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THE RICHES OF THE LORD, AND OF HIS REDEEMED

Outline:-

1. "He was rich".
2. "He became poor".
3. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the
Godhead.
4. "Out of His fullness have ALL we received".
5. "All are yours".
6. "In everything give thanks, and other
Inferences.

Our subject, this evening, beloved friends, is "The Riches of the Lord, and of His redeemed". A subject intensely devotional and intensely practical. We, are, as you know, when gathered around the Scriptures here, desirous of pondering together any subject from the word of truth which anyone may desire; but it is a joy that all the subjects are not exactly the same. I mean not exactly of the same nature. If some are more intensely microscopic of special words, others have a general relationship to wide principles. If some subjects are those about which there are sad differences of opinion, others are those about which there is unanimity of belief among many who love the Lord Jesus, at least a unanimity of belief in the head, but oh that truth may lay hold of our hearts and be expressed in our lives. May I illustrate what I mean? If the subject of the Deity of the Lord Jesus were brought up, we should all be of one mind that He was very God, but there is a vast difference between this head-belief, and the heart-realization that Christ is God, for the heart-realization brings us down to the dust in confession of our own listlessness when we think of Him Who was God, Who took upon Him the form of a servant, and we who were dead creatures dared to pride ourselves upon our abilities and our arrangements, or our 'anything', whereas we have nothing, and are nothing EXCEPT as we have received grace.

Need I say that our subject this evening must necessarily be linked with the Deity of our beloved Lord, of which we have just been speaking, for if we refer to His "riches" in the words of 2 Cor. 8.9 we testify that HE WAS RICH, essentially rich! You know the whole verse: it needs an emphasis in every believing life, -- "For ye recognize, (or "recognize ye" - a command) the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that because of you He became poor, being essentially rich, in order that ye, by the poverty of That One, might be fixedly rich". He was rich, essentially rich, as we read elsewhere (in Philemon 2) of Christ BEING in the form of God. For "In the beginning WAS the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". He was rich, rich as the One Who is over all, God blessed for ever, rich in that He was upholding all things by the word of His power, rich in that He was the acknowledged One of all angelic powers that had not fallen, rich in that He was the One in the bosom of the Father in a relationship and intercourse beyond all understanding, and beyond all language, except the language of Scripture. For, beloved friends, I feel you will agree with me, philosophising and reasoning are out of place when we think of the Person of the Lord Jesus, and His relationship with the Father. We rather bow our heads and worship. Here is a depth or rather a height of mystery. He was in the bosom of the Father in that wondrous unity and affection of our Triune God. Indeed, in whatever way we take this expression, we can say He was rich. There was NO poverty in Christ by nature; there was No poverty of ignorance, there was No poverty of weakness. The only thing that God cannot do is He cannot lie, or deny Himself, or go against the truth. But there was no poverty of defect, there was no poverty spiritually, for all perfections were found in Him Who was rich. I need hardly say that He had riches not only of glory, not only of knowledge, not only of power, but of love, because He loved His people with an everlasting love. The Lamb's book of life was not an afterthought, there was grace from eternity. Before the first Adam had fallen, God had planned a way of salvation, for we read of that which is before the foundation of the world, ordered in all things and sure. But though we might dwell more upon this richness, I do not want so to do just now, because we are about to speak of His becoming poor. But He never became poor in grace. He always retained His riches of love, His riches of grace. The riches that we consider first are those riches of majesty, and dignity which He was able to lay aside, and which He gladly laid aside for poor guilty sinners, and so, adoringly, we pass on to our second point.

"HE BECAME POOR". The words are brief, but each one is full. He became poor, - born not in a palace, not even in an inn, but as One almost outcast at overcrowded Bethlehem. He became poor and this was seen at His birth. There was no room for Him in the

