

The Riches Of Christ

In 1516-17, [Johann Tetzel](#), a [Dominican friar](#) and papal commissioner for [indulgences](#), was sent to Germany by the Roman Catholic Church to sell indulgences to raise money to rebuild [St Peter's Basilica](#) in Rome.^[32] Roman Catholic theology stated that faith alone, cannot justify man;^[33] and only good works can justify him. These good works could be obtained by donating money to the church.

On 31 October, 1517, Luther wrote protesting the sale of indulgences. He enclosed in his letter a copy of his "Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," which came to be known as [The 95 Theses](#). Thesis 86, asks: "Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of most, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?"^[35]

Luther objected to a saying attributed to Johann Tetzel that "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs,"^[36] insisting that, since forgiveness was God's alone to grant, those who claimed that indulgences absolved buyers from all punishments and granted them salvation were in error. Christians, Luther said, must not slacken in following Christ on account of such false assurances.

Martin Luther's **Faith in the Riches of Christ was his Defense Against the deception of earning salvation**

The parallel between Martins situation and Paul's are very close

²⁴**Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—²⁶the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

1:24 In this verse, Paul is not saying that Christ's death was insufficient or that somehow he was a co-redeemer with Christ.

Paul is making the point that a Christian will endure the **sufferings** that Christ would be enduring if He were still in the world

-Paul is announcing himself to be a chosen proclaimer of God concerning the mystery The Lord had revealed this mystery to Paul and called him to be a steward of it The mystery is that Christ now lives within Gentile believers

-in Gnosticism the word “mystery” meant a secret revelations granted only to the perfect with a view to the redemption of their souls

-thus not only does Paul claim to know this mystery that leads to redemption but he also is the keeper of this mystery which he determines to give to the Colossians

-the Gnostic leaders were ones that were arrogant and thought themselves better than others because they claimed to hold secret knowledge

-Paul is trumping their claims by saying that he is the keeper of this knowledge and that it was appointed by God for him to distribute

-Paul not only emphasizes Jesus’ deity, but also explains that He possesses all wisdom and knowledge.

-The Gnostics thought only certain “knowledgeable” people could join their elite group; -

-Paul teaches that every believer has access to complete wisdom found in Christ.

-and not only is Paul distributing it but he is doing so with at the expense of his health and safety just as Jesus did

-In further explaining this **mystery** Paul equates “Christ in you” with **the hope of glory**. -“Hope” means “certainty of the future,” that is, for a Christian it is the joyful and confident expectation of salvation.

-“Glory” here refers to the glorious state to be enjoyed by the believer in heaven.

-Thus the hope of glory refers to the certainty of heaven.

-That Christ’s life, character, virtues, values, thoughts, attitudes, and deeds are present in a Christian is evidence that he is headed toward glory (heaven).

-it is a testimony of the seriousness of the mystery that Paul is proclaiming

the five things being mentioned in this paragraph are:

- 1) Paul is appointed by God
- 2) Paul is the holder of the mystery of redemption
- 3) Paul is the proclaimer of this mystery
- 4) Paul is willing to suffer in the proclamation of this mystery
- 5) the mystery is not a secret anymore and is available to any that would want to know

That mystery of christ

²⁸We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²⁹To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

-perfection is acquired through accepting Christ

¹I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. ²My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that

they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.⁴ I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.⁵ For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

-Paul's purpose in proclaiming this mystery is simple yet profound he gives three reasons

1) it is for the Colossians be encouraged or comforted as it says in the Greek

-And what a comfort it would be to know that the work of Jesus Christ has qualified them has freed them has enabled them to be the children of God

-they do not need to be afraid

They can rest

-their salvation is secure

-They can rest in the belief that they have been made adequate in Christ

-They do not need other special mystery they have the mystery in them and it is Jesus Christ

2) that they be united under one teaching, under one truth of Jesus Christ that is the Gospel

-and in so do that they may have **the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**

3) so that they won't be deceived by fine-sounding arguments, : the word here means to persuade,

induce, mislead and corrupt

-Paul knows through Epaphras the infection of gnosticism that has penetrated the church

-he knows that the people have been led astray by others confident in what they believe

-their confidence and intelligence has swayed the church to uphold wrong teaching before the truth

-the Gnostics did not have the truth, and so they sought to attract a following through the clever presentation of his message.

-That is exactly what heretics do.-

-They argue from probabilities and build a system of teaching on deductions.

-On the other hand, if a man is preaching the truth of God, then he does not need to depend on such things as eloquence or clever arguments.

-The truth is its own best argument and, like a lion, will defend itself.

Faith in the Riches of Christ is our Defense Against Deception

From 1510 to 1520, Luther lectured on the Psalms, the books of Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians. In doing so he was further awakened to the riches to be found in faith in Christ

As he studied these portions of the Bible, he came to view the use of terms such as [penance](#) and [righteousness](#) by the Roman Catholic Church in new ways.

