

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

A. The Challenge to Give, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

(2 Corinthians 8:1-15) **Introduction:** the churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. This is what this passage is about: meeting the desperate need of fellow believers and human beings who were being threatened with starvation and death, many of whom were without Christ and doomed to an eternity apart from Christ.

The need of missions is an *unending call*, a *call that never ends*. The desperate needs of the world must always confront man. Why? Because the world is sinful and corruptible, full of greed and covetousness, banking and hoarding. People who *have* more than they need should be helping and giving, serving and ministering. Instead they are banking and hoarding. The result is a world reeling in desperate need. The challenge to the church is clear! **Give—give all you are and have to reach and help the desperate of the world.**

1. Know the spirit of the Macedonians: they gave because of the grace and favor of God (v.1-5).
2. Excel in the same spirit of giving (v.6-7).
3. Prove the sincerity of your love (v.8).
4. Know the example of Christ—He gave (v.9).
5. Remember your own past record (v.10).
6. Give readily and willingly (v.11-12).
7. Meet the needs of one another—equally (v.13-15).

4. (2 Corinthians 8:9) Stewardship— Giving— Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension: the fourth challenge is to know the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NASB)

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 through His poverty might become rich.”

Above all others, Jesus Christ demonstrates not only that we are to give, but how we are to give.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was rich. He was the Son of God, possessing the very nature and being and fullness of God (John 1:1-3; Philippians 2:6).

John 1:1-3 (NASB)

¹“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Philippians 2:6 (NASB)

⁶“Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.”

⇒ He dwelt in the glory and majesty, dominion and power of the Godhead (**Jude 24-25**).

Jude 1:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,
²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

⇒ He dwelt in light which no man can approach, in all the splendor and brilliance of the Godhead (**1 Timothy 6:16**).

1 Timothy 6:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

⇒ He possessed every good and perfect thing that can be possessed (**James 1:17**).

James 1:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

⇒ He had all the worship and adoration of heavenly beings (**Revelation 4:6; Revelation 5:11**).

Revelation 4:6 (NASB)

⁶“And before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.”

Revelation 5:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.”

2. The Lord Jesus Christ became poor. This refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that is, to His condescension or humiliation. It refers to the great gulf He had to span in coming to earth. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was King of kings and Lord of lords, who was God of very God, left all the glory and worship of heaven to become a man.

He who was...

- God became a humble man.
- the Lord took on flesh and blood.
- the Holy God took the place of the lowest.
- the Sovereign Lord became the subject.
- the Beloved became the rejected.
- the Perfect One became the Sacrifice for sin.
- the Life became the Substitute for death.

As Scripture declares so aptly, **“He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.”** Because He became poor, we can become rich. We can receive the adoption of sons, actually become sons and daughters of God and live with Him forever and ever in the new heavens and earth ([2 Corinthians 6:17-18](#)).

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷**“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN”; And I will welcome you.**

¹⁸**“And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.”**

The point is this: since Christ willingly sacrificed so much to help us, we ought to sacrifice to help those in need. Just as Christ gave everything for us when we were in desperate need, so we are to give everything to meet the needs of those who are desperately lost in this world.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB)

⁵**“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,**

⁷**but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.**

⁸**Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”**

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴**“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,**

¹⁵**and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”**

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵ “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NASB)

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 through His poverty might become rich.”

The Macedonians had not been induced into giving by gimmicks or fear. Rather it was the heavenly example of giving (“**the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**”) that brought about the grace of giving in their lives. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is the great example and motivation for giving. Paul reaches for the highest example and the ultimate motivation for giving in order to challenge the Corinthians. The apostle is using the example of the Lord Jesus to teach the importance of grace-giving and being unselfish. He is also confirming the fact that the Lord finished what He started.

This verse teaches the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ. When was the Lord wealthy? Certainly, not when He came into the world as the Babe of Bethlehem, and certainly not during His thirty-three years of wandering “**as a stranger in the world His hands had made.**” His family was poor in Bethlehem. He himself never possessed any property among men from the stable to the cross. Jesus did not have anything to bequeath at His death but His peace.

