

Series: Romans

Title: Their Debtors We Are

Text: Rom 15:25-28

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Romans 15:25: But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26: For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27: It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28: When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

The church at Jerusalem sent forth preachers and through the preaching of Christ crucified, our great Shepherd called out his lost sheep in Macedonia and Achaia. Then God prospered the churches of Macedonia and Achaia while God made the church at Jerusalem fall on lean times. It was a trial God gave—whatever comes to pass in our lives is of our sovereign God. God gave that trial to test the faith of those at Macedonia and Achaia. By God's grace they passed the test. They took up an offering and entrusted Paul to deliver it to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

We are approaching a time in this church that I have looked forward to since I came here. When I came here we had around 20 children. God saved some of them. Now we are seeing the second generation marry and have children. It is a blessed, happy time.

But other churches are coming to the phase where many are going home to be with the Lord. Those churches have profited us. They sent the gospel to us. They supported us in the early go. Their debtors we are.

Notice, "*it hath pleased them verily.*" The churches at Macedonia and Achaia were happy to provide for the saints at Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 9:7: Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

What makes a believer "pleased" to provide for our older brethren? We see how richly God has blessed us using them to minister to us.

Proposition: Nothing is more valuable to God's people as Christ and his gospel. God used our brethren to bless us in *spiritual* things so God's saints are happy to help them with *carnal* things—"their debtors we are."

Divisions: 1) The riches of Christ and his blessings 2) The constraint of those riches 3) A word of application

TRUE RICHES

Christ and all his blessings are our true riches. Scripture warns us about seeking the riches of this world. But scripture describes God's grace as true riches. God's purpose in saving his people is to show us his riches toward us.

Ephesians 2:7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

We were born unprofitable, bankrupt, poor and needy sinners in the deep poverty of depravity. We had nothing to pay to God's law. Nothing wherewith we could pay to earn God's favor and acceptance. God chose us by free grace in Christ, redeemed us and regenerated us all by grace. God's grace in Christ is described throughout scripture as great riches—the only true riches—Paul said,

Ephesians 3:8: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

God our Father gave the unspeakable gift to successfully redeem all God's bankrupt elect sinners like us.

John 3: 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Christ freely justified his people by his grace. He paid the full price of redemption, his own blood, and purchased us from the prison of the curse and death.

Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

We first experience his riches when Christ is formed in us and makes us behold Christ's glory. Christ dwelling in us is our very hope of being with him in glory. This was according to God's riches.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

God makes us know Christ is All: Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption; the Way, the Truth, the Life—no man comes to the Father but by him. Then Christ HIMSELF becomes precious to us,

Isaiah 13:12: I will make a MAN more precious than fine gold; even a MAN than the golden wedge of Ophir.

That Man more precious than fine gold is Jesus Christ our Righteousness.

1 Peter 2: 6:...Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:...7: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious

In conversion he effectually counsels us to freely lay hold of him. He is the gold tried in the fire.

Revelation 3:18: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

This buying is free to the believer.

Isaiah 55: 1: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price....³ Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.

When God makes Christ Wisdom unto us then we possess the most precious merchandise a sinner can possess.

Proverbs 3: 13: Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding. 14: For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. 15: She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. 16: Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour.

Proverbs 20:15: There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

Proverbs 24:4: 4: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

Colossians 2: 2...[our] hearts [are] comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Every gift, every blessing God gives, is precious to a believer by Christ—when God gives faith which rests solely on Christ then faith is precious.

1 Peter 1:7: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire,

2 Peter 1:1...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

The counterfeit faith wherein men boast in themselves is fool's gold. The faith God gives looks nowhere but to Christ—that is precious faith. Our strength is Christ—from God's treasure chest.

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

All our needs are provided from God's endless treasure

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, these are our true riches. This world's riches perish with the using. But Christ is our true Pearl of great price.

CONSTRAINED BY RICHES

Romans 15: 26: For it hath *pleased* them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27: It hath *pleased them verily*; THEIR DEBTORS THEY ARE; For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their *spiritual* things, their *duty* is also to minister unto them in *carnal* things.

These spiritual riches constrain God's saints, making us pleased to provide for our needy brethren.

God does not produce grudging givers but willing givers by the constraint of Christ's love and grace. We know it is God alone who makes us to differ. Everything we have we received of God's hand freely. Every spiritual blessing and every temporal blessing came from God. Everything is freely given us from God's rich storehouse.

We came into this world covetous for this temporary, vain, fleeting world—but now we know:

Proverbs 10:2: Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Now we know Christ alone; before we thought money protected us

Proverbs 18: 10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. 11: The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

But money is as weak to save as we are to save ourselves because earthly riches perish with us

James 1:11: For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Beholding the riches of God's grace in Christ, Christ makes us heed his command.

Matthew 6: 19: Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Jeremiah 9: 23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

For a believer to hold on to what God has given us, when we could be freely providing for needy brethren, is to glory in earthly riches as though we provided—when it is God who provided all. It is to glory in earthly riches as though they are our salvation rather than Christ the gracious Giver of all. So we are constrained by the love of Christ toward us, not to live unto ourselves, but unto Christ who loved us and gave himself for us—by helping needy brethren—as we rest assured the Lord shall provide!

THEIR DEBTORS WE ARE

Romans 15: 27:...their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Christ has created a new man in some of you and blessed you with the unsearchable riches of Christ: free justification; perfect righteousness in him; a pure heart created in his holiness by the Holy Spirit by Christ being formed in you; an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure; an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven for you; eternal life, the salvation of your souls.

Therefore, you and I are debtors to those God used to minister the gospel to us. We are debtors to those churches because we can never repay so as to profit them like God has used them to profit us.

1 Corinthians 9: 11: If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

So we see it as no great thing to minister carnal things, seeing carnal things are nothing in comparison to spiritual blessings we have been made to partaker of. We see this illustrated with the woman who came with the alabaster box of very precious ointment. That ointment was worth an entire year's wages. Imagine how she protected that very precious ointment. I am sure she guarded it so thieves would not steal it. But when she came to Christ what did she do?

Matthew 26:7: There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

Beholding Christ, our eternal Life, we are willing to part with the most precious things of this world for him and his gospel. Why? It is because Christ is more precious than all. So are those brethren in whom he abides. Oh, that God would make us like Moses. He was heir to the richest ruler on this earth. But Moses left all,

Hebrews 11:26: Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Sinner, if you give yourself to hear and study this gospel, seeking the wisdom of God like you seek the treasure of this world, God promises to make Christ your Wisdom

Proverbs 2: 3: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; 5: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6: For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

Brethren, remember, this precious promise from our God. And not only this promise but notice that it is God who gets all the glory for the ministry of giving. Truly, it is God's gift to us when Christ has made us willing, cheerful providers for our needy brethren.

2 Corinthians 9: 8: 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: 9: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10: Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread

for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) 11: Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 12: For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13: Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14: And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. 15: Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

May God make us generous to help our brethren in need: especially older churches and pastor's widows.

Amen!