

The Grace of Jesus Christ

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- [0:00] 2 Corinthians chapter 8, 1 through 9. And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.
- ! Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.
- For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability, entirely on their own. They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in the service to the saints.
- And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urge Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.
- But just as you excel in everything, in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in your love for us, see that you also excel in this grace of giving.
- [1:08] Let's hear the preaching of God's word.
- Grace. God's riches at Christ's expense. Grace.
- God's undeserved favor for those who deserved his eternal wrath. Grace. How do you describe it?
- How do you define this idea of grace? Grace. Can I tell you how the Apostle Paul spelled it? G-O-S-P-E-L.
- Gospel. Indeed, grace is so central to the gospel that Paul refers to the gospel in Acts chapter 20 and verse 24 as the gospel of God's grace.
- [2:25] The good news about God's grace. The gospel is all about the grace of God. Verse 32, he refers to it as the word of his grace.
- The message about God being gracious. So Paul can't think about the gospel without immediately thinking of God's grace.
- That is the brightest display of the graciousness of God, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lost sinners need to hear the gospel.
- Because, and they need to hear it over and over because it's really almost too good to be true. And they dismiss it almost as a fable. That God is really that gracious.
- And so they need to hear it over and over. But Paul is convinced that not only lost sinners need to hear about the grace of God, but that believers also need to hear this good news over and over again.
- [3:29] So did you eat yesterday? You say, yes, of course. Well, then you're done eating. You're not going to eat today or tomorrow or the next day.
- You say, no, that's fuel for my body. I need it every day. Precisely the gospel of God's grace. That is fuel for your soul.
- That's what makes your soul to live and grow and be healthy. So where do we go to study the grace of God?

Well, we go directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is God. He's God the Son. And he's come to our planet to exegete the Father, John 1.18.

To make the Father known. For the Son is the exact representation of his being.

[4:31] He makes visible him who is invisible. So if you want to know what God is like, study Jesus. Jesus. If indeed Jesus said, I and my Father are one.

And so perfect is the correlation between them. That in seeing him, he says, you have seen the Father. So if you want to know what the grace of God is.

Study the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. So that's what we're doing this morning. We're beginning a study on the grace of God. And we're beginning it by looking at the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who demonstrates the grace of God himself. 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9. Here in a nutshell, we see what grace is.

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.

[5:43] Now there's the grace of God. Seen in the grace of our Lord Jesus. This is the gospel. The good news of how gracious God is.

And believers, this is something that you know. Paul's writing to believers in Corinth. And he says, you know. You know this. This grace.

Indeed, all believers know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've all tasted it. We've all experienced it. We know it firsthand. But you notice that didn't stop Paul from telling them about it again, did it?

You know all about the grace of our Lord Jesus. And then he goes on and he tells them about that grace. Because he's wanting the grace of the Lord Jesus to seep into every pore of their being.

To where it changes them. And makes them men and women of grace. Just like their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[6:54] Who is he? He is our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, England is the land of kings and queens and lords and ladies. And so it was in Bedford, England, years ago, that a minister was out for a ride.

And came upon a finely dressed woman. To whom he said. Good woman, do you know anything of the Lord Jesus Christ? To which she replied.

No, sir. There's no such nobleman living around here that I know of by that name. The ignorance of the world about the Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't know of a Lord by that name. She says. Oh, but you do. You believers know of this Lord.

He is the Lord of all other lords. He lives and he reigns over all. And you know of his grace. Here's a Lord who expresses his authority as a Lord, as a master.

[8:01] In a most gracious and kind manner. Yes, it's the grace of our Lord. It's the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the word for the anointed one of God. The Messiah. This is that long expected Messiah. Messiah. And he's been anointed.

With the spirit of grace. And the name of this Messiah who is Lord is Jesus. He is our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's his personal name. And the angel told us why he was so named. Because he will save his people from their sins. And so this Lord saves.

