

Ephesians

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[0 : 0 0] Ephesians That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

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The essence of this verse is found in these six words the exceeding riches of his grace.

We perhaps define grace in a general sense as being the free and unmerited favour of Almighty God and so it is.

But oh that we may be helped so to be taught by the teaching of the Holy Spirit that it is the very essence of the deity even as he is holy righteous just eternal almighty infinite so he is gracious and he has been pleased both in the written word and in the fulfilment of all that written word by the incarnate word to make that grace known unto sinners.

[2 : 1 7] I want first of all as help to try and look at the grace that is spoken of here and seek to bring out its fullness its sufficiency its perfection but also that it is the grace of God the Father it is the grace of God the Son it is the grace of God the Holy Ghost and a poor needy sinner can do without none of these or any of them we stand in need of them all and in this part of the epistle that we have read together

I believe the apostle has been led so to show forth the riches of that grace and if we consider firstly the grace of God the Father and as we consider them one by one may we each be helped to search our own hearts and our understanding and see whether we can do without any one or any part of that grace if we hope to be saved with an everlasting salvation in the first chapter that we read together in the fourth verse we read this according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world dear friend can you do without electing love consider if the

Father had not chosen us would we have chosen him and is it not in the exceeding riches of his grace that he hath chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world these are vital matters to every one of us and no matter what we may suppose in our own mind be assured of this it is these whom he hath chosen in him and them alone who are made partakers of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus isn't that measure of the riches the exceeding riches of the father's grace that he hath chosen us in him and brought us into that union unto him and thereby made us partakers of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in

Christ Jesus we cannot continue we cannot begin neither shall we know eternal blessings save only as we are chosen in him and he hath bestowed upon us all spiritual blessings blessings think of the spiritual blessings that are brought down unto us in Christ Jesus the Lord and can we do without any one of them can we provide any of them for ourselves are we not utterly dependent upon Christ and that union unto Christ which the Father in the exceeding riches of his grace has bestowed upon us well then consider the fifth verse having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by

Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will before the earth was made before aught was created the Father predestinated a people and determined their relationship unto himself in Christ Jesus the Lord God and the measure the exceeding riches of his grace toward us is manifested in this the holy angels do not stand in this relationship unto almighty God they have a created righteousness but the

[8 : 39] Lord hath purposed so to give a righteousness that is beyond and exceeding great compared with that created righteousness for them that are in Christ Jesus they have a righteousness which is the righteousness of God himself now these things by far exceed all other things and we are reminded it is according to the good pleasure of his will that is the exceeding riches of his grace now we may go on and add unto those things but time will not permit if we want to consider the exceeding riches of his grace in its various aspects and so

I want to look at the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the eternal son and in verse 7 we read in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace oh the abundance of that grace the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in that when in the purposes of almighty God the people that the father chose were given unto him in an eternal donation to preserve to redeem to keep and to present them holy and without blame before the father's face and our

Lord stood up in that day and in those covenant undertaking standing up for his people for them that God had given unto him and he saw our cause he knew our need and yet in the fullness of that grace he turned not away but rather one of the hymn writers describes the majesty and the glory of that grace of the Lord Jesus Christ when he says he saw me ruined in the fall yet loved me notwithstanding all there is no measure of that grace but dear friend the vilest sinner out of hell that lives to feel his need is welcome to the throne of grace the saviour's blood to plead how exceeding rich is that grace and that precious blood now the father in prophecy moved the prophets of old by his spirit so to promise these very things for he says in that day there shall be opened unto the house of

Judah and Jerusalem a fountain for sin and for uncleanness and when Christ came into the world the fulfillment of that promise and of God's determination salvation and of his grace is brought forth before all men and consider the grace of the Lord Jesus to leave his glory by God to him there are no means whereby the finite mind can understand and comprehend what it was for the eternal son to leave the father's bosom and to come down to take unto his divine person our nature but nevertheless he fulfilled all things according to the father's will and love for his own will and love are exactly the same and when we read it pleased the father to prepare for him a body oh what a oneness of desire and of love is manifested in the father and in the son and when we think of him made of a woman made under the law all the grace of the

Lord Jesus Christ in his willingness to be made under the law not for his own sake not for any need in himself but for his people that he might redeem them that he might present them holy before his father's face and and I believe that when we consider the life of the Lord Jesus and perhaps we consider with greater interest those things that pertain unto his ministry and his labor upon the earth but

[16 : 26] I found a peculiar sweetness in this aspect of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ for when he was a little boy Mary and Joseph took him to Jerusalem and when they returned with the company they supposed that he was with them but we know that he had stayed behind and when they missed him they returned to Jerusalem and they found him answering and asking questions of the experts in the law and in the word and when Mary gently chided him or the grace of that answer from a little boy wish ye not that

