

Romans 9:23-24(TLB) ²³⁻²⁴And he has a right to take others such as ourselves, who have been made for pouring the riches of his glory into, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, and to be kind to us so that everyone can see how very great his glory is. ²³⁻²⁴And he has a right to take others such as ourselves, who have been made for pouring the riches of his glory into, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, and to be kind to us so that everyone can see how very great his glory is.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

I am rich and so are you. God has poured into us the richness of his glory. Have you ever been embarrassed by the car that you drive. Over ten years ago I did a funeral, and the burial was one of the most beautiful of cemeteries I had ever been. The cemetery had a manicured lawn with absolutely no weeds at all. The cemetery was exceptionally large. I do not know how many acres it covered, but it was huge. At the edge of the cemetery was a huge embankment that overlooked Lake Michigan. The beauty was breath taking. I was the last person to arrive at the cemetery. Most of the cars in the funeral line were Mercedes, BMW's, Audis, Cadillac's, Lincolns, and large SUV's. I pulled up in my 1989 Crown Victoria Station Wagon, the oldest car in the cemetery. I loved my station wagon, so I was not embarrassed at all, but I was obviously with a group of people well above me monetarily.

Friends, God considers all of us, every believer in Jesus Christ, to be incredibly rich and it does not matter what car you drive, how new or how old, or even if you have a car. We have been given untold riches. As we grow closer to Jesus, as we grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the riches that we already have in Christ are revealed to us. You are absolutely rich. You have riches that will last you for an eternity. Some of the riches we experience here and some of the riches will be revealed to us in heaven, including the mansions we will be living in. Your future is so bright in God's glory that you cannot see it now for it would blind your eyesight or worse. The Bible says, "God lives in unapproachable light"(1 Tim. 6:16).

Friends, when I have the privilege of praying with you I feel like am the richest person on the face of the earth. I have a wife who loves me, children who know Jesus, and most

importantly, God who has saved me from my sins. We are incredibly rich in the Lord Jesus Christ. God has poured his richest of blessings into our hearts. The greatest of treasures of all time reside within you and now I wish to state a few of them. My list is not endless. We do not even know what all the treasures are but one day we will know when we are living in the light of God's glory.

Here is my list. 1. You have within you the treasure of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It ought to thrill our souls to no end when we think this thought. Jesus never sinned. Please repeat that after me. Jesus never sinned. That nugget of gold absolutely astounds me. One of the reasons we will live in the light of God's glory forever and ever is the fact that Jesus lived a perfect, sinless, holy life. Aren't you glad you were not a brother or sister to Jesus? You can just hear Mary say, "Why can't you be more like Jesus." I don't think we would love Jesus very much if we were part of his original family. His brothers and sisters thought Him out of his mind until after the resurrection. Jesus never sinned.

This truth is one of the greatest of all truths. The Good News of Jesus Christ within you knows this to be true. God has planted the seeds of the Gospel into your heart. You have the grace of God growing within you, the truth of God's Word. When Jesus died on the cross He took out of you all of your sins. His blood covered your sins. Jesus gave to you His perfect righteousness. The perfect, sinless record of Jesus has been placed inside of you. You are rich beyond measure and those riches will never run out. God has saved you. Yea!

I sin every day. As a matter of fact, God has been putting me through an early spring cleaning, burning the sins and dross out of me, purging me, and cleansing me. Only one sin is enough to keep us out of heaven for God is incapable of accepting sin. Jesus' perfect life, death and resurrection has made us acceptable to God. Alleluia. You are rich.

2. You have been granted the treasure of the riches of eternal life. Christians never die. Jesus says, "And anyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:26). We breathe

our last and are instantly with the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadness, illness, sin, evil, and Satan will never touch you again. You move from here into a mansion built by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said to the disciples, *"In my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2 NKJV). Jesus is the greatest builder ever. He created the entire universe in the beginning. He can certainly build a place for you that will last forever and ever. And will you ever enjoy it. Yes you will. You will treasure it.

3. You have been given by God the Word of God. I am so hoping all of you will be here Wednesday night or watch the live stream for I will be speaking of the rich treasure we have in the Bible. I have known of Biblical scholars whose intellect far outweighs mine and have studied the Bible intensely for well over 50 years and more. They have forgotten more than I will ever learn. At the end of life, they feel like they are just beginning to discover the treasures before them in the Word of God. Please listen to this. Your soul is that part of you that will never die. Your soul will live on after you breathe your last and for the Christian that means heaven. Your soul craves that which is eternal, and God's word is eternal. Your soul is famished, is starving for the truth only found in the Bible. The Bible says God's Word lasts forever. It is in the Word that our precious treasures given by God are discovered. If Columbus never sailed to America, he never would have found it. There are treasures in Christ that you discover in the Bible and no one else can do it for you. It is up to you, between you and God to discover them yourselves as you study Scriptures. Yes, there are helps. Yes, God has gifted some to find those treasures a bit easier. But God wants each of us to discover the vastness of God and his riches each day as we open up our Bibles and feed on God's word. Any emptiness of soul can only be resolved by taking in God's truth. It cannot be found in a bottle, running away from life, from drugs, or material possessions. Your spirit, your soul can only be fed by God's truth. It has riches that never end.

4. We have been given by God the treasure of the community of believers. God has given to us each other to love one another, to befriend one another, to support each other, and encourage one another. The Bible says, "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sins." So many of us feel more isolated than ever. We have been cut off from visiting due to Covid. Right or wrong I do not get near people to speak outside of my home. I do my best to stay six feet away and with my mask on with few exceptions. There is a new loneliness in the air. I did a funeral on Friday and one of workers said, "Pastor, you did not walk through the crowd and speak to people like you normally do." She was and is right. I try to keep my personal distance and will do so until I have the shots. I do not want to pass Covid on to anyone nor do I wish to get it. Friends, we can speak on the phone. We can write letters, emails, and more. It is too cold now, but when it warms up we can visit safely outside and give much needed encouragement. I sense in my spirit at times a need and so I call that person. I have people who call me. Friends, we are here for each other. We are a community of believers and it is good and healthy to find ways to stay in touch with each other. This is true. One word of encouragement can keep another person from making the biggest mistake of their lives. One word of encouragement from you to another person can be used of God to keep them from entering a season of sin. One word of encouragement from you may even make the difference between a person wanting to live or not live. When people fall into a deep pit, a horrible struggle, just surviving is a chore and your word of encouragement can make all the difference in the world. Please do not hold it in. Give it away. God asks you to do just that. One more thing, as a community of believers we are all one family, worldwide, blood related, by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

5. God has given to you the treasure of having a place to raise your children. We promise God when we have our children baptized to raise them in the admonition, in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We promise to bring them to God's house week after week.

The majority of Christians come to faith before the age of 18. The earliest of years are so important in the life of faith in Jesus Christ. Giving our children a great start will give them a gift that will keep on giving for the rest of their lives. What a great treasure we have, a place to raise our children, visiting God's place of worship week after week, year in and year out. The time we have with our children in the home goes by so fast, too fast, and then they are gone.

Jesus says, "Bring the children unto me. Hinder them not" (Mark 10:14). When we do not do this, we are hindering their lives in Christ. I can think of no greater responsibility given by God than to raise our children in the Christian faith. Where they spend eternity is at stake.

I have five more treasures to speak of, but I am not out of time. I will conclude this sermon, God willing, next week. Amen and Amen