

Though he was rich (Communion service)

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Preacher: Rev Dr Malcolm Maclean

[0 : 00] 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9 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.

2 Corinthians This letter of Paul, that we call 2 Corinthians, is often regarded as the most heartwarming of his letters.

In this letter we see some of the inner feelings that the Apostle had. He obviously didn't have them just for the Corinthians, but in this letter he almost opens up his affections as it were, and we can read some of his very moving and warm comments that he makes about the church in Corinth. Now of course we know that the church in Corinth, in 1 Corinthians, had turned their back on Paul. I get to write that letter of 1 Corinthians to correct them for their various misdemeanours. But here in 2 Corinthians, there's, but it still does maintain some corrective aspects, yet in the main it's a very warm and encouraging letter.

[2 : 15] And in the chapter we read, the Apostle is reminding them of a commitment they had made the year before, that they would participate in the big collection that he was gathering together for the suffering churches in Jerusalem.

And he reminds them, and we can see the way Paul uses various arguments to persuade them to recall that they had made this commitment to give to this church-wide collection for the church in Jerusalem.

You can see, for example, in verse 1, chapter 8, that he reminds the Corinthians, he calls this as an Achaia, he reminds the Corinthians how the churches of Macedonia had given to this collection. The churches of Macedonia, which he said in verse 2, that they had given out of their poverty, and out of their lack of resources, they had given very liberally.

So in addition to their own promise that they had made a year or so before, he also reminds them that other churches are giving very sacrificially, and therefore, by implication, the Corinthians should do the same.

[3 : 42] But that's not his most powerful argument that he uses in order to stimulate them to share with their fellow Christians who are in great need.

The most powerful argument that he uses is in verse 9, our text that we are going to think about together. That's not his most powerful argument.

That even the sacrificial giving of the churches in Macedonia. It is interesting, of course, isn't it, how often Paul and other New Testament writers turn to the example of Jesus as how to do something. For example, we're all familiar with Paul's well-known words in Philippians chapter 2 about humility. where he's calling the church in Philippians chapter 2 about humility.

His members to live handy with one another. And we might think the problem in Philippians chapter 2 about humility.

[5 : 21] And we might think the problem in Philippians chapter 2 about humility. Because all it seems to be is that two women were not going on. Iodian syncythe. They were not speaking to one another. And for some reason that was affecting the whole church.

And whatever may have been the secondary motives for their behavior, the real problem was a lack of humility.

And Paul, in dealing with that problem, points to Jesus. And he says to all of them, not just the two ladies are having their little dispute, but he says to all of them, So let this mind be anew, who is also in Christ, who made himself of no reputation.

He was the one who had a reputation. Because after all, he was God. But he made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

So there, Jesus, Paul appeals to Jesus as the example for humility. In Hebrews chapter 12, the writer of that book, as he considers how to run the Christian race.

[6 : 43] And of course, he mentions a lot of other athletes in chapter 12. But in chapter 11, he mentions other athletes. In chapter 12, he says the best example is Jesus.

And the apostle Peter, when he is writing to encourage the Christians to whom he was sent his letter, first letter, who were suffering for the faith, He tells them that Jesus is an example for suffering.

And again and again, the New Testament writers turn the minds of the followers of Jesus to think about Jesus as their model, as their example.

And here they are in verse 9, as Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to show liberality. The example that he mentions is what Jesus did with his resources.

And he says, But though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

[8 : 03] I just want to think on a couple of matters that come out of this verse.

What were the riches of Jesus? And what does it mean that he became poor?

And then, who was it that he became poor for? And then a little about the riches that these people received.

So firstly, the riches of Jesus. Obviously, Paul is referring to what he was like before he came into the world.

When he was the Son of God. And his riches, we could say, included his capabilities.

[9 : 12] When we see somebody with talents, we say, well they're endowed richly with talents, don't we? And what kind of talents did the Son of God have?

His attributes, we want to call them that. His abilities. Take his ability of wisdom.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is more than knowledge. Wisdom is knowing what to do with knowledge.

There are plenty of people who have lots of knowledge, but they're not wise. But the Son of God, while he was wisdom throughout his whole existence as the eternal Son of God, he never made one wrong thought.

That's a rich person, isn't it? Never once. There are many wealthy people in our society, in our world, but it can never be said about them that in their career that they haven't made wrong assessments, wrong decisions.

[10 : 37] There are always were situations that baffled them, but that can never be said about the Son of God. Whatever he thought about, it was wise.

And of course, his wisdom has always been there. Because he has no beginning. He was rich in the number of days that he existed.

However far back we want to go. And of course we have to use human measurements to try and get some assessment of that. But however far back we want to go.

Billions of centuries, you want to put it that way, before the universe began. It all belonged to him. It all belonged to him.

Everything was his. And he knew wisely what to do with it.

