



2 Corinthians 8:9

Exceedingly Rich in Christ

Susanna was brought up in an English parsonage, the youngest of the Annesley family, which numbered twenty-four. Her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, was the pastor of the Puritan meeting house of the little St. Helen's church in London.

Susanna was a pretty girl, said to be the most beautiful of her family. She was slim and graceful and even retained her figure to her old age. She was cultured, gracious and had a good measure of wit. She had her convictions and fearlessly stuck to them.

Susanna married and settled down tending to her family. She had few idle moments. Mehetabel or Hetty arrived during the first year, followed in rapid succession by five other babies, all of whom died. Susanna lost nine of her nineteen children before they reached maturity.

Susanna and Samuel's home was like a beehive. As soon as her children could speak they were taught the Lord's prayer, and they were made to recite it at rising and bedtime. They were taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask politely for what they wanted. According to modern American standards we would call it a rigid home with lots of rules.

Yet, nowhere is there a record of resentment on the part of the Wesley children. All the children point to a mother who trained them in the Word of God. There was not a greater force upon the nation of England than her sons John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley "represents the force which has most profoundly affected English history" in the 18th century. Her son Charles probably wrote more hymns than any other composer of Christian music did.

Susanna Wesley wrote, "I am content to fill a little space if God be glorified."

Mothering may be old fashioned and out of date for some modern people. It is ashamed that many fulltime mothers are made to blush and feel ashamed when asked to state their occupation. There is no higher honor or occupation than that of being a full time mom.

Someone said motherhood takes 180 movable parts, 3 pairs of hands, 3 sets of eyes and the grace of God. My mother's daily prayer when I was a teen was, "God help you if you ever do that again!" When our daughters were young my wife was often accused of having eyes behind her head.

There is no greater thrill in life, than to point to your wonderful mother and be able to say with all your heart to all the world, "That's my mother!"

My mother was always sacrificing. It is a characteristic of a graceful mother. She is always giving. A mature mother's love reminds me of grace. The very essence of divine grace is sacrificial giving. The story of redemption is indispensably linked to the subject of giving. The appropriate test of love is self-sacrifice. It always puts our love to test and proves it. Christ gave Himself for you; therefore you may well be expected to sacrifice yourself for others.

THE MOTIVE OF OUR GIVING IS THE GRACE OF GOD.

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (v. 9a).

Our English word grace comes from a family of words largely translated love, mercy, kindness, favor, thanksgiving and pity. They reflect some aspect of "grace." The word Greek word *charis* always means love, charm and beauty. It is a lovely thing. A charming woman is a graceful loving person. It describes "a free gift freely given." It is something given in the overflowing love from the heart. The recipient does not deserve it, and could never earn, or achieve the gift. The "grace" is the "unmerited, spontaneous love" of Jesus Christ for the sinner. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the basis of our salvation, a right relationship with God that comes to the believer as an unearned gift. It is the sheer generosity of the love of God to the believing sinner. Christ gave Himself for us.

The very perfection of grace is summed up in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we think of the grace of giving no one has ever demonstrated such grace in comparison. He who was rich gave it all up and became exceedingly poor that He could bestow it upon undeserving recipients.

The beauty of His life is He held back nothing. You know the "grace," the beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know the beauty of the undeserved love of God that has been given to you, which you could never earn. The grace of the Lord Jesus was manifested by His becoming poor on our behalf.

What is that "grace," that beauty, charm and loveliness of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is the free, divine, unmerited favor of God bestowed upon sinful and undeserving man. God gives us what we do not deserve. "Our Lord" is the supreme and absolute Lord who is the sovereign of the universe. He is "our Lord." Because we belong to Him, He belongs to us in that He provides care, protection and support to His people. He is our God anointed Savior.

Unselfish giving mothers

Not only is Christ our savior, but He is also the perfect model of sacrificial giving in motherhood.

