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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 29 October 1922

TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 8 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

He, of whose voluntary poverty, the text speaks, was the Word, was with God and was God. He possesses all the infinite riches of Deity, eternity, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence. He possesses all these excellencies of which the scriptures speak, love, mercy, He justifies the ungodly, He ceaselessly watches over them who believe in Him to the saving of their souls. He made all the gold and the silver, all precious stones and everything that is valued among men. He made the world; He upholds it by the word of His power. As Christ, He possesses unsearchable riches which the Apostle Peter was sent and commissioned to preach and which every minister sent of God to preach, has had for his main subject. Eternal love, manifested by His death; justifying righteousness, wrought out at infinite pains; sanctifying grace, of which the fulness is in Him; never slumbering eyes. These are all His, and these riches are unsearchable. But the text speaks of poverty, His poverty. And this is one of the mysteries of divine grace, that the Lord of life and glory, possessing, as I have said, all the riches of Deity, should have been poor, should have voluntarily become poor. Externally, literally of poor parentage; born in the inn, or the outer part of it; laid in a manger. Of Himself He said to one who professed readiness to follow Him - "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head". And when Peter had pledged his master with respect to the payment of taxes, there was no money to pay the taxes with. A miracle must be performed to honour the pledge. What a position for God to come into, Incarnate Deity. There was a poverty beneath this, as I understand. He came to be the substitute of sinners who were poor in every respect in which

God would have them and did make them rich in creation. If you are led and enabled to consider this, you will see what a solemn position the Lord of life and glory came into, came into voluntarily, of His own free will, His own great love wherewith He loved His people. He became poor, and His poverty of heart and mind, so to speak, concerning His being made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the curse of the law, that He should have no place to lay His head on, was much. But, that He should be in that condition under the law that His people were in and under, that he should come to that as to be a poor broken-hearted, persecuted man, this is wonderful, beyond our conception as to the fulness of it, and this was the grace of Christ. And I am disposed to say this, I believe it, that the depth of Christ's poverty was reached when He was on the cross. During His sojourn and walking in Jewry and living among His own, He had not where to lay His head, but on the cross, He who had been eternally in the bosom of His Father, said to His Father "Why hast Thou forsaken Me", as if that very bosom was no longer His rest and this was poverty, this was poverty indeed. And should the Holy Ghost give us to follow Christ in this, His poverty, we shall see that which will deeply humble and affect our hearts. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". By comparison it seems little that Christ should have nowhere to lay His head, should have no money, but just always experience poverty of that kind. I say, by comparison, it seems little when you think of the deep poverty of His soul, what He went through, endured, felt and suffered, especially that last part of it, deepest and worst, when He said - "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me."

Should we be led to consider the position of Christ as a substitute, there might be to us a beauty cast upon this word - poverty. A beggar the word may be literally said to be a beggar. He was a beggar. His grace was such that He became a poor man. And what was it for? That He might be able to sympathise with His suffering people. As the Apostle Paul was inspired to say that - "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted". He suffered being tempted and therefore having ability, and has still an ability, to

succour all who are tempted. Behold a poor Saviour. Behold Him who made heaven and earth and all that therein is, the sea and all that is therein. A poor man, a man persecuted, broken-hearted, a man who had come, as to His Eternal Deity, from the bosom of His Father into that abject condition that here is set forth. And the Apostle says to the Corinthian church, you know this. The context is beautiful. It has relation to the charity, the liberality of the people of God, particularly in this instance, the churches of Macedonia which, out of their abundant poverty exhibited remarkable liberality. But, says the Lord by the Apostle Paul, there is one whose example is above all other examples; one whose liberality is expressive indeed, infinite. He who possessed all things emptied Himself of them all, became poor. The Apostle Paul has the same truth in another Epistle where he says that "He made Himself of no reputation" and he expresses, just before, what the position of Christ was in Himself and in Eternity. "Who, being in the form of God", that is being very God, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but took on Him the form of a servant". "Made Himself of no reputation and took on Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This emptying of Himself sets forth how that the Eternal Son of God gave but little proof of His being that while He was here, that all the Deity that dwelt in Him was veiled. Occasionally it came forth in miracles, in kindnesses done, in healing the sick and raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, feeding miraculously thousands, of a few loaves and fishes. But, for the most part, He just was the man, a poor man, had never been to school, had no prowess, no position among men, but just walked as a poor man. He emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation. Says Paul - "Let this mind be in you". Do not lift yourselves up, do not seem to be, or aim at being, what you are not. This mighty Lord Jesus was crucified through weakness. This eternally rich person, Almighty God, was a poor man, and the Apostle gives the reason of this when he says "that ye through His poverty might be rich". For your sakes He became poor, volunteered to be poor, really, voluntarily emptied Himself, took on Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and all for the sake of poor people, that they might lose their poverty and be enriched

with all the riches of this blessed Person.

