

SECOND CORINTHIANS EIGHT, NINE

Intro: It is doubtful if there is any word in the Bible that is richer, or any word which has any many different shades of meaning as the word, GRACE.

Every true Christian knows that this word is forever linked with our salvation. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9.

Grace is also a word which instructs us concerning the lives we are to live after we are saved. Cf. Tit. 2:11-14.

Grace means in 2 Cor. 12:9, sufficient strength.

Without using the word, Paul is describing the grace of God when he teaches humility in Phil. 2:5-8.

If you want a blessing, take an exhaustive concordance and look up all of the verses where the word, grace, is used, and notice how it is used. It is a most amazing word.

In the verse before us tonight it is used in connection with giving. The grace of God meant the gift of His Son. So Paul uses the incarnation and all that resulted from it to teach the Corinthians and us what it means to be so concerned about each other that we gladly give to meet each other's needs.

Let us notice the details of the verse.

I. IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE IS WRITING TO BELIEVERS: "For ye know the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

It is like we would say, "For ye know the gift of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

Paul dwells on His dignity, His supremacy over us, His authority, HIS DEITY, when he writes, "of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

When he writes that they "know" it, he means:

- 1) That they know it as a fact of history.
- 2) That they know it in personal experience. That is, His gift has resulted in their enrichment.

Cf. 1 Cor. 1:4-7,

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- 3) That is was a growing experience in their lives--not something that they knew fully, but a truth that was

living and growing and becoming more wonderful all of the time.

II. HE THEN SPEAKS OF HIS WEALTH: "That, though He was rich."

Paul goes back now to the time preceding the Incarnation, and He reminds us of what our Lord always had been: "rich."

This speaks not only of what He had, but of what He was--rich in His Deity (as rich as the Father). Rich in the manifestation of His power and glory--creating all things, and upholding all things. His power and wisdom were exhaustless, limitless.

No one, except the other members of the Godhead, ever had so much. Cf. John 17:5.

III. WHAT HE DID WITH HIS WEALTH: "He became poor."

He came to earth in the likeness of a creature, and died as a criminal. Cf. Phil. 2:5-8.

He had no place to lay His head. Cf. Mt. 8:20.

He who was the wisdom of God became a babe, and had to learn. He who was the power of God was taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain!

No thoughtful reader of this verse can help but notice

IV. WHY HE DID ALL OF THIS: "for your sakes . . . that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Every person without Christ is pictured by the Jerusalem saints. We have nothing. We are poor. In fact, it pictures man as a beggar. He is not only poor, but finds it impossible to get what he needs.

And the Lord put Himself in our place that we might have His --unspeakably rich!!!

There are many passages in the NT which speak of our Lord's riches, but let us notice just the five verses that are found in Ephesians: Eph. 1:7,

" 1:18,
" 2:4,
" 2:7,
" 3:8.

Concl: All that remains is for us to determine why Paul would make this reference to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in a passage like this which deals with giving.

There are two answers:

- 1) He wanted the example of our Lord to become a pattern for their giving. If the Lord gave up heaven for the sake of those who were at enmity with Him, should not believers be thankful for the opportunity to give to their fellow-believers who were their brothers in Christ?
- 2) He wanted them to realize that, whatever they gave, they could never give as much as our Lord has given. His gift goes beyond all other gifts that have ever been given--combined!

The Lord does not measure our gifts by what we give, but by what we give in relation to what we have.

Cf. Mark 12:41-44. Our Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, This poor widow hath cast more in than all they who have cast into the treasury; For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Cf. Prov. 11:24,

"There is he that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is he that withholdeth more than is fitting, but it tendeth to poverty."

And the next verse says,

"The liberal (generous) soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11:25).

Unbounding joy results (2 Cor. 8:1, 2), AND PHIL. 4:19!