There must be a certain loveliness in the Christian mother. There is no beauty like giving. And there is nothing more beautiful than a gracious mother. There is no charm more attractive than an unselfish generous heart of a loving mother. The most beautiful mothers are those who are constantly giving "undeserved generosity." How often we do not deserve being treated with the unmerited generosity of our mothers.

Mothers who are loved and cherished are those who are always unselfishly giving. The kind of love we are thinking about here is that which always seeks the highest good in the other person. It is a selfless love. It is the love of a mother when she hurts, and is weary and exhausted. It is the love she has when she has to discipline the rowdy and disrespectful.

No greater example of that perfect love can be found anywhere than in the act of Jesus Christ becoming a servant.

A RICH MAN BECAME A PAUPER

Jesus was rich.

"Though He was [exceedingly] rich, yet for your sake He became poor" (v. 9b).

Jesus as the pre-incarnate Son of God had everything. He was rich in power. He could do anything with the universe He had created. He was rich in glory which He had with the Father (John 17:5). The angels were "constantly bowing down" to worship Him and crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). As the Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead, Jesus was rich in "the actual and constant possession of all divine prerogatives" (Charles Hodge). Even though in Him was the fullness of the Godhead with all of its rights and possessions, He chose on His own to become poor. It was His own volitional choice. He chose to do the Father's will. Cf. Philippians 2:6.

"Jesus Christ is the Son who was *sent*, the One who *came*, into the world, the Word who *became* flesh, the Lord who for our sakes impoverished Himself" (Philip Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, p. 301).

Jesus became poor.

Jesus "became [extremely] poor." He made Himself a beggar. It is the idea of cowering in the abject condition of poverty.

Jesus became poor in the act of becoming man. Paul has in mind the incarnation of Christ, and probably including His death. The greatest of His condescension is in the fact that He should have been born. "Though He shared the Father's glory before the world was created (John 17:5), nevertheless He temporarily laid aside this glory in order to 'be found in fashion as a man'. He did not lay aside His divinity; for there is no doctrine of *kenosis*, or emptying of His Godhead, to be found here any more than in Philippians 2:7" (R. V. G. Tasker, *Second Corinthians*, p. 115). Jesus laid aside the glory of His divine majesty. He did not lay aside His deity. He laid aside the manifestation of it while in His incarnate visitation on this earth for 33 years. He was fully God; He was fully man; He was God man. Jesus laid aside the constant use of His divine attributes, not their possession. "He so far laid aside the glory of His divine majesty, that He was to all appearance a man, and even a servant, so that men refused to recognize Him, as God, but despised, persecuted, and at last crucified Him, as a man. He who was rich in the plentitude of all divine attributes and prerogatives thus became poor,

Him, as a man. He who was rich in the plentitude of all divine attributes and prerogatives thus became poor, "on your account," out of love to you" (Charles Hodge, *Second Corinthians*, p. 201). His purpose of becoming poor was that through His poverty you might become rich. He did it because He wants what is best for you. Isn't that the heart of a mother! As parents, we love our children and we want what is the very best for them.

"The Lord was manifested in human flesh in order to take away sin (1 John 3:5); and the taking away of sin involved His taking upon Himself the role of the suffering Servant, and being the Son of man who had nowhere to lay His head (Luke 9:58), and who was to die without a single possession; even the clothes He wore were stripped off Him by the soldiers responsible for His execution" (Tasker, p. 115).

Jesus gave it all up. Instead of being worshipped, "He was despised and rejected by men . . . we esteemed Him not . . . he was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:3-4). Jesus was obedient to death. There were "no reserves, no half-measures, no conditions, no holding back." Jesus gave His all. Jesus poured out everything He had in a demonstration of His love for the sinner. It was a demonstration of His love for His enemies. He freely gave all that He had, not expecting anything in return. He descended from highest heaven to the grave. No one was richer than He was; none became poorer than He did.

When "all His disciples left Him and went to their own homes, Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives." He had no place to go, no table, no bed on which to lay His head. He became the poorest of paupers.