Let us look at this part of the text as helped a little, "For your sakes He became poor" And this would intimate to us, first of all, that the people of God were ever in the heart and eye of the Lord Jesus, that what He did He never did a single act of all without reference to this people. Take this thought, look at it. Did the Lord Jesus think of you, of me, when He was a poor man here, suffering; when in His weakness, He prayed; when under His heavy burden, He offered strong cries unto God, and was heard in that He feared; when He submitted to all the false accusations that were brought against Him and did not prohibit them; when He would honour the pledge of His servant, a disciple, Peter. Rather than dishonour it, He would work a miracle. Did all this that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished, have reference to you, to me? Was His heart on us sitting here, in those past generations when He was on the earth? "For your sakes". Not only for the Corinthians, but for people today, born again, eternally chosen in Christ, and looked upon by Him. And for their sakes He wrought and prayed and wept and groaned and gave Himself unto God as a sacrifice. "For your sakes", that your deep poverty, that is your death, for death is the greatest and deepest poverty that can be, that your death might be swallowed up of His eternal life; that your sinful weakness might be removed by His gracious omnipotence; that your sinful ignorance might be removed by the teaching of His good Spirit; that your emptiness should no longer condemn you, but that you should be filled out of the fulness of Him, who filleth all in all. "For your sakes" He had His children with Him always; He had them in His heart; He had them in His mind and eye always, so that nothing He did on earth was without reference to these people who should come after and should be born again and who, realising their poverty and all evil, should seek unto Him and find their riches in Him. What a great thing is this. A persuasion of this enters the heart of a sinner when the Holy Ghost leaves no room for doubt, for the moment, in the heart of a sinner, as if the Lord Himself should say - Now you were with Me when I was poor, with Me when I had nowhere to lay My head, and with Me when My poverty reached its deepest depths and I suffered

the keenest of all pains, even when My Father forsook Me, and the law cursed Me and the work of God in Me was death. You were with Me then. The effect of this upon the soul, when made known, is very great and sweet, and any position that you may occupy, any suffering that you may have to endure, any poverty that may fall upon you, you will be enabled cheerfully to submit to under the influence of this truth that you were with Christ, that for your sake He endured His poverty. We must have trouble. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". But what an example there is of suffering patiently in the Lord Jesus. May we find the power of that example in our souls.

Notice, in the next place, the effect of this poverty, the poverty of Christ. "That ye through His poverty might be rich". Now this says, we are poor. If we were rich it could not be said of us that we might be made rich. But we are poor, and our poverty, alas for us is sinful poverty. May the Lord make us believe this. I have often said it, our inability to obey God is part of our sin. All our poverty is sinful poverty. We were not created poor, we were not placed in a wilderness when we were created. We were created rich and we were placed in a well watered garden, a garden made by God Himself, through which ran a river. We were not poor then. We made ourselves poor, and we are poor. We are poorer than we can realise fully. Our poverty consists in ignorance, in alienation from God, in blindness of understanding, in perversity of will, in corruption of affection. Our poverty consists in death. "Dead in trespasses and sins". It consists in a perpetual disposition to depart from God; it consists in our realising a sweetness in that which God hates. O poverty, how poor is the word poverty, when put to this case, when spoken of respecting our condition through the fall. Why my friends it is impossible, utterly impossible for anyone to enter fully into this impossible, awful state into which we, through sin, have brought ourselves. But I just make these remarks in order to speak of our being made rich. "That ye through His poverty", poverty culminating in His death "might be rich". If you ask the wordly man what he would esteem riches, he will tell you. If he speaks in the language of the Psalmist, it will be this - corn and wine. There be many that say "who will show us