He saves from sin. From sins that would damn us. No wonder Paul here speaks of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[8:58] And the fact that he would save sinful rebels. Like us is pure grace. You know when a third of the angels of heaven fell with Lucifer.

In their rebellion against God. God did not send them a savior. But condemned them all to everlasting torments of hell. No second chance.

But when the whole human race rebelled. Not just a third of us. But when all of us rebelled against God. He did not condemn us all to hell.

But chose to save a people by sending them a redeemer. The Lord Jesus Christ. That's grace. He didn't owe us anything of a savior. He didn't owe us a savior any more than he owed the angels a savior.

He didn't send a savior for angels. He did for us. What grace is this? All he owed us was everlasting damnation. Instead he sent his son.

[10:05] His one and only son. That's grace. That's undeserved favor. And you know about it believer. You know this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ personally.

You've tasted it. Well next the Apostle Paul describes this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. What it did. Indeed what our gracious Lord did.

He impoverished himself in order to enrich us. He goes from riches to rags in order to bring us from rags to riches.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor. So that you through his poverty might become rich.

You know he was rich. Well just how rich was he? Think of the riches of our Lord in terms of his possessions.

[11:03] Psalm 24 1. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Having made it he owns it. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

The wealth in every mine. The rivers, the lakes, the mountains, the resorts, the homes, the businesses, the people. It's all his.

But that's just small change. Because he made the heavens and the earth. So the sun and the moon and the solar system and the Milky Way galaxy and the billions of galaxies of stars.

He looks at each of them and says mine, mine, mine, mine. The wealth of our Lord.

The entire universe and everything in it was his estate. And that makes the richest lords, billionaires of this world look like young boys bragging about their pennies to one another.

[12:08] He was rich in possessions. He was rich in glory. The eternal glory that he had with his heavenly father before the world was created. The very glory of God.

The uncreated creator. Infinite, eternal and unchangeable. God. With no one like him. The glory of having no one even close to him.

No one even in the same category as him. In terms of glory and splendor. Majesty and greatness. Even the highest angelic creatures. What do they do in his presence?

But cover their faces before the glory. The riches of his glory and cry holy. He was rich in all the prerogatives of deity.

Knowing all things. Being everywhere. Present. All powerful. Doing whatever pleased him. The glory of being completely self-sufficient.

[13:10] Meaning nothing. No one. The glory of reigning over everything. From heaven his throne. Far above the reach of rebellious man. To be rich.

In joyful. The joyful company he keeps. Think how rich he was. With unbroken fellowship with the father. And the holy spirit. Rich in praise and honor.

In worship. The sinless angels worshipping. And the spirits of just men made perfect. Declaring his worth. His fame. Yes. The Lord Jesus was rich.

Beyond telling. And yet. Though he was rich. He became poor. None was richer. None became poor. None started higher.

None stooped lower. This is the grace of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Now he became poor in the incarnation. That's where his poverty began.

[14:08] He became poor in the incarnation. When the eternal word of God became flesh. And dwelt among us. And he who was forever God. Is now also. A man.

So in addition to his divine nature. He now has a human nature. That means a real human body. And soul. Just like you. Your body. Your soul.

The only exception being. No sin. In him. And so for the first time. From all eternity. He experienced hunger. And thirst. And weariness.

And pain. And loneliness. So the infinite God. Now experiences life. On the planet. Like a. Finite man.

That he is. He who gave life to his mother. Now depends upon his mother's milk for life. And he who never slumbered or slept. Now has a body that needs sleep.

[15:06] Just like yours and mine. He who knows all things. Must now learn obedience. By the things that he suffered. He became poor.

Impoverishing himself. He came down. Down from his glory. That glory that he had enjoyed.

With the father. From all eternity. A glory that he says. In John 17. That he would later return to. After his death and resurrection. And ascension. Glory.

He laid aside the use of many of his. Divine rights. He laid aside. Many of those divine. Prerogatives. And chose to live in humble dependence.