Jesus held nothing back. He poured out everything He had on the cross at Calvary. All that He could call His own He gave up for you and me. "Having loved His own [disciples], He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). And one of those whom He loved to the very end was Judas. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8-10). We were God's enemies, we were helpless sinners and He came to give Himself for us.

He sacrificed Himself for us. We were rebels at heart, hostile toward God, living selfish lives, and He died for us. Can you think of a more profound mother's day gift? Oh, mothers, this is how much God loves you. Never again question God's love for you. He has demonstrated it once and for all. Christ came and died for you. In deed, after Jesus rose from the dead we find the mother of Jesus, who had suffered so terribly watching Him die on the cross, with a group of 120 believers. She is worshipping Him as her Savior and God.

Ray Stedman asked an inditing question in our day, "Is it not strange that we who call ourselves Christians seek to live as kings, but He who was the King of Kings lived like a pauper?" How much does it cost us to give? It cost Jesus everything.

THE PAUPERS BECAME RICH

The purpose of Jesus' poverty was to make paupers rich.

"Though He was [exceedingly] rich, yet for your sake He became [extremely] poor, so that by His poverty you might become [exceedingly] rich (v. 9b, c). "Believers have become rich in the possession of that glory which Christ laid aside, or concealed" (Hodge). It was by His poverty that we have been made rich.

You have become rich.

For every individual who accepts by faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for their sins there is the blessed assurance that "one day they share in the very glory which He had laid aside precisely in order that He

blessed assurance that "one day they share in the very glory which He had laid aside precisely in order that He might die the death by which alone He could redeem them" (Tasker).

You are rich in His grace and mercy. You are rich in an intimate love relationship with God. You are rich in the Holy Spirit indwelling in you, filling you, guiding you, empowering you. You are rich in His love. Cf. Romans 8; Ephesians 1:3. You are exceedingly rich! We have been made rich as partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). It is divine because of its source and its nature. Jesus said in John 17:22, "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one." Romans 8:17 tells us since we are His children, we are "heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ." Wow! Paupers, no! Exceedingly rich, in deed.

Why has He been so generous in making us exceedingly rich?

We have become exceedingly rich, so that we too might become extremely poor in order to make other people exceedingly rich.

This is how grace transforms us. When the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ captures our hearts and we yield ourselves to Him, we suddenly realize that though we are rich, yet for the sake of others we choose to become poor that they through our poverty might be rich. Anything else is cheap grace. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

No one can enter into the meaning of this great verse without being willing to sacrifice himself for others. Cf. 1 John 3:17. If Christ's self-sacrificing love has arrested the believer then it is unnecessary to command anyone to give. Grace transforms giving into a joyous privilege. Paul doesn't have to command the Corinthians to give because they are constrained by the love of God. No one has to tell you to sacrifice for your children, or your family, or your church. When you are overwhelmed by the grace of God, you can do no other.

Perhaps I speak to a mother who has given, and given, and given and you are close to depleting all your emotional, spiritual and personal resources. You feel weary and worn. You know what it is like to love the unlovely. You have entered into the pain of being despised and rejected by the ones you love. You don't deserve the pain and emotional suffering you are going through, but you keep reaching out in unmerited love. To a limited extent you have entered into the suffering of Christ. In a limited way you have entered into and understand His suffering and what He goes through with each of us.

That is what the grace of God does to the prodigal son, daughter, mother and father.

We see your beauty when you listen to our hurts and when you hear what we don't say. We see your beauty when you laugh under pressure, even though it is inappropriate. We see your beauty when your smile covers the pain of a thousand worries and concerns.

How do you keep on giving where there is no more to give?

How do you continue to give when mothering wears thin! "Don't become weary in well doing." Come back to the cross and the resurrected Christ and draw more strength by abiding in Christ. You can only make others rich by drawing from the deep well of God's grace to you. Because He has made you rich in His grace you can give and give and give, even when you have exhausted your supply of strength.

