

A Vision for Weary Hearts

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2 Corinthians 8:9

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Well, it is Sunday night, which means for many of you, you're exhausted after a long week, right. You're worn out after a long week of putting out fires at home, at work, and your personal life. Maybe for some of you, you are not weary because of what's behind, you are weary because of what's ahead, right. You've got a case of what they call the Sunday Blues or the Sunday Scaries. I don't know if you've heard about that real thing, so psychologists have termed it, and it's when people feel anxiety and worry and irritability and stress on Sunday because they know Monday's coming. In fact, a recent study found that 75% of working Americans feel this way. They have the Sunday Blues, and I bet some of you know what I'm talking about. And I don't know why you are dreading the week to come. Hey, maybe it's you've got a looming deadline at work, maybe you know are going to have a hard conversation with your boss.

Maybe you have a big exam coming up. Maybe you found some surprises on the family credit card statement and you know you and your wife are going to have a fight about money. Whatever it is, whether it's the week behind or the week ahead, your spirit needs a lift. You need a breath of fresh air, you need a glimpse of something awe-inspiring, something to pull you up out of the humdrum of daily existence and lift you above the thousand little problems that seem to pull you down. What you need is a vision of something captivating, something motivating. You need a vision of something glorious. That's exactly what you are going to find in our texts this evening. 2 Corinthians 8:9, a single verse so simple that a child could read it and comprehend it, and yet it is so profound it sweeps across the cosmos encompassing both time and space, eternity and infinity, heaven, and earth. This simple verse has 21 words in the Greek language, and yet the vision it gives us couldn't be adequately explained with 1,000 tongues in 1,000 years, and that's because it is a vision of no person less than the glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So if you're not already there, turn with me in your Bible to 2 Corinthians, chapter eight, verse nine. And the text we're looking at comes in the middle of the book of 2 Corinthians, and in context, Paul is exhorting the Corinthian church to excel in giving generously, right. The Jerusalem saints are poverty-stricken, in financial need, and so he is encouraging them to send financial relief to the saints in Jerusalem. And although the express purpose of verse nine is to motivate them with a compelling example of extravagant generosity, yet what Paul does far, and above motivating giving is he communicates some of the most precious truths in all of holy scripture about Jesus Christ.

So, let's read our text together and if you would, in reverence for the perfect word of God, why don't you stand with me as we read our text. 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." You may take a seat. Paul starts by saying, for you know, in other

words Corinthians, you have intimate experiential knowledge of the grace of Christ. And you rightly ask the question, "Well, what grace is this?"

Paul's going to unfold it for us with three simple truths, three truths that will offer a vision of the glory of Jesus Christ, a vision which is what every weary soul needs, a vision that will revive your weary heart and fill you with wonder and awe. And our vision of this glory of Christ begins with truth #1) *his riches incalculable, his riches incalculable*. And Paul says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich..." Well, what do you mean he was rich? What kind of riches are we talking about here, Paul? Are we talking about worldly riches, material riches?

A lot of people take it to mean that, but that's not what he's talking about. I'll explain that later, but I'm going to pause it to you, he's talking about eternal riches, infinite riches, and remember, who is this Lord Jesus Christ? Well, he's God. Jesus is God. He's king of creation, Lord of heaven and earth, he's very God of very God. Jesus is preexistent deity, which is to say he is without beginning, he is without end. Just remember John 1:14, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father full of grace and truth." And you hear that and say, "Wait, that sounds like Jesus' beginning as a man." You're right, it is. That's Jesus' beginning as a man, but you notice he was referred to as the word, the word became flesh.

Well, you trace the word word back to John 1:1 because long before Jesus was man, Jesus was the Word, and John 1:1 tells you, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." So before time and space existed, before humanity ever drew a breath, Jesus existed as the uncreated creator. And Paul talks about this uncreated creator, Jesus, in Philippians 2:6. He's speaking of Jesus when he writes this, "Who..." A reference to Christ, "Though he was in the form of God." Though he was in the form of God. In other words, the verbal idea here says... Speaks of continuous existence without start, without end, and Paul is saying Jesus was God in time past. He is God now and he will ever always be God in the future because Jesus is God. Well, if Jesus is God and Paul says he was rich, then Jesus must have been as rich as God is rich. After all, Jesus is God, so Jesus owns all that God owns. He possesses all of the magnificent riches that God possesses.

