Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift

II COR. 9:15, 8:9

12/24/17

*** THIS CHRISTMAS, WE NEED TO <u>APPRECIATE</u> WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US!**

(Learn to say: "Thank you" for the grace of Christ!)

I. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT HIM <u>DOWN</u> TO THE <u>DEPTHS OF POVERTY</u>
V. 9a

How low did Christ go?

II. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT US <u>UP</u> TO THE <u>HEIGHT OF PROSPERITY</u>
V. 9b

How high were we lifted?

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INTRODUCTION:

2 Cor. 9:15
Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
2 Cor. 8:9
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.

Every year just prior to December 25th a lot of gift purchasing goes on around the world. Christmas for many wholesalers and retailers means big business. Christmas time is a multi-billion dollar occasion. No wonder the world so readily acknowledges a day that is supposed to relate somehow to Jesus Christ.

At Christmas time so many...
Spend money they do not have
On people they do not like
To buy gifts they will never use

However, on that first "Christmas" whether or not it was December 25th, God the Father gave the greatest gift this world would ever receive. He gave the gift of His Son.

God gave...
Out of His abundant Riches, His greatest Gift
To people He does love
A gift that will benefit the one who receives it, both now and forever.

Anything God gives is good. He is the giver of life and all good things that come to us in this life and beyond.

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

However, only the believer will fully appreciate all that God gives:
1Co 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

2Co 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable (indescribable) gift.

What is a “gift”? A gift is something to value that is kindly given at a cost to the giver but free to the receiver and it in some way benefits the receiver.

What makes a gift great?

Answer: It’s value (how much did it cost? What is it worth)
It’s usefulness (how can I benefit from it?)

Words cannot describe all of the blessings that come with His gift which is offered to the entire world.

What makes God’s gift the greatest gift ever given?

1. The greatest gift was sent the greatest distance (from Heaven to Earth)
2. The greatest gift was given to the most unworthy
3. The greatest gift was given to meet the greatest need
4. The greatest gift was given at the greatest price
5. The greatest gift was given at no cost to the receiver (it is free)
6. The greatest gift was given to last an eternity
7. The greatest gift can be yours today
8. The greatest gift comes with the greatest benefits

ILLUS: how we teach our children to say: "Thank you."

EX: of how we appreciate appreciation. We show appreciation by doing or giving something in return for what someone else has done or has given us.

NOTE: Context of II Cor. 8 & 9. Paul is exhorting the Corinthians toward <u>giving</u> to help the needs of the famine-stricken church in Jerusalem.

Two times in this context to encourage generosity for the Corinthian believers, Paul appeals to God's tremendous giving (READ: II Cor. 9:15, 8:9).

*** THIS CHRISTMAS, YOU NEED TO <u>APPRECIATE</u> WHAT CHRIST DID FOR YOU!**
(Learn to say: "Thank you" for the grace of Christ!)

I. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT HIM DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF POVERTY (v. 9a)
How low did Christ go?

"Our Lord Jesus Christ" - note full title:

1) "Lord" - He who is master (of the Universe) - the eternal Yahweh became poor!

2) "Jesus" - He who is Savior (the only deliverer from sin and hell) became poor!

3) "Christ" - He who is Messiah (the anointed King of kings) became poor!

"Though He was rich" –

--This points to His pre-existence (Jesus existed before incarnation)
--This points to His pre-eminence (He was ruler over all creation)

Before He came to earth, the Lord Jesus shared the same glory as the Father (Jn. 17:5).

Phil. 2:5-11 - Christ's Humiliation

"Let this mind be in you . . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man."

Jesus humbled Himself so much as seen by:

1) His coming to earth
2) Taking on a physical body with all of its limitations

Christ had:

1) Humble ancestors (lineage)
   --Tamar (incest with Judah)
   --Rahab (a prostitute)
   --Ruth (a Moabite)
   --Bathsheba (an Adultress)
   Mt. 1:3, 5

2) Humble birth

--swaddling clothes (Lk. 2:7, 12)

Cp. how we are so interested in how we wrap gifts to beautify what is inside, with how God wrapped His gift to us!

"Swaddling clothes" = lit. strips of cloth - Christ was wrapped up like a mummy.

NOTE: This wrapping was part of a sign (v. 12) (a sign is something out of the ordinary).

