

permanent riches of others. Believers are the true recipients of Christ's work. Oh, how rich we are in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:5). Someday these riches of His grace will be on display (Eph. 2:7). How wonderful to receive from HIM.

Conclusion

Let us not forget the context in which this marvelous text is found. Paul draws upon the Person and Word of Christ to show in an indisputable fashion that giving is the norm for believers. Giving which really makes others rich! In our thanking Christ for what He has done for us, let us not stop there. Let us, rather, determine under the Holy Spirit to perform in that same fashion in all that we do. The specific concern here is: giving of ones funds to the work of the Lord. Amen.

Notes

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

"The Greatest Sacrifice Ever"
2 Corinthians 8:9

Introduction

1. How do you go about provoking other believers to give to the work of the Lord? How would you get to their hearts so that they will feel in their deepest beings the need to share to the glory of God? That is a large order!

2. Three groups normally make up every local assembly: a. Those who don't care and usually find it difficult to get concerned. Many of these actually oppose the work. b. Those who are passively interested. They want more or less to do as they please. Prefer not to be bothered. Will help as they please. c. Those who are genuinely concerned. They take it upon themselves to see to the success of a local work both by generous participation and giving. They identify strongly with the work. Obviously, the goal is to get as many people as possible into this group!

3. How did Paul the Apostle handle the situation outlined here? He utilized two marvelous avenues of approach: a. The action of the Macedonians and b. The example of our Lord Jesus. The former was rather inferior and this drove Paul to the greatest possible motivation--the Person and Work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. But what did the Macedonians do? They had great forwardness (Greek: zeal and earnestness). Since they reacted in this fashion, it was to be expected from the Corinthians also! By so showing forth zeal, the Corinthians would, in effect, be proving (subjecting to a test) their love. It is not the only text, but it would be a real one! Let no one evermore minimize the giving situation in his life!

5. Nonetheless, the greatest movement upon a soul is the Lord Jesus. So Paul issues his call for giving on the foundation of that fantastic example. That example was important because it was concerned with:

a. Personal knowledge. "Ye know" is not something perfunctory. It was a fact that they had experiential knowledge of the Lord. They were saved, hence they knew the facts!

b. Divine grace. "grace of our Lord . . ." What He did was an act of grace! Giving what was not deserved--that's grace and that's what Christ did and this is what is known by the Corinthians!

c. Entire Person. "Lord Jesus Christ" points to the entire glorious Person of Christ. He is at once LORD, Jesus (Saviour) and Christ (Messiah). It was He, in all of these aspects Who is called upon as the prime example! Glory to God.

6. The elements of Christ's example are plain, explicit, and profound. Mark them with diligence:

1. HIS ETERNAL RICHES

"Though He was rich."

Here is a participial phrase with concessive force. The verb utilized by the Spirit connotes the actual being of the Lord Jesus. One might well ask: in what did the riches of our Lord consist? Two of these might beneficially be listed:

a. The glory of God John 17:5

Prior to Christ's expression of grace as outlined in this text, He enjoyed the glory of being in the very presence of the Father. The unique arrangement within the Godhead was a part of His experience. He never relinquished His deity, but He did make new arrangements for the experience of His glory!

b. The form of God. Phil. 2:6.

The noun used here denotes the fact that Christ was and is identified with the essential nature and character of God and He reveals this. The

inner being of Christ was actually and concretely absolute deity! This was a facet of His eternal riches.

2. HIS TEMPORARY POVERTY.

"yet for your sakes He became poor."

Three of the most fantastic truths known are made understandable in this phrase. Here they are for your spiritual digestion:

a. His act.

The Greek verb is in the aorist and this points to the stupendous act of grace performed by our Lord. He was preincarnate, but He became poor. In summary, this truth is taught in John 1:1, 14. The verb has ingressive force, therefore, and shows an incisive act of our Lord.

b. His action

The verb form also notes a movement from one sphere into another. From riches into poverty. What does this mean? It means that the kenosis ("emptying Himself") as recorded in Phil. 2:7) concerned a deprivation of certain inalienable rights. He submitted to an arrangement which only an eternal God Who sought the redemption of men could have devised!

c. His occasion

One small fragmentary prepositional phrase is sufficient to explain. It was done "for your sakes." How staggering is this revelation. This is the pith and kernel of genuine giving. Christ gained nothing! It was all for others! Hallelujah!

3. HIS PERMANENT PROVISION

"that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Here is the goal of His grace. He yearned that others might be benefited. This is the only way it could be. Using an ingressive aorist again, Paul by inspiration of the Spirit shows that the temporary poverty of Christ was designed to be for the ultimate and