So, what kind of riches does God possess? What kind of riches does Jesus Christ possess? Well, let me give you a few ways to think of it. First, Jesus had incalculable riches of possessions. Just think about it, he's the owner and master of everything. Psalm 24, verse one, "The earth is the lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." And then Psalm 50 says this, God speaking, "For every beast of the forest is mine. The cattle on 1,000 hills, I know all the birds of the hills and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine."

There's nothing in creation, nothing the sun shines upon, nothing the darkness lays upon over which Jesus Christ is not both king and owner, but his riches are more than that. See, Jesus had incalculable riches of power. Material possessions, that's an obvious indicator of wealth, but see,

isn't power an even more compelling currency? There are many people who have wealth, but they don't have power and they want that expression of wealth that they just don't possess, namely power, that wealth that presidents and politicians and popes have been seeking for thousands of years because power is wealth, yet no one has ever matched the power of God.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He did it with a word. The Lord Jesus Christ, if he wanted, could speak into existence 1,000 galaxies that twinkle and shine just for his sake and he could sort of gather them like marbles in a bag, creative power that you and I can't fathom because we can't create anything except problems. Well, I'm speaking personally.

Job speaks about the awesome nature of God's creative power in Job 26. Maybe you've read this, if not, listen, he's speaking of God's creative activity. "He stretches out the north over the void, the emptiness, and he hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the waters in his thick clouds and the cloud is not split open under it. He covers the face of the full moon and spreads over it his cloud. He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded as his rebuke. By his power he stilled the sea, by his understanding he shattered ~~Rahab~~. By his wind, the heavens were made fair. His hand pierced the fleeing serpent." Listen to Job's conclusion, "Behold, these are but the outskirts, the fringes of his ways and how small a whisper do we hear of him," which is to say all of these creative acts of God give you only the barest expression of his power.

Not only does Jesus have the creative power, he's got commanding power. Just remember in his life before he... Well, I should say after Jesus became a man. We see evidences of his power that were surely magnified before he became a man. Jesus commanded the storm to stop, did he not? Jesus commanded demons to leave their host, did he not? Jesus commanded the diseases to go and then he also says, Matthew 26:53, "Do you not think that I cannot appeal to my father, and he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels?" Who among you could command 12 legions of angels at the snap of your finger?

Who among all of humanity could do that? Nobody has that kind of commanding power except Christ, but there's another sort of dimension to his riches. Third, Jesus had incalculable riches of preeminence, which is to say he possessed unrivaled glory and unmatched honor and there are many today, they have wealth, they even have power, but they don't have honor. And so, their cup is empty because they lack honor, and they want it. Jesus' cup overflows with honor. Paul calls Jesus in 1 Corinthians 2:8 the Lord of glory.

Then Jesus will say of himself, John 17:5 in the high priestly prayer, "And now Father, glorify me in your own presence." Catch this, "With the glory that I had with you before the world existed." And we actually get a sneak peek of that glory that Jesus enjoyed before he became a man. You get a sneak peek of that in Isaiah 6. You know Isaiah's vision, Isaiah 6, you've heard it, I'm sure. Let me read it for you. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings, with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, with

two he flew, and one called to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.'" And then in John 12:41, John says Isaiah saw Jesus.

Isaiah was talking about Christ. The whole earth is full of his glory. That's Jesus he's speaking of, that's honor unrivaled, and glory incalculable, but there's more to his riches. Number four, Jesus had incalculable riches of position. How many men and women seek for position in this life? They want rank, they want authority, and yet Jesus occupied a position unmatched by any ever. Jesus was the darling of heaven, the beloved of the Father, the companion of the spirit.

Colossians 1:17 declares of Christ, "And he is before all things and in him all things hold together." He is before all things. Listen, what could be more wonderful than reigning over heaven and earth, sustaining everything by your power and coming first in rank and order and dignity among all of the created order? Whose glory or position comes anywhere close to that?