inn. He became poor with respect to all earthly advantages, as men would esteem them. He had not where to lay His head. Not only was He born in surroundings of poverty, but when He manifested Himself to Israel, and went about doing good, still He remained the poor and needy One. Again and again the Psalms seem to refer to the Lord Jesus by that precious title. We read for example in the Messianic 109th Psalm the wondrous words that Judas (and those with him) remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy Man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. Our beloved Lord was the Poor and Needy One. Again and again such words come together in the Psalms. Again and again we are reminded that David, even as Moses, spake concerning Him. Yea, there was never a time in our beloved Lord's life when He was surrounded by the comforts of earth as His own earthly possessions. He Who owned all gave up all so manifestly that we do not read of His possessions. He went about from place to place, owning nothing as it were. He illustrated the precepts which He gave to the disciples as to putting aside of gold and silver and earthly goods. This is shown yet again with regard to His mode of journeying. We do not read of His travelling upon a warrior horse, nor even upon the ass, except on one occasion to fulfil prophecy. At other times He walked, though this walking meant that He was wearied, and needed for example, to sit on Samaria's well, or to be taken "even as He was" in the ship. He became poor, poor as to earthly goods, and poor as to majesty outwardly. For, though His disciples saw Him in glory, as John puts it, - "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth", - though there was this glory made known to those whose eyes were opened, to others He Who was a Living Root out of a dry ground, before the Father, was "without form and comeliness"; and if His redeemed beheld in Him the blue and purple and fine twined linen of the interior of the Tabernacle, others could only see but the badger's skins, telling of His humiliation and strain and absence of earthly majesty and grandeur. It is indeed remarkable that our beloved Lord should thus become so absolutely poor that men who were subject to Him mocked Him, spat at Him, insulted Him, condemned Him. He, Who will judge, was then judged. Verily, He became poor. He, Who will tread His enemies beneath His feet, was then trodden. How striking, He became poor. He, Who will cast out, was then cast out. The simple words of 2 Cor. 8.9 give the key; He became poor. But if we consider this, not only with respect to the possession of riches, and the possession of majesty, but also in other ways, we can see

further illustrations of His poverty. Further illustrations? Yes. If He wrought a miracle, virtue went out of Him, and He felt it. There was a continual strain upon the Lord Jesus, as He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made in fashion like a man. He was pleased to become subject to infirmities; and all through that life in which He was never weary in service, there was a wearying strain. He became poor. We shrink from over-effort. We shrink from the giving up of our reserve strength. Our beloved Lord drew back from nothing. He became poor. The utter weakness that often is marked in His life is brought before us that we might see how deep was the depth of that poverty to which in His tender love and compassion He came down. He became so poor in this respect that even the Jews seemed to suggest He looked older than He was. He Who had spent but a little over 30 years upon this earth was addressed by them thus "Thou art not yet 50 years old". He looked like one who bore a strain, and he DID bear it, -a strain beyond parallel. His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, for He became poor. Oh how wondrously He meant those words which express feelings beyond our comprehension, "I am a worm and no man". Beloved friends, we know that is a Messianic Psalm for the Holy Spirit so applies it. "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head". Surely, He became poor. And Psalm 32 is the comment upon this fact of intense love. But though He became poor, it was with an object, that we through His poverty might become rich, and therefore it was necessary that the poverty should become lower than that of the manger; that the poverty should become lower than that of His walking up and down on earth, having nowhere to lay His head, that the poverty should be greater than that of leaving Jerusalem, and going out to Bethany for the night; that His poverty should become the absolute poverty of taking a criminal's death, and more than that the absolute poverty of One Who bore wrath, from Whom God as it were, hid His face, so that He cried out in anguish "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?! To the fullest degree He became poor. He, who was entitled to all things, gave up everything, not only in life, but in death, and there He was marked out as the absolutely poor One, without anything, as it were, crushed beneath a judgment no man could have supported, when He bare OUR sins in His own body on the tree, as we may truthfully say, if we have fled for refuge to lay hold on the one hope set before us. For though the life was precious, the life without the death would have been unavailing. It is the blood that maketh atone-

ment, and without pouring out of blood is no forgiveness. Therefore He became absolutely poor in an absoluteness beyond all parallel, that we through His poverty might be rich. Hence we read that God hath highly exalted him and gave Him the Name that is above every name. Not that God gave to Him a nature that He had not, for He was eternally and essentially God, and when He emptied Himself, Himself remained. He, the Emptier, was God, and though He emptied Himself of all glory, He could not empty Himself of personality. Throughout His life there was Godhead, though Godhead was veiled. Throughout His life there was that which was inexplicable, as He said to Nicodemus, "The Son of man WHO IS IN HEAVEN". Human language fails to grasp the wondrous blending of these two natures in Him, Who was at once the Child born, and the Mighty God. But though human language and human reasoning fail, faith realizes that whereas He became a Man, He was, in the words of His adoring disciple, "Lord and God". Happy are we if we can say "MY Lord and MY God".

