

Subject: *God's Grace Revealed in Christ*

Scripture: *2 Corinthians 8:9*

During this season called Advent we are lighting a candle each week: the candle of hope, joy, peace, love, and the Christ candle. It would entirely appropriate to add another candle: the candle of grace because God's grace is so evident in the story of Christ's birth.

Before Jesus came into the world to be our Savior He had everything, and yet He was willing to give everything up for our sake. I want us to think about that for a minute because this is the real meaning of Christmas. It's not just that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger. We can't appreciate that at all if we don't know what He had before that time and what He gave up to leave heaven and come down to earth.

All of this happened for one reason: grace. Jesus did all this for undeserving sinners like us. The great hymn, *At Calvary*, says:

*O the love that drew salvation's plan
O the grace that brought it down to man
O the mighty gulf that God did span...at Calvary.*

We usually think of God's grace in connection with Christ's death or in connection with our salvation when we repent and believe. ***Ephesians 2:8-9***⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.* But the focus of our text is God's grace in connection with Christ's birth and earthly life. He was rich. He became poor, so that we through His poverty might be rich. We could not be saved unless Jesus died, but He would not have died unless He first humbled Himself and came to earth to live and die. I want you to think about God's grace revealed in Christ:

THE RICHES CHRIST LEFT IN HEAVEN

He was rich. The word "rich" (Gk., *ploutos*) can refer to money or possessions, but it can also mean abundance. In this case it means the fullness and abundance Jesus had in Heaven from eternity. The Bible speaks of the riches of God's grace and mercy and goodness. Jesus had all power, all wisdom, all authority, and all glory. The Bible has more to say about Christ before Christmas than it says about Christ at Christmas. Before He left heaven to live here:

- Jesus had eternal power

John 1:3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Colossians 1:16 *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.*

The omnipotent Son of God became a little baby in the manger.

- Jesus had supreme glory

John 17:5 *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

The glorious Son of God became a meek and humble man.

- Jesus had a perfect home

John 14:2 *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Jesus left His home in heaven where there was no sin and no suffering to live in a world full of both. P. T. Forsyth: "He gave up the fullness, power, and immunity of a heavenly life."

THE POVERTY CHRIST HAD ON EARTH

For your sakes He became poor. That's exactly what happened. Jesus paid a high price for our salvation. Not only when He died on the cross, but when He left everything in heaven. The phrase "he became poor" (Gk., *ptochuo*) means he was like a beggar, he was destitute. He said, "Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay his head." He left a home in heaven to become homeless.

The Bible tells us He was laid in a borrowed manger, preached from a borrowed boat, used a lunch he borrowed from a little boy to feed the hungry multitude, rode a borrowed donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, borrowed an upper room to eat the Passover with His disciples, and was laid in a borrowed tomb. Before Christ came to earth He had everything. When He came to earth He had nothing.

There has been much said and debated about President-Elect Trump. One of the main questions surrounding this transition time is whether he should divest himself of his company and business interests around the world. Should he or shouldn't he? Will he or won't he? What if any President-Elect was required to give up everything he owned before he entered office? Would he be willing to give it all up?

THE REASON WHY CHRIST GAVE UP HIS RICHES

Through His poverty we might be rich. This is the same word that describes Christ.

- Believers are spiritually rich on earth

1 John 5:11-12¹¹ *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*¹² *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

John 1:16 *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

- Believers will be eternally rich in heaven

Romans 8:16-18 ¹⁶ *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Revelation 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

What's really amazing is not only that Christ became poor that we might be rich, but He did all this for us while we were sinners in rebellion against Him. It was the free grace of God. The word "grace" can be understood as God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We see God's grace at the cross, but we also see God's grace in the manger.

There is only one reason why Jesus left heaven for earth. He was willing to obey God the Father and fulfill His plan of redemption. And the only way we will ever go from earth to heaven is to obey God and accept His plan of redemption.

Jesus came to offer Himself as the perfect gift for all who will receive Him.

John 1:11-12 ¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*