

# His Poverty, Our Riches

by David Guzik

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*Jesus became poor for our sakes, to show us the giving heart of God and to make Himself open and accessible to everybody.*

**Duration:** 30:51

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20, John 1:1-14, 2 Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 4:7

**Topics:** "Divine Nature", "Gods Grace"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the richness of Jesus in various aspects. Firstly, Jesus was rich in possessions and honor in heaven, where he received constant praise and glory from the angelic hosts. Secondly, Jesus was rich in power, as he had the ability to create everything from nothing with just a thought. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus' actions were motivated by grace, which is defined as the free given goodness and favor of God. Unlike the giving we often do during Christmas, which may be driven by obligation or expectation, Jesus gave freely out of love. Lastly, the speaker highlights the pre-existing relationship of love and fellowship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit before the creation of the world.

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## Transcript

You can look all through the Bible and find examples of the Christmas story. You can find Christmas in the book of Matthew. You can find Christmas in the book of Luke.

You can find Christmas of some sort in the gospel of John. You can find it in the Old Testament in the prophet Isaiah. You can find it in the book of Genesis.

But I want to suggest to you that our passage this morning, 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 9, is a marvelous passage having to do with Christmas. You see, every year there's quite a drive to get back to the real meaning of Christmas. And for some people, that means an emphasis on family and friends as opposed to an emphasis on shopping and gifts.

And that's a good thing. We should emphasize people instead of things at Christmastime. For some people, getting back to the real meaning of Christmas means to emphasize giving instead of receiving.

We especially want to direct that towards our children, don't we? And sort of help them to understand that Christmas is all about what you can give. It's not about what you receive. For other people, getting back to

the real meaning of Christmas means emphasizing Jesus instead of Santa Claus.

And putting that into perspective, putting that into focus. And it's good to emphasize people instead of shopping and gifts. It's good to emphasize giving instead of receiving.

And obviously it's good to emphasize Jesus instead of Santa Claus. But I'm suggesting to you this morning that even any one of those things, even emphasizing Jesus instead of Santa Claus, in and of itself can be incomplete. I don't think we can really understand the meaning of Christmas unless we go beyond just Jesus versus Santa Claus.

Because for a lot of people, when they consider Jesus at Christmastime, they're considering the baby Jesus. Jesus in the manger. Who can't love the baby Jesus? Who can't love any baby? The baby Jesus is heartwarming and it elicits a response of warmth and joy and love from us.

But for many people, they kind of like the baby Jesus because the baby Jesus doesn't make any demands on them. And the baby Jesus is just one slice of who Jesus is and why he came. I'm suggesting to you this morning that I don't think we can really understand the real meaning of Christmas unless we understand why Jesus came and why he came in the manner that he came.

Our text gives us the answer to this question. Take a look, 2nd Corinthians, chapter 8, verse 9. Mark it carefully here. Paul writes and he says, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.

Well, it's a simple verse in the Bible, but it dramatically sets forth what I consider to be a bunch of Christmas gifts. I mean, think of a Christmas tree and there's a bunch of gifts underneath it. And I think each one of you, one by one, God is inviting you to open up those gifts this morning and take a look at them.

There's truths in here. There's powerful applications for our life. And look at sort of the beginning point in this verse, at least chronologically.

The first point I want to make to you is the verse clearly says that Jesus was rich. It says, though he was rich. Now, you might scratch your head and say, look, I know something of the life of Jesus.

When was he rich? Was he rich when he was born as a baby in Bethlehem? No. Was he rich as a boy growing up? No. Was he rich as a man performing his ministry? No.

Was he rich even in his death or anything? No, not at all. Then when was Jesus rich? Well, friends, he was rich in heaven before he ever came to this earth. You know, this verse, in a subtle but very powerful way, teaches us that Jesus had an existence before he ever existed in Mary's womb.

That there was a time when God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, lived in heaven before he ever added humanity to his deity and came to this earth. And when Jesus lived before he lived in Mary's womb, Jesus was rich. Very rich.