Upon his heavenly father. Just as you and I have to do. So in the incarnation. His divine glory. Became a veiled glory.

[16:04] Veiled in his flesh. Veiled with visible weakness. And shame. And so instead of being worshipped as God. He now feels the brunt of being despised.

And rejected by men. You know that passage in Philippians 2. And how it takes us down. That staircase of humiliation. From his glory. He comes down.

Christ. Who being in very nature God. Did not consider it robbery. To be. Equal. With God. That's who he is. It was rightfully his.

Nevertheless he became poor. In Philippians 2 says. He made himself nothing. Humbling himself. Taking the very nature of a servant.

Being made in human likeness. Down. Down. Down he went. Becoming poor. And so now. The Lord. And master of the whole universe.

[17:01] Is now a servant. Obeying the will of another. But not only became flesh. He became poor by dwelling among us. He lived among us for 33 years.

That was impoverishing himself. He came down where sinners are. He came down into enemy territory. Into a world in rebellion against him.

Where wicked sinners could now get their hands on him. And pour out their hatred on him. Where they could reach him with their mocking words. And their clenched fists.

And their cruel thorns. And their whips. And killing nails. Now they could get a hold of him. That's where he came. Indeed he became poor.

As he entered into a world of evil men and devils. And so he who is Lord of all. Is not born into the family of a lord and lady.

[17:58] A king and a queen. And some palace. But he's born into a poor carpenter's home. Of a humble virgin. And he became even poorer when his stepfather died.

And he who had everything. Now knows what it is to do without. And during his three years of public ministry. This owner of all things.

Lived off the charity of a group of women. Who traveled about with them. Providing for their needs. And he who lived in the highest heaven. Now had no place of his own.

To lay his head. Indeed the foxes. And the birds of the air. Had it better than him. And they had their holes. And their own nests. And at the end of the life.

At the end of his life. The one who clothes the grass with lilies. Has nothing but the clothes on his back. And that the soldiers divided up among themselves.

[18:58] Poor indeed. He became poor. But he becomes poor still. As he came to the death of the cross. Think of that. How poor he became.

On Calvary's cross. For he who was the praise and adoration of heaven. Now suffers the greatest shame. And humiliation of all.

The death. Of the cross. You know it. It was capital punishment. For the worst of men. That's what the cross was. In Rome.

And so here he is. The holy and sinless. Son of God. Now appearing to be a wicked man. To be just like the guys on either side of him.

With whom he's crucified. Wicked thieves. Rebels. Against. The state. Just one more deserving man. Wicked man.

[19:53] Deserving capital punishment. And he whose powerful words. Hold. The stars in their place. Now dies in weakness. How poor he became.

In the company he keeps. He finds that one of his own inner band of twelve. Now betrays him. Another swears he doesn't even know him.

And at his arrest. They all forsook him. And fled. But. He who is the best friend of all. Is now without a friend. He's friendless.

In the time of his greatest need. But he knew this was coming. And he had told the twelve. A time is coming. And has come. On the very night of his arrest.

When you will be scattered. And each of you to your own home. You'll leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone. For my father is with me.

[20:49] And you see. It was the felt presence of. The father. Being with him. Loving him. Adoring him. That was Jesus priceless treasure.

There's his riches. My father. Is with me. But on the cross. This treasure too. Was ripped. From him. As the father. Turned his face.

Away. And those three dark hours. Rang. From the Lord Jesus. The cry. My God. My God. Why have you.

Forsaken me. The twelve. Yes. But surely not you. You. Have forsaken me. And so he does. His greatest suffering. All.

Alone. The one who everlastingly. Basks. In the love of his heavenly father. Now is made to feel. The full force. Of his infinite wrath.

