

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **2Corinthians 8:7-9**.

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, that you through His poverty might become rich.

B. The once popular TV show, "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" glamorized materialism, hedonism, and opulence as a way of life to be sought after and valued.

C. Yet, many who live in this way are not happy, and have serious moral and emotional deficiencies. Malcolm Forbes said, "He who dies with the most toys wins." But even as well as Forbes did financially there was another side, a sinful side to Forbes life that showed him to a very troubled man.

D. Xians are the rich and famous of this world. We should never allow the glitter, the bright lights and the extravagant tastes of the world delude our thinking.

E. Our text suggests that we have an abundance of all things!

II. SEVEN GREAT RICHES.

A. One, **the riches of material possessions**.

1. Read the article by Steve Williams from *The Rainbow Beacon* (1995; Vol. 26, No. 28).

2. We are rich beyond the world's dreams!! There are over a billion people on this planet that would take our material possessions in a heartbeat.

B. Two, **the riches of grace**.

1. Redemption and forgiveness by blood comes because of the grace of X. We no longer live under law, we live under grace (Eph. 1:7).

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

2. When we begin to appreciate the greatness and riches of grace it can be a motivator for Xian service (Jn. 1:17).

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

C. Three, **the riches of providence**.

1. God can see the big picture of my life; with height comes perspective (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

2. If God's great providence and last over some 6-7,000 years in bringing X into the world, He can without problem run the 70-80 years of my life.

D. Four, **the riches of pardon**.

1. Pardon means justification. It is "just-as-if-I'd never sinned" (Isa. 55:7).

Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

2. God's pardon means that there is no sin that I have to live with or live down.

E. Five, **the riches of God's promises**.

1. God never made a promise He didn't intend to keep (2Pet. 1:4).

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

2. Matthew 6:33 is not my problem, it's God's problem. All I need to do is seek first the kingdom, the rest is up to God!

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

- F. Six, **the riches of Christ's peace.**
 - 1. This peace is greater than the world's peace, because it is more than the absence of war or conflict (Jn. 14:27).
"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
 - 2. X's peace says that it passes understanding because it can be there no matter what else happens all around us. It is a peace not dependent upon circumstances.
- G. Seven, **the riches of God's power.**
 - 1. This power is always available because it works through us (Eph. 3:20).
Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
 - 2. God's power is greater than all we ask or think!! We are rich!
- H. All seven of these things begin to show how rich we really are. As the song says, we need to count our many blessings every day and it will surprise you what the Lord has done (and what He is doing).

III. I'M TOO RICH TO....

- A. You have heard of:
 - 1. Successful businessmen turn to shady business deals to make even more money.
 - 2. Young people who have rich parents, but the kids lead lives of crime to get even more money.
 - 3. Celebrities who have money and popularity but get themselves involved in things they shouldn't.
- B. We don't understand why these people would mess up their lives the way they do when they legitimately have so much going for themselves.
- C. The same is true for Xians! We are just too rich to get involved in sinful things. It doesn't make sense. I'm too rich to:
 - 1. Argue with my wife.
 - 2. Not to forgive those who sin against me.
 - 3. Not to serve God each day with what He has given me.
 - 4. Not to pray without ceasing.
 - 5. To get depressed over the things over which I have no control.
 - 6. To allow alcohol or tobacco take control of my habits.
 - 7. To get involved in things that will pull me down spiritually.
 - 8. To miss church services for things that don't matter.
 - 9. To live hypocritically.

IV. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. As Xians we are the richest people in the world.
 - 1. Rich in material possessions.
 - 2. Rich in grace.
 - 3. Rich in providence.
 - 4. Rich in pardon.
 - 5. Rich in promises.
 - 6. Rich in peace.
 - 7. Rich in power.
- B. All of us in this room are richer physically and materially than 1 billion people.
- C. Because of X, we have untold spiritual riches.
- D. Give your life to X today, so that you can be rich in every way.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.

HOW RICH ARE WE?

From the standpoint of material wealth, Americans have difficulty in realizing how rich we are. Going through a little mental exercise suggested by Robert Heilbroner can help us to count our blessings. Imagine doing the following, and you will see how daily life is for as many as a billion people in the world:

1. Take out all the furniture in your home except for one table and a couple of chairs. Use blankets and pads for beds.
2. Take away all of your clothing except for your oldest dress or suit, shirt, or blouse. Leave only one pair of shoes.
3. Empty the pantry and the refrigerator except for a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt, a few potatoes, some onions and a dish of dried beans.
4. Dismantle the bathroom, shut off the running water, and remove all the electrical wiring in your house.
5. Take away the house itself and move the family into the tool shed.
6. Place your "house" in a shantytown.
7. Cancel all subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, and book clubs. This is no great loss because now none of you can read anyway.
8. Leave only one radio for the whole shantytown.
9. Move the nearest hospital or clinic ten miles away and put a midwife in charge instead of a doctor.
10. Throw away your bankbooks, stock certificates, pension plans, and insurance policies. Leave the family a cash hoard of ten dollars.
11. Give the head of the family a few acres to cultivate on which he can raise a few hundred dollars of cash crops, of which one-third will go to the property owner and one-tenth to the money lenders.
12. Lop 25 years or more off your life expectancy.

By comparison how rich we are. And with our wealth comes responsibility to use it wisely, not to be wasteful and to help others. Think on these things.

-Steve Williams