

Gospel that Has No End – *Ephesians 3:8-13*

Introduction – “*Christ died for sinners.*” There it is – the gospel. Or is it? Paul will begin in this passage, and continue on in his prayer for the Ephesians, to use more and more superlatives and expressions that almost make no sense in order to describe the gospel. Language begins to get in his way as he attempts to press out all that God has done through Jesus Christ.

Quick Summary – Paul, who knew he was far from worthy to have been given such an honor, was given the tremendous privilege of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles (v8). This gospel would reveal the worldwide plan of God which had always existed and yet had remained hidden (v9). As this was declared, even the principalities and powers in the heavenly places would see the manifold wisdom of God (v10), the intent of which was to reveal all that was accomplished in Jesus Christ (v11). Because of Christ’s faithfulness, we have boldness in our access to the Father and all His eternal purposes (v12), and all tribulation for Christ’s sake finds its end in nothing but glory (v13).

Revealing the Unsearchable Riches (v8) – Here is a wonderful summary of what it means to preach the gospel. It is for a finite and fallible man to imperfectly declare and describe that which is unsearchable and incomprehensible to other finite and fallible people. But when God blesses it, we hear Christ (Rom 10:14-15) which is why we come to this service of worship by faith expecting to hear Christ by His Holy Spirit through His Word proclaimed.

It also describes the breadth of the gospel. The riches are not just about what Christ has given us; the riches are Christ, “...*who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD”*” (1 Cor 1:30-31).

Christ is My Wisdom – Jesus, by His Spirit, teaches me about God, about myself, about my sinfulness, about my need for redemption, about what it means to die to self, about what it means to live in the new Humanity, and on and on.

Christ is My Righteousness – Righteousness is less of a thing than it is a Person and a relationship. In Christ, I have righteousness – I am righteous, for His name is “the LORD, my righteousness.”

Christ is My Sanctification – In Christ I stand faultless and blameless before God; it’s already done. And then, in Him, He works into me by His Spirit that sanctification which then I work out in my life, led by Him all the way along.

Christ is My Redemption – Among other things, this means that I will be raised from the dead and all suffering, all shortcomings, all tears, all the imperfections that are me – will be gone. There will be nothing lacking in body, mind or spirit. Jesus said, “*I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10) – Whoot! Whoot!

Again, summarizing the gospel, John wrote, “*And from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace*” (John 1:16, ESV). We are thimbles placed under a Niagara Falls of riches – but no worries – we have an eternity to explore and grow into the fullness.

The Enlightenment of an Eternal Purpose (vv9-11) – There are only two ways to view time (history, our present, and the future). Either it is the chaos and random purposelessness outside of Jesus Christ, or it is the manifold wisdom of God according to His eternal purposes which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. “Why am I here?” has no answer at all outside of Christ, no answer that satisfies the soul.

But from Creation to the New Creation, from Noah’s flood to the outpouring of the Spirit, from Babel to Pentecost, from David and Goliath to the great Shepherd Who crushed the serpent’s head, from kings of Israel to the King of kings over all the earth, God has been telling a story. That story has revealed that the problem of evil is not the greatest problem to be solved. The greatest problem to be solved is the salvation of sinful men by a holy God. The salvation of a single soul, the forgiveness of sins – that is the most profound problem that has ever arisen, the mystery that had to be revealed – a mystery even the principalities and powers are amazed to see answered by God (v10, 1 Pet 1:10-12). How can God be both just and the One Who justifies (Rom 3:26)? How can mercy and truth meet; how can righteousness and peace kiss (Psalm 85:10)? Through and only through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This also shows that the church is no afterthought of God, no parenthetical event between His real plans. The church is the fullness of Christ, the expression of His manifold wisdom, the outworking of His eternal purpose and plan.

Bold, Confident Access Because of His Faithfulness (v11) – Jesus said, “*Apart from Me, you can do nothing.*” Through the faith, the faithfulness and trustworthiness of Christ, “...*we have boldness and access with confidence.*” We do not come waiving our faith as the object of our confidence – we come waiving Christ, all He did, all He promised, all He is doing. Faith does not get you through those tough times. Jesus does. Jesus and all that His gospel declares – the unsearchable riches, the manifold wisdom of God.

A Conclusion of Confidence – From prison and in the midst of tribulations, Paul preaches a gospel of optimism and hope for the Ephesians and for the world. No one is “lost” or outside the reach of God or His gospel. Not you; not anyone. That is why Paul went and got them. That is why we can and must do the same. This is the gospel that has no end.