

2 Corinthians 8:9

Introduction

The apostle challenges the believers in Corinth to consider how they measured up, not only to the generosity of the believers in Macedonia, but ultimately to the generosity of the Lord, Himself.

Summary

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul points to the extravagant grace of Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, became poor for the sake of sinners, in order that they might be made rich.

1. Known Grace

There are two simple and yet profound things to see in this verse in its context.

First, that self-sacrifice is the proper test of love.

Secondly, that the example of Christ, and the obligation that Christians have to the Lord, should lead believers to do good to others.

Hence Paul says: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ...” Grace here is God’s spontaneous, unmerited favor in action; His freely bestowed lovingkindness in operation, bestowing salvation on guilty sinners who turn to him for refuge.

Paul speaks of the grace of OUR Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle shows here that all true believers are one in the Lord.

He is our **Lord**, i. e. the supreme and absolute Lord whom we acknowledge to be our rightful sovereign. He who is our **Lord** is **Jesus**, our Saviour, and the **Christ**, God's anointed, invested by Him with supreme dominion.

Paul says to the Christians in Corinth; “you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This divine grace, which includes the incarnation of the Son of God, the manifestation of God in the flesh, is assumed to be known and acknowledged by all who call themselves Christians. This means that they had personally experienced and come to know the grace that Jesus gives.

As the Corinthians received the Lord’s grace, so they ought to demonstrate grace to others. They must be a channel through which God's grace reaches others.

2. Explained Grace

Paul gives an explanation of the grace that the Lord Jesus Christ grants to his people. You know: “that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor ...”

Paul teaches here the pre-existence of the Son of God ‘though he was rich.’ The riches of Christ point not to his earthly existence but to his pre-existent state. Yet Jesus Christ became poor because of you, writes Paul to the Corinthians. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ consists in, or is shown by, his becoming poor for our sakes. “He became poor” refers to what Christ did when he came into the world. (**Phil. 2:5-8**).

Paul contrasts the riches of Christ before Jesus' birth with the poverty of human existence in a fallen, sin cursed world. It is God's indescribable gift (**2 Cor 9:15**) to send his Son to be born, live suffer, and die for sinners.

He assumed our humanity to conquer death for us, and by his resurrection he promises us that we, too, will rise from the dead (I Cor. 15:21-22).

What was the result of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming poor?

“For your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

This is not meant to teach us that we can save others by giving up material possessions. We cannot emulate Christ in the uniqueness of His saving work.

It is only through Christ's life, suffering, death, and resurrection, believers are heirs and co-heirs with him (**Rom. 8:17**). We are children of the light, filled with joy and happiness, and partakers of his glory. Through his perfect life and sin-bearing death believers have "become the righteousness of God" (**2 Cor 5:21**).

We already are spiritually rich in this life and rich beyond comparison in the world to come.

3. Right Response to Grace

The gospel is for all people: the rich and the poor alike.

Jesus did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Both the rich and the poor must accept Jesus Christ in repentance and faith.

Christians are made rich in the possession of that glory which belongs to Christ. Believers are said to be glorified with Christ and to reign with him (**Rom 8:17**).

The price of this exaltation and everlasting blessedness of his people was his own poverty. It is by his poverty that we are made rich.

Unless he had submitted to all the humiliation of his incarnation and death, we should forever have remained poor, destitute of all holiness, happiness and glory.

No man can enter into the meaning of this verse or feel its power, without being made willing by it to sacrifice himself for others (**1 John 3:17**).