Rich through his poverty

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[0:00] As the Lord may enable us, we shall consider words which we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 8. And we may read again at verse 9.

2 Corinthians chapter 8 at verse 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.
Now, the Lord Jesus Christ himself said that he came to preach the gospel to the poor.
And one of the Beatitudes is addressed particularly to the poor. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
And what we have in this verse is a message of hope, a message of salvation to those who have become acquainted with their poverty.
[1:31] And the first thing that we notice when we look at this verse is the description that is given of those for whose salvation Christ came into the world.

They are described as people who have been in poverty. Now, it may be true that some of them are in poverty as far as the things of this world is concerned.
It may be true that some of them are very wealthy as far as the things of this world are concerned. But the poverty that matters, the poverty that qualifies a person for the gospel, the poverty that a person needs to feel in himself if he's going to come to the Savior, is the poverty of spiritual relationship with God.
And this is a poverty, of course, which characterizes every one of us by nature. We are poor in relation to God.
We are unable to meet the demands which God is making upon us. And our inability means that day after day we are heaping up this indebtedness to God.
[3:05] For example, we are duty-bound as his creatures to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

And yet, since the day we came into the world, we have not begun to meet that debt because we do not have the love of God in us. And therefore, we cannot do anything that measures up to the requirements of his love.
We may do many things that are right in themselves, but they have no power to please God. Because they are not motivated by love.
And yet, the demand is constantly pressed upon us. We are duty-bound to pay to God this debt of love and obedience. And because we are not giving him the obedience he is due, we are coming under another kind of debt.
We are coming into debt to his justice. Because whatever may be true of the law of man, disobedience to the law of God always exposes us to the demands of justice.
[4:28] And the demands of justice are that if obedience is not given to the law, then satisfaction must be given to the justice of God.

And that is something that we are equally unable to give to God. We cannot obey his law. We cannot satisfy his justice.
There is nothing we can do. Not all our tears. Not all our endeavors. Not all our repentance. Can begin to atone to the justice of God for our disobedience.
So that you can see how we are day by day becoming more and more poverty stricken. Our debts are mounting up and we cannot even begin to meet them.
This is our condition by nature. And this is what the poor in spirit have become aware of to some little extent. Because the poor in spirit are those people who have come to terms with their poverty.

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[5:38] They've become aware of their poverty. And they've taken up an attitude which is in keeping with their poverty. They're not trying to brace them it out before God.

But they are confessing how poor they are. And how utterly unable they are to meet the demands of God. This is our condition then.
We are poor and we are needy. And we are incapable of remedying our situation. But here is a person who has done a work which has the power to deliver us from our poverty and to make us rich.
And what we want to look at in the second place is what is said about this person. Who is this person who can make the poor rich?
We are told his name our Lord Jesus Christ. A very comprehensive name for the Saviour.
[6:47] Which brings before us the fact that he is God and man. In two distinct natures and one person.

Here is a person whom all the angels of God worship. As their Lord and as their God. He is our Lord.
And that is a term when applied to Jesus. Which brings out his Godhood. The fact that he is not a mere man. But the one to whom we owe obedience and worship.
He is God. And the fact that he is called Jesus. Means not only that he is Saviour. But that he is man.
This is the name of a man. It's a name which men had before he was born. The same name as you know which was given to Joshua. A common name amongst men.
[7:52] Given to the Son of God. Not only to mark out his Saviourhood. But his manhood. And he is Christ. God and man.

In order that he might be Christ. God's anointed Saviour and Redeemer. The one who came in God's great name to save.
So here is a person. Who is God. And he is man. And he is both. In the one person. Because he has been sent.
By God. To save his people. From their sins. This is what raises hope. In the heart of a poor sinner.
He is a person. Who can do. What has to be done. If sinners are going to be saved. From their lost condition. Now.
[8:53] Notice what is said about him. He was. Rich. Rich. Our Lord. Jesus Christ. Was. Rich.

And indeed. When it says he was rich. It's not referring. To something. That belonged. Only to the past. It's not referring to.
A time. At all. It's referring. To something that is essential. Though. Being rich. This is his nature. This is what is true of him.
This is what was true of him. What is true of him. Which will be true of him. As long as he has his being. The Lord Jesus Christ. Is rich.
He is rich. In everything. That goes. To make. God. God. God. The riches. That Christ.
[9:55] Has. Are the riches. Of. Divine. Character. And divine. Attributes. And divine.

Powers. And divine. Possessions. Divine. Worship. Divine. Happiness. Divine. Blessedness. In its entirety.
Belongs. To. The Lord. Jesus. Christ. How rich. Is God. How infinitely.
Glorious. In his own being. How infinitely. Satisfied. Within himself. In the fellowship.
Of the three persons. Of the Godhead. We cannot begin. To appreciate. The richness. Of God. The infinite.
[10:52] Glory. Of God. And yet. All. That infinite. Glory. And blessedness. Belonged. Essentially.