- [21 : 45] The favorite of heaven. Now feels the forsakenness. Of hell. The light of the world. Is made to feel. The despair. Of outer darkness.
- And at the last. The Lord of life. Becomes a lifeless corpse. And is laid. In a borrowed tomb. Look and wonder. Believer. At how poor.
- He became. And as you do. Know this. It was for your sakes. For your sakes. For your sakes.
- What blessed three words. For your sakes. It was for your sakes. That he who was rich. Became poor. Paul's. Not writing a letter.
- To the world. He's writing a letter. To the saints. In Corinth. And he says. It's for your sakes. That he who was rich.
- [22 : 43] Became poor. It was your debts. And mine. That made him so poor. It was your liabilities. Before God. Because sin incurs a debt.
- Against God. And on your balance sheet. With God. You had nothing but debts. Sin debts. With an everlasting hell. To pay for them.
- You had no credits. No assets. No righteousness. Nothing good. With which to pay. And God the father. Took your sins.
- Your debts. And he laid on him. The iniquities. Of us all. And Jesus. Bore our sins. In his body.
- To the tree. He paid. He paid. The infinite debt. We owe. There on the cross. He who had no sin. Became sin. For us.
- [23 : 38] And that's what sunk him. Into the deepest. Poverty. That's what made him so poor. That's why the father. Hid his face. And turned away. That's why he suffers.
- God's wrath. On the cross. He was taking. What you had. Coming. For all eternity. And that's why he dies. And becomes as poor as death itself.
- For your sakes. For your sakes. Drink it in. It was for you believer. That he came down. From his glory. And was lifted up. On the cross.
- For you. For me. For me. Kind Jesus. Was thine incarnation. Thy mortal sorrow. And thy life's oblation.
- Thy death of anguish. And thy bitter passion. For my salvation. Your sakes. And it was all so that you.
- [24 : 34] Dear believer. Through his. Becoming poor. Might be made. Rich. You see the story. Doesn't end with. With just Jesus. Impoverishing himself.
- Here we are. Impoverished. And here's Jesus. High and rich. And he's now. Impoverished. It doesn't end with. Just all here. In poverty. But he did that.
- In order to do this. In order that you. Through his poverty. Might become rich. Because he not only. Took. All of your sins. And all the punishment.
- For them. He gave you. All of his. Righteousness. All of his. Worthiness. And that is. Wealth. Indeed. It was. Impoverishment. He was.
- Impoverished. That you might. Be enriched. He was. Arrested. That you might. Go free. He was. Condemned. That you might. Be forgiven. He was. Forsaken. That you might.
- [25 : 30] Never be. He died. That you might. Live. And live. As you were. Meant to live. As you were. Created to live. In fellowship. With God. Forever.
- Ever. And ever. That you. Through his. Poverty. Might. Become rich. And know this.
- That it cost a lot. To make you rich. Toward God. It cost you. It cost a lot. And every penny. Of it was paid. By the Lord Jesus. When you had nothing.

To pay. He paid it all. Well how rich. Has he made you. By his poverty. Paul says. We're heirs of God.

And joint heirs. With Jesus Christ. How rich are you? How rich is Jesus? Because you're a. Co-heir with Christ. That means. That the new heavens.

[26 : 25] And the new earth. The home of righteousness. As much yours. As it is Jesus. He shares it all. With you. It will take eternity. To calculate your bottom line.

The wealth. Of eternity. Is yours. One day. A proud. Wealthy man. Took a visiting. Acquaintance of his. Up onto the roof. Of his house. In order that he might.

Show him. The extent. Of his possessions. And waving his hand. About. And pointing. Here and there. He said. Pointing to a nearby. Estate. That's mine. Over there.

And you see. That farm. A great distance. Over there. That's mine. Too. And off the other direction. He pointed to an impressive house. And said. That's mine.

That's mine. Friend had had about enough of it. And said to him. Do you see that little village. Way far away.

[27 : 24] Yes. Well there's a poor woman. In that village. Who can say. More than you can. Well what can she say.