[11 : 39] He was rich in his interactions with others in the Trinity. The Father, the Spirit.

One of our greatest treasures, isn't it, is the ability to interact with one another. And when we find someone who is able to understand us, someone who is able to appreciate us, then we regard ourselves as rich.

And in the Divine Trinity, there is a Father who is full of affection. There is a Father with this wonderful eternal plan.

And in his Son, he is a person who is able to respond to him with the same degree of love.

And who is able to grasp fully and appreciate every detail of the Father's eternal counsel. The Son was wealthy in all these attributes that he had.

[12 : 56] And we can go through all of them. We know what they are. His power, his wisdom, his love, his holiness.

He has them all to perfection. He was rich in his capabilities.

We can also say he was wealthy in his activities. We are not told much about what went on before creation.

But when we look at the universe, who made it all? The Son of God. All the galaxies that we are aware of, he brought them into existence.

They are his. They are his. All these things were made by him and for him. Whether we think about the universe in its bigness, or whether we go down into its minutiae.

[14:11] We see there the capabilities of Jesus. That he brought all this into existence.

All that we are aware of in the universe. And all that extends far beyond our knowledge. And far beyond our capabilities of even beginning to imagine what is out there.

The Son of God made it all. And he made it with one word with words. He just said it and it was done.

And it was done perfectly. What great power he has. What amazing insights to make everything perfect.

How wealthy he is. Because everything is his. What can be added to his wealth? Nothing can be added to his wealth.

[15:13] Everything is in his hands. Everything is in his hands. And indeed we can also say that he was rich in what he did with his creation.

Because he was the one who maintained it all in existence. Why do all the atoms hold together? Jesus does it. He did it. Ever since the universe first appeared.

As Paul writes in the Colossians. And says in him all things hold together. He maintains it all.

What a wealthy person. Many people in our society are desperate to cling on to what they have. And what brightens them is that some or other they might lose it all. But the Son of God. Who is going to take it from?

[16:18] All of it was his. He was wealthy. Though he was rich. He was rich.

He was rich in his capabilities. And he was rich in what he did. His activities.

And yet we are told that he became poor. What does that mean secondly? That the wealthy Son of God became poor.

Or to put it away. Paul writes in Philippians. That Jesus made himself of no reputation. Well the first thing is that this new state that he entered into.

It was voluntary. He truly chose to go into it. We are aware of many people who lose their wealth. But they don't lose it voluntarily.

[17:24] Things happen that cause it to take place. But here is the one who had everything. Everything belonged to him.

And yet he became poor. And he freely and voluntarily and cheerfully chose to become poor.

He came into this world to do his Father's will. And part of the Father's will for him was to become poor. He condescended to come into this world.

And freely he chose to come. And of course that gives that marvelous insight into his heart, doesn't it? He came to be poor because he loved those who were poor.

He loved sinners. And he came into their world for their sake. But what does it mean for him to become poor? And we have to be careful when we think about this.

[18:32] Because it doesn't mean that he lost his riches. We have to remember that. He did not become poor by losing what he had.

We have already mentioned some of the things that he possessed. His abilities, his capabilities, his attributes. But he never lost them. He never lost his divine knowledge.

When he became poor, he still remained fully possessed of all his divine actions. They were never taken from him.

He never lost his divine wisdom. He never lost his divine power. He never lost his divine knowledge. That all retained with, he retained all that when he became poor.

Nor did he lose his, his, what we have been speaking of earlier. He didn't cease to be the creator. And he didn't cease to be the upholder of the universe.

[19:37] When he became poor, and we'll think of the essence of his poverty later on. But when he became poor, he still remained the one in total control of the whole universe.

We are thinking here about a remarkable type of poverty. A poverty that was so real. But yet it was not a poverty that removed from him the riches he had in eternity.

This poverty we might say is added to him. But he remains the eternal God. Full of all his capabilities.

And full of all his authority and dominion. And it's a big mystery to us. But when we think of his birth. And there we see at his birth how poor he became.

But as we gaze there in the manger. We are looking at the one who at the same time as he's lying there in the manger. Who is at the same time the Lord of all.

[20 : 54] And the whole universe is in his hands. He hasn't abrogated that position. But he's taken on a new position. The one who is in control of all things.

As we look at the manger. Is now lying in the manger. And of course the reason that that is the case. Is because what made him poor.

Is that he became a man. That he became a human. He became like us.

He who was the infinite God. The eternal God. The eternal God. Became a man. He added to his divine person. A human nature.

He humbled himself. But we have to remember. That he always remained. The eternal God. And though he was rich.

[21 : 56] He became poor. So why did he become poor? Well he became poor.

Because we were poor. He became poor. Because we had debts. He became poor. Because we by our sinfulness.

