

WHAT PAUL MIGHT WRITE TO THE CHURCH AT OKC?

Paul's letter to the church of Jesus Christ at Oklahoma City
The Admonitions- Ephesians 3:8-9 and Ephesians 2:4-8

Ephesians 3:8-9

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...

One of the most disturbing problems that I believe Paul would want to address in the church in OKC is the problem that so many disciples in His church are not experiencing the unsearchable riches of Christ.

- Instead of overcoming sin, so many are being overcome.
- Instead of overcoming painful emotions, so many are being overcome.
- Instead of overcoming lustful thoughts, so many are being overcome.
- Instead of living like spiritual giants, so many are living like spiritual weaklings.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of prosperity. But the prosperity that is promised to every disciple is a spiritual prosperity rather than a material prosperity. This spiritual prosperity is received by faith in the gospel of Jesus.

For some the problem is ignorance. You are like a babe or an infant. You have not been informed about the unsearchable riches of Christ.

For others, the problem is unbelief. When you are stuck in unbelief, you are like the children of Israel who would not receive the promised land and instead longed for the pleasures of Egypt.

My challenge is to inform you and to stir up your faith to receive the promises of the gospel.

Two of the unsearchable riches of Christ is that we are raised together with Christ and we are seated together with Jesus in heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-7

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

NKJV

We are a new man in Christ and we sit in a place of honor with Christ.

When Paul wrote these words, whenever someone hosted a dinner for an honored guest, there would be seats of honor near that person that were reserved for guests of honor.

Paul said to the disciples in Ephesus that at God's table in the heavenly places, Jesus is the chief honoree, those seats of honor were for them.

This is both a future hope and a present reality.

- [The future hope.](#)

Jesus frequently spoke about a great feast after His return. In Revelation 19:9, the angel of the Lord called it the wedding supper of the lamb.

[Revelation 19:9](#)

[9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'"](#)

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After Jesus returns, there will be a great wedding feast, and if you have received Jesus, you will be seated in seats of honor with Him.

- [The present reality](#)

If you have been raised with Jesus, this future hope is already a present spiritual reality.

Paul said if you have received Jesus, you are already seated with Jesus in a seat of honor.

[Ephesians 2:6](#)

[and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...](#)

[Revelation 3:20](#)

[20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.](#)

[NKJV](#)

This honor is just one part of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

There are many things that can cause us to suffer from the pain of feelings of rejection.

- [A parent that abandons us.](#)
- [A parent that is never satisfied with our performance.](#)
- [Harsh words from a parent.](#)
- [Bullies](#)

- Family members and friends that do not try to help us during our time of need.
- Friends that exclude us.
- People that we like that do not like us.
- Authorities that do not acknowledge our contributions or see our potential.
- Personal failure
- Disabilities
- Chronic health problems
- Divorce.
- Death of a loved one.

If you do not deal with the pain of feelings of rejection, they will follow you around the rest of your life. It will haunt you. It will control your motives, thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions.

The cure for feelings of rejection is being honored. Being honored makes us feel significant and important.

When I was a child, I suffered from severe feelings of rejection. My main motive for seeking success was to be honored by men.

One of the people that God used to comfort me amid my feelings of rejection before was my 9th grade speech teacher Mrs. Willoughby. She was a Christian and she accepted me. She made me feel important. She spent personal time coaching me. She chose me to be her student aid. She chose me to be the lead man in the play Tom Sawyer.

I am grateful for Mrs. Willoughby because she modeled the love of Jesus to me. I don't know if she knew that I was suffering from feelings of rejection. The way she honored me comforted me. She made me feel important and significant.

Also, my sister Sandy made me feel this way.

I do not think that my sister or Mrs. Willoughby would be offended to hear me say, I would rather have the honor that Jesus has given me.

Since I have received Jesus, I have been honored by men. When I was a senior in college there was an athletic banquet to honor the most outstanding athletes and their accomplishments. I had never in my life been honored by men like I was honored that night. It was very meaningful because my father was there and he had terminal cancer. My fiancé Debbie was there as well. She did not attend my college. That night, I heard my name called 4 times and was called to the podium.

- I received the award as the most outstanding senior athlete.
- I received the president's award that was given the award as the most outstanding student athlete.
- I was given the award as the most outstanding pitcher on the baseball team.
- I received the award as the most outstanding hustler on the basketball team.

I would rather have the honor that Jesus has given me.

Since college, I have been honored by you on many occasions for my service to you.

I would rather have the honor that Jesus has given me.

I have been honored by being asked to serve as a director on several boards.

I would rather have the honor that Jesus has given me.

The honor that Jesus has given me fully gratifies, satisfies, and fills up my need for significance. He makes me whole.

Talking about your pain is not going to liberate you from the pain of your feelings of rejection. Medicating your pain is not going to liberate you from your pain. Finding a new friend is not going to liberate you from your pain. Receiving a great honor from men is not going to liberate you from your pain.

The way to get over the pain of feelings of rejection is being honored by Jesus and receiving that honor by faith.

- Jesus chose you to be in Him before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:3-4)
- Jesus knew you when you were first formed in your mother's womb. (Psalms 139:13-16)
- Jesus loved you when you did not love Him. (Romans 5:8-10)
- Jesus died for you knowing you were going to be a sinner. (Romans 3:23)
- Jesus paid for your sins. (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Jesus adopted you into His family. (Ephesians 1:5)
- Jesus will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5-6)
- Jesus will always be available when you need Him. (Revelation 3:20)
- Jesus has given you a seat of honor for you at His table. (Ephesians 2:6)

When you receive Jesus, all of this is yours and much, much more. What heals the pain of rejection is the honor you receive from Jesus! His acceptance causes the pain of rejection to dissipate. He makes you whole!

Isaiah 61:1

61 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
NKJV

When this need is met in Jesus you will not be compelled to expect people to meet it. You can take a seat at the lowest seat at any dinner and love the people you are with. You can spend time serving others without expecting anything in return. You can serve the least of these without thinking you have more important things to do. You can avoid intimate relationships with the wrong people.

The honor you receive from Jesus is enough!

One day, Jesus was invited to such a dinner by a Pharisee. While he was there he noticed people taking the seats of honor and this is what He said.

Luke 14:7-11

7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." NKJV

In this story, Jesus gave some very sound wisdom. He also gave a very clear warning. But what Jesus did not provide in this story is all He was going to do that would so exalt His friends that they would never need to seek honor from men.

Part of those riches was that Jesus was going to make a seat of honor near Him for His friends at His feast in His kingdom.

Are you free from that sinful compulsion to be honored by men?
Are you free to serve others without expecting anything in return?
Are you free to anonymously serve the least and the lowest?

Isn't it time for you to begin to experience the unsearchable riches of Christ?