

HE BECAME POOR THAT WE MIGHT BECOME RICH

I. 2 Corinthians 8:9

A. John 1:14 (NKJV) 14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Luke 2:6-7 (ESV) 6* *And while they were there (in Bethlehem), the time came for her (Mary) to give birth. 7* *And she gave birth to her firstborn Son (Jesus) and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV) says it even more succinctly: "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 by His poverty might become rich."*

B. Churches all around the globe are celebrating the birth of Christ tonight. And so they should. Many cite the last verse about Jesus becoming poor in order to bring people's attention to the poor. While we do not need that verse to affirm God's call for us to care for the poor and needy, we should be careful not to misinterpret the passage. Pure and simple, God the Son became the Son of Man! Emmanuel will ever mean: "God with us!"

C. Many suppose Jesus was poor because He was born in a stable and His first bassinet was a feeding trough. But remember, Joseph was a carpenter and would've been earning a fair day's wage. Jesus was born in a stable because the inn was full, not because Joseph & Mary couldn't afford the room fee. And if you insist on them being impoverished by human standards, that sure changed when the Magi dropped by with their gifts. (Story of Jack Gorham at a Live Nativity Scene.)

D. The Persian Shah Befriends a Poor Fireman

As told by John MacArthur in his Sermon: "*The Poverty That Made Us Rich*" (01/07/96)

A wonderful story was told many years ago about a Persian monarch. We would call him a king and they would call him a Shah. This particular Shah reigned in Persia in a time of great splendor and magnificence and lived in the midst of all of that wealth and prosperity. But he had a heart for people who were poor and common, and so he decided that he would dress himself as a poor man, and that he would descend from the lofty heights of his splendor down to the commonest man that he could find and try to make a friend out of him. And such a man was a man whose job it was to stoke fires and prepare fires that could then be put into little containers and taken around the palace to keep people warm. He worked all the time in ashes and soot and smoke and filth, way, way down in a basement.

The king then put on the garments of a poor man, descended the dark, damp, cellar stairs and came down to where the man was seated in a pile of ashes, he was called a fireman, appropriately, and he was tending to his fires. The king sat down beside him dressed in rags himself, and began to talk. At meal time the fireman produced some coarse black bread and a little bit of water and they ate together and drank together. And then the Shah went away.

But he came back day after day after day after day, again and again because his heart was filled with sympathy that eventually was demonstrated to that man by his longing just to be there to share a little bit of his common and difficult life. He gave the man sweet counsel from his wisdom and experience. This poor man opened his whole heart and loved his friend, so kind and so wise, and he thought so poor like himself.

At last the emperor thought, "I can't keep this up, I have to tell him who I really am and so I'll tell him and then I'll ask him what gift he would like from me, now that we're friends." So he said, "You think I'm poor but I'm not, I am the Shah, your emperor. What would you like?" He expected the man to petition him for some great thing but he sat, simply gazing in wonder and love. The king said, "Have you understood what I've told you? I can make you rich. I can make you noble. I can give you a city. I can give you anything. What do you want?"

The man replied according to the story, "Yes, my lord, I understand. But what is this you have done to leave your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to partake of my coarse bread, to care whether my heart is glad or sorry? Even you can give nothing more precious than that. On others you may bestow rich presents but to me you have given yourself, it only remains to ask one thing...and that is that you never withdraw your friendship."

E. God the Son, Co-Creator of all things seen and unseen, chose to become a lowly human being. The One who owned the cattle on a thousand hills chose to be born in a cattle barn. He became poor that we might become rich. That remains the astounding miracle we call Incarnation.

F. And what about making us rich? Did the God of the Universe take on flesh to make us wealthy in the ways of this world? No! Billionaires without Christ, left unrestored to God, are steeped in spiritual poverty. Unless they repent, they'll be separated from the riches of God. True wealth is knowing, loving, serving, and worshiping God. Spreading the wealth means making God known so others can do the same. Jesus in the Beatitudes: "*Blessed*

are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." **Jesus became poor in order to make you rich! The cost to make this happen was His sacrifice on the cross. The Bread & Cup remind us.**

II. Communion

A. Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV) is our proof text and takes us into Communion: 5 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6* *who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7* *but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8* *And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9* *Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, 10* *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11* *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (And the Bread & Cup remind us.)*

*** Pray & Serve Communion...**

B. Ephesians 1:3-10 (Phillips) takes to our Christmas Eve homes with true riches: 3-6 *Praise be to God for giving us through Christ every possible spiritual benefit as citizens of Heaven! For consider what He has done--before the foundation of the world He chose us to become, in Christ, His holy and blameless children living within His constant care. He planned, in His purpose of love, that we should be adopted as His own children through Jesus Christ--that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of His which has made us welcome in the everlasting love He bears towards the Son.7-10* *It is through the Son, at the cost of His own blood, that we are redeemed, freely forgiven through that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth. For God had allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in Him.*

*** God rest Ye Merry Gentleman & Ladies in the rich blessings of Christ Jesus our Lord!**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

John 1:14 (NKJV)

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Luke 2:6-7 (ESV)

6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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Ephesians 1:3-10 (Phillips)

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was to stoke fires and prepare fires that could then be put into little containers and taken around the palace to keep people warm. He worked all the time in ashes and soot and smoke and filth, way, way down in a basement.