any good" The corn and the wine of the wicked increasing, they esteem wealth. If you speak in the language of the day, it is in the possession of much good. A man who possesses much of this world's goods is a rich man, and they do not, all these rich folk, do not think themselves poor. They have more than heart could wish, their eyes stand out with fatness. They shoot out their tongue against the heavens. True riches you will find, according to scripture, begin in the new birth, the impartation and implantation of eternal life. The greatest wealth is life, pure, blessed life, and this life the Holy Ghost imparts through the poverty of Jesus Christ. He came into their death, that they might partake of His life. He came into their darkness when God forsook Him that they might live in the light of His countenance for ever. Oh it is a rich blessing that the Holy Ghost gives to a sinner when He gives him eternal life. See then if this belongs to you, O sinner. Have you any evidence of being born again, any evidence that the Holy Ghost ever came to you and quickened your dead soul so that that is true of you that was true of the Ephesians of whom it was said by Paul - "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." The beginning of this world was the creating word of God - "Let there be". The beginning of vital religion in any sinner is that word - "live". "I passed by thee; I spread My skirt over thee, I said unto thee - "live". That breathes into the soul eternal life; that begets a soul in the image of Christ; that is the beginning of a conflict, the beginning of a living stream of life, flowing Godward through eternity and in this time state, in opposition to all the dams and hindrances that sin and Satan might set up and build up, will press itself Godward, must do so. Ah, he is rich who has grace, the grace of life. Poor sinner if you cannot do without God in your feelings, that is an evidence that God cannot do without you, that He will have you and that that determination to have you brought Him from heaven, made Him a poor man, to make poor men the sons of God and pay the debt His brethren owed. Blessed be God for the possession of eternal life. "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish. No man shall pluck them out of My hands." Satan plucked Adam from his original state of purity, but Satan shall never pluck a sinner out of the hands of Christ, nor cast him down from

his excellency that he has now in the possession of a pure, holy life. Bless God for the new birth. Bless God for every evidence that He has given us<sup>of</sup> a divine life, the only life that is to be for ever in purity and blessedness. "That ye might be rich"

And secondly this wealth consists in the righteousness of Christ. "This is the name wherewith He shall be called the Lord our righteousness." You will never do a righteous thing fully. You will fail everywhere in everything, and every new born person knows that sin is mixed with all we do and think and say. "There is none righteous, no not one". There is none that doeth good, no not one. We think wrong thoughts, wrong thoughts are departures from God. Think of it, if you believe that, if you are enabled even for a single half hour to take notice of your thoughts, you will conclude that that half hour had many departures from God in it, and therefore how are you to be righteous. How can a person who lives so much in sin, a person who enters into Paul's word in the Romans "When I would do good, evil is present with me" be righteous? Righteousness must be wealth. To be right and righteous must be riches indeed. And how can it be that one who lives as I have just said, yea what the scripture says, be righteous? It must be by the righteousness of another person, the righteousness, that is to say, of the Lord Jesus. This delivers from death as says Solomon "Righteousness delivereth from death". This brings a person into a good standing with God; this makes him acceptable to God; this beautifies him, for justification certainly is beautiful. O the beauty of one who is justified in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is wealth; this is part of that word that Christ has in the Proverbs, the chapter I read - "Durable riches and righteousness are with Me" says Christ, durable riches, not perishing wealth, not a substance that God may make liquid in a day, no, but a wealth that endures, and it is this\*righteousness. "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment". And if you notice, it is one way of righteousness. "I lead in the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of judgment". Many paths, many dealings of God with you, but only one way of justification. This is part of the riches that Christ gives,

that comes through His poverty. "That ye through His poverty might be rich". He took the poverty of your rags, your filthy garments; He took the poverty of all your sins; He took the poverty of all your guilt and gives to you for your badness, this, His goodness; for your rags, this, His beautiful robe. He gives it and gives it freely. Happy the man who is justified. Blessed is the sinner on whom this robe is put by divine imputation, and to whom it is made known by divine manifestation. What can God ask of a sinner? All that the law asks. What does He ask of one who is justified? Nothing that that justified person cannot render Him. What is that perfection? Perfection is not found in us, but perfection is found upon us when this blessed robe of divine righteousness is made ours. Therefore Hart beautifully expresses it

Righteousness to full perfection  
Must be brought  
Lacking nought  
Fearless of rejection

When God asks perfection of you, if you look within you will say "I am lost". If you look at your life, you will say "I am undone". If you look at your thoughts you will say "I am undone". But if the Spirit turns your eyes to the Lord Jesus, and brings His righteousness to you, you will say "I am justified, justified from all things from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses.

That ye might be rich in the possession of faith. Faith is a great grace and it is that grace that has dealings with God, God in Christ. This experimental religion is wealth. If you believe in God you cannot be poor. You may be poor, as the world speaks; you may lack many things in your experience; you may lack many things in providence, things which, if you possessed, would make you very comfortable, but if you possess faith you are rich, because it deals with God. The Apostle Paul was inspired to write the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to set forth the examples of this spirit of faith in its wonders, its working and you will find from that chapter, as in other parts of the



