

From Riches to Rags

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

2 Corinthians 8 is a chapter on giving

- Introduces the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
- Paul never forgot the mother church or the poor in his missionary travels.

Today, “Riches to Rags” focuses on the motivation for giving.

Next week, Aug. 19, “Nuts and Bolts of Giving” focuses on practicalities of tithing.

How do you compare your giving to another's?

1. Measure the size of their gift.

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." —1 Samuel 16:7

Size of the gift alone does not account for earnestness, ability, or sacrifice.

Widow's mite—Luke 21:3

2. Measure the size of their need.

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. —2 Corinthians 8:2-3

Widow of Zarephath and Elijah—gave her last meal: oil and flour,

"As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die." —1 Kings 17:12

3. Measure the size of their **abundance**.

But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

—2 Corinthians 8:7

Many Americans love themselves **more** than anyone else.

4. Measure the size of **God's** gift.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

—2 Corinthians 8:9

Measure our gifts against the **earnestness** of Jesus Christ.

Ragman---Walter Wangerin, Jr. from “*Ragman and Other Cries of Faith*”

Paul—count all things as dung (**Philippians 3:7-9**)

John—we do not realize we are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked

(**Revelations 3:17-18**)

Conclusion: We never know the true riches until we become poor.
Surrender our all to God: **will, time, and pocketbook.**

Memory Verse:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

—2 Corinthians 8:9