I must be about my father's business oh meditate upon it and see all the fullness of the Holy Spirit and all the love of the father's will and purpose manifested in those few words see the motivation of the Lord Jesus Christ in all things and in perfection for we read that when he had thus spoken he returned with them and was subject to them there's no imperfection in Christ Jesus the Lord in every aspect of his word his deed his walk his manner his behavior there's a perfection of grace he was under the law and he fulfilled the law for the law required that he be subject and so he went and was subject to them no disobedience no carelessness no indifference no temper only a fullness of grace and then we read this we have redemption through his blood and

I wonder sometimes whether we by faith perceive the transaction that was undertaken whereby our redemption is obtained for God must punish sin there's no alternative and if you and I are sinners and we know it by the convicting and the convincing of the Holy Spirit we shall know how abhorrent a thing sin is at least in some measure to a holy God and to ourselves and therefore we shall understand by reason of

God's righteousness and holiness and justice that sin must be punished dear friend if the father has not laid upon him our iniquities are still upon us for it is as though there is a great scale set up in other courts of heaven in righteousness and in holiness and all the sins of God's people are put in the one side and oh how great a number how tremendous a weight how solemn a transgression and what is there that can meet and answer that tremendous weight that tremendous debt that is due by us unto a holy

God well dear friend I believe faith causes us to see and trust in that precious blood for it is as though Christ pours out his precious blood in the other side of the scale bearing in his own body our sins upon the tree and thereby redemption is obtained and we read that in the exceeding riches of his grace the forgiveness of sins is given unto us if you turn to the book Leviticus you will find there a description of the day of atonement and the services of that day the sacrifices the ceremony that was to be performed and the

[22 : 51] Lord himself declared concerning the day of atonement that it was that day when Israel should be cleansed from all their sins before the Lord now this is the type and the shadow of that which Christ hath perfected for his people upon the cross and we know in that day that Aaron could not go into the holy place save only as he wore the holy garments and we know that he could not go into the holy place and remain there or go in at his own volition it was once a year but not without blood which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people and when all these things were done then he entered into the holy place and the promise of almighty

God was fulfilled there I will meet with thee and commune with thee and when that day was done Aaron could no more go into that holy place save only on the appointed day and when the appointed sacrifices were offered and Paul in Hebrews declares unto us the Holy Ghost is signifying that the way was not yet open but dear friend it needed a richer blood a nobler name that of Jesus and when he offered himself without sputon to God consider the veil of the temple was rent in twain the way was opened and as

Aaron and his sons offered continually year by year those sacrifices declaring the inefficiency and the weakness of them because of their transgression so Christ offered himself once without spot unto God and thereby is the conscience purged forgiveness of sins is brought down unto the soul and let in so that the truth the blessedness the sweetness of it pervades the soul and fills the heart with joy and with gladness and then consider this other aspect of the exceeding riches of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ for it is by him that we know the mystery of the will of

God the scribes and the Pharisees thought that they understood and they knew all the things that were needful that they in their knowledge and expertise were conversant with all things concerning the Father and yet how far off they were what foolishness they indulged in but when Christ came the covenant entered into before the foundation of the world is opened up in all its fullness in all its blessedness in all its greatness in all its exactness and consider this also that the

Pharisees supposed that it was by the keeping of the law and their works that they should attain unto salvation and so they labored and the apostle Paul speaks concerning his grief for his brethren they go about seeking a righteousness of their own and have not sought the righteousness which is of God and this righteousness is known and brought to pass by Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ the Lord one says concerning this mystery strangely my soul art thou arrayed by the great sacred three in sweetest harmonies of praise let all our powers agree why well dear friend because of that robe he took the robe the saviour wrought and cast it all around think of the grace of the

[28 : 55] Lord Jesus in coming in revealing in fulfilling in suffering in dying in laying down his life so that there may be no demand either by the law or by justice or righteousness and holiness which can be brought against those for whom he has died and the apostle rejoices in this grace and he says there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus then we read in the eleventh verse in whom also we have an inheritance this inheritance is perhaps considered in many aspects of the blessings of heaven the plenitude of heaven the comforts of heaven but if you turn to

John's gospel chapter 17 I believe the very essence and glory of that inheritance is summed up in these verses beginning at verse 21 that they all may be one as thou father art in me and I in thee that they also may be one in us oh what an inheritance to be one in the father the son and the holy ghost and this is the inheritance of the Lord's dear people for he hath determined that they shall be children by Jesus