And thus we rejoice that He was exalted, exalted in resurrection, for the resurrection made clear that the sacrifice of Calvary was accepted, that the work was finished, that the precious Redeemer had accomplished that which He came to do, and therefore, highly exalted, He was received back into that glory from which He had come, - in accord with His Own request "Glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had beside Thee before the world was". There was consequently a re-instating, not that a new life of Deity was added to Him, He WAS God. But He was reinstated, as the cry went out "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the KING OF GLORY shall come in", and the question sounds forth, "Who is this King of glory?" And to that the reply was given, "The Lord Strong and Mighty, the Lord Mighty in battle", for had He not met in conflict the powers of the evil one? He had not asked for twelve legions of angels, but it would seem that demonic power had sought to war against Him, with such awful ingenuity, and Satan had come, as Christ Himself declared, "The prince of this world cometh". But there was victory. His words of triumph were fulfilled, "NOW is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out". He completely accomplished that which was given Him to do, and then returned and heard that wondrous Divine utterance "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec", in accord with the Divine words "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy foot-

stool".

And so we realize now that in Christ at the right hand of God there dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, available for His people. I know that ere He became Man He was God; I know that when He walked this earth He spake of the temple of His body; for there was the fulness of the Godhead within, but that fulness of Godhead was not available for those who have fled unto Him, except via death and resurrection. "Except the Corn of Wheat has fallen into the ground and died it abideth alone, but if it hath died it bringeth forth much fruit". In such precious words the Lord Jesus enunciated the Truth, that there is no union with Himself except through resurrection. Incarnation could not save; it was a means to an end and goal even His death; there is only salvation VIA atonement. It is the blood that maketh an atonement, and we, if we are saved, are not saved upon any basis of incarnation without atonement, but upon that basis of atonement to which incarnation led. Joined with Him in resurrection we are made in the words of Ephesians 2 to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and therefore we do not look to human powers, we do not look to human learning, we do not look to human arrangements for the supply of our needs. In Christ is our salvation and not in men. In Christ is our salvation and not in self. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", and as those words were addressed to the Colossian christians beseeching them to hold aloof from philosophy and vain deceit, so may the words ring in our ears this evening, calling upon us to hold aloof from philosophy and vain deceit, because in Christ is everything to meet the believers need. Let us remember that by nature we were nothing, for if any man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. In our flesh dwelleth no good thing. The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the Spirit that quickeneth. Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy God saved us, if indeed we are among the called of Jesus Christ. And therefore as those who were under sin, and under wrath by nature, and with a prospect of judgment, as those who rest upon the work of Another, even upon our precious Lord Jesus, let us remember that only out of His fulness can we receive a fullness. If we are those who were worthless we cannot have evolved a **godliness**. If we are those who were nothing we cannot have developed a spirituality. We needed and need Christ. We need Christ in connection with growth, even as we needed Christ

in salvation. The Spirit of God takes of the things of CHRIST, and never separates Himself from Christ, and if we have indeed been brought to the Lord Jesus Christ as our own precious Saviour, beloved friends, we DEPEND upon Christ for every day of our life, and every moment of every day. In Him there is a fulness that out from His fulness may we all receive, even as out from His fulness have all we received. We have received grace in that we are among the called of Jesus Christ, but we need MORE grace, and God giveth more grace. For however so many be the promises of God, in CHRIST is the yea, and in HIM the Amen to the glory of God by us. There is no running short of Divine supplies. There is no staying of this heavenly fulness. The widow was instructed to gather vessels and to pour out the oil, and not till the vessels failed was the oil stayed. So is it with Christ. He is sufficient fulness for all our emptiness. The important point is that we should have sufficient emptiness to receive His fulness. THAT is the need. The woman's faith was vast but not sufficient. If only she had expected more, she would have received more. We think of the king of Israel who smote thrice and STAYED and it was said, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times". Let us not limit our God. He has a fulness of riches for our fulness of poverty, I mean a real poverty that we have, a poverty unlike the poverty of our precious Lord, a poverty in that we are, by nature, utterly worthless and helpless. Only in Christ is our sufficiency and only from Christ is our salvation. Only as we realize more what is in Christ can we grow in a grace, and that growth in grace is ever in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Out of His fulness have all we received. There is no imperfection with the Lord. He does not ever draw back. He supplies, He gives that which is TRUE within, as well as TRUE without:- there is no mere profession of fulness - and so, beloved friends, the thought comes to one's mind in connection with this real fulness of our precious Lord. Do we avail ourselves of it? Out from the head every member of our body is nourished and kept, and out from Christ every saved one is nourished and kept. God may use joints and bands, and no believer will undervalue them, but the joints and bands whereby a saved one may help another saved one, these things are but subordinate. The fulness is in Christ, and the sufficiency is from Christ. Boasting is shut out, no glory belongs to man, everything belongs to Christ.