Presidents are dust before that, and yet Jesus' riches are even greater still. Number five, Jesus had incalculable riches of praise. There are so many people today who crave the praise of man. In part, I think that's why social media exists, so you can put your picture up and solicit that praise that you desire. Not everyone, but a lot of people and they crave praise. Jesus didn't need to crave praise. His praise was effusive, overwhelming. Listen to Psalm 19, "Creation praises him. The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork day-to-day pours out speech and night-to-night reveals knowledge." Who else can claim that?

How about Hebrews 1:6? Listen to who else praises Jesus. "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'" The angels worship Christ. And then if you remember when Jesus was a man, when he was going to enter Jerusalem, his triumphant entry, the Pharisees get mad at him for the worship he's receiving and he says essentially, Luke 19:40, "If the people stay silent, the rocks will cry out." How many rocks have you heard singing your praise? I've never heard any rock talk to me before, but Jesus is all praiseworthy. Surely his riches are incalculable. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, incalculable riches, which makes the next part of the vision stunning, staggering, hard to imagine and fathom, truth #2) ***his losses immeasurable. From riches incalculable, to his losses immeasurable.***

Here Paul enlarges our vision of the glory of Christ by swinging the pendulum from prosperity to poverty, from riches to rags. He's going to unfold for us the staggering losses suffered by Jesus Christ, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich..." And that is a dramatic understatement, "Yet for your sake, he became poor." Your sake, sinners, rebels for your sake he became poor. And you say, "Well, what do you mean poor? You just talked about Jesus possessed all that God possesses. He has all the wealth of deity. How does deity become impoverished? How does he become poor?" And the verb tense here, by the way, become poor, that means he entered into a new condition that did not previously exist. This is new territory, in other words. Jesus becoming poor is not something he had ever known or experienced.

How did he become poor? What did his poverty consist of? Are we talking about economic poverty, the kind of poverty you read about and see in pictures of Africa, India, Bangladesh? Is

that the kind of poverty we're talking about? Maybe you're going back to verses you remember, oh, Jesus was born in a manger right, not a palace. He had nowhere to lay his head, no mansion to retire to. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. He didn't even have his own place to be buried. Maybe that's what Paul's talking about, some measure of economic poverty.

He's not. It's not economic poverty. This is not material poverty. Although many in church history have understood this verse, or rather I should say misunderstood this verse to mean the opposite of riches, you're physically poor. In fact, some guys say, "Oh, because Jesus was impoverished, you Christian, you Christian, you need to live in poverty too. Do you have a car? Doesn't sound like poverty to me. You need to sell that thing and be poor like your master." Many people going all the way back to people like St. Thomas Aquinas, that's what they said. Even Calvin says something very similar to that, but see, that misses the point entirely to make this about economic poverty because listen, when he said he was rich, he's not saying he was rich in dollars or the currency of the day, and if he wasn't talking about physical riches then, is he now switching to physical riches? No, he's not, that would be inconsistent.

Jesus becoming poor has nothing to do with money. It has everything to do with the incarnation. Incarnate what? Incarnation where God becomes man. This is John 1:14, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." That is what he's talking about with he became poor. God became a man. Jesus was a man with two natures, human, divine, truly God, but truly man. How? Well, it's mysterious, it's incomprehensible, but it's vital because as man, he was able to identify with us and bear our sins, and as God, he was able to bear the Father's wrath and give us perfect merit, perfect righteousness.

The old Puritan Stephen Charnock, he captures the mystery of the incarnation in this manner. I quote, "What a wonder is it that two natures infinitely distant should be more intimately united than anything in the world? And yet without confusion that the same person should have both a glory and a grief, an infinite joy in the deity and an inexpressible sorrow in the humanity, that a God upon a throne should be an infant in a cradle, that the thundering creator be a weeping babe and a suffering man. These are such expressions of mighty power, as well as condescending love that they astonish men upon earth and angels in heaven."