Rich can't even describe the word. Jesus, as the eternal second member of the Trinity, as God the Son, living in the riches and splendor and the ivory palaces of heaven, surrounded constantly by the glory and power and majesty of God. The riches that Jesus enjoyed before adding humanity to his deity make any person on this earth and their wealth seem poor in comparison.

I mean, think of the riches of Jesus in heaven. Rich in possessions. I don't know what kind of possessions speak of riches to you.

Jewelry, houses, cars, just cash. I don't know what it is, but whatever it is, God can create anything. So if he wanted a million of the best of those things, he could create them in an instant and fill heaven with them.

It's no problem for God. He pays the streets of heaven with gold. The gates of heaven are made out of magnificent pearls.

I mean, you read the description of heaven, and it shows you a God that is so far beyond material possessions that he can have anything he wants. Jesus was rich in possessions, but far more than that. For some people, possessions really don't matter much.

What they want is honor. They want fame. They want popularity.

Jesus in heaven, before he ever came to this earth, was rich in honor. The angels surrounding the throne were worshiping him and declaring his honor and his glory and his worthiness all day long, 24 hours a day, although heaven doesn't have any clocks, but you know what I mean. It was just unending praise.

And Jesus heard it all the time. He heard the honor and the glory. Jesus was, if I could use such a crude term, Jesus was famous in heaven and had complete honor and glory and praise from all the angelic hosts.

He was rich in possessions, rich in honor. He was also rich in power. What couldn't Jesus do? Jesus could think a thought and the worlds were created.

He cried out, let there be light, and light was. He created everything from nothing. Rich in possessions, rich in honor, rich in power, rich in love.

You know, the Bible tells us that God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit enjoyed a beautiful relationship of love and fellowship before the worlds were ever created. We don't often think about that, but I think it's an important fact. It's an important fact because there's a sense that God didn't need us so that he'd have somebody to love.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoyed this relationship of love before we were ever created. And what a relationship of love! Have you ever been in a moment, and I trust that everybody could say that they have, some moment when you're worshiping God or you're fellowshiping with him in his word or you're caught up in the spirit of prayer and you're pouring out your heart to God. Have you ever had those moments where you're just almost carried away? Well, your heart is just filled with the outpoured love of God and it's almost a heavenly experience.

God seems so close and his love seems so real and you're just calling out to him and he's calling out to you and it's just so wonderful. You just want to live there all your days. It's just unbelievable.

Well, take that experience, multiply it about a million times and that's what Jesus and the Father had all the time before the worlds were began. Rich in possessions, rich in honor, rich in power, rich in love. I might add, rich in happiness.

God, enthroned in heaven, is a happy God. He knows what's going on. There's nothing bringing him down.

He's not depressed. He's not gloomy. He's not worried about tomorrow.

He doesn't pace the halls of heaven saying, oh, I hope this works out. God knows exactly what's going on and he's in perfect peace in heaven. He's in control of everything.

Friends, when we say that Jesus was rich, it's a very poor expression. I believe that human language utterly fails us to say how rich he was. He was more than rich.

He was more than great. He was God in all that that word can possibly mean. When Paul says, though he was rich, he means it.

But then there's a next step. Did you see it in verse 9? It says, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. There he was, rich in heaven.

He comes to earth and he comes how? As a poor man. Now, I suppose you could go too far and exaggerate the poverty of Jesus. Jesus was not the poorest man in all of Jerusalem and Judea.

There were people more destitute, more beggarly than Jesus, and so we don't want to over-exaggerate the poverty of Jesus. Yet Jesus himself said, boxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. You want to know the poverty of Jesus on a human scale? Think in your mind of the Christmas story and think of that picture of the nativity.

I trust you have a nativity at your house and you like to look at it. Maybe it's carved out of wood. Maybe it's made out of porcelain.

Maybe it has a music box with it. I don't know, but you know what a nativity scene looks like. And the nativity scenes that we make are very antiseptic.

