

New 2Corinthians 8 9 Christ makes the poor rich. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 Text vs.9

Congregation beloved of our Lord Jesus Christ,;

In vs.1 the Apostle Paul is speaking of the grace which God had given to the churches of Macedonia. They had gone through very severe tests and hardships. However, in spite of their own needs, they were so generous in helping others who were in even greater need.

It is wonderful to see that kind of concern and love among Christians when there is need. But, where does this generosity come from? Why is there such love and care for each other?

It is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ at work in every believer that changes their sinful nature when their sins have been pardoned. The Holy Spirit at work in the church that enables the members to love each other and be generous .

The change that takes place in the life of a believer, is because of what vs. 9:says; "for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich".

There are three things that require our attention in our text here in vs.9. 1. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.2. that though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor , so that 3. by His poverty, you might become rich.

1.First of all consider knowing the grace of Christ. How did the Corinthians come to know His grace?

In Acts chapter 18 we read that when Paul first came to Corinth he preached in the Jewish synagogue (犹太人的会堂) but many opposed him. He proved to them from the scriptures that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah (弥赛亚) , the Savior (救主) of the world, but they did not believe it. Most of them rejected the grace of God.

But, not all, some did believe..Even the ruler of the synagogueCrispus believed on the Lord and he and his whole family were saved.

The Lord spoke to Paul in Corinth in a night vision to encourage him, saying not to be afraid but to keep on preaching "for I am with you" he said in Acts 18: 10 "and no one will attack or hurt you for I have many people in this city". 1.

The Lord knows his own. He draws his elect to himself through the preaching of his Word. Many came to faith in Christ and were saved to form the church in Corinth.

Notice that our text here in 2Corinthians 8: 9 says; that the Corinthians knew the grace of our **Lord** Jesus Christ. Notice the emphasis on Jesus being the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead and is seated on his throne in heaven, ruling over allhis domain both in heaven and on earth.

All of us are living under his authority and power. Yet, as mighty and powerful as he is, he graciously comes to us thru the Holy Spirit to speak to us, not thru a night vision, but by his word, to seek us out. He comes personally to each of us to make known his grace and his love for us. Why? Because by nature we are all lost. We do not know who we are or why we are here. Because of our sin we are in the dark.

Christ is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings and yet he is so compassionate and kind to us. He wants all of us to know his grace and his love. That is why he is with us right now in person saying "believe me, trust me to save you and forgive you for your sins against me". When you repent and confess your sins to him , you, like the Corinthians, will know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2.Now secondly , vs. 9 goes on to say;" that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor"..

When we say that someone is rich, what comes to your mind? Having a lot of money? or a large house, a beautiful property? Having many expensive possessions, or being intelligent,? Or perhaps having special gifts of music or being someone important?

But none of these things compare to how rich Jesus is.The entire Bible speaks of the great riches of Christ; riches that no other man has had or will have. Let me just give you a few examples.

Philippians 2:9-10 says that "God also has exalted him highly and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father".

2.

"John 1:1-3 tells us that" Jesus was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made."

John 17:5 on his prayer with his father Jesus said, "And now, Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory I had with you before the world existed".

" Hebrews 1:3 says that "the son is the radiance (光辉) of God's glory and the express image of his person, upholding all things by his powerful word". The only reason you can breathe this very moment is because Jesus is providing you with oxygen.

Hebrews 1:8 says about Jesus, 'your throne, o God, is for ever and ever, and the Scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your Kingdom." Jesus is King!

Hebrews 1: 10 says about Jesus" you Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands",

So, verse after verse in the Bible talks about how rich Jesus Christ is. He owns everything, because he made everything, together with the God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Each flower, each fish in the sea, each bird in the sky, all the minerals as gold and silver that men think are worth so much, are his.

All the creatures, everyone with his intelligence and perfect design is his creation. He is the King of the heavens and earth. All angels adore him and obey him. All the Saints in heaven, so many that no one can count, are around his throne praising his Holy name.

Revelation 5:13 says that the multitudes of saints and angels in heaven , are singing : “ blessing and honor and glory and power be to him who sits on the throne and the Lamb forever and ever amen ".So you see his intelligence and wisdom in all of his creation, and owning the whole universe makes him the richest man ever.But, as rich as Jesus is, he was willing to become poor for our sake.

When we think of poverty what comes to mind? Not having money to buy food or no roof over your head and no place to live and sleep, right?.

There are many in the world who are suffering such poverty. They go through garbage bins and bags looking for food scraps. They sleep under bridges or on park benches or on the ground. This is one kind of poverty of being reduced to a beggar on the street.