God's gift was the best gift ever imaginable and yet it wasn't wrapped in special paper! In God`s infinite wisdom He planned that His Son would not be recognized man's way. (by a royal, wealthy family with imperial power and prestige) but that He would be revealed solely by the Holy Spirit (as the Child was to Simeon).

--Manger - a feeding trough for animals in a stall or stable (possibly a cave or an underground barn).

--Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.")

3) a humble family (Lk. 2:24)

Mary and Joseph could only afford to give two turtledoves or two young pigeons, rather than a lamb (READ Lev. 12:6 - cp. with 5:7).

4) a humble trade (Mk. 6:3 - "Carpenter . . . they were offended at Him" (Mt. 11:6 - "And blessed is He, whosoever shall not be offended in me.")

5) a humble upbringing - "Nazareth in Galilee" Nathaniel said: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46) (Town was very small and had a negative reputation) Jn. 7:52 - "They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

6) a humble ministry
--He had no pillow to lay His head (Mt. 8:20)
--He had no money to pay His taxes (Mt. 17:24-27)

> Christ's life shows that He plunged into the depths of poverty. At birth, he slept in another's manger; in ministry, He cruised in another's boat; in ministry, He ate in another's house; at triumphal entry, He rode on another's donkey; at death, he was buried in another's tomb (Mt. 27:57-60).

7) a humble death (Phil. 2:8)
crucified = a curse (Gal. 3:13)
Stripped of clothes, thorns, etc.

The hymnwriter wrote:

"There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus--
No, not one! No, not one!
None would could heal all our soul's diseases--
No, not one! No, not one!

No friend like Him is so high and holy--
No, not one! No, not one!
And yet no friend is so meek and lowly--
No, not one! No, not one!

Jesus knows all about our struggles,
He will guide till the day is done"
(Hymn # 208)

Humility of Christ - Isaiah 53:2-3 - "For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall se him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

As a lowly servant, Christ washed the disciples feet (Jn. 13:13ff). He preached salvation to the lowest of the low. He traveled with common fishermen and a tax collector.

Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ." (Mt. 20:28)

The Lord of the universe put up with poverty, persecution, scorn, abandonment, and the cruelties of the cross.

Why?

So that we might be rich.

He "spent" all He had - to purchase our redemption.

II. THE GRACE OF CHRIST BROUGHT US UP TO THE HEIGHT OF PROSPERITY (v. 9b)

How high were we lifted?

He gave His life so that we might have life.
He suffered so that we might have peace.
He faced agonies of this wicked earth so that we might enjoy the blessings of our "promised land."

Christ did not become poor just to set an "example"; rather, He did so to change our spiritual status.

"Rich" = very wealthy (spiritually)

NOTE: He did not merely make us "well off" but rich!

We have so much in Christ, we will be shocked when we get to Heaven.

I Cor. 2:9 - "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Turn to Col. 2:9-10.

We belong to the one who has it all!

Therefore, we are "complete in Him."
(we lack nothing in Christ)

ILLUS: of people who marry people for their money. This is not real completeness!

True riches are in Christ!

Eph. 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"

In Ephesians, it is evident that: we have been adopted into a royal family (1:5); accepted in the Beloved (1:6); we already have redemption, forgiveness (1:7); an inheritance that will never end (1:11).

We have gone from sin to the Savior.
We have gone from spiritual blindness to the light.
We have gone from the wrath of God to peace with God.
We have gone from fear to comfort.
We have gone from facing the prospect of hell to anticipating the blessings of Heaven.
We have gone from spiritual poverty to spiritual riches.

Turn to Rev. 21:2-6.

v. 2 - "Prepared" jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you (John 14)

"As a bride adorned" - spotless beauty.
God will satisfy our every desire

v. 3 - The very presence of God will be enjoyed.

v. 4 - No sadness or pain.

CONCLUSION: If Christ gave His all for us:

Is anything too great to give?

Is any price too high to pay?

Is any sacrifice too great to make?

Christ went from riches to rags so that we might go from rags to riches.
Christ went from the top to the bottom so that we might go from the bottom to the top.
Christ went from everything to nothing so that we might go from nothing to everything.
Christ went from wealth to poverty so that we might go from poverty to wealth.
He experienced rockbottom humiliation so that we might experience mountain top wealth (in Heaven)

We need to say from our hearts today: "Thank you, God, for the most costly, the most needful, the most satisfying, and the most wonderful gift ever given -- your own blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior!"