They look sort of quaint and wonderful. We don't get into the poverty of it by looking at the nativity scene. I mean, you can see the oxen and the cows in our nativity scene, but in Jesus' nativity scene you could smell them.

I mean, we see a proper little wooden manger there. In Jesus' day, you take a look at that manger, and you know what a manger is, right? Some people think, well, a manger is something that you lay the baby Jesus in in the nativity scene. No, my friends, a manger is a feeding trough.

It's what you put the food in so that the animals can come and eat. Have you ever seen a manger? They don't look very nice. They don't smell very nice.

They've got streaks of dried cow saliva on them. They're gross things, but that's the only place they could lay Jesus. I don't know, maybe when you're a baby, your mom and dad say, well, you know, we were so poor, we had to pull out a dresser drawer and line it with blankets, and that's where we laid you.

Jesus wishes He could have been in a dresser drawer. He was put in a feeding trough. A little bit of straw, some blankets around Him, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Friends, this is the king of the universe, but He wasn't walking the halls of the palace of Caesar. He wasn't in a golden cradle. He wasn't attended to by servants and waiters and people depending on His every need.

He wasn't in the plushiest hospital with the best care. He came as a poor child, wrapped in whatever they could find, swaddling clothes, wrapped tightly. I'm here to tell you that if I were God, I wouldn't have done it that way.

It's a good thing I'm not God, and that He didn't check with me beforehand. But if I was God, and if I figured, okay, I have to come to earth to accomplish the salvation of man, okay, alright. Well, no, no, I wouldn't have done it this way.

If I had to add humanity to my deity and come to earth, I would have come as the richest, most powerful man who had ever lived. Why couldn't I? I'd just create all the wealth I want, create all that He's created, create a special palace for me. For heaven's sakes, I would have created a hospital in case I get sick.

They weren't around in Jesus' day, but I would have made one from the 20th century. Most of all, I would have come just as a full-grown man. Forget this baby business.

Adam was created as a full-grown man. Jesus, conceivably, could have come as a full-grown man. Why did He even bother with the baby business? Is there anything more poor and dependent and helpless than a baby? Most of all, I would not have been poor.

Not when I'm the God of the universe and have the power to be rich. Who is poor when they have the power to be rich without effort? It's like having the winning lottery ticket in your hand. And there it is.

And all you have to do is go cash in. You say, well, I don't think so. I'll stay in my poverty.

No, you have the power to be rich without effort. And you're going to pass that up and choose to be poor? Why? Yes, that was true of Jesus. He became poor, but friends, it was true of more than His birth.

His whole life was lived that way. Though He was sheltered in a stable, soon He was banished from His own country and He had to leave as a refugee into Egypt. Then He grew up as the son of a humble carpenter in a small, insignificant town.

He had no fancy clothes, no home of His own. He relied on the generosity of others for His food. He never even owned His own grave.

As high as Jesus was in riches in heaven, that's how low He was in poverty on earth. Jesus was rich in possessions in heaven, but now He's poor in possessions. What does He have? Nothing.

Jesus was rich in heaven and honor. What does He have now on earth? He's poor in honor. Now He has other people mocking Him and making fun of Him.

Where once He heard the angels praising Him, now the angels are silent and He hears the criticism and the hatred and the abuse of others. Where once He was rich in power in heaven, now voluntarily Jesus has laid aside that great power and has lived under the same fatigue and hunger and weariness and cold and heat that we all live under. Jesus was once rich in love in heaven, but He allowed Himself to come to earth and away from the immediate presence of God the Father.

And I don't mean to suggest for a moment that Jesus and His Father didn't enjoy a marvelous relationship of love while He was on this earth. Yet at the same time, I don't think it was the same as it was in heaven. Jesus was rich in happiness in heaven.

Now on earth, He's poorer. Oh please, I don't mean to imply that Jesus was depressed or melancholy all the time, but the Bible does say that He was a man of sorrows well acquainted with grief. Jesus was not sort of one of those happy-go-lucky, carefree kind of people.

