God’s] glorious riches”
 - a. This week at cell group we spoke about the parables of the man who found a treasure in a field and a merchant who found the pearl of great price – both gave up everything they had to obtain more than what they had.
 - b. These riches are also translated as wealth.
2. “In Christ,” says Paul, “are unsearchable riches!” The Gk for unsearchable literally means *that cannot be traced out or unfathomable*.
 - a. Like an ocean which is so deep that it is impossible plumb the depths.
 - b. Wealth in Christ which is impossible to imagine and of which there is no limit.

Not now (so much)

1. I tried to show last week as we looked at eternity that life in time and space is so fleeting, so swift and altogether temporary.
 - a. And too many live for life as if what can be gained here in this life is all that there is to be had.
 - b. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” asked Jesus about a man who had such an attitude (Mat 16:26).
 - c. His whole vision of existence was only the length of his life – his whole understanding of value was was in stuff that corrodes.
2. Christians do not agree with abortion because we believe that life begins at the moment of conception and so to kill a foetus is to take a life.
 - a. But what kind of life is it in the womb? It is the developmental stage. It is a place without knowledge and understanding. It is a place of darkness. It is a place of mostly silence and what noise there is is indiscernible, etc.
 - b. When that baby is born is is suddenly thrust out into the reality of life where it hears and sees and distinguishes and learns and grows.
 - c. This life can be likened to the womb. We cannot see or imagine beyond the gates of death.
3. As Christians though, we get impressions of the things beyond even as the baby in the womb can hear sounds from the outside, and can feel the pressure of the parents pushing on the womb, etc.
 - a. That’s how it is with us now, “*We see a blurred image in a mirror. Then we will see very clearly. Now my knowledge is incomplete. Then I will have complete knowledge as God has complete knowledge of me*” (1 Cor 13:12).
 - b. We get these impressions because right now we walk by faith and not by sight and God honours our faith and faith is the evidence of things not seen because God proves Himself to the spirit of those who believe but have not seen.
 - c. He has given us His Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession (Eph 1:14).
 - d. “*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children*” (Rom 8:16).
 - e. All these Scriptures show that we only get vague **but definite** impressions in our spirit by the Spirit of God but when we see Christ face to face, we will come into the fulness of all that He has in store for us.
 - f. “*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit*” (1 Cor 2:9).
4. The Israelites coming out of Egypt and having to go through the wilderness is a picture of our lives. They had to go through the wilderness to get to the promised land.
 - a. We are in the wilderness – the fulness of God’s riches are beyond the Jordan – the wilderness was hardly a foretaste of Canaan (which speaks of heaven).
 - b. But did not God reveal Himself to them, protect them, give them food and water, encouragement, etc.?

Value

1. Everything in this world must have a value: we teach our children that $1 + 1 = 2$ and that's true but 1 must have a value attached to it because $1 \text{ nothing} + 1 \text{ nothing} = \text{nothing!}$ But $1 \text{ apple} + 1 \text{ apple} = 2 \text{ apples}$ so you either have a big lunch or something to share.
 - a. If your rich aunt died and left you a couple of million you'd be ecstatic. Say you went to the bank and drew it all out in \$5 notes and took it home and emptied out your living room and spread it all around so you could look at it and roll in it and play in it, actually the paper notes in your living room wouldn't amount to much value. It's the value behind the \$5 note.
 - b. If your aunty was a Zimbabwean and left you Z\$1m you'd only get A\$3,008
 - a. Flies have value – they are an important part of the food chain (eg fish eat them) but they also help by breaking down dung and rotting flesh.
 - a. Tree have value: aesthetic value, shade, fruit, etc. And if it dies you can use it to build a house or a chair or burn it to cook and warm yourself.
2. Isaiah asks the question though of a man who took a piece of wood to make an idol and he says that he is a fool because he uses part of the wood to make an idol, and part of it to cook his food and part of it to warm himself (Isa 44)
 - a. What value is there is a wooden idol?
 - b. A rich young man came to Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life and Jesus told him he should obey all the commands. "I've done that," said the man. And it says that Jesus looked at him **and loved him**; "One thing you lack. God sell everything you have and give it to the poor and then you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10)
 - c. The rich man went away sad because he had great wealth. Riches beyond his imagination were his for the asking but he rejected them for something of much much lesser value.
3. Nothing, but nothing, but nothing should hinder us from laying claim to the riches in Christ. Nothing in this world compares. Nothing comes even close.
 - a. "*I pray,*" says Paul, "*that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*"
 - b. Our treasure is in heaven, stored up for us when eternity dawns but now, the strengthens us out of the abundance of His riches.
 - c. **He encourages** us, and *blesses* us. **He comforts** us and *strengthens* us. **He forgives** and *cleanses* us and gives us *confidence* to approach Him. **He supplies our needs** and *heals* our bodies. **He shines a light** for us in dark places. **He gives strength** to the weary and *courage* to the faint-hearted. **He gives wisdom** when we ask and *leads* us like a shepherd lead his sheep.
 - d. When the clouds of doubt come Jesus reminds us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. When the wind and waves are roaring at us He says, "Peace, be still." When we feel like failures and can't go on, Jesus is interceding with the Father on our behalf.

Conclusion