Christ became poor by exiting the gates of heaven and entering earth through the womb of a woman. That's how he became poor, but see, there is way more to his poverty than just that. It wasn't simply becoming man that accounts for his poverty. No, no, no, Paul is going to, in Philippians chapter two, he will transport us even deeper into the depths of this poverty here that he's talking about in 2 Corinthians 8. Let me read from Philippians 2, and this is Paul speaking about Christ, who although he was in the form of God, which we said meant Jesus has eternally been God, he is God, he will be God. "He was in the form of God, did not account equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

He was and is and ever will be fully God, and yet he did not count equality a thing to be grasped, which just means he refused to cling onto his prerogatives, his privileges, the rights accorded him as deity. He didn't say, "No, those are mine. I will not give them up," rather he freely set them aside, so that he could stoop to become human, so that he could be born of a woman. Galatians 4:4, "So that he could be born in the likeness of sinful flesh." Romans 8:3, "So that he might be made a little lower than the angels." Hebrews 2:7, "So that he might be tempted in every respect as we are yet without sin." Hebrews 2:7, or rather Hebrews 4:15, and in all of it he lost not a speck of his deity. Colossians 2:9 affirms, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." And if your mind is struggling to compute that, you're in good company. Jesus emptied himself not through addition, or rather not through subtraction, it was through addition. What do you mean? Well, he added humanity to preexisting deity. He emptied himself by adding humanity. He became what he was not while never losing what he always was.

Just let this thought hang in your mind, God became a man, but not just a man, the lowest form, a slave, the servant of all. And you know where that took him? You know what mounts of glory he ascended as a slave? A cross. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. The world has never devised a form of death so degrading as crucifixion. You are naked and exposed before all and you die slowly, painfully, miserably, and if you're Jesus, as you die, they mock you, as you die, they scorn you. But that's, that's not why the cross was bad. The cross was bad because he bore the wrath of God on the cross because God's full fury was dumped out upon him and he swallowed as it were, the whole cup of God's fury.

It was the wrath of God that made the cross the most horrific death for him, far beyond the physical, and yet that was the level to which the Savior sank in order to save. Think about his losses, the creator of man becomes the sacrifice for man. The darling son suffers as the damned son. The immeasurable losses endured suffered by the savior cannot be comprehended, but let's try. He was rich as the sustainer of all things, yet poor as one sustained by his mother's body in the womb. Rich as the bread of life, yet poor as one who needed food for his weary body. Rich as the fountain of living water, yet poor as one who asked the Samaritan woman for a cup of water. Rich in strength as almighty God, yet poor as one so weary, he slept through a raging storm on the sea. Rich in majesty such that no one compares, yet poor as one with no beauty that we should desire him. Rich in that through him all things were created, yet poor as the one rejected by his very creation. Rich in holiness such that he cannot sin, yet poor as one who was tempted by Satan himself. Rich in fellowship with the Father and spirit, yet poor as one accused of being in league with the devil. Rich in that he gives breath to all mankind, yet poor as one who gasped in ragged breaths upon the cross. Rich in that him the Father, is well pleased, yet poor as one forsaken by God on the cross. Rich in that he is immortal, yet poor in that he yielded up his life and died. Rich in that he owns the heavens and the earth, yet poor as one buried in another man's tomb.

Jesus is the blessed one who became the cursed one, the worthy one who became the ridiculed one, the beloved one who became the defiled one. As we think about his losses, they're immeasurable. One so rich yet suffered so much loss willingly.

Thus far in the text, our vision of the glory of Christ has spanned both heaven and earth, both the mountaintop and the lowest pit. Now, we turn our attention to truth number three, and we shift the perspective. Truth #3) *our blessings inexpressible, our blessings inexpressible*. Let's read the text again, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." So, that you by his poverty might become rich.

What that means is you had no riches apart from him. His poverty accomplished our prosperity. It's through his poverty that we become rich. Then, the implication is you have nothing without Jesus. You are the poorest of the poor without Jesus. You couldn't be any poorer without Christ. It is true of every human before, or rather I should say apart from Christ, this is their spiritual condition, the same one Jesus ascribed to the church of Sardis in Revelation 3:17, "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."

That's every man's condition apart from Christ, every man, every woman, every child, that is who they are apart from Christ. We were the impoverished ones truly, not him, and yet his poverty was necessary for our prosperity. But before we get to our prosperity, I want you to consider just how poor we truly are apart from Christ. And if you're a Christian, how poor you were before Jesus saved you. You were poor in life, dead in your trespasses and sins. You were poor in relationships, separated from God and a son or daughter of Satan. You were poor in righteousness, your good deeds as filthy rags. You were poor in knowledge, blind and hardened to the truth. You were poor in obedience, unable to do anything to please God. You were poor in your affections, hating God and despising his law. You were poor in blessings, deserving nothing but the wrath and fury of almighty God.