Always a smile on His face. Happy, happy, happy. No, Jesus knew the sorrowful side of life well acquainted with it.

As high as the riches were of Jesus in heaven, so now was His poverty on earth, and He became poor. And isn't it interesting that the poverty always feels worse when you once were rich. I mean, it's one thing to be poor and always be poor.

It's another thing to once be rich and then to be made poor. Then you think it's so much more tragic. You talk to somebody who's in that place and once they had status, once they had riches, once they had influence, and now they have nothing and they could look at you and they could say, I've known better days than these.

Don't you think that thought crossed the mind of Jesus? When the crowd was mocking Him? When His own family came to Him and said that He was crazy? When He was being attacked and scorned? When He was cold and hungry and tired? Don't you think He thought in His mind through His existence before He ever came to this earth? He said, I've known better days than these. Jesus, in His poverty, became poor. Did you see that line? He became poor.

Friends, He wasn't made poor. It wasn't forced on Him from the outside. There was no coercion.

Nobody from the outside made Jesus poor. It wasn't some situation out of His control, some financial collapse, some loss of a family member, something that He couldn't control. No, Jesus voluntarily chose this poverty.

He wasn't made poor. He became poor. And because Jesus chose this, He could have chosen differently at any moment.

He could have said enough of this. He could have put Himself in the midst of immediate comfort and wealth. Friends, every moment of Jesus' life on earth, He made the conscious choice to live as a poor man.

Friends, if that was fit for the Son of God, how that should encourage us to follow in His footsteps and not be so willing to cling on to our wealth, whatever it might be. I mean, if such was His poverty, shouldn't we also for His glory be willing to be made poor for His sake? If He was willing to throw aside the honor, shouldn't we be willing to give up our honor for His sake? If He gave up the comfort and the pleasures of heaven, shouldn't we give up our comfort or pleasures for His sake? If He was willing to be made a servant for us, shouldn't we be willing to be made servants for Him? If He was willing to give up His reputation, shouldn't we do the same for His sake and for His glory? Friends, there was a reason why Jesus did this. Did you see it in our text? It says simply, Yet for your sakes He became poor.

Now on the one hand, I read this and I was blown away. For my sake? For me? For me, Jesus became poor. He did it for me.

I was just blown away that He didn't do it because anybody was making Him, anybody was twisting His arm. It was for our sakes that He became poor. But then as soon as I sort of let that sink in, another

question came to my mind.

What good does the poverty of Jesus do me? I mean, would it really make any difference to me if it was a rich Jesus hanging on the cross dying for my sins or a poor Jesus hanging on the cross dying for my sins? What difference would it have made? Would His blood be any less precious? Would the salvation be any less valuable? Ah, but then as I thought of it, I thought, no, no, it was important that Jesus was a poor man. His poverty does many important things for us. First of all, Jesus' poverty shows us the giving heart of God.

It shows us that God is willing to give, willing to sacrifice, willing to lower Himself. You know what else the poverty of Jesus does for us? It shows us the relative importance of material things. Friends, if material things were really important, don't you think Jesus would have had a lot of them? Makes sense to me.

He would have had everything He needed. If material things were important, Jesus would have been wealthy in them. But His poverty shows us the relative importance of material things.

The poverty of Jesus makes Jesus open and accessible to everybody. You know, sometimes we're a little bit intimidated meeting somebody who's wealthy or powerful or influential. We're sort of intimidated by them.

Jesus didn't want anybody to be intimidated by Him. He wanted to be able to come openly and freely and have everybody come that way to Him. I think the poverty of Jesus also is important because it rebukes the pride of those who might refuse to come to a poor Savior.

You know, some people despise the poor. They look at them and say, well, they're lazy, they're stupid, they have no talents. That's their problem.

That's the problem with the poor. And some people don't think they have anything to learn or to receive from poor people. And Jesus says, no, no, no, no.