Had descended into abject poverty. We had put ourselves in a situation. Where we were totally. Spiritually bankrupt. And the son of God.

He freely chose. To come into our circumstances. And to deal with our debts. He became our representative.

It's almost as if he said. I will take their debts. Upon me. We are all fully aware. Of the banking crisis. That has been happening now.

[22 : 57] For several years. And what a debt that is there. But imagine if somebody came along. And took on all that debt. And said.

It's going to be mine. And I will be responsible for paying it. Well we would say. What an amazing act of love. And kindness that would be.

But you know the reality is. That however great the banking debt is. What a debt that is. It is nothing in comparison.

To the debt of our hearts. We are spiritually bankrupt. And no one can come and rescue us. From around us.

Or in the human race. But the son of God. The one who is rich beyond all measure. He freely came.

[23 : 57] To be our representative. And to take on our debts. And to deal with our debts. With our sins. And to pay the price. That our sins have caused.

And as we think of him becoming poor. We have always got to remember. That he became poor. Poor for us. And this poverty that he entered into.

Well. How poor did he become? We have already thought about his. Birth.

And how low that was. The son of God. Who we might imagine. Sitting on the throne of splendor.

Now lies in an open manger. The son of God. Whose word is authoritative. Has to flee into exile.

[25 : 05] As an infant. As Mary and Joseph. Take him away from the tentacles of Herod. As Herod. As Herod tries to destroy him.

How poor is that? He goes to live in Nazareth. A community composed of poor people. When he grows up.

And becomes an adult. And goes into his public ministry. We can imagine him there. As he says to his disciples. On one occasion. That the foxes of holes.

And the birds of the air of nests. That the son of man. Is nowhere to lay his head. In the name of man. It's an interesting soul. Isn't it?

As we go to. To bed each night. To thank the son of man. The eternal son of God. That during his public ministry. There were occasions.

[26 : 07] He had nowhere to lay his head. He had nowhere to lay his head. We can think about him as he. As he goes.

Before Pilate. And he is so poor. There before Pilate. And before headed. That he is denied justice. Even the basic rights.

That people may have. He is deprived of them. He becomes. Poor. No one. Has ever become.

So poor as Jesus. And yet. He was rich. Who is this. That lies there.

In the manger. Who is this. That has to be. Brought down to Egypt. To escape. The clutches. Of a cruel king. Who is this.

[27 : 05] That's got to live. In obscurity. In Nazareth. Who is this. That has nowhere. To lay his head. Who is this. That denied. Or even natural justice.

Who is this. Poor man. Is the son of God. He whose riches. He whose riches. Cannot be calculated. He to whom. Everything belongs. He who is upholding. The whole universe. In existence. There he is. The poorest.

Of the poor. And yet. We know. Don't we. That we haven't yet. Even. Scratched the surface. The surface. Of his poverty. Because. If we want. To see. His real. Poverty. If we want. To see.

[28 : 05] Sorry. The fullness. Of his. The depth. Of his poverty. Is. The fullness. And what. A sight.

That. Isn't it. We see there. The. Lord. Of glory. And all.

He's got to wear. Is. The poverty. Of shame. as he hangs there naked on the cross.

No garments anymore. How poor he is as he hangs there in a shameful condition.

Why is he there with the poverty of shame? Well, we here today know the answer to that question.

He is there for us.

[29 : 12] He who owns everything is now brought down so low that he has literally nothing.

Nothing. There on the cross only has he got the poverty of shame we might say but he's got the poverty of solitude.

He's totally abandoned. His friends have forsaken them. He's poor. Even the poor people normally have others to whom they can speak.

But here's Jesus the man who has become poor. And who is there for him to speak to? He goes there to the cross.

He speaks for the soldiers when he prays about them and says to his father Father forgive them but these soldiers have got no time to speak to Jesus.

[30 : 37] Where's his disciple? These ones would listen to his words and listen to his promises and to his plans but I they'd left him.

They at that moment didn't want to be identified with this poor man. beside him there's two criminals being executed.

We know that one of them marvelously but Ron spoke to Jesus and there in his poverty Jesus heard these wonderful words remember me when you come into your kingdom because that man amazingly realized that the poor man hanging beside him was actually very rich.

