

Subject: *Christmas Explained in One Verse*
Scripture: *2 Corinthians 8:9*

In this one simple verse we learn the true meaning of Christmas. We have somehow taken Christmas and made it something it was never meant to be. It should be a simple time, but we have complicated it. It should be a sacred time, but we have corrupted it. It should be a spiritual time, but we have commercialized it.

Christmas is all about Christ. Jesus is the reason for the season. As we celebrate His birth wouldn't it be a good idea to ask, "Lord, how can we honor you on your birthday?" I believe He would say, "Remember Me." That's exactly what we are going to do.

The first coming of Christ is prophesied in the Old Testament; it is described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; and it is explained in the letters of Paul. Here in one verse Paul explains the real meaning of Christmas, something that is often overlooked.

During this season called Advent we are lighting a candle each week: the candle of hope, joy, peace, love, and the Christ candle. It would entirely appropriate to add another candle: the candle of grace because God's grace is so evident in the story of Christ's birth.

Before Jesus came into the world to be our Savior He had everything, and yet He was willing to give everything up for our sake. I want us to think about that for a minute because this is the real meaning of Christmas. It's not just that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger. We can't appreciate that at all if we don't know what He had before that time and what He gave up to leave heaven and come down to earth.

All of this happened for one reason: grace. The great hymn, *At Calvary*, says:

*O the love that drew salvation's plan
O the grace that brought it down to man
O the mighty gulf that God did span...at Calvary.*

We usually think of God's grace in connection with Christ's death or in connection with our salvation when we repent and believe. ***Ephesians 2:8-9*** ⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* ⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* But the focus of our text is God's grace in connection with Christ's birth and earthly life. He was rich. He became poor, so that we through His poverty might be rich. We could not be saved unless Jesus died, but He would not have died unless He first humbled Himself and came to earth to live and die.

1. The riches Christ gave up for us

Just think about what it cost Him to leave heaven and come to earth as our Savior.

A. Christ shared eternal glory with the Father

The Bible tells us about Christ before Christmas.

John 17:5 *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

John 17:24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

B. Christ created, owned, and sustained all things

John 1:3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Colossians 1:16-17 ¹⁶ *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:* ¹⁷ *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

C. Christ had a perfect home

John 14:2 *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Jesus left His home in heaven where there was no sin and no suffering to live in a world full of both. P. T. Forsyth: "He gave up the fullness, power, and immunity of a heavenly life."

The Bible says that Christ became poor. The Greek word describes someone who is destitute, a beggar. He gave up His heavenly riches for earthly poverty. The omnipotent God became a weak, dependent baby. The all-knowing God became a child who increased in wisdom. The omnipresent God who inhabited the universe became limited to one place a time. The eternal Son left the heavenly Father and entered time to become the son of Joseph and Mary and live in a poor family.

Philippians 2:5-8 ⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:* ⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:* ⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:* ⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

He was in the form (inward nature) of God and equal with God. He made Himself of no reputation (emptied Himself of the outward majesty of God and the constant use of His divine power). He put His own interests aside. He left heaven where He had everything and came to earth where He had nothing.

Matthew 8:20 *And Jesus saith unto 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.*

In heaven Christ owned all things, but He came to earth where He borrowed things: He was laid in a borrowed stable, He preached from a borrowed boat, fed the multitude with a borrowed lunch, taught from a borrowed Bible, slept in a borrowed bed, rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey, ate the last supper in a borrowed room, was nailed to a borrowed cross, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. For your sakes He became poor.

2. The riches Christ gives to us

“That we through His poverty might be rich” (the same word that describes Christ).

He gave up everything so we might inherit everything. He came to earth so we might go to heaven. He left the Father so we might come to the Father. He died so we might live. He came to give us true riches, the things that money can't buy and death can't take away. He came to give us fellowship with God, love, peace, joy, forgiveness of sins, and a perfect righteousness to stand before God.

A. Believers have spiritual riches on earth

1 John 5:11-12 ¹¹ *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

John 1:16 *And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

Ephesians 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.*

B. Believers will have eternal riches in heaven

Romans 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Romans 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich. This was something that the church at Corinth knew and understood, and I pray it is something we know and understand. It was sheer grace for Christ to leave Heaven to save us. He gave up His riches, so we might be rich. And He did it when we were still sinners and rebels. G.R.A.C.E = God's Riches At Christ's Expense