I am poor. You must receive salvation from Me. And I suppose there's some people who saw Jesus and saw the way He lived as He walked this earth and they said, I don't want to receive anything from Him.

He's a poor man. What could He have to give me? The poverty of Jesus rebukes our pride. I think the poverty of Jesus was also important because it gave other people the privilege of giving to Him.

I mean, when He walked this earth, if Jesus was a wealthy, wealthy man, then what would He do if He wanted to give Him a gift? He'd take the gift and say, oh, fine, great. Put it in the storeroom. But because Jesus was poor, it really gave people the privilege and the honor of giving to Him.

And isn't it a glorious thing to give to Jesus? So, friends, that was the reason for His poverty. For your sake. And I wish somehow you could block out everybody else in this room and just think of you and the Lord alone.

And as if there was nobody else who ever lived, Jesus still would have given Himself for your sake. That's how precious you are to Him. Now, look at this.

And this is perhaps the most glorious thing. The result of His poverty. From the beginning of the verse we read, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

God wants this to be a room full of rich people. Rich in what Jesus Christ has to give us. It says it right there.

God wants us, through the poverty of Jesus, to become rich. And because of that poverty, we really can. We have a share in Jesus' eternal, heavenly wealth because He came and had a share in our poverty.

And if our riches are proportionate to His poverty, what rich people we are. He was poor as poor can be, and then we, as we believe in Him, we're as rich as rich can be. As low as He went, that's as high as we can go.

As we become rich through the poverty of Jesus, we receive the riches of Jesus Christ. Don't think how rich Jesus was in heaven. He was rich in possessions, right? So we, in Jesus, we are rich in possessions.

You say, Pastor, you don't know, I've been spending all my money on Christmas presents. I'm not rich in possessions anymore. Oh friends, let me tell you something.

Every Christian, every person who is a son or a daughter of the living God enthroned in heaven, you are rich in possessions. Do you know how you're rich in possessions? Let me explain it to you. We're rich in possessions simply in the sense that we have a loving Father who has promised to take care of our every need.

Everything. He has all resources, and He's going to take care of every need that we have. That's all we have to worry about.

There's nothing else for us to be concerned about. What if the wealthiest man in the world came to you and he said, OK, I'm going to provide for all your needs according to my wealth. That's all.

I'll provide for them all. You say, oh great, does that mean you're going to transfer me millions of dollars to put in my own account? He says, no, no, I'll keep all the money in my account. Just any time you need something, ask me for it and I'll find a way to get it to you.

Great, that's fantastic. That's exactly what I want. Now, you don't have any more money in your account than you had before.

But you have a wealthy person who has promised to provide for all of your needs. Isn't that what we have in God? You say, well, I want the money in my account. Sorry, that's not the way God does it.

He'll keep the money in His account in heaven and provide for you. You're rich in possessions. Everything you need is provided for you in Jesus Christ.

You say, well, I want more than I really need. Well, that's another problem entirely. And God will deal with you on it.

But we're rich in possessions. Jesus was rich in honor in heaven, was He not? All the honor that He had. Friends, so are we.

We have the honor of being sons and daughters of God. I don't know what title there could be more majestic than that in all of heaven and all of earth. A son or a daughter of God.

Oh, you can win an award, you can be a president, you can have this award or that award, you can have this recognition, that recognition, any of the world's accolades or titles. You could have them all, but the important thing to have is to be a son or a daughter of God. That's greater than anything that the world can give.

Jesus was rich in honor, so are we. Jesus was rich in power, so are we. Oh, you think of the movers and the shakers of this world.

You think of the people who have status and influence. They're powerful. They say things and things get done.

They know how to do things. Friends, I don't know what greater power there is than to know that you and I as sons and daughters of God can come and pray and the omnipotent God of the universe will use His power on our behalf. I don't know what power there is greater than that.