But prior to the criminal realizing that he had no nice words for Jesus he just cast insults at him and there is Jesus in the poverty of complete solitude with no one but a word for him he's become poor he who is the eternal word who had engaged you might say in endless and beautiful conversation with his father here he is now in a situation where he's alone where his companions have left but of course it gets worse doesn't because even when he couldn't when the soldiers wouldn't speak to him this poor man could speak to the father and hear his father's comforting response but eventually on the cross this poor man discovered that even the access that he had known into the heavenly father's presence that that was no longer comforting to him and as he turned to look to heaven for some consolation as he went into the depths of his poverty all he saw was forsaken abandoned alone what words can possibly describe the poverty of christ that he who was rich beyond measure now finds himself in poverty beyond measure as he's abandoned there by the heavenly father and as he comes and I think this is marvelous as he comes to pay the price for all the bankrupt people he is representing all he has to pay the only thing he has to give and pay is a perfect life that's all he has this poor man as he made his way from

Bethlehem to the Calvary he lived a perfect wonderful life and he offered up to God that perfect life as the sacrifice to pay the debts that we couldn't pay we're all familiar with the requirement that the lamb had to be offered as the sacrifice for the sins of the people in Israel there had to be no blemish on that lamb one little spot would have rendered that lamb useless for the sacrifice and the same would have been true of Jesus all he needed to have in order to disqualify him as the person to pay our debt would be one little mark and yet through all his life of poverty as he found himself in all kinds of different situations which showed what he had descended to there's no there's no flaws he comes through all these circumstances whatever they are and he's still perfect and as he comes to the cross and he finds himself in this world of total abandonment he still remains perfect as he comes there to the cross into the darkness of these three hours of course the darkness tells us not to probe too deeply but as he comes there to the cross the amazing thing about this poor man is that he has no regrets the price that he paid is a very high price it has made him very poor and he

has been fooled as we know from the garden of Gethsemane he's been apprehensive about going to this ultimate place of poverty but yet he regarded as a price worth paying he gave himself he gave himself to the awful punishment that he endured on the cross and we have to remember that every second of it was increasing agony agony for him and yet he went through it all he didn't draw back and he paid the price this man who became so poor he paid the price and we are here today to remember his poverty but though he was rich yet he became poor very briefly what kind of people did he become poor for who were they well we can start with these

[38 : 33] Corinthians what kind of people were these individuals in Corinth we remember for example when in the book of Acts when Paul was in Corinth and he was apprehensive about the earth was a dangerous place to be and God said to him fear not I have much people in this city well who were they these matched people well Paul tells us who they were in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 he says fornicators idolaters adulterers effeminate abusers of themselves and mankind thieves callities drunkards drunkards revivers extortioners and he says such were some of you who has the son of God become poor for it's not for nice respectable people in

Corinth that he's become poor for instead he's become so poor because of the poverty of all these Corinthians how poor they had become as far as God's requirements were concerned as we look at that list of awful sins that are mentioned there in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 we can just look at that list and say well they've broken everyone of the ten commandments and that's who Jesus came poor for that's what they were like before their conversion but this church in Corinth what was it like after their conversion well we can read about that in 1 Corinthians we ask remember that 1 Corinthians is written as chapter 1 of 1

Corinthians tells us it was written to those who have been sanctified but as we make our way through 1 Corinthians we see what a strange group of people tolerating sins that even society would not tolerate they were pursuing spiritual gifts for the wrong reasons even in 1 Corinthians 15 we discover that some of them were doubting the resurrection and yet here's Paul writing there in 2 Corinthians and he says that the Son of God became poor for your sins and of course I'm just mentioning that type of lifestyle that marked the people in Corinth moment to highlight the wonder of the Son of God that it was for them he descended so low that he became poor for such people and of course we can look at the church in Corinth and we can marvel at God's grace shown to them but also let's look at our own hearts at the moment and to remember that whatever we were like before we were converted and to remember what we've been like since we've been converted and we are to remember that

Jesus became poor for us we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor and as we gaze at the cross and watch him there we have to see he's there for me it's my poverty that's brought him there and yet it's marvel isn't it that for such people as Latin common Paul says to them here at the end of verse 9 that they through his poverty might be rich how rich are they going to be the son of God he has all things he's the heir of all things how are the followers of Jesus described they're joint heirs with

Jesus he's the heir of all things and they are joint heirs with him Paul writes elsewhere about the disciples of Jesus all things are yours all things doesn't matter what it is it exists for your benefit there's almost a sense in which Paul is saying here that the son of God was so humiliated that he came down to our poverty and we are going to be so exalted that we share his riches he is the heir of all things we're going to share his inheritance and inheritance that never ends he has made us kings what a marvelous title isn't it he has made us kings kings and priests unto God and to his father we have been we have become more than conquerors through him

[45 : 20] Jesus has made us rich he has pardoned all our sins he has given to us his peace the peace that passes all understanding all the rich promises are in the Bible each one of them is for us he says to us as he looks at us he assures us when he says fear not little flock it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom through his poverty we have become rich and we have an inheritance that can never be taken away how rich we are and yet we have always got to remember that we are rich because he became poor and we gather here today those who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing and we gather to remember the one who remembered us and came down into this world came down to the cross when down into the place where he is abandoned by the father in order that we will be rich he is worth remembering and God bless these thoughts through us we can sing this praise from psalm 123 me 3 we at the