

Consider Jesus – in the Straitness of Poverty

**Thoughts for Daily Duty, Service,
and Suffering**

By [Octavius Winslow](#)

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"Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess."—Hebrews 3:1

"He became poor."—2 Cor. 8:9

The wealth of Jesus, of which we have already spoken, was essential; His poverty, of which we are now to speak, was willingly assumed. "He became poor." By an act of unparalleled beneficence, He emptied Himself of His wealth and linked Himself with a life of dependent poverty. The only riches He retained--and these He scattered with a profuse and unbounded generosity--were the 'unsearchable riches of His grace', bestowed indiscriminately and freely upon the vilest of the race. So poor was He, holy women ministered to Him of their substance; and so homeless, the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, but He, the Creator of the world, had not where to lay His head! "Consider Him."

We learn, in the first place, that poverty may exist in alliance with greatness and moral wealth. There is nothing in poverty essentially degrading or demoralizing. Wealth, unsanctified by Divine grace, may depress our moral instincts, vitiate and impair our noblest faculties, developing and arming, to an almost unbounded extent, the innate evil of our nature; but poverty, hallowed of God, has often proved a school of grace in which that same nature has been molded into a vessel of honor, pencilled with the beauty of holiness, sanctified and made fit for Christ's service.

Thus, poverty is not essentially sinful, though springing from original sin, and is often the sad and bitter fruit of willful transgression against the soul and God--improvidence, indolence, and intemperance, entailing poverty and need, misery and woe. Yet, as in the case of our adorable Lord, and in countless instances of His disciples, it may be allied to the highest intellectual development, to the richest spiritual grace, and to the noblest formation of character. Did there ever exist one so poor in this world, yet one so holy, so gracious, and so useful as Jesus? Learn of Him, then, who stamped with so great a dignity, and invested

with so rich a luster, a life of virtuous poverty and need, before which the worth and glitter of unsanctified riches fade into insignificance.

Straitened circumstances aid in the development of a life of faith in God. Such was the life of Jesus. As man, He as much lived by faith on God as His disciples. He never bids us walk in a path divergent from His own, but in each one "left us an example that we should follow His steps." Thus the poor are dependent upon God, and the poverty of the Christian--often his greatest wealth--leads him to prayer, and prayer brings him into closer acquaintance with God, and the more he knows of the character of God, the more he learns to love and fear and trust in Him. "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Oh, take your poverty to God. Your Heavenly Father knows and is pledged, has promised and is able, to supply all your needs. Do you think that He who feeds the birds of the air will neglect the children of His love? Never! Oh, how your very poverty may enrich you in prayer, faith, and grace! Sweet to live a life of childlike dependence upon God! To know and feel, "My Father thinks for, and takes care of, me."

The poverty of Jesus was the wealth of others. Thus there are none, so straitened and tried in their circumstances, who may not contribute, in some degree, to the temporal or the spiritual necessities of others. "As poor, yet making many rich." Hence we often find in the poor the greatest sympathy and help for the poor. Let not your limited resources, then, be a veil for stinginess; your poverty an excuse for unkindness. But imitate the early Christians, whose "deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality;" and consider Jesus, "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich." Be submissive to God's will in poverty. LET CHRIST BE YOUR SOUL'S PORTION. Lay up treasures in heaven. And let your life, amid its toil and trial, its poverty and need, be a holy preparation for your riches of glory above. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed."

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