

Through His poverty we are rich

We are now learning how the NOT I BUT CHRIST life is the foundation for the NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER life.

Last time we learned that there are several key proving grounds for this life.

/The NOT I BUT OTHERS life has several key proving grounds.\
Life with other members of the congregation is a very important proving ground.
Family life - really, our daily living with those who are closest to us – is another one.

And as we saw in 1 John last week, a very important – and challenging- one is /how we use the resources the LORD has given us, particularly financial resources.\

/The most extensive teaching on Christian giving is found in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9.\ It has it all, the principles that we have learned.

This is where we pick things up this morning. Let's turn there now.
Watch how living for Christ is the foundation for living for one another.

2 Cor 8:1-15

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

/Here we have the life of love: giving sacrificially so others may have a better life.\

When we are doing this, we living as a friend to the LORD.

/Notice the partnership, the close intimacy, between abundant joy and deep poverty. \

Deep poverty can be financial, but it isn't limited to that. We see here that it can be any form of affliction or suffering. Because ultimately the poverty here is spiritual in nature. This is talking about poverty in spirit.

Jesus said that the poor in spirit are blessed

Matt 5:1-3

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

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

But you know, we aren't born poor in spirit. It's something that comes from going through affliction. It's a quality of the heart that God produces in us.

When we participate in the sufferings of Jesus, we come to know Him better. We see the power of His resurrection. That's where the abundant joy comes from.

/Notice how from their affliction came an overflowing wealth of care and concern and assistance for others.\

2 Cor 8:3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

Now think about this for a minute. They gave freely, of their own accord – that means voluntarily. They were gracious. /This is how God gives – freely, graciously.\ In other words, they practiced imitating God.

Wow. Now can see how this is a great example of the kind of love that Jesus commanded us to have for one another?

/Love is giving sacrificially for the benefit of the one being loved.\

But we need to consider one more thing. It's not stated outright here but it's here nonetheless.

They gave beyond their ability to give. Sacrificial love, to be sure.
/They gave money that they needed for their daily bread.\

Therefore, they had to rely on the one who gives seed for the sower and bread for food. The one who promised to meet all their needs, and beyond their needs.

2 Cor 9:8

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

/The decision to do it – the willingness, the desire, the resolve to give - is ours.\

/The power and ability do not come from us. They come from the LORD.\

SO the NOT I BUT CHRIST can only be lived by faith in the Son of God who gave Himself up for us. Let's go back to 2 Cor 8 and pick up with verse 5.

2 Cor 8:5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

/They learned the right order!! \ We live no longer for ourselves, but for Him.

/Christ first – then others.\ Christ is the source of this life. He loved us first. He showed us what real love is.

First, they looked to Christ. Then that gave them the power, the motivation, the strength, the confidence, the hope, and the joy, to freely give to others.

/NOT I BUT CHRIST must come first. NOT I BUT OTHERS will follow.\

2 Cor 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

9 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 through His poverty might become rich.

Though He was rich – you can't be any richer than being God the Son in heaven –
For your sake He became poor – not I but others

You can't get any poorer than being naked, penniless, and dying the death of a common criminal.

So that you through His poverty might become rich.

/Death worked in Him so that life could work in us.\

/We are so rich! We have every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies [Eph 1:3].\

/The riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints [Eph 1:18].\

/The surpassing riches of His grace [Eph 2:7].\

/The unfathomable riches of Christ [Eph 3:8].\

And we have Christ **in us!**, the hope (certain expectation) of glory. [Col 1:27]

/All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Him [Col 2:2-3]!\

And we are in Him! RICHES. We are SO wealthy.

It's all through Jesus Christ. His death brought us life.

/Truly, through His poverty, we have been made exceedingly RICH!!!\

Let's head back now to 2 Corinthians 8, as we pick up in verse 10.

2 Cor 8:10 I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it.

11 But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. 12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. 13 For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality — 14 at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; 15 as it is written, "HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

At the present time, your abundance being a supply for their need,
So that their abundance also may become a supply for your need.

/Here we have the principle of NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER. One another. We bless others - and in turn and in time, we are blessed by them.\

Lean on me
When you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on...

For it won't be long
Till I'm gonna need
somebody to lean on

/And this is certainly the case in the Spirit's design for our spiritual gifts.\

1 Cor 12:24-26

But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

/Here, NOT I BUT CHRIST leads to NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER.\

We find this principle again and again in the New Testament scriptures.

Eph 4:32-5:2

32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

/When we put our eyes off ourselves and onto Christ, we see once again how magnificent He is. \

Magnificent that Christ loved us. /It's magnificent that He gave Himself up for us.\

And since He did, we ought to walk in love. /We ought to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.\

After all, God in Christ has already forgiven you.

See how it works? It's really simple when He puts it that way, isn't it?!

That's all the time we have for today. Next week we will dive into the NOT I BUT ONE ANOTHER life with a series of "one another" scriptures.

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