

"FOR YOUR SAKES"

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." II Corinthians 8:9.

In the preceding verses of this chapter, Paul was trying to stir the Corinthian Christians to be more liberal. He was doing his utmost to collect a generous gift in order to supply the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem and Judea, suffering from famine, persecution and other circumstances. He desired this as a fruit of Christian faith, as a token of Christian love to brethren in need, and, above all, as a response to the unmeasured love of God in Christ Who gave Himself.

In his effort to arouse a spirit of liberality among them, Paul pointed to the liberality of the Macedonians. They had given more than they were able to give, and until he was almost ashamed to receive what they gave. 8:1-3. That was a worthy example of sacrificial giving, but it was not the highest example. That was to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. 8:9. This text is a priceless gem of truth.

I. Jesus Christ Was Rich.

He was not born wealthy, neither did He acquire riches. Then it must have been at some other time than during His life upon the earth. The riches here spoken of are not the riches which He now possesses as Mediator, but the riches which He had with the Father before the world was.

1. He was rich in possessions.

All things were made by Him. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him." Col. 1:16.

2. He was rich in the love of the Father.

To be loved by God the Father is the truest of all riches. The love of God is undying, unchanging love. None ever enjoyed the love of God as Jesus did.

3. He was rich in surroundings.

Heaven, with its beauty, perfections and artistry, was His home.

4. He was rich in position.

One day John gently pushed open the door to that upper room in Jerusalem, and allowed us to hear the great Saviour in prayer. He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17:5. He shared all the glory of the Father. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Philipians 2:6-7.

5. He was rich in power.

Creative power was His for He made all things. Sustaining power was His, for "in Him all things hold together." Reigning power was His, for dominions and principalities and powers were subject to Him. Whatever of power, glory, riches and blessedness the Father had, they dwelt with equal fulness in the Son; for He was in the

form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He also has all authority over your life. He can cause you to die or He can enable you to continue to live.

II. Jesus Christ Became Poor.

1. He became poor in condition.

He was God veiled in humanity. He was the God of joy transformed into the Man of sorrows. He became a man, and took upon Himself the limitations of a man.

2. He was poor in position.

He left His home in heaven. He left the hallelujahs of the heavenly world for the manger at Bethlehem. The wonderful condescension of Jesus amazed the angels, and startled the earth, and terrified hell. From the highest heights to the deepest depths. from the highest honor to the deepest shame, and from the greatest wealth to the deepest poverty, He came.

3. He was poor in circumstances.

(1) At His birth.

This world gave him a chilling reception. When He was born the best door that opened to Him was a barn door, the best bed afforded Him was a litter of straw, and He was wrapped in the swaddling clothes of poverty. He was born of a peasant mother and had for His foster-father a poor carpenter. He was an outcast, as there was no room for Him in the inn, which was a foreshadowing of His whole earthly life.

(2) In His life.

a. As an artisan.

In Nazareth He earned His living by the sweat of His brow. Nazareth was the most despised village of the land. It was a synonym for abject poverty and depravity. He often was hungry, and consequently depended upon the charity of others for the relief of His wants.

bb. As a traveller.

He journeyed in penury. He did not ride in a chariot, but He walked His weary way, foot sore o'er the flints of Galilee. He did not have a place to lay His head. He looked at the fox as it hurried to its burrow, and the fowl as it went to its resting place, and He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but I, the Son of man, have not where to lay My head." When He entered the Holy City on what is commonly known as the Triumphal Entry, He rode on a borrowed donkey.

c.

c. As a preacher.

He was dependent upon casual charity. When He needed a pulpit from which to preach to the waiting multitudes along the seashore, He borrowed a boat

from one of His disciples. Instead of paying Him homage, they mocked Him and insulted Him. Few believed on Him. He was poor in worldly estimation. They called Him a Sabbath-breaker, wine-bibber, glutton, traitor, friend of sinners, blasphemer and deceiver. Often they plotted to kill Him. When He wanted to feed the multitudes He borrowed loaves and fishes. When tax-paying time came and He did not have sufficient money to pay them, He wrought a miracle to get money to pay them, by sending Simon Peter to get a fish with the tax-money in its mouth. When He made ready to eat the Passover for the last time with His beloved disciples, He borrowed a room in which to do so.

