

# CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF GIVING

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The New Testament teaches God's childrens to generously give to those who are in need. Galatians 6:10 says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." As Christians, we are *commanded* to give every Sunday: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come*" (1 Cor 16:1-2). In Acts 20:35, the Apostle Paul quoted Jesus Christ on the subject of giving: "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" Christ used the example of a poor widow to teach his disciples the right spirit of giving. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living (Mark 12:41-44). But our Lord did much more than teach us how to give by his words. He especially taught us by his own actions.

## **What Christ gave up**

Second Corinthians 8:9 says, "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*" Jesus Christ had the riches and glory of heaven and of being in the form of God before he came to this earth (John 17:5,24; Php 2:6). But, though Christ was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Php 2:6), he then "*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*" (Php 2:7-8). Christ emptied himself and forsook all the riches and glory of heaven and was made like us in every way (Heb 2:9-18).

## **To serve, not be served**

And when he was on this earth, Christ did not live in wealth and luxury. He did not even have a place to lay his head (Matt 8:20; Luke 9:58). When he was crucified and the soldiers cast lots for his possessions (Psa 22:18; Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34), all that was there were his clothes and a coat that was woven without seam (John 19:23-24). And Jesus also did not have a retinue of servants waiting upon him. In fact, the very

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opposite was true. Jesus took upon him the form of a *servant*. He “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:25-28; Mk 9:35; 10:42-45), and said, “*I am among you as he that serves*” (Luke 22:24-27). Jesus humbled himself to serve to the point that he even washed his disciples’ feet (John 13:1-17). In all of this, he left the perfect example of being poor in spirit (Isa 66:2; Psa 51:17; Matt 5:3).

## **Nothing of himself**

Throughout his life on this earth, Jesus obeyed His Father (Php 2:8; 5:8), and he never sinned even one time (John 8:46; 16:33; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22; 3:18; Rev 3:21). He only did God’s will, not his own (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28-29; 17:4). He even returned good for the evil that was done to him (Matt 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36; 22:51; 23:34; Jas 5:6; 1 Pet 2:21-25; 3:8-9,13-14), and grew to be perfect (Luke 6:40; John 15:9; 17:20-26; Heb 2:10; 5:8), setting the example for us to follow. Jesus humbled himself and obeyed God to the point of dying on the cross (Php 2:5-8), proving that he would do *nothing* of himself but only and always what pleased the Father (John 8:28-29). This was the ultimate act of humility and obedience to God, and of love towards mankind (John 13:1; 13:34; 15:9-13; 2 Cor 5:14-15; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2,25; Rev 1:5).

## **Our pattern to follow**

Christ’s pathway from the riches of heaven to his death on the cross was the greatest descent from wealth to poverty that there could ever be. But through Christ’s poverty, we have the opportunity to become rich. It is through Christ’s sacrifice that we have redemption, reconciliation with God, the remission of sins, and freedom from sin (Isa 53:5-6; Matt 26:28; John 3:16-18; Acts 2:38; Rom 5:6-11; Col 1:13-14,18-22; Heb 9:11-14,22-28; 10:4-23,26-29). All spiritual riches and blessings are found in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 8:9; Eph 1:3; Php 4:19; 1 Tim 6:17-18; 2 Pet 1:3; Jas 1:4; 2:5; 3 John 2; Rev 2:9). Christ is thus used as the perfect example for us in our giving. As he completely emptied himself and become poor for our sakes, we should “*abound in this grace also*” (2 Cor 8:7-15), speaking of the grace of giving up some of what we have for the sake of others. “*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work*” (2 Cor 9:6-8).