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- John MacArthur, Sermon titled, "The Poverty That Made Us Rich." - January 7, 1996. To read more, go to: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/47-59/the-poverty-that-made-us-rich>

From The Squalor of a Borrowed Stable (Immanuel)

By Stuart Townend - © 1999.

From the squalor of a borrowed stable,
By the Spirit and a virgin's faith;
To the anguish and the shame of scandal,
Came the Saviour of the human race!
But the skies were filled, with the praise of heav'n,
Shepherds listen as the angels tell
Of the Gift of God, come down to man
At the dawning of Immanuel!

King of heaven, now the Friend of sinners,
Humble servant in the Father's hands,
Filled with power and the Holy Spirit,
Filled with mercy for the broken man.
Yes He walked my road, and He felt my pain,
Joys and sorrows that I know so well;
Yet His righteous steps, give me hope again -
I will follow my Immanuel!

Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal,
He was lifted on a cruel cross;
He was punished for a world's transgressions,
He was suffering to save the lost.
He fights for breath, He fights for me,
Loosing sinners from the claims of hell;
And with a shout, our souls are free -
Death defeated by Immanuel!

Now He's standing in the place of honour,
Crowned with glory on the highest throne,
Interceding for His own beloved
Till His Father calls to bring them home!

Then the skies will part, as the trumpet sounds,
Hope of heaven or the fear of hell;
But the Bride will run, to her Lover's arms,
Giving glory to Immanuel!
- By Stuart Townend - © 1999, Thankyou Music.

[Film Clips & Other Links](#)

Immanuel (From The Squalor of a Borrowed Stable) - David Wesley's Version
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYXFU8HugMY>

"You Laid Aside Your Majesty" - Heart of Worship Band
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFICAbIxv_M

"He Became Poor" - George Beverly Shea
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwTU5UmT84c>

Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)
<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[Luke 4:18 \(ESV\)](#)

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

[Luke 6:20-21 \(ESV\)](#)

20 And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. **21** "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

[Matthew 5:3 \(ESV\)](#)

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[Psalm 9:18 \(ESV\)](#)

18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

[Psalm 12:5 \(ESV\)](#)

5 "Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

[Psalm 140:12 \(ESV\)](#)

12 I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy.

[Deuteronomy 15:7-8 \(ESV\)](#)

7 "If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, **8** but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.

[Deuteronomy 15:11 \(ESV\)](#)

11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

[1 John 3:17 \(ESV\)](#)

17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

[Proverbs 14:21 \(ESV\)](#)

21 Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.

Proverbs 14:31 (ESV)

31 Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

Proverbs 17:5 (ESV)

5 Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 19:17 (ESV)

17 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

Proverbs 21:13 (ESV)

13 Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

Proverbs 22:2 (ESV)

2 The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:9 (ESV)

9 Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

Proverbs 22:16 (ESV)

16 Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth, or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.

Proverbs 22:22-23 (ESV)

22 Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate, **23** for the Lord will plead their cause and rob of life those who rob them.

Proverbs 29:7 (ESV)

7 A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge.

Matthew 25:40 (ESV)

40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Quote by John MacArthur

"Jesus wanted to make us rich. And in order to make us rich He had to make Himself...what?...poor. That's magnanimous. That is generous. Rich people do help poor people but rarely if ever do rich people make themselves poor in the helping. Rich people give out of their riches, they don't impoverish themselves in the process normally. They normally give and are no poorer for the giving, but Jesus became poor that we might be made rich."

How Peter Miller Saved Michel Whitman

By Ray Stedman

In the days of the American Revolution there lived in Ephesiansrata, Pennsylvania, a Baptist pastor by the name of Peter Miller. He was a man who enjoyed the friendship of George Washington. In that same city there lived another man named Michael Whitman, who was an ungodly scoundrel, who did everything in his power to obstruct and oppose the work of the pastor. On one occasion, Michael Whitman was involved in an act of treason against the government of the United States. He was arrested and taken to Philadelphia, some seventy miles away, to appear before General Washington. When the news reached Peter Miller that this man, his enemy, was appearing on trial for his life before General Washington, Peter Miller walked the long seventy miles to Philadelphia to appeal for the life of this man. He was admitted to the presence of Washington because of his friendship, and when he came in he began without delay to speak for the life of Michael Whitman. Washington listened to him and heard his story through, and then said, "No, Peter, I cannot give you the life of your friend," Peter Miller said, "My friend! My friend! This man is not my friend; he is the bitterest enemy that I have!" Washington said, "What! You mean to say that you have walked seventy miles through the dust and the heat of the road to appeal for the life of your enemy? Well, that puts the matter in a different light. I'll give you, then, the life of your enemy." And Peter Miller put his arm around the shoulders of Michael Whitman and led him out of the very shadow of death, back to his own home, no longer his enemy, but a friend.

- Ray Stedman, from his sermon, "That You Might Be Rich." To read more, go to: <https://www.raystedman.org/thematic-studies/christian-living/that-you-might-be-rich>