Christ unto himself heirs and joint heirs with Jesus now if it was anything less than that wondrous inheritance we should be as it were out of court worshippers in heaven but the Lord has said I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there shall ye be also oh what an inheritance the Lord's people obtain in him and then in verse 22 and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one even as we are one

I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that thou has sent me and has loved them as thou has loved me there's no variation or diminution or degree of the love of the father unto the children that he gave unto Christ compared with the love wherewith he has unto Christ it is that same equal love and that's the inheritance of the Lord's dear people those are the blessings that God hath purposed in the exceeding riches of his grace to make known unto his people not only in part here but in the fullness of times throughout all the eternal ages these things they shall know they shall enjoy well

I see the time is going very quickly I want to come and mention the grace of the Holy Ghost for we cannot do without the grace of the Holy Ghost Christ even as we cannot do without the grace of the Lord Jesus or the grace of God the Father and in this chapter we read these things there there is many many things concerning the purposes of

[34 : 46] God respecting his will respecting the means and the way he has determined in salvation but there were many years when while we knew them in the head we knew not the reality or the power of them being unenlightened by the Holy Ghost to the blessedness the efficacy and the perfections and glory that pertain unto Christ when the apostle Paul called the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him he was leaving them behind and we know that their meeting was a very tender one and they knelt down on the seashore and they prayed and

Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus for he had a great love for them and he said I commend you to God and the word of his grace now it hath pleased almighty God by the word of his grace to bring down those blessings unto his people and by the Holy Ghost seal them upon their hearts and consciences and dear friend it's only when by the grace of the Holy Spirit's operations within the soul that these precious truths are led down to for when the

Holy Spirit comes down and softens teaching the precious things of mercy in the gospel isn't there a hope raised up and isn't that hope a consolation to the soul and when the spirit comes and moves aren't we like the woman in the song of Solomon she said it is the voice of my beloved oh she knew who it was she heard it but she was negligent as we are often times she was at ease and comfortable but the savour of his word the sweetness of it the power of it the unction of the spirit within moved her so that she rose up and she went out after him crying saw ye him whom I so love it dear friend there's nothing in our nature that will move us to go out after him save only as the precious things of Christ are applied unto the soul and let down with power and with unction by the Holy Ghost consider what we read in another place

God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness that shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and how are these things brought down unto us made over unto us by the unction of the Holy Spirit dear friend aren't there times when because of our coldness our indifference our failings we grieve the spirit but the spirit doesn't withdraw the spirit is sent to be a comforter to abide with us sometimes we suppose and feel that we can't continue or that we've been deceived well think of Paul the word tells us that he had a thorn in the flesh and he prayed unto the Lord three times that he would take it away now that thorn in the flesh evidently wounded him grieved him was a continual irritant unto him and it may be that there are times when we know these circumstances there's something that wounds us that grieves us that's a burden but not only that the apostle said that it was a messenger of Satan to buffet him so he was tempted because of this thorn in the flesh and Satan came as it were and bruised him battered him with his suggestions and the apostle prayed unto the Lord and the Lord heard him and this was what the Lord did and this was how

Paul records it he said unto me now I believe that to be an example of the exceeding riches of the grace of God unto his people that almighty God should hear but also condescend to come and speak and to make the apostle know that it was from him that is from God to Paul it was the soul being dealt with in measureless grace by a merciful God and some may say well was he merciful he didn't take the thorn away dear friend he did far more than take the thorn away he said unto Paul my grace is sufficient for thee my strength is made perfect in weakness and what a change that made to the apostle

[42 : 25] Paul he was wounded he was bruised he was grieved he was battered he was tempted but when the Lord came and when the Lord spake unto him he said most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me that's the blessing which the exceeding riches of God's grace bestows upon his needy children when they cry unto him not something of the moment not something of the flesh not something of nature but nothing less than the power of Christ is bestowed upon them no wonder that the Lord says my grace is sufficient for thee we often take that word sufficient in this day to mean adequate but if we read it in the context of almighty

God and the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus it is infinite it is perfect it is full it is satisfying and that not for a time but throughout all eternity eternity and the Lord has purposed that throughout a never ending eternity the exceeding riches of his grace shall be known tasted rejoiced in by those whom he hath chosen in him before the foundation of the world may you and I be partakers of that grace there is no greater blessing that we can know and I believe there is no greater blessing that we can desire for those that are dear unto us and all that we might each often be found at the throne of grace waiting upon him for these blessings for ourselves and for those that we love may the

Lord have his blessings everything they still will have a well but all if we the we Ooh go through who we know we have■ who