And eternally. To the Lord. Jesus Christ. As the son. Of God. I think. That is something. That our minds.
Must. Concentrate upon. When we begin. To think about. The Lord. Jesus Christ. And his work. And his suffering. And his death. He is a person.
Who is everything. That God is. And who has everything. That God has. And who essentially. And eternally. Enjoys.
What is involved. In being God. He has no need. At all. No. Empty place.
[11:49] In his life. No need. For the creation. To fill a void. In his happiness. He is. In his life.

And yet. We are told. What he did. Here is a world. Of poor sinners. Here is the rich. Glorious.

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Infinitely. Blessed. Son of God. and he became poor he became poor, he didn't become rich he was always rich, essentially rich but he became poor and when it says he became poor that poverty must be thought of in the same context of their poverty for whose sakes he did become poor this becoming poor is not something completely removed from their experience it involves him in coming where they were now when it says he became poor it doesn't mean that he ceased to be what he was before he didn't cease to be the son of God but the person who was the son of God knew all the richness of Godhood came to know in human nature all the poverty that belongs to a man under the curse of God he became poor he took upon himself our human nature that was a new experience for the son of God it's amazing to think of the son of God entering into an experience he never had before but that is what happened when he took on our nature and when in our human nature he knew what it was was to experience limitation and dependence and submission and obedience these were things that the son of God as such could know nothing about but in our human nature he came to know them human limitation human dependence human obedience and submission that was an experience of poverty poverty in itself but having become a man he humbled himself it wasn't just becoming man that made him poor but he was poor as a man he was poor in his outward circumstances it would have been a great coming down for Christ supposing he had been born in the greatest palace on the earth but he was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn and that's the sort of social level at which he lived in his youth and early years he was a poor man he didn't know where to lay his head the foxes had holes the birds of the air had nests but the son of man didn't have a place to lay his head but his poverty was something even more extreme and intense than that because we are told when he humbled himself he became obedient unto death obedient to the extent of dying even the death of the cross he lost even the sense that he had of the presence and the support of God he came under the burden of his people's sin and under the burden of their curse to such an extent that at the end
of the day he cried my God my God why hast thou forsaken me isn't that poverty for the son of God who knew as the son of God eternal fellowship and communion with the father and yet in our nature he came to know this desolation which made him cry why hast thou forsaken me he had not even in his human nature the comfort of the consciousness of the presence of his father he became poor in that he descended into the very depth of God forsakenness now why what accounts for the fact that the son of God essentially and eternally rich became poor in our nature and became so poor that he did not have even the sense of the presence of God why did he do this what accounts for it first of all it says it was for your sakes you know the grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that's the first reason it was for your sakes it wasn't because of some necessity in himself as we mentioned he was eternally blessed as God he didn't need to do what he did in order to satisfy some emptiness in himself no it was for your sakes it was out of regard to your condition it was because of his relationship to you that he became poor now that's what lies at the very heart of the gospel people that there's a union between Christ and his people which means that
[18:45] God treats Christ as they should be treated and God treats them as Christ should be treated the union is so real that the son of God in becoming united to them became responsible for all the debts they had that's what made him poor for your sakes because he came into such a union with you and he's speaking to the believer he came into such a union with you that he became accountable for all your debts and it's your poverty that made him poor you had such debts accumulated that for Christ to meet them in your place brought him down into the depths of poverty he had to give the obedience you could not give he had to give the satisfaction you could not give to the justice of God and that debt accumulated by you and by all the people of

God was so enormous that when Christ took it on it reduced him to the lowest depths of poverty he was made sin for us he was made a curse for us he was made poor for us and doesn't that bring Christ very near and make him very precious to his people that he was prepared to stand where they stand and to become what they are in relation to God to bear their sin and guilt and curse even although it brought him down into human nature and even although it brought him down into death and into the experience of the curse to the extent that he did say my God why hast thou forsaken me for your sakes because you were so poor because you were so indebted to God because he took on your debts it brought you down it brought him down into these depths of poverty that's the first reason for your sake the second reason that he became poor was that you through his poverty

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might be rich and this is the wonder of it that his becoming poor has resulted in our becoming rich and the reason is that the satisfaction which Christ gave to
God's law and to God's justice was so tremendous so satisfying to God that it not only resulted in the wiping out of all our debts but it resulted in the accumulation on our account of unsearchable riches the perfect righteousness of Christ his perfect obedience to the law his perfect satisfaction of the justice of God resulted in not only the wiping out of what was against us but in the crediting to us of all that satisfaction and all that righteousness Christ not only paid the debt but he magnified the law and he made it honourable he satisfied
God in a way that we could never have done to all eternity supposing we had never sinned we could never have obeyed the law in a way that would have so glorified God as his obedience did and supposing we suffered in hell to all eternity we could never satisfy the justice of God as he has done and the result of what he has done is not only that he and we have been released from the debt we were under but that we have come to share in his richness in his blessedness we have an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and fadeth not away and is reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith and to salvation yes he became poor so that by what he did in paying the debt of his people he might make them eternally and immeasurably rich and how rich the
Christian is perhaps you could refresh your minds as one often tries to do from the shorter catechism when it asks about the benefits that we receive in this life from our union with Christ justification adoption sanctification and all the benefits that flow from them such as assurance of God's love peace of conscience joy in the Holy Ghost increase of grace perseverance therein to the end and at death the souls of believers made perfect in holiness immediately pass into glory their body being still united to Christ resting in the grave to the resurrection and after resurrection raised up in glory and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity I think these answers in the shorter catechism bring before us in a very scriptural way how rich the
[25:31] Christian is how rich Christ's poverty has made him there's one other reason given as to why he became poor it was for your sakes it was so that you through his poverty might be rich and it was an account of his grace for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich it's grace that made him poor it's grace that brought him into our human nature it's grace that kept him going in the midst of all the temptations and afflictions that he experienced in this world when the devil oppressed him and when his enemies attacked him and when his friends forsook him it was grace that brought him to the cross of