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But, these examples are nothing compared to the poverty suffered by Jesus.Not only did he suffer hunger and thirst, and cold like us at times, but he was subjected to contempt (轻蔑) , hatred and mocked (讥笑) by the very men he had created. In character, Jesus is a righteous man, just, faithful, loving, kind, and compassionate.

He is pure, perfect and sinless in all his thoughts and deeds. Yet he was scorned and beaten and hated intensely by the very people he had come to heal from their disease and sickness. He did that to show them what their greatest need was. They needed to be freed from their slavery to the power of sin, death, hell and the devil.He came from heaven to save them from their sins and from being punished in an eternal hell.

No one has been so rich and so powerful to create all things by speaking, and to be worshipped and honored by all powerful angels and saints in heaven, and yet so despised by the very creatures he made. So no one has suffered so much poverty as Jesus did when he was on earth.

He voluntarily (自愿地, 心甘情愿地) subjected himself to rebellious and wicked men when he was crucified. Isaiah 53 describes his suffering in detail. vs:3 “he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we did not esteem him”. (他被藐视, 被人厌弃, 多受痛苦, 常经忧患。他被藐视, 好像被人掩面不看的一样, 我们也不尊重他。)

But even his being despised and rejected by the pride and hatred of man was nothing in comparison to the just wrath (公义的忿怒) of God his Father he suffered in our place.The punishment of our peace was the price he had to pay, so that by his wounds we could be healed says (因他受的鞭伤我们得医治) Isaiah 53:5Jesus himself was holy, blameless, pure, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens “says Hebrews 7:26.

“But the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, “says Isaiah 53:6" it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He was put to grief”. He was pierced for our transgressions (过犯) and crushed for our iniquities (罪过) ”.

He was in agony (痛苦) in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood in anticipation of the cross and the agony of Gods just judgment in hell, all for the sins he bore for us. Jesus became the greatest of criminals taking our sins upon himself.

4.

Have you ever felt ashamed (羞耻的) of what you did wrong? How you offended God with your disobedience? Didn't that shame feel like a terrible weight you were carrying? What a burden sin can be on our hearts. Just think how holy, perfect and just Jesus was and how ashamed he must have felt carrying our sins. Yet he never wavered (动摇) in His purpose to save us. He continued steadfastly to complete the work God the Father had given him as our savior and mediator (中保) .

But the climax of his suffering was when he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken (离弃) me". That was the most painful for him because he so enjoyed the intimate Fellowship (团契) and communion with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Together they enjoyed that perfect unity and a relationship of love and perfect friendship. That was the greatest price he paid, being forsaken.

All this, he suffered to deliver us from the power of sin and the dominion of death so that we will never be forsaken by God. Yet, as agonizing as it was, Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus: "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." What was the joy before him that enabled him to suffer the wrath of God? It was completing his Father's will that he should bring many sons to glory. So we see that, although he was so rich, Christ became poor. And for whom?

3. For your sakes he became poor so that thirdly "you through his poverty might become rich". What are the riches that Christians receive from Christ?

Now, in order to appreciate the riches believers receive in Christ we have to remind ourselves first of all, of how poor we are without Christ.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death (罪的工价乃是死), and the Bible tells us we are all sinners. So, every one of us here are in the process of dying. There is nothing we can do to stop our bodies from wearing out and dying. Unless the Lord returns before we die, these very bodies we are living in, will be buried and return to dust.

We will leave everything behind us that is precious to us. Our husbands, wives, children, family, friends, our home and all the possessions we value. We will leave it all behind.

5.

But that is not the end of our poverty. Losing our life and all our possessions and our family is a great loss. But, our greatest loss is that when we die we will be found guilty and condemned (被咒诅) forever.

Without faith in Christ we will face the just judgment of God for all our disobedience and rebellion against God. Jesus tells us that no man can come to the Father but by him. He alone can open the door of heaven for us. He is our only hope, our only Mediator who can save us from our sin. He has the keys to death and hell Revelation 1:18 tells us. That is why it is so crucial for all of us to know the grace of God personally.

We need to know that we are forgiven so that we do not have to fear the judgment of God. Can we know for certain that we are forgiven? Yes we can. How? By believing what Jesus says in John 5:24 "most assuredly I say unto you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into the judgment but has passed from death into life".

This is the key, have you passed from death to life? We are all born spiritually dead. We must be born again Jesus tells us in John 3:3 This happens to us when we put our trust and our confidence in what Jesus has done for us. Jesus himself tells us in John 3:36 "he who believes in the Son has everlasting life and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him".

So you see how critically important it is for all of us to trust and believe in Christ as our only hope to be saved from the judgment?. We are "justified by faith and so have peace with God" says Romans 5:1 And to confirm that, vs.5 says: "that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us".

So you see how rich you become if you have faith in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins. The Holy Spirit will fill your heart with the love of God to confirm that you have passed from death to a new life, eternal life. What a great joy and peace will flood your heart when you have the love of God in your heart.

