

What Are We Preaching?
*"The Unsearchable Riches
 Of Christ"*
 Ephesians 3:8

Paul's Past Work In Ephesus

Acts 19

- Trying work. (verses 8–9; 23–31; 2 Corinthians 1:8ff)
- Lengthy. (verse 10; cf. 20:31)
- Rewarding. (verse 10)

Acts 20:36–38 Affectionate.

Ephesians 3:8

- ▶ **Reveals Three Things:**
 - What Paul says about HIMSELF.
 - What Paul says about HIS WORK.
 - What Paul says about the great SUBJECT of his preaching.

**What Paul Says About HIMSELF
 Ephesians 3:8**

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints."

- ▶ Paul was a persecutor:
 - Acts 8:1 Held the garments of those who stoned Stephen. cf. Acts 22:19–22
 - Acts 8:3 Laid waste the church.
 - Acts 9:1 Breathed threatening and slaughter
 - 1 Timothy 1:12–15 Considered himself chief of sinners.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:9–10 Least of the apostles
 - Acts 26:9ff Punished the disciples.

**What Paul Says About HIMSELF
 Ephesians 3:8**

"Was this grace given ..." Verses 2,7,8

1 Corinthians 9:17 "I have a stewardship intrusted to me."

1 Timothy 1:11 "gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

Acts 20:24 "But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

**What Paul Says About HIMSELF
 Ephesians 3:8**

"Was this grace given ..." Verses 2,7,8

WHY?

- ▶ "to make all men see ..." Ephesians 3:9
- ▶ "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build (you) up, and to give (you) the inheritance among all them that are sanctified." Acts 20:32
- ▶ "to present every man perfect ..." Colossians 1:24–29
- ▶ "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:16

What Paul Says About His WORK Ephesians 3:8

"To preach unto the Gentiles."

- ▶ Paul preached to the Jews. Acts 13:14ff; 17:1-2
- ▶ He turned to the Gentiles. Acts 13:46-48
- ▶ Apostle to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-23

7

What Paul Says About His WORK Ephesians 3:8

***"To preach unto the Gentiles."
(note: Ephesians 1:3ff "us" & "ye")***

- ▶ What an honor.
- ▶ What a serious & painful responsibility.
 - Must preach it right. 2 Timothy 4:2-4
 - Must preach it in its fullness. Acts 20:26-27
 - No more, no less. Galatians 1:6
 - Jeopardize our soul and those who hear. 1 Timothy 4:16; cf. James 3:1

8

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

"The unsearchable riches of Christ."

- ▶ Definition: (Greek *anexichniastos*) "not tracked out, i.e. (by implication) untraceable" (Strong's)

9

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

"The unsearchable riches of Christ."

- ▶ Job 5:8-9 "But as for me, I would seek unto God, And unto God would I commit my cause; Who doeth great things and unsearchable, Marvellous things without number."
- ▶ Psalms 145:3 "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable."

10

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

- ▶ Romans 11:33 "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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?"
- ▶ Note: Isaiah 55:8-9

11

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

It was a mystery.

- Ephesians 1:9 "make known unto us the mystery of His will."
Ephesians 3:3 "Was made known unto me the mystery ..."
Ephesians 3:4 "... my understanding in the mystery ..."

12

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

It was a **mystery**.

Ephesians 3:9 To make all men see the "dispensation of the **mystery**."

Ephesians 6:19 "the **mystery** of the gospel" points to God's plan of redeeming man from sin and death.

13

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

Definition: "mystery." (Greek *musterion*)

- ▶ "a hidden purpose or counsel; secret will: of men ... In the N.T., God's plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed: Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26" (Thayer)
- ▶ "... may be best illustrated by the following passage: ***'the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested to His saints'***" Colossians 1:26 (Vine)

14

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

God's redemptive plan was hidden, now been revealed.

- ▶ Previous generations did not know. Ephesians 3:3–5, 9
- ▶ Prophets and angels did not know. 1 Peter 1:10–12
- ▶ Wisdom of man could not reveal it. 1 Corinthians 1:18ff; cf. Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12

1 Corinthians 2:7–13 "revealed through the Spirit ... that we might know ..."

15

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

Romans 16:25–27 "Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith: to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen."

16

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

"Riches of Christ." Wealth, abundance.

cf. Romans 5:20–21; Ephesians 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; cf. Colossians 1:27; 2:2

They are a fountain which, however many draw from its waters, never runs dry.

17

What Paul Says About The SUBJECT Of His Preaching. Ephesians 3:8

"Riches of Christ."

- ▶ Forgiveness. Life and death. Ephesians 2:1
- ▶ Reconciliation. Ephesians 2:16; Isaiah 59:1–2
- ▶ In the body, the church. cf. Ephesians 1:22–23
- ▶ The gospel. Ephesians 3:6; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 1:1
- ▶ Hope. Ephesians 4:4; 5:23

18

Conclusion

- ▶ What do you think of yourself? *"less than the least ..."*
- ▶ Have you come to see yourself as dead in sin? *"What shall I do?" cf. Acts 22:16*
- ▶ What do you think about the message of the gospel? *"Unsearchable riches." NOTE: Ephesians 3:9-10*
Mark 16:15-16 "Go preach ..."
Luke 24:47 "Repentance and remission of sins ..."
Acts 2:47 "Added to the church ... saved."

19