



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

April 20, 2025

Jump Start # 3643

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Through the sacrifice of Jesus, in many ways we have traded places with Him. He died, when we should have died. His death gave us life. The wrath of God was poured out upon Him, so we might receive the blessings and forgiveness of God. And, as our verse states today, Jesus, rich as He was, became poor, so that we, who were bankrupt, might become rich.

Now, some thought needs to take place. How was Jesus rich? He had no place to lay His head. He never owned property. He entered Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey. There was a coin in the mouth of a fish that was used to pay the tax He owed. Sure doesn't sound like He was rich. The problem with this reasoning is our starting point. Jesus came from Heaven. He is Lord of Heaven and Earth. He is the creator. The cattle on a thousand hills, the Psalmist wrote, are His. In deed, this is My Father's world. He became poor when He left all that. He never hungered in Heaven. He did on earth. He never had someone spit on Him or kiss Him in betrayal in Heaven. He did on earth. Jesus became poor by giving up His position and becoming like us, yet without sin.

Now, we are the other hand, with closets full of clothes and pantries full of food, cars in the garage and more stuff than we know what to do with, are poor. Although we are the richest county in the world and we have more than most people in the world, we are more than poor, we are bankrupt. The apostle is describing our spiritual state. This is why the beatitude states, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That has nothing to do with bank statements and financial planning, but everything to do with our sinful life before the Lord. Without Jesus, we are hopeless and helpless. Lost in our sins, is our condition.

But because of the grace and sacrifice of Jesus, who was rich and become poor, we who were poor are now rich. What a flip flop. If our poverty refers to our spiritual condition, how are now we rich spiritually? Have you thought about that?

(OVER)

First, we have the Lord as our Savior, help and friend. Anytime and any place we can call upon the Lord. The Lord has left a path for us to follow. Our way is clear. God has not left anything for us to find on our own or to figure out. The prodigals that we are, know the way home. It's just a matter of getting up and getting there.

Second, we are rich in that God has included and invited us to work in the greatest endeavor of creation, His amazing kingdom. Unlike walking through a museum, where one sees things, but is not allowed to touch, God has put His perfect word about His perfect Son into our imperfect hands and has entrusted the kingdom to us. We are God's A team. We are the varsity squad. There is no one else that will support, defend and protect the kingdom, other than God's people. If we sit on the sidelines, if we quit, there won't arise something from the business sector, or government that will ensure God's kingdom. No. The Lord has put that into our hands. It's up to us to make sure in our times, we remain faithful, strong and committed to the Lord.

You and I won't get a call from the White House asking for our help. We won't get a call from a major sports team asking for our help. We won't get called from Hollywood, wanting help on a movie project. Car designers won't be asking for our input. Paris fashion designers won't be reaching out to us for our thoughts on style. None of those things will happen. Yet, God has placed the kingdom into our hands. Don't think you are important? You stand in the shadows of those long ago apostles. We don't have miracles as they did, but we don't need miracles. We have the word of God. Teach it. Live it. Share it. Show it. The eternal kingdom of God in our hands. Amazing.

Third, we are rich in that our future is only getting better and better. Our home is not here, but there. Eternally, we will be with the Lord. Heaven, His home, will be our home, one day. No one can take that away from you, except yourself. Those poor first Christians, many of them slaves, that had very little and lived pitiful lives, are rejoicing in Heaven's home. Poor Lazarus, laid at the rich man's gate, no food, no mercy, and no help, was carried by God's angels to the comfort of Abraham in paradise. Poor in life, rich in eternity.

As a believer, you don't have to check your 401 status to see if you are rich. God has made you rich in ways money can never provide. Count your many blessings, the song tells us, and name them one by one.

The gift of salvation—the greatest demonstration of God's love for us, ought to remind us that we are blessed to be in the care of the Lord.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
