**God’s Indescribable Gift**

**The Word**

Read together 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

**The Big Idea**

Jesus generously spent his “wealth” to take poor people like us and make us spiritually rich. When we embrace our riches in Christ, we our freed to live lives of joyful generosity in return.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What is a past gift that you either gave or received that gave you great joy?

2. Read verse 9 together. How does Paul’s framing of Christ’s work in terms of wealth and poverty impact you or add to your understanding of the gospel?

3. To what extent are you currently living with an experience of how very rich you are in Christ? What gets in the way of a fuller experience of that for you?

4. Consider either of the two questions posed at the end of Sunday’s message. 1) Where do you need to be reminded of just how rich you are in Jesus? 2) Where is God prompting you to be generous in some way during this season?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. Gift giving at Christmas time comes from the generous gift of God’s son

B. The context of this passage is a gift (a financial collection) that Paul wants to organize and give to the church in Jerusalem. He is inviting the Corinthian church to give generously to this gift.

C. Paul brings up two examples of radical generosity to inspire them

II. The example of Jesus (v. 9)

A. Consider this verse in terms of Jesus’ birth

1. He was the richest being in the universe before becoming human (materially, spiritually, relationally)

2. He “emptied himself” of his divine privileges and became poor (human, dependent, frail, limited)

3. And in his birth, we are made rich (we now see exactly what God is truly like)

B. Consider this verse in terms of Jesus’ life and ministry

1. He was rich (God’s anointed Messiah) who deserved fame, comforts, and a throne

2. But he became poor and took on the role of a servant to all

3. And through his life, we are made rich (we now have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and is uniquely equipped to help us in our time of need)

 C. Consider this verse in terms of Jesus’ death

 1. Though he was rich (God’s perfect son) he became utterly poor.

 a. Physically poor: Stripped of all physical possessions, comforts

 b. Relationally poor: subjected to public shame, humiliation

c. Spiritually poor: The Holy one becomes sin for us and faces the divine wrath of God on our behalf.

2. And through his death, we are made rich (we become the righteousness of God, we receive forgiveness, eternal life, no condemnation)

III. Our riches in Christ

A. The New Testament authors spend a lot of time reminding us of how rich we are in Christ

1. Consider Ephesians 1:3-8 as an example

2. Spiritual blessings have been poured out on us like a waterfall

 B. Yet we so often forget how rich we are in Christ

 1. We forget when life is hard

Our painful circumstances stare us in the face and our spiritual blessings feel a long ways off

 2. We forget when life is easy

a. We get distracted by all the material blessings and start wanting more and more

b. The temptation in the garden was this: “God’s provision is not enough. You aren’t rich; you’re poor, and you need more

c. Why does the American church give money at about a 2.5% rate? The wealthiest people in the world are convinced they aren’t wealthy and don’t have much to spare

C. So we need to constantly stand under the waterfall of God’s blessing in Christ and remember how very rich we are.

D. When we are embracing our riches in Christ, we become generous people ourselves, living from an abundance mentality, not a scarcity mentality.

1. We can live like a reservoir: hoarding our blessings out of fear

2. We can live like a river: letting the blessings flow through our lives to others because we trust the waterfall will never run out.

IV. The Macedonian example

A. God’s “grace” was active in their lives (v. 1)

B. Even though they were circumstantially poor, their sense of spiritual wealth won out and led to generosity

C. Their generosity was sacrificial (v. 3)

D. But they didn’t think of it as sacrificial. They saw it as a privilege (v. 4)

E. Their generosity to others flowed out of their commitment to Jesus (v. 5)

V. Conclusion

A. Where do you need to be reminded of how rich you are in Jesus?

B. Where is God prompting you to be a generous gift giver this season?