

# Secret Riches

*Ray Stedman*

## I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ephesians 3:7-13.

B. The gospel is the answer to the world's problems, our human condition and man's impotence.

## II. The reason Paul wrote this section was that the Ephesians were troubled by Paul's suffering.

A. Suffering for the cause of Christ is assured victory.

B. There is no way to assure that victory is certain unless the sufferings of Christ are being filled up in the body of the believer.

## III. Paul was amazed at...

A. The value of the gift that God had given to him.

B. The gift came to Paul by the power and grace of God. (I Corinthians 12, Romans 12)

1. Gifts are given to every believer who is a new creation.

a. This is parallel to the old life—every person is given a talent that is part of the gifts of God to Adam.

b. It is only right that the new man should be given spiritual gifts.

c. It is likely that Paul had every one of the gifts of the Spirit.

d. Paul is speaking of the gift of evangelism here.

e. The gift is the ability, and the ministry is the place where the gift is to be operated.

2. Paul considered himself the least of the saints.

a. The older a believer grows the more acute is his sense of weakness.

b. Strengths become weaknesses over the years.

## IV. The unsearchable riches of Christ are right now.

A. Everywhere Jesus went He was healing and restoring people.

B. The unsearchable riches of Christ are that tremendous fulfillment of life.

C. God distributes universal knowledge to see the plan of mystery. (Isaiah 9)

1. Light is brought to all men.
2. Paul gloried in enlightening man because he knew that the secret to all societal and spiritual problems is unlocked through the revealing of the mystery.
3. Human light is dependent upon the degree that the gospel is revealed.
4. Circumstances had all lined up for the proper distribution of the gospel during the time of Christ.

D. Principalities and powers are observing the church.

1. We are surrounded by spiritual powers both good and evil. (Ephesians 6)
2. Angels are watching and learning.
3. God's incredible love is being demonstrated by the church in such a way as to startle the angels into viewing the manifold wisdom of God.

E. All of this comes through Christ alone—the great mystery of God unfolded at Bethlehem.

**Application questions:**

1. How has suffering helped you grow as a believer? Explain.

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2. What is the difference between a gift and a ministry? How do these relate to each other?

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3. How is your church or small group manifesting the wisdom and love of God? What is something your group can do to reach out or reach within to show God's love this week?

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