scriptures, that this faith , of which I now speak, had dealings with God, reference to God, looked to Him, laid hold of Him, waited on Him, waited for Him, forsook all things for His sake. O what a rich grace the grace of faith is. Now if you have it it wont tell you in so many words that you are a rich person. It will tell you again and again how poor you are without God. It will empty you of yourself; it will, again and again, cry in your heart, poverty and weakness and emptiness on the whole of creation with respect to yourself. It wont let you boast. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith". But this faith that will thus speak in your heart, will turn to God and you will turn to Him. Yes, you will turn to Him in your necessities, in your weakness, in your fears, in your trials. In your want, you will turn to this blessed God, for faith sees in Him all that can be needed, all that can be desired. It is one of the most wonderful graces that the Spirit gives. It goes, if I may use such a word, it goes directly to God. It takes short cuts so to speak, goes straight to God. Prodigal like, you will be saying in faith, I am guilty, but you will see a Father's house full and to that you will go as well as you can. Ah this blessed faith looks to a rich Saviour, looks to a mighty Redeemer, looks to a High Priest who in His offices is efficacious, works efficaciously, so as to bring all for whom He works unto God, reconciled. They are reconciled to Him in the body of the flesh of Jesus their great High Priest. See if you have got faith. "Have faith in God", said Christ. You will want nothing if you have got faith. It will work wonders for you and in you. Faith, why it will carry you, if I may use that word, carry you to God. Faith in the bleeding Lamb, faith in the ever prevailing intercessor, why it will do wonders in you. It will tell you again and again that you need not be troubled. "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me". It will tell you again and again that your very feeling of poverty shall be for your good. Very humbling it may be to you, very mortifying to your pride. Faith, it will honour God, yes, it will honour God. Paul's faith honoured God and disregarded the storm that was to break the vessel in pieces, and you will find sometimes this faith in you will put the Lord in mind - "Remember Thy holy promise". It will

stay your mind; it will fix your thoughts and affections on God; it will take you in a proper sense from creatures to the Almighty and you will see in Him all that you need. It will cause you to sing with some understanding

Why should the soul a drop bemoan  
That has a fountain near  
A fountain that will ever run  
With water sweet and clear

Faith in Christ, it is a rich grace. I may call, very properly I may call, unbelief, poverty. It is a wicked thing and it is poverty itself. It keeps men poor; it sets their hearts on a bit of tinsel, a gaudy toy, a bit of sordid dust; it is a wicked spirit and it is an impoverishing spirit. But faith is a noble spirit, a great spirit, an enriching spirit, because it goes to God. It looks at durable riches and righteousness; it looks at that word that the Apostle has in the Corinthians. He said "All things are yours". We are not to glory in men. He says no man shall glory in men, "for all things are your's; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." What a summing up. My brethren, if we have faith in this blessed One, what harm can ever reach us? O but you may object your shortcomings and sins and fallings and backslidings. You may so look at them at times as to say - the sun is hid from my view, I see no sky, I only see my sins and their blackness. But when the Spirit strengthens faith, it will say of all these things, it is too true, you are exceedingly wicked and have been, but it will say there is no ground of despair, for Christ's precious blood cleanseth from all sin, and this will give you strength, strength to confess your sins. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". So that faith will fix in Christ. Ah it wont let you despair. Your hands hang down often, but your heart will never sink into despair. The possession of faith in you will bring you infallibly to the atonement of Christ and there you will see that which will swallow up everything in you that is wrong, that is wicked. "That ye through His poverty

might be rich". And brethren, whatever you want in this world, faith will say Christ has to give you. "The gold and the silver" He said "are Mine". "The cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee", but when you are hungry, tell Me. Whatever the hunger is, after whatever you are hankering, bring that to Me, and faith will take it to Him, and with it, sometimes, faith will say "Remember Thy holy promise". Time, if I may say so, has nothing here, no place here. A promise that you may have had 50 years ago will stand today, and when faith gets a fresh hold of it, will be as fresh as when you got it first, and you will plead it with the Lord. "Remember Thy holy promise". Rich, yes, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom"

"That ye through His poverty might be rich". None would have had faith if Christ had not been poor. No sinner would have believed in God, as a God of grace, but for the death of Christ. So that precious death is the cause of faith being created and faith given by the Spirit, created by the Spirit, will always bring you, when it is active, to the Blessed God of all grace, that you might have love in your own soul. Love is the fulfilling of the law. If you have love, your poverty is taken away. That you might have the light of life. "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eye to behold the sun". That you might possess that which includes all. Ye are Christ's. Christ is yours. That man was rich, though persecuted and troubled, though he was put into a pit, though his feet sank into the mire. He was rich (I mean Jeremiah) when he said "The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in Him." And if you can say that occasionally, if you, by precious faith, lay hold of God, and are led by the Spirit to say "The Lord is my portion saith my soul" you are rich indeed, and the day will come when you find out how rich. We must needs die to know how rich we are in the possession of God. May it please the Holy Ghost to lead us to see what Christ went into to give us riches, and what a hell of suffering He endured to give us a heaven of bliss and glory.

AMEN.