

Just Checking #134 MARCH 2013

The Grace of Christ 2 Corinthians 8:9

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

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2 Corinthians 8:9

**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,
so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

As you know, Paul wrote two letters to the church in Corinth. The first was a letter of rebuke and correction to address the several problems that were dividing the church and destroying their witness. The second was a letter to remind and comfort the church regarding God's grace that restores and renews the repentant. As with all his 13 letters, "Grace to you" introduces the letter, and "Grace be with you" concludes it. Paul is ever mindful of God's amazing grace. Like us, he was saved by grace, justified by grace, called by grace, enabled by grace, sustained by grace, and assured by grace of future glory.

Over the past several weeks I have been meditating on 2 Cor 8:9, as I have shared this passage scores of times in hospital rooms, nursing homes, living rooms, and conversations with fellow believers. I don't pretend to fully comprehend the limitless ocean of revelation contained herein, but let's swim a while in this text and soak up what we can for the time.

2 Corinthians 8:9

**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
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We see three key realities regarding our Savior in this text. The grace of Christ, the riches of Christ, and the poverty of Christ.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST

Paul begins with a bold declaration that we already know the grace of Christ. This "knowledge" of Christ's grace is personal, experiential, and real. It is not that we have simply heard about His grace, or have considered it theoretically. No! We know it by deep and personal experience as first-hand recipients of His grace. And let us not forget the meaning of this marvelous word, "grace." It carries the meaning of undeserved kindness, abundant care, and active compassion. Grace, as we have heard, is "getting what we don't deserve." While that is true, it is more, far more than that. Grace is not just getting what we don't deserve, that is, unearned and unmerited kindness. But in reality, grace is getting the opposite of what we do deserve. We who deserve hell receive heaven. We who have earned wrath receive loving kindness. We who merit judgment receive forgiveness. You see, if I am poor and you give me unearned riches, that is compassion. But if I am poor, and then burn your house down, kill your family, and despise you, and then you give me of your riches, that, my friend is grace! That is the grace we have received and that we "know" by firsthand experience.

2 Corinthians 8:9

**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,
so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST

Now let's consider the poverty of Christ. We certainly know much of His poverty. He was born in a borrowed stable. His first bed was a borrowed manger. His parents were so poor that their temple offering for the firstborn was two doves. During His life and ministry He said that "foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but He, the Son of Man, had nowhere to lay His head." The only thing we know He possessed was a seamless robe, and that was stripped from Him and gambled away at His death. When He died naked on the cross the only thing He held in His hands were the nails our sins placed there. And after He died they buried Him in a borrowed tomb. Oh yes, we know the poverty of Christ.

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THE RICHES OF CHRIST

The verse also says... "that though He was rich..." But when was He ever rich? Not at His birth. Not during His life. Not at His death! When? Before! Consider the kind of riches and poverty we are speaking of. What riches did He possess that He gave up? It must of necessity be the same kind of riches He has given us. I would submit that it is the riches of His glory we are speaking of here. He possessed the riches of glory at His Father's right hand. It was this glory He left behind. It was this rich glory He asked to be restored to Him in John 17:1-3. It is this rich glory that we have been guaranteed as our inheritance. (Eph 1:18, 3:16, Phil 4:19.)

2 Corinthians 8:9

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that though he was rich, yet **for your sakes** he became poor,
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Now, many are the rich in this world who have become poor, through mismanagement, addictions, or robbery... (lottery winners, sports stars, Bernie Madoff victims, etc.) All of this poverty was material and unintentional. But Christ's poverty was relational, intentional, purposeful, and determined. "for your sakes He became poor!" Consider as well, that in this world some are made rich through the riches of others. But in our case, we are made rich "through the poverty" of Christ. Let us not forget the manner in which we are made rich. It is not that the rich One made us rich by His riches. It is that the rich One became the poor One so that we, by means of His poverty, become rich ones. Eternity shall never reveal even to glorified mortals the depth of the soul pain He endured in His poverty to give us the exceeding great and surpassing joy of sharing in His wealth of glory forever.

The Loss was His. The Cross was His. The Treasure is Ours. This is GRACE! This is the GRACE of Christ that you know!

SELF CHECK:

- 1) Does the grace of Christ daily astound and humble me?
- 2) Does the poverty of Christ release me from vain striving after the wealth of this world?
- 3) Do I consider the glory of Christ the true and lasting treasure worth pursuing?
- 4) Is my definition of wealth and poverty truly Biblical?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

GRACE	2 Cor 1:2	2 Cor 12:9	2 Cor 13:14
RICHES	Ro 2:4	Ro 9:23	Ro 10:12
Ro 11:33	2Cor 6:10	Eph 1:7	
Eph 1:18	Eph 2:4	Eph 2:7	
Eph 3:8	Eph 3:16	Phil 4:19	
Col 1:27	Col 2:2	1Tim 6:17	
1Tim6:18	Jas 2:5		

"O Lord Jesus, Lord of glory, Worthy One, King of Grace, I seek to know you more. Give me a growing understanding of all You are, all You've done, all You gave up, all You suffered for my sake, that my gratitude may grow and my worship may grow into something acceptable in Your sight. I am too often captured by this world, casual in my worship, taking Thy grace for granted, and forgetful of the infinite cost You paid to secure my soul, my forgiveness, my joy and my future glory. I shall never comprehend the cost You paid, or why You would be willing to give Your all for the likes of me. But I long to worship You with an ever deepening gratitude of soul, focus of mind and fervency of spirit, not for the sake of my feelings, but for the glory of Your Name. O Worthy One, I pray always and only in Your Name, Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity,
owning nothing yet possessing everything
that matters and lasts.

We are Pilgrims in Paradox.

Welcome to THE JOURNEY