She can say. Jesus is mine. Mine. Mine. Mine. Mine. Jesus is mine. Mine when I'm weary. Mine when I'm dreary. Mine. Mine. Mine. Mine. Jesus. Is mine. Jesus is always mine. Can you say that my friend. If so you're richer. Than the richest.

On earth. Mine in the day of sorrow. Mine in the day of gladness. Mine in the day of my death. Mine in the day of judgment. Mine for all eternity. To have Jesus.

Is to be rich. In the things that count. How rich I am. Since Jesus came my way. Redeem my soul. And turn my night today.

[28 : 22] How rich. How very. Very rich. I am. Such peace and joy. I never knew before. And countless blessings. From his boundless store.

And with all this. Heaven. Is my destiny. How rich. I am. That dear ones. Is what grace is. That he. Who was rich.

Became poor. To make me. Who was poor. To become rich. Me. The bankrupt. Rebel. Rebel. Who by sin. Had forfeited. Every favor.

And kindness. From God. And that forever. Who was so well deserving. Of his everlasting wrath. He did it for me. He made me rich.

That's grace. That's the wonderful grace. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know it. But I'm going to tell you about it. Again.

[29 : 19] And again. So we're beginning a series of studies on the grace of God. And we begin with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace. God's riches. At Christ's expense. There was a great cost to make you rich.

Grace. But notice. How much grace is a giving thing. This morning. Can we look at this one verse without saying.

Grace is a giving thing. Grace is an enriching thing. It impoverishes self in order to enrich others. Others.

Now we come to apply this verse. And here's the lesson. What we know personally then. Of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is to make us. Men and women.

[30 : 18] Boys and girls. Of grace. Notice the context of our verse. Where do we find this? Why is this verse even in the Bible? Well it's found here.

In a chapter on giving. Some of God's people were poor. And in great physical need. So Paul's taking up a collection for the saints. The people of Jesus Christ.

And he wants. This church at Corinth. To give sacrificially. To give generously. To enrich others. He wants them to become poor.

That others might become richer. So what's his tact? How does he go about writing to the church at Corinth? Well he gives them two examples. And the first example is the Macedonian churches.

Verses 1 to 5. Now brothers. We want you to know about the grace. That God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of their most severe trial.

[31:19] Their overflowing joy. And their extreme poverty. Welled up in rich generosity. For I testify. That they gave as much as they were able. And even beyond their ability.

Entirely on their own. They urgently pleaded with us. For the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do. As we expected.

But they gave themselves first to the Lord. And then. To us. In keeping with God's will. So here are these churches in Macedonia. And they were dirt poor.

They were in extreme poverty. And yet they gave generously. Even beyond their ability. To give. They gave willingly. It wasn't under compulsion.

I guess if we've got. They urgently pleaded. They begged for the opportunity. To have a part in this offering. They gave themselves first to the Lord. And then their offering.

[32:18] It was for the Lord. You see. It's for his people. For him. Who had given so much to them. So this example. Of the Macedonian church. Was to encourage the believers in Corinth.

That they too. Might have the same spirit. Of giving. And so they might complete the offering.

That they had begun earlier. Something that Paul. In verse 6 calls. An act. Of grace. Isn't that something. This offering. This giving. Is called an act.

Of grace. Giving. Is an act. Of grace. It's the way grace acts. Grace gives.

And it gives. Costing. The giver. But it's to enrich. Others. Grace is a giving thing.

[33:16] And so they are to excel. In this grace. Of giving. Now what will make a body of believers. Sacrificial givers. What will make them willing. Begging for an opportunity.

To give. What will make them. Looking. For opportunities. To give. Generous. Cheerful. Givers. Well. Paul drops.

All mention. Now. Of. The example. Of other churches. And he runs. Right away. To the example. Of our Lord. Jesus Christ. That's the ultimate.

Example. Paul holds. Before them. And us. You may not have. Known. About the grace. Of these Macedonian churches. So I'll tell you about it. But you do know. About 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. You see.