Rich in possessions, rich in honor, rich in power, rich in love. You know what it's like to have the love of God poured out in your heart? You know what it is to have that kind of fellowship and communion with Him? Friends, that's what Jesus longs to give to us. And finally, we can be rich in happiness as well.

Friends, just as much as Jesus was rich in happiness in heaven, so we can be rich in happiness now with a peace that passes all understanding. If it was peace just in the good times, then it wouldn't pass understanding. But that's what God longs to give us.

That kind of happiness, that kind of peace. Well, let's take a look at one last aspect of this. We sort of left aside the first part of the verse.

Did you notice that? Verse 9 reads, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Friends, that was the motive behind what Jesus did. His grace.

And do you know what grace is? Grace is the free-given goodness and favor of God. Jesus did this all for us as a free gift of grace. Grace means that every reason for the giving is found in the giver, not in the one receiving.

Let me explain it to you this way. I bet that a lot of the giving you do this Christmas is not going to be giving of grace. You're giving to people because they're giving something to you.

For some people, that's the only reason why they give. There's a sense of obligation, expectation. There's some sort of family pressure, this or that.

That's why you're giving to people. You're not giving just freely because you want to give. Instead, there you are, moaning and groaning at the shopping mall, complaining because of the crowds, and this and that, and you're all on it.

It's out of obligation. I suppose there's some things we just have to do out of obligation. But that's not the kind of giving God does.

God gives to us because He longs to give to us. You don't have to make yourself worthy for this gift. You don't have to earn it.

You don't have to promise to be worthy of it. You just have to receive His gift of grace. Then you'll be rich because He became poor that you, through His poverty, might become rich.

It's really that simple. And I don't know why it's strange to see some Christians living such poor lives. You look at some Christians and you think, don't you know that He became poor that you might become rich in Him? Friends, I think maybe some people miss out on this because they don't want to receive the gift of grace to make them rich.

In other words, they only want to be rich if they can make themselves rich. I want to be rich in possessions, but only if I can make myself rich in possessions. I want to be rich in honor, but only if I can make myself rich in honor.

And so forth and so forth down the list. Friends, if that's the attitude of your heart, then you can't receive the gracious gift of God. Imagine there's wonderful presents for you under the tree, yet you don't want to open them.

You say, well, you know what, I don't need those presents. I can buy great presents for myself. I don't need anybody's charity.

No, you'd be a fool to let the riches of Jesus Christ pass you by because you were too proud to receive them. Oh, my friends, don't you see Jesus standing before you now? He became poor that we might become rich. Let me conclude with one final thought.

This is a real conclusion, not a preacher's conclusion. We've got about 15 more minutes to go. You know, as I was thinking about this and thinking about the riches of Jesus before He came to this earth, and then His poverty while He walked this earth, then I thought, He's not poor anymore.

Jesus, right now, is seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty. He's not poor any longer. He's rich again.

He's rich in possessions, rich in honor, rich in power, rich in love, rich in happiness. As a matter of fact, I would argue that He's even richer now because now He has you, and you have increased His wealth. Now, if Jesus did all of this for us while He was poor, how much more will He do for us now that He is rich again? Friends, right now, He's in heaven, loving you, praying for you.

The Bible says that He ever lives to intercede for His people. And He's up there thinking about you, loving you, caring for you. And I would suggest to you that there's a special group of people here this morning that He's especially praying for.

And those are the people who haven't received His riches. You haven't received them. Or you know about God, and you have a reverence towards God, but you haven't received His riches.

Maybe it's because you're clinging on to your own wealth. Maybe it's because the idea of Jesus dying on the cross to pay the penalty for sin that you deserve, maybe that's offensive to you. But I think for those people here this morning who haven't received His riches, Jesus is especially praying for you right now.

And you know what He's praying? He's praying that your heart would be turned towards Him. That you would lay aside every attempt to find wealth or riches in yourself, and you would receive Jesus as all of your riches, as all of your goodness, as all of your right standing before God. And you'd do it now this

morning.

Let's pray and bring our hearts before God to do just that.

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