He became convinced that the church was corrupt in

their ways and had lost sight of what he saw as several of the central truths of Christianity, the most important of which, for Luther, was the doctrine of [justification](#) —

God's act of declaring a sinner righteous — by faith alone through God's grace.

He began to teach that [salvation](#) or redemption is a gift of God's [grace](#), attainable only through faith in Jesus as the [messiah](#).^[41]

The Gnostics and the Catholic church bare some striking similarities

As both claim a works based salvation and both claim to have an exclusive knowledge of how to achieve salvation

-the Gnostics claimed to have claimed a higher knowledge

They claimed a greater truth than Jesus Christ

They claimed to have fantastic mysteries

They boasted about having insight and understanding

They prided themselves as being of greater importance than the apostles

They upheld a belief in special knowledge that was necessary for redemption

They proclaimed this lie and those that believed them were bound to it

Paul's method up until this point was to first illustrate who the Colossians were in Christ

He told them that they were qualified

He assured them that they were children of God

He told them that the way to live a worthy and pleasing life to God is to first believe that you are worthy and pleasing to God because of your belief in Jesus Christ

The next step Paul takes is to give an exhaustive list in regards to the supremacy of Christ over everything

After having done this he then affirms their identity with Christ

Reaffirming a salvation that is not determined by works but in faith in Jesus Christ

Paul does all of this in the hope that they will ascribe the value to their faith that was lacking

Thus he is hoping that the people will see how fantastic Jesus Christ is and how privileged they are to be a part of him

He calls this the mystery that is Christ in you

The purpose of all of this is so that they will stand against the lies of the Gnostics

Paul wants them to stand against those that teach Jesus is not God

He wants them to come against those that teach that faith in Jesus is not sufficient for salvation

The special knowledge the Gnostics boast about is found in Christ and is plain to any that would want it

Paul anticipated them being more established in their faith so that they could stand firm in the essential of the Supremacy of Christ and their place with him

Valuing who Christ is and who we are in Christ is
our defense against the lies of this world
If we value Jesus as God
If we value him as the savior of this world
If we value the knowledge that salvation is found in
no one or nothing else
If we value the privilege of being his children
If we value being marked by his accomplishments
and not our short-comings
If we value who we are in him and look forward to
who he will make us to be we cannot and will not
be sway by falsehoods

The world will desire to label and judge us as they
do
They desire to make us ashamed of who we are and
they belittle who Christ our savior and the savior of
anyone who believes in him is
If we value who we are in Christ these insults will
not burden us

Others will tell us that the sacrifice of God's son is
not enough for salvation
Still others may teach that Jesus Christ isn't really
God but was more of a good person
The lies and deceptions of this world against Christ
and against us defining ourselves with Christ are
greater and more numerous than I have time to
mention
None of these lies

None of these half-truths, mistruths or deceptions
can stand against the Christian that value his faith
Jesus Christ
We will feel angry indignation over these lies but
will not consider them or be swayed by them
because of the value held in our faith

Paul uses the terms riches, and treasure to indicate
the value or holding to the truths of Christianity
It is the apostle's way of attributing and
highlighting the importance of his message
The gospel
The treasure of salvation
The riches of redemption
The treasure of being qualified by God as worthy
and pleasing
The riches of being seen as acceptable as Christ
The treasure of being called a child of God

If we truly value the truth of the Gospel no
judgment against Christ or ourselves will shake our
faith

The Value We Put on the Riches of our Faith Determines our Defense Against lies

On 18 April, 1521, Luther appeared as ordered
before the [Diet of Worms](#). This was a general
assembly of the estates of the Holy Roman Empire
that took place in [Worms](#) a town on the [Rhine](#). It

was conducted from 28 January to 25 May, 1521, with [Emperor Charles V](#) presiding. Prince [Frederick III, Elector of Saxony](#), obtained an agreement that Luther would be promised safe passage to and from the meeting.

This was a problem Huss In 1414 he was summoned to the Council of, with the Emperor guaranteeing his personal safety even if found guilty. He was tried, and ordered to recant certain heretical doctrines he didn't and was burned at the stake because the Catholic church felt that it was not bound to keep its word to some one who was speaking heresy

Johann Eck, speaking on behalf of the Empire as assistant of the Archbishop of Trier, presented Luther with copies of his writings laid out on a table, and asked him if the books were his, and whether he stood by their contents. Luther confirmed he was the author, but requested time to think about the answer to the second question. He prayed, consulted friends, and gave his response the next day:

"Unless I shall be convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear reason ... I neither can nor will make any retraction, since it is neither safe nor honourable to act against conscience." "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen

Over the next five days, private conferences were held to determine Luther's fate. The Emperor presented the final draft of the [Edict of Worms](#) on

May 25, 1521, declaring Luther an [outlaw](#), banning his literature, and requiring his arrest: "We want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic".^[54] It also made it a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter. It permitted anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence. The Edict was a divisive move that distressed more moderate men, in particular [Erasmus](#).