Our Lord was rich in a bygone eternity, dwelling with the Father in the courts of Heaven, but He became poor for us. **Paul describes Christ’s descent from riches to poverty so that believers might ascend from poverty to riches.** It was all for our sakes, that we, through His poverty, might become rich.

How did Jesus become poor for us? There is no evidence that Jesus was any poorer than most first-century Palestinians; rather, Jesus became poor by giving up His rights as God and becoming human. In his incarnation, God voluntarily became a man known as Jesus of Nazareth. As a man, Jesus was subject to place, time, and other human limitations. He did not give up His eternal power when He became human, but He did set aside His glory and His rights. Paul spoke of this in [Philippians 2](#).

Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB)

⁵ “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Jesus was a man, but He was also God. Wow! Our Creator lived among the creation. The God of the universe put on a robe of human flesh so that we could begin to understand and know Him and His great love for us. By becoming a man, He became the only one who could act as a mediator between God the Father and mankind. A mediator represents both parties. This is why the Virgin Mary does not qualify for the job. She could not represent God, but Jesus could, for He was God and also man. Paul put it this way, “**For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**” ([1 Timothy 2:5 NASB](#)).

At the Cross, our mediator Jesus, paid the bail, paid the debt, and reconciled man to God. Jesus represents both God and man. He was God incarnate, God in the flesh, and He was also man. He came from the courts of Heaven, yet, He could represent man for He was clothed in a garment of humanity. Jesus carried man’s burdens, endured man’s agonies, suffered man’s sorrows, and He was tested by man’s trials and temptations. He lived as a man among men and died a man’s death. He was *Infinite* who had become *Intimate*. He was the Divine Sovereign who became the Human Sufferer. He was the God man. Though a man, He did not surrender His power as God.

- *As a man, He got tired, but as God He said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”*
- *As a man, He wept at Lazarus’ grave. As God, He raised him from the dead.*
- *As a man, Jesus was despised of men. As God, all the angels of Heaven worshiped Him.*
- *As a man, our Savior got hungry. As God, He fed thousands with a little boy’s lunch.*
- *As a man a boat carried Him. As God, He walked on a rolling, raging sea.*
- *As a man, our Lord got thirsty, and as God He gave us living water.*
- *As a man, He was tempted in all points as we are. As God, He was without sin.*
- *As a man, Jesus got tired and slept. As God, He arose from His sleep and calmed a raging storm.*
- *As a man, Jesus could die, but as God, He could not remain dead. God had to become man to die for us because God cannot die.*

In response to the Father’s will, Jesus limited His power. Christ became “poor” when He became human, because He set aside so much for all of us. From His cold welcome into the world on a pallet of straw, until the time when He was cruelly thrust out on the point of a spear, no one has ever found Jesus Christ guilty of sin. His life was a flawless mirror of stainless purity, reflecting the wisdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sun on which all the telescopes of time have failed to find a flaw. The character of our Savior continues to shine as earth’s purest diamond. Our Lord is the *verity* of God’s truth, the *beauty* of God’s holiness, the *purity* of God’s nature, the *reality* of God’s love, the *surety* of God’s promises, the *majesty* of God’s power, the *authority* of God’s throne, the *pity* of God’s heart, the *repository* of God’s fullness, and the *legacy* of God’s will.

When Christ came to earth, He came down from the *coronations* of Heaven to the **condemnations** of this earth. The excellencies of Heaven were surrendered to experience a Roman execution. He came down from the *favor* of the Father's face to the *fury* of an angry mob. *Hallelujah's* were replaced by *hisses*. Joy was met by jeers. The tender ears of the Son of God that enjoyed the songs of Heaven, had to listen to the sneers of sinful men on earth. The love He enjoyed in Heaven's halls was replaced with the lying accusations of religious men. The King of kings left Heaven's throne to fulfill an appointment on the tree of Calvary as our suffering servant because He was determined to finish what He had started before the foundations of the earth were made. By giving Himself, He made us "rich" because we received His salvation and gift of eternal life. He finished what He started.