

2 Corinthians 6:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Analysis

As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing (ώς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες, hōs lypoumenoi aei de chairontes)—Lypeō (sorrow/grief) acknowledges real pain—Paul wasn't Stoically indifferent to suffering. Yet chairō (rejoice) modified by aei ('always,' 'continually') indicates simultaneous, constant joy. This isn't emotional denial but spiritual depth: joy rooted in God's presence and promises coexists with sorrow over sin, suffering, and unbelief (cf. Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16).

As poor, yet making many rich (ώς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς δὲ πλούτιζοντες, hōs ptōchoi pollous de ploutizontes)—Ptōchos denotes abject poverty, beggarly destitution (not mere lack of luxury). Paul possessed little materially (Phil 4:11-12; 1 Cor 4:11) yet enriched countless souls with gospel wealth. Ploutizō (to make rich) refers primarily to spiritual enrichment (1 Cor 1:5; Eph 3:8; Col 1:27), though it may also include the practical generosity Paul taught (2 Cor 8-9). This inverts worldly values: spiritual wealth infinitely surpasses material prosperity.

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things (ώς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα κατέχοντες, hōs mēden echontes kai panta katechontes)—Mēden ('nothing,' emphatic form) expresses absolute material poverty. Yet panta ('all things') modified by katechō (possess, hold fast) indicates comprehensive spiritual wealth. Believers own nothing yet inherit everything in Christ (1 Cor 3:21-23; Rom 8:32)—the entire created order becomes their possession through union with the heir of all things.

This final triad climaxes the paradox series with three contrasts that define Christian existence: simultaneous sorrow and joy, poverty and enrichment, nothingness and all-ness. Paul's catalogue (vv.4-10) demolishes worldly metrics of success, replacing them with cruciform values where weakness becomes strength, death becomes life, and loss becomes gain.

Historical Context

The Corinthians prized wealth, status, wisdom, and power—typical Greco-Roman values. Paul's poverty and sufferings appeared to discredit him in their eyes. His opponents likely boasted of their social standing and material success. Paul radically subverts these values, showing that apostolic credibility lies precisely in suffering that produces spiritual fruitfulness, not in worldly impressiveness that produces empty pride.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can you cultivate the spiritual maturity to experience 'sorrow yet always rejoicing'—genuine lament coexisting with deep-rooted joy?
2. In what ways are you 'poor yet making many rich' through spiritual rather than material investment in others?
3. How does Paul's claim to possess 'all things' in Christ challenge materialistic definitions of security, success, and satisfaction?

Interlinear Text

ώς λυπούμενοι ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες ὡς πτωχοὶ πολλοὺς

As sorrowful alway yet rejoicing As poor many
G5613 G3076 G104 G1161 G5463 G5613 G4434 G4183

δὲ πλουτίζοντες ὡς μηδὲν ἔχοντες καὶ πάντα

yet making As nothing having and all things
G1161 G4148 G5613 G3367 G2192 G2532 G3956

κατέχοντες

yet possessing

G2722

Additional Cross-References

John 16:22 (Parallel theme): And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): 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.

Revelation 2:9 (Parallel theme): I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Hebrews 10:34 (Parallel theme): For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

1 Timothy 4:8 (Parallel theme): For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

James 2:5 (Kingdom): Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Philippians 4:4 (Parallel theme): Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

Colossians 3:16 (Sin): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (Parallel theme): And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

Proverbs 16:16 (Parallel theme): How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org