Calvary and kept him on the cross of Calvary as has often been said it wasn't the nails that kept him on the cross he could have come down he could have kept himself from being there at all but it was grace the free and sovereign undeserved mercy that he had towards his people he came in obedience to the father's will but he came out of the grace that was in his own heart he received this commandment from the father to do thy will I take delight oh thou my god that art yea that most holy law of thine I have within my heart when we look for a reason for christ coming the ultimate reason is found in his grace the grace of our lord jesus christ and that's what opens the door of hope to sinners like us that when we are dealing with the gospel we are not dealing with human merit whoever we are we have no worthiness but it doesn't matter how unworthy we are because salvation is of the grace and mercy of the lord so here we have this person infinitely essentially eternally rich as god and yet in our human nature he becomes poor beyond our power to understand and he does it because of the relationship he has with his people he does it for their sake he does it so that they will be made rich forever he does it out of his grace and the apostle brings this home to the personal experience of god's people he's applying it to themselves and he says you know the grace of our lord jesus christ you know it not just you know about it you've heard about it you've read about it you've talked about it you know it as a doctrine but you know it as an experimental thing you know it in your own soul's experience it has reached you it has made you feel how poor you are without christ and it has made you begin to experience the riches that are in christ for sinners that's what's involved at least a little of what's involved in knowing this grace you've come to see yourself as poor without him and you've come to begin to experience something of the richness that you have when you have christ as the portion of your soul you're as poor as you ever were in yourself but you can come to a throne of grace you can approach god you can have hope in his presence because christ is the ground of your hope that's where we have to be brought

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if all of this is going to become meaningful to ourselves we have to be brought to a personal knowledge of his grace a personal knowledge of himself knowing him by faith knowing him in our own experience in a way that makes us feel we're
poor without him but that if we have him we have all things we have all that we need for time and for eternity do you feel like that yourself today you perhaps have never felt poorer in yourself than you feel today poor lost sinner you're not able to think a right thought you can't even concentrate in the bible you can't even pray you feel you're lost if you're left to yourself but all your hope is in christ and what a great hope that is because it means he'll never let you go you will never be separate from him in your relationship to god now there's one thing by way of conclusion you notice that this text is set in the midst of a chapter that is all about people sacrificing for the sake of the cause of christ actually the chapter was written as an appeal for the collection that was going to be made in the church for poor saints and what the apostle is saying is if you do know his grace if you have experienced that grace if the lord of glory made himself so poor for you in order that you would be eternally rich then how can you fail to give yourself and all you have for christ and for his cause it's too bad really that so often in the church pressures are brought to bear upon people for this reason and for that reason to be giving to the cause if you don't give to the cause you'll not get a minister or if you don't give to the cause some other place is going to be closed down this and that and the next thing till we're tired hearing of it and yet why is that being done perhaps because we feel so little of the constraint of the gospel in our spirits why should we give all that we are and all that we have to the lord because he has given himself for us he has given all he had for us he came from the realms of glory to die for us and our salvation and to make us eternally blessed and surely then if we know that grace we ourselves will be responding in this way that all we are and all we have is for him and for his disposal it's amazing how often the most precious statements of the gospel are made in a context of practical
Christian living if you look through the epistles you'll find that this is often the case Christ and what he has done is held up in order to impress on us what we ought to be it's the same in Philippians in the second chapter that glorious passage about him becoming man and as man becoming obedient to death even the death of the cross and God highly exalting him that passage is brought in in order to underline this truth that we ourselves ought to be lowly in our minds we ourselves ought to be concerned about our fellow Christians and our fellow sinners and you'll find the same thing again and again in the Bible these glorious truths if they become meaningful to us will have an influence in our everyday lives so may the
Lord enable us to realise what a glorious saviour we have may we be enabled to put our confidence in him may we realise how rich we are if we have Christ and may the effect be manifested in our lives being devoted entirely to him and his service and glory let us pray eternal God we pray that thou wilt shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ and although we are so poor in ourselves may we rejoice at the richness which we have in him part us now with thy blessing and take each one home in safety and pardon sin for Jesus' sake [35:56] Amen Amen

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