(3) In His death.

Though He made the earth, and it was His by right of creation, He did not even own a cemetery lot. He was buried in a borrowed grave. What shame! What humiliation! The Son of God buried in a borrowed tomb!

III. For What Purpose Did Jesus Christ Become Poor?

The truest test of any action lies in its motive. Many deeds, which seemed to be glorious, were really ignoble because they were done with a base intention; while other actions, which appeared to be poor and paltry, were really full of the beauty and glory of a noble purpose. As the mainspring of a watch is all-important, so the spring of an action is everything. Note the motive at the root of Christ's action in becoming poor. With Him there was no self-seeking. He did not come to this earth and suffer for Himself. He came for others, lived for others, and died for others. Everything He did was "FOR YOUR SAKES."

When we think of what He did for us we ask, What made Him do it? To that question the only accurate answer is GRACE. He did it because He is the kind of God He is. He has an eager longing to put away the black barrier of sin that stands between His creatures and Himself.

In Southern California a Mexican mother died. She left a family of eight children. The oldest child, although she was sixteen, was small for her age and not strong. Upon her frail shoulders there rested the burden of caring for the family. She took up the task with courage and devotion. As the neighbors watched, they had to admire the efficient way in which, not sparing herself, she kept those seven brothers and sisters clean, well fed, and in school. One day a friend congratulated her on the excellent way she was meeting the difficult situation. Somewhat to this friend's surprise, the girl said, "Well, I can't take credit for something I have to do." "But, my dear," replied the friend, "you don't have to. You could get out of it." The girl was silent for a few thoughtful seconds, and then she answered, "Yes, that's true. But what about the HAVE TO that's inside of me?" It was that HAVE TO inside Christ that made it grace. He became poor in order that we through His poverty might become rich. He became what we were that He might make us as He is. The Son of God became the Son of Man in order that we who are the children of men might become the children of God.

He came to give us pardon, peace, salvation, and to lead us through the gates of pearl to eternal bliss. He came to make us heirs of God and joint heirs with Himself. He wants us to be rich.

1. Rich in faith.

He wants us to give up our self-reliance, our strutting about in our own clever-

ness, our bragging about our accomplishments, and open up our whole beings to His promises and His power. Because of His poverty we are made rich in the forgiveness of our sins through faith in the atoning Saviour. There are not enough riches in all the world to forgive a single sin of a single sinner. Not all the wealth, power, prestige, possessions and positions in the world can save a single sinner from the torments of hell. But the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ blots out every transgression, covers over every iniquity, removes every spot, stain, stigma, blot and blemish from the soul of every believer in Christ. Through the gospel I offer to you the free pardon of every one of your sins, if you will come to Christ and accept the grace of God in Him.

2. Rich in fellowship.

Some have a strange conception of salvation. They have the idea that salvation means your sins are forgiven and you will go to heaven when you die. That is right, but that is only part of it. Salvation is enjoyed here and now, also. God is our Father, Christ is our Lord and Master. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Guide. We are rich in fellowship with the Lord because He walks with us, and talks with us, and calls us His very own. He will make all who believe on Him rich, not only in the forgiveness of the past, the fellowship of the present, but also in the future glory that is waiting for us.

3. Rich in fruitfulness.

In II Corinthians 6 Paul says that the real Christian goes about in this world "making many rich." This means that when we are rich in the love and beauty, and the peace and joy of Jesus Christ, we have real wealth to share. Rich in Christ we ought to make others rich also. God's utmost for man's highest calls for a worthy response -- man's utmost for God's highest.

It is a blessed thing to accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Unsaved friend, give Christ your heart and life right now. He will give you everything that is worth having.. He will also make your life beautiful, useful and happy. Receive Him as your Saviour now.