Luther could not and would not recant the truth of the Gospel because he valued it even more than his own life

Let's compare our faith to a gold medal
if you had a trophy or won a gold medal
you would protect this medal
you might display it in pride over your achievement
anyone who would suggest that you didn't win the medal you would quickly correct
you would not take kindly to jokes being made concerning your achievement
you would welcome opportunities to speak about the sport you won the medal in and the day it happened
it would be something that you would celebrate
you would take delight in being known as someone who won

A Christian that values their faith will display like a medal it by looking for opportunities to share their faith

Anyone that would challenge the essentials of your faith would be quickly answered
Any challenge that there are multiple ways to achieve salvation or that one must work as well as have faith would be met with quick discussion to the otherwise
Jokes regarding one's valued faith would not be taken lightly
To be known as a Christian would be a delight
The main difference between the medal and faith is that the medal is our achievement and salvation is God's achievement given to us
A person will protect and nurture what they value

A Christian will speak against the lies and mistruths of Christianity if they truly value their Faith
A Christian that values their faith will not be swayed by false teaching as to who Christ is or who they are
They will bear up easily under the temptation of lessening the value of Jesus Christ and the sacrifice that was made for them
A Christian that holds onto the value of their faith is marked by peace, confidence and humility
A Christian that values their faith will be burdened for others to know the truth as both Paul, Epaphras and Martin Luther were
A Christian that values their faith will not put consideration of the feelings of others before consideration of the truth

One does not need to be aggressive or rude in upholding one's faith
Even though they may be seen as aggressive or rude by the other person
One's does not need to be short-tempered or impatience when correcting or standing up for their faith
If we truly value the riches of God's grace bestowed upon us we will unapologetically proclaim the truth of who God is and who we are in him as Paul has done with the Colossians with gentleness, confidence and love
And we will not be hurt by those that would despise us for our faith because we value who we are in Christ more than the faulty opinions of others

How many of us know of Christians
People from our past that seemed to have had it all together
People that were once on fire for the truth
But then circumstances changed
They changed
They stopped going to church and they stopped reading their Bible
They started to become agitated whenever you brought up the truth
Whether it was the Bible
The gospel
Or Jesus
Such people have let their guard down

Such people have allowed the lies and doctrines of this world to infect and devalue the truth of Jesus Christ and the truth of who they are
Whether it be other religions or pseudo-sciences or philosophies that have clouded and distorted the truth from their hearts and minds
They have made the same error that the Colossians have made
They allowed the truth they once stood for and professed to be watered down and useless like the Colossians did with the fine sounding arguments of the Gnostics
This has occurred because they did not value the riches of Christ
A Christian will defend their faith in proportion with how much value they put in it
If a Christian regards their faith as valuable as worthwhile and precious they will not compromise their beliefs in the supremacy of Christ or the importance of them being a child of God
If a Christian regards their faith as less significant than another part of their life or the opinions of others they are susceptible to compromising the supremacy of Christ and disregarding the value of being a child of God

Conclusion

Despite the open opposition against Luther no harm came to him
He was protected by local government and allowed to progress in his teaching and theology

The Catholic Church devalued the saving work of Christ and Luther effectively came against it and through his teachings has expanded on what Paul was espousing hundreds of years ago
The value of Christ compelled Paul to risk everything to proclaim the truth
Paul like Luther was more concerned about proclaiming the truth and coming against false teaching than tolerating or compromising the truth in spite of the threat to their safety
The value of the truth of the supremacy of Christ and the unconditional salvation that came through a belief in Him compelled them to defend and proclaim the gospel for the benefit of future generations
If we value Christ and the truth of his gospel we will not be persuaded by lies
How can we ensure that we value the gospel enough?
Look at what makes something valuable
1. it's regarded as rare by a society like gold or gems
2. it is desired by others
3. it holds intrinsic value to the bearer

Let's apply that to the gospel

1. is it rare?
2. is it desired by others?
3. does it hold intrinsic value?

It will or it won't depending on the community you regard as important

If they are non-Christians then no, we are often laughed at, and ridiculed and in most places in the world persecuted

I Corinthians 15:33 "Bad company corrupts good character"

Paul was not writing the letter to one person but to a community.

It was the community he wanted to change because only if the community changed to see and regard the value of their faith would the individual believers also regard that faith as valuable

If we are serious about maintaining or growing in our understanding in the value of the gospel it starts with prayer, faith, and is established in community

The gospel we hold to is already valuable regardless of what anyone thinks of it

But if we are to think it valuable we need to be in community with those who are like-minded

1) The first step to holding onto the value of Christ depends on the company we keep

2) The second step: How intrinsically valuable we see our faith and ourselves is dependent on

Confession

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and lastly submission

3) God thank-you for forgiving me help to value your truth in my life