Hence the words of our fifth point. "All are yours" have a fulness inasmuch as Christ is in glory, inasmuch as Christ

possesses everything. All things are yours, beloved friends; if you are in Christ. You may be earth's despised one, you may hardly know where the supply of your physical needs for a few weeks ahead may be, and whence that supply may come, but IN CHRIST there is sufficient for every need, and all things are yours. This takes away from us as our sixth point, ALL GRUMBLING. "In everything give thanks" should be a daily motto, not only on the wall, but on the heart of each one saved by grace. We have no reason for complaint, for those who deserve nothing can complain of nothing. If we have anything we have more than we deserve, and if we have everything we have everything more than we deserve. Aye, we have beyond things, we have a Person, and therefore in EVERYTHING we should give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. Let trials come, they come to us by way of Christ. God doth not willingly afflict. There is a needs-be for every grief. Nothing happens by chance. Let problems come, affecting us physically, or financially, or in some other painful way, those problems are sent in a Father's wisdom. "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things"? That passage not only implies that God will meet every need, as He has promised in Philippians 4.19 but it also suggests that everything that comes to us is grace. He will give to us in grace everything. This cheque of God's love, drawn on His limitless bank, does not mean simply that we can go to God and ask Him for this money, or for that physical health, "just as we like", but it means that He will give us everything good and suitable in grace; and therefore if we have a thorn in the flesh, like the apostle of old, we have also the words "My grace is sufficient for thee". There is thus more than a makeweight, there is a super-abundance of love, and every trial is most precious for it makes room for more grace. You follow what I mean. Look at your trial if you will as so many reverses, so many debts. Well, let the trial be a debt of a thousand pounds. God's grace will be a thousand and one pounds, and more. Thus every difficulty but makes a vacuum larger, that the Lord can and does fill. "Most gladly therefore," said the apostle, "will I glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me". Sometimes we are too afraid of blessings. I mean we are afraid of the trials that make other blessings possible. Yea, the trials are themselves blessing as well. We desire not to be stripped, and therefore we fail to enjoy this power clothing us. We often

lose much because we will not lose enough, and give up most because we give up too little. We cling to things of earth, and lose the things of heaven. We snatch at that which is tinsel, and miss God's hundred-fold. Oh, that we might look at things from the right standpoint, and estimate them by the right standard. Then shall we in everything give thanks, as we go about our daily life. We shall not envy those who are prospering in this world. "Fret not thyself" was the ancient message, and "Fret not thyself" is today's message. In Psalm 73 Asaph was alarmed at the prosperity of the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary, and thither should the saint always go, and thence should the saint never return, for we can live best in the world as we live in the sanctuary, inasmuch as God has declared He will be a little sanctuary to us.

So, beloved friends, we have many inferences from the fulness of Christ. All our worrying is shut out, all our envy is shut out, all our pride is shut out, all our scheming is shut out; everything is shut out, except that which is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Now I feel I have come to the end of the address, but THAT is about all. I feel, speaking for myself, I have only reached but the BEGINNING of the experience. The subject that I have tried to bring before you expresses the attitude we should take. Beloved friends, I dare not say that my attitude has reached this fulness. Dare anyone present claim this realization of Christ in this wondrous completeness? I am sure of this that God's servant Paul favoured to enjoy privileges of communion beyond many, would, if he had been asked a question concerning his enjoyment of Christ, have answered in words like those of Phil. "Not that I have already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, that for which I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth unto those which are in front, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be full grown, be thus minded, and if as to anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you". In such words did the apostle explain his Divine longings and his Divine feelings accounting all things but loss that he might know Christ. We have received life eternal that we might know God. We

know Him That is True in one sense, and glory in this knowledge beyond all other knowledge; but we need to grow in grace and knowledge. The Holy Spirit works in the individual believer to cause an appropriation of Christ. My appropriation of Christ is not my salvation, I mean in the sense of my further enjoyment of what He is. My salvation depends upon His work for me, and not on my appreciation of it. If I appreciated it but a little, salvation is still by grace. But Oh that we might appreciate it more, not to become more saved, but to enjoy more that salvation which is fully accomplished. It is not that we can add to grace by realizing grace, but that we can receive grace, not in vain, but to God's glory, as we live in the light of abounding grace. May the Holy Spirit take of the things of Christ and apply them in our experience, beloved friends, even this evening.

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