When you know you belong to Christ, you have such wonderful things to look forward to. There are a lot of things in this life that can trouble us, but Jesus tells us in John 14:1-3:

6.

"let not your heart be troubled believe in God believe also in me in my Father's house are many mansions and I go and prepare a place for you and I will come again and receive you to myself so that where I am there you may be also". So when you die, you will be welcomed into the God the Father's house where Jesus is preparing a place for you, and for all other forgiven sinners who have been pardoned.

When Jesus forgives you your sins, he makes you perfect, without stain, pure and Holy. He takes your sin and shame, and gives you his righteousness and perfection. He takes your poverty and gives you all his riches. He takes your guilt, and gives you his holiness. Now, instead of being cursed you are being blessed. Rather than dying eternally, you are eternally living. He took your cross and gave you his Crown. When he comes again, Jesus will speak to your dead body in the grave and it will rise from the grave and it will be perfect and beautiful. You will never look so good as you will look then. Philippians 3:20-21 says "for the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it might be conformed to his glorious body."

Dear friends, do you see how rich you are if you know the grace, love, mercy and peace of your Savior Jesus Christ? If you do not know his grace, if you do not have this new life, do not wait to ask him . Ask Jesus today to send the Holy Spirit to give you a new life, so that you may know his love for you . He is speaking to you right now from his word and by His Spirit. He wants you to know him and his love for you.

He's encouraging you to come to him to know him and to know how rich you can become in Him. All that Jesus possesses right now as Lord He will share with you. He wants you to live with him forever and ever in heaven.

But the Lord does ask you to do something. Not to earn your salvation (救恩) , but because he saved you by grace. In 1John 2:15 the Lord gives us a strong warning: “ Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (肉体的情欲) , the lust of the eyes (眼目的情欲) , and the pride of life (今生的骄傲) ,(meaning the things you have and do that you are so proud of), is not of the Father but the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God will live forever”.

7.

What happens to us when we make the things that pass away our riches, we will no longer appreciate the wonder of the riches we have in Christ. This has happened to so many in the history of the church. Just read the prophets in the Old Testament. But also in the NT. Think of the rich young man in Luke 18 who came to Jesus and said: “ good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? You know the sad story, he chose the riches that pass away, rather than the eternal riches Christ would have given him if he had followed him.

What a tragic mistake he made. YP, please do not make that tragic mistake. Listen to the Lord of glory who is calling out to you to follow him to share in the eternal riches he has for you. We all need to heed the words of 1Tim 6:6-7 “Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” (6 然而敬虔加上知足的心便是大利了; 7 因为我们没有带什么到世上来, 也不能带什么去。8 只要有衣有食, 就当知足。)

The Lord wants us to enjoy the new life He has given us to the utmost. He wants us to joyfully and lovingly serve him with all that he has given us, whether it is with much or little, but with a heart full of thanksgiving. He wants us to demonstrate our love for him to those around us. He wants everyone around us to see just how much we adore and worship Him as our living Lord and savior. He wants us to be passionate and on fire in our devotion to him.

He has given us the Holy Spirit who came with flames of fire on Pentecost (五旬节) to put a fire in our hearts and so enable us to honor and obey our King and Lord Jesus Christ seated on his throne in glory. That's the kind of loving devotion the Lord wants from our hearts, as his bride, his church.

So dear brothers and sisters, we all need to ask the Holy Spirit to kindle a flame of fire in our heart, soul and mind to love our Savior and enjoy his riches. It will transform our lives .You will be so very content and happy in serving the Lord enjoying all his riches rather than what this world has to offer you.

Can you imagine anything more amazing than that the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to have fellowship with us? He wants our love for him, it is precious to him. How is it possible?

8.

Listen to what Revelation 3:20-21 have to say. “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. To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne”

What greater riches could you ever receive than to have the Lord Jesus Christ loving you so much that he wants you with him forever?..Just image ,sitting down with him as vs.21 says, while he is on the throne in heaven ruling over all things, but he is inviting you to sit with him on the throne. He is so interested in what you have to say, that takes the time to talk and to listen to you. Even though he is so infinitely great and majestic he wants us sit down with us to have fellowship with us .

That is what the Lord of glory promises. “I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me. Can you think of anything more precious than that?

Dear Brothers and sisters, enjoy your new life in Christ.

And if there is anyone here who does not have this new life, if you are not born again by the Holy Spirit, I urge you to flee to Christ now and repent of your sins and ask him to forgive you, and he will not turn you away. He has never turned anyone away who has come to him with a broken and contrite heart.

If you do that, you will go home rejoicing and giving thanks for what you have heard : "that by the grace of our Lord , though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor so that by his poverty you might become rich." Amen.