Make no mistake, apart from Christ, every one of us is a blind, dirty, naked beggar. There is no poverty beyond our poverty apart from Christ. And you know what the worst part was? There was nothing we could do to remedy our situation. We couldn't fix it. We couldn't be good enough. We couldn't accumulate some measure of merit or status or wealth or favor before God. We were poor, truly poor, infinitely poor and trapped in our poverty. Our future was judgment, until Christ intervened, until the Lord Jesus Christ stepped off of the throne, stooped into the creation and became a man. And he clothed himself with humanity, he became a man. He lived a perfect life, he died on the cross in our place. He bore the full wrath of God. They buried him in a tomb. They said, "We've done it, we've killed him, we've won." And then on the third day they realized they were wrong because he came back, validating his claims of deity. The old Puritan John Flavel, he imagines a scene in heaven between the Father and the son. Before Jesus became a man, he pictures this scene and it's come to be known as the Father's Bargain, and it's a dialogue between father and son, right before Jesus comes to become a man. Listen in on this dialogue. The Father, "My son here is a company of poor miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to my justice. Justice demands satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. What shall be done for these souls?" Son, "Oh my father, such is my love and pity for them that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible

for them as their surety, as their guarantee. Bring in thy bills that I may see what they owe thee, Father." "But my son, if thou undertake for them..." If you stand in their place. "Thou must reckon to pay the last night, expect no abatements." That is I will have no mercy on you. "If I spare them, I will not spare thee." Son, "Content, Father. Let it be so. Charge it all upon me. I am able to discharge it. I can bear the cost."

That's the riches of Christ and the poverty of Christ making you wealthy. Not in boats or cars, not in gold or silver or Bitcoin, but in riches that actually matter, infinite riches, spiritual riches, real riches. "We are rich, enjoying redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses," Ephesians 1:7. "We are rich being the objects of God's unbreakable love," Romans 8:39. "We are rich possessing every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," Ephesians 1:3. "We are rich having a conscience cleaned by the blood of Jesus," Hebrews 9:14. "We are rich possessing Christ himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Colossians 2:3.

"We are rich, adopted into the very family of God as sons of God," Ephesians 1:5. "We are rich, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ," Romans 8:17. "We are rich being a chosen race of royal priesthood, a holy nation of people for God's own possession," 1 Peter 2:9. "We are rich and dwelt by the spirit of God," Ephesians 1:13. "And we are rich having an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for us," 1 Peter 1:4. If you are in Christ, your riches are staggering, and I hope you're beginning to see how immeasurable are your riches in Christ, but there's a catch.

You must be in Christ. There were no riches apart from Christ. And so if you are one today who is not in Christ, I would beg you, come to him today. Do not be a fool. Do not seek to amass riches to pay your debt. You will not succeed. Cast off your filthy righteousness. Accept the perfect garment of his righteousness. You must repent, you must believe, you must come to Christ in faith. That is where true riches are found, appropriate Christ and appropriate infinite riches. 21 words contain a lot of truth, do they not?

A vision of glory, the rich one becomes the poor one, so that the poor ones might become the rich ones. That's the vision, the vision of the glory of our savior that every weary heart needs. Every heart needs, weary or not, but sometimes it's hard to appreciate that vision until your face has been ground in the mud of life. And then when you look up, when you're burdened and tired and exhausted and weary, then you look up and you see Christ and he shines with a beauty more particularly wonderful than ever. And when you see him, then that majesty lifts you out of the mud.

And before we close, let me just suggest to you the only proper response to this is worship. Let's crown the king with praise and honor. Let's worship him for his immeasurable sacrifice, his perfect obedience, his substitutionary death because in worship, your weary heart will find all the rest it needs. Refreshment is here, look at Christ. Let's pray. Father, it's so impossible to rightly capture-

Your mic is dead.

... The glory Christ. Not even an angelic preacher sent from heaven could adequately explain the glory of Christ in this passage. We will need all of eternity to wrap our minds around it. But would you feed your people with a morsel of that majesty tonight? And if there are any who do not know you, who are outside of Christ, apart from Christ, may tonight be the night where they repent and they believe, that their poverty may be exchanged for prosperity. We ask that you do this for the sake of our Lord, for the fame of his name, amen.

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