[34:11] It's the gospel. Of the grace. Of Jesus Christ. That makes men of grace. Women of grace. Boys and girls. Of grace. Who are willing.

To give of themselves. To enrich. Others. To become poor. To sacrifice. Their own wealth. To make others. Better off. Just as Jesus.

Did. For us. So I have to ask you. Are others receiving. Grace from you. You know. Jesus didn't treat you. As your sins deserve.

Is that how you treat others. When they sin against you. As they deserve. Or are they receiving. Grace from you. Kindness from you. When they least. Deserve it. Or are you quick.

To judge. And condemn. And to punish. And point out. Their faults. What do others need? You know. It may not be money.

[35:07] Maybe forgiveness. That might be. What they need from you. Is grace. The grace of forgiveness. Such as you've received. It might not be money.

It might be time. Your time. It might not be money. It might be your words. Just to come alongside them. And to talk with them. Freely you've received.

Freely give. Are you a sacrificial giver? Are you on the lookout. For the needs of others? What's strong enough. To loosen our grip. On our things. Our money.

Our time. Our rights. Our talents. Our comfort. And ease. So that. Others. Might be enriched. What is strong enough. To release. A grasping hand.

It's the grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's confident in it. The grace of Jesus Christ. Has power. To do that.

[36:04] He had seen it. In the Macedonians. And he's confident. That that's what will happen. In Corinth. And that's why he. He reminds them. Of the grace. That they already know.

Have you tasted this grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. None. Who have. Remained the same. The grace of Jesus.

Changes us. His grace. Makes us. Gracious. We now give ourselves. Up to him.

First. We see everything. That we have. Is his. Myself. And all that I am. It's yours. We give ourselves. Back up to him. Who gave everything.

For us. All that we have. It's. We become rich. Because of his. Impoverishing himself. For us. And so now. We give it back to him.

[36:56] And then. To the needs. Of others. Well. This is the wonderful grace. Of Jesus. Do you know it?

Have you tasted it? My lost friend. God. I fear that. It sounds. Too good. To be true. We're so wired.

With. The. Works religion. That we think. We've got to do something. To deserve. What we get. That. That it comes in. Right here. He says.

I will take your sins. And give you my righteousness. I'll take your poverty. And I'll give you my wealth. If there was a man on earth. So gracious and kind. Is to say.

That. For the first. Million people. Who. Who come to my house. I'll pay off all their debts. And it's somebody. Of.

[37:54] Worth. That could do that. It's a Warren Buffett. It's somebody. Who. Can. Actually do what he says. And. And he. He makes the promise. And says. And makes it known. And puts the declaration out.

On social media. And everywhere. That can be known. And says. If you'll come to my house. I will pay your debts. The world would be beating. A track. To his front door.

But when. The Lord. Jesus Christ. Says. If you have any. Sin debts. Against God. That you must pay forever. And ever in hell with.

And you bring those to me. I'll pay for them. In full. The world yawns. And it's the greatest. Irrelevance. To them. Why?

They don't believe it. It's. It's. It's. It's too good. To be true. I think sometimes. The sinner. Takes. What is faith? What is faith? In Jesus? It's just taking him.

To you. I want. To relieve. Your debt. And if you come to me. I will gladly. Pay your debt. And you will be rich. Forever. Will you believe him?

It's taking him at his word. Come and taste. And see. That the Lord. Is gracious. And you too. Will become rich.

Of your being. What. What there is. In you. Straight through. Your being. There is grace.
The Lord. The compassionate.

To become so poor. That. That we bankrupt. Rebels. Could become so rich. And we. We see. Why we need. To hear this message. Again.

First to him. And then to others. In need. And for those. Who don't. Know. And have never. Tasted this. Saving grace. And taken you.

Forever. Even today. Take those who came. Poor. And send them home rich. Rich in Christ.

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