You and I need the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ daily. I get that supply of grace by exchanging it by

You and I need the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ daily. I get that supply of grace by exchanging it by handing my need over to Him. I give Him my anxiety and He gives me His peace and security. God's grace is always coming to my heart and life in a very wonderful and blessed experience.

Allan Redpath said, "Yesterday's grace is totally inadequate for the burden of today, and if I do not learn to lay hold of heavenly resources every day of my life for the little things as well as the big things, as a Christian I soon become stale, barren, and fruitless in the service of the Lord. . . This is the moment in which God's grace is available to me, in any emergency and in any situation. Thank heaven that whatever the surprises, disappointments, and problems that may come to me at any moment of any day, I do not have to look back and say, 'What did the preacher say last Sunday that I should do at this moment?'" (Alan Redpath, *Blessings out of Buffetings*, p. 112-113). Christ gives the believer a daily supply of grace that never runs out.

How do you do it mothers? Charles Inwood said, "It is a constant appropriation of a constant supply from Jesus Christ Himself. As I believe, I receive; and as I go on believing, I go on receiving." Draw daily, moment by moment from your riches in Christ. If you don't you will become barren, stale, worn out emotionally and spiritually and take it out on everyone else. You will wind up taking it out on your kids, your spouse and loved ones rather than giving them more grace.

Because you are rich in the grace of Christ you have grace sufficient at every moment to meet every need. Moment by moment lay hold of the heavenly supply of your riches in Christ. As you give yourself away, you are renewed day by day in the inner person. When you have come to the end of your day of giving yourself away each night you go to bed so poor that you have not one drop of grace left. All the grace of God for that day has gone and you are exhausted and without any reserve for tomorrow. When you get up the next morning to be filled again with God's daily grace and you are once again can give and give and give again. As Redpath wrote, "in the process of being poor, he is making many rich: and though he possesses apparently nothing, yet he has access to the treasure in heaven, and nothing can ever touch that or ever take it away" (p. 117). This is the principle upon which God dispenses His grace. Jesus set the example. He gives to you and you become rich so that you can become poor by giving it away so others can become rich.

God watches you in the kitchen, He watches you in the home, He watches you with your spouse and longs to make you rich through His poverty so that you can invest those riches in those you come in contact with so they can become rich through your poverty. He does this so you will daily come back to Him for more grace. He is always ready to give you more grace.

Some Abiding Principles for Today

- When we give ourselves in total abandonment to Jesus Christ we will be abandoned to accomplish His will in our homes. Christ made a total commitment, a total surrender, to do the will of God in the provision of our salvation, what more can we do than give our total self in total abandonment to accomplish His will?
- Only when we permit the Holy Spirit to ignite the fire in our hearts that comprehends the love shed abroad by the Holy Spirit will we rise to the challenge and opportunities God has given to us. That is true in our individual lives as well as our church.
- With such a tremendous example of giving before us in the person of Jesus Christ, how can we possible hold back from giving our very best in sacrificial giving?
- Philip Hughes said it well: ". . . if He did all this for me, then nothing I give or do for Him can be too much; such love constrains me; redeemed at incalculable cost, I am no longer my own; all that was

mine is now His, for Him to make of us in accordance with His holy purposes" (p. 300).

- When the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ captures our hearts and we yield ourselves to Him, we suddenly realize that though we are exceedingly rich, yet for the sake of others we choose to become extremely poor that they through our poverty they might be exceedingly rich.

Do you know someone who needs an extra touch of grace? God has made you rich in His grace to give yourself away. In His grace we can give, and give, and give again.

Salvation is freely given and received. You can't purchase it. Even working hard as a Godly mother won't save you. It won't even help you to be saved. Christ purchased your salvation for you when He died for you on the cross. Salvation is God's free gift to you. It is an insult to Him to offer Him anything other than yourself. However, if you are the recipient of His grace you are free to respond in grace. For more information on how to receive Christ as your personal savior please checkout [A Free Gift for You](#).

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