

Philippians 4:14-23

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Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] Good morning. Open up your Bibles to Philippians 4. Today, I'm going to attempt to land the plane on Philippians. Again, I'm very thankful that we chose this book because I know the past year and even the past few months have been difficult for a lot of people.

And we chose Philippians because it was, again, like a warm, familiar friend to go to. And we hope that it's been likewise for you while you've been listening to it the past few months.

And we're going to pick up a little earlier. I was supposed to actually preach last Sunday, but we had my father's memorial services this past weekend, one on Saturday and one on Sunday.

And I think it was a good enough reason maybe not to preach last Sunday. But I think just to understand the context of where we're going to be today, we'll pick up and just reread briefly, just starting in verse 10 of chapter 4.

And Paul says, So, to pause there for a second.

[1 : 49] Paul is telling them that he knows what it's like to go through any and every circumstance. And a huge thing that I hope you really picked up on last week, and you'll continue to learn it throughout the rest of your life until you breathe your last on this earth, that Christ is enough.

That his person, his fellowship is enough. And that Paul says he learned this over the course of his life. He didn't just read a book about contentment and say, I figured it out.

It was like what the Lord taught him through years and years of going through so many different situations, hardships, trials, as well as days of plenty. And he says, you know, the question is, we're always tempted to believe if my situation just changed or if my circumstance just changed, then I would be content.

I would, you know, choose to have this in my life. I want to add this in my life. I just had no more debt. Or if I just had a lot of money in the bank or a lot of toys to play with.

Or even just if I had a spouse. We could go on and on. Just fill in the blank. We tend to think we will be content if God would change our circumstances.

[3 : 08] But what he really emphasizes there is that true contentment is not circumstantial. It is found alone in Christ Jesus. And this is a man who knows what that's like.

And he's learned it. He's learned it well. And so from that backdrop, he says, I can do all things through him who strengthens me. So not a verse to help you win a football game or any kind of game at all.

He's talking about those who have their hope anchored in the person of Christ. To live a life glorifying to him. He can do all things through Christ.

So after he says that, we get into our text for today. Verse 14. He says, Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

And you, Philippians, yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only.

[4 : 15] Even in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epapertitis the gifts you sent. A fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. So, what an awesome way to kind of end this beautiful letter.

[5 : 20] But we know that Paul, it had been almost 10 years since he has seen the Philippians. And in this section today, Paul concludes his letter to this beloved church much in the same way he begins it.

He thanks them for their partnership in the spreading of the gospel in gospel ministry. He deep gratitudes for their partnership, in fact.

He thanks them for their financial support. You know, everything they've done to help him along. And then he ends with a doxology of praise to God. And expresses his final greetings to the believers.

So, again, if you remember in the earlier part of this letter, he was in possibly prison or dungeon. But also very likely sort of on house arrest where he could kind of come and go as he pleads. That's how we leave the book of Acts. It kind of says that. But he had someone guarding him at all times. But regardless, he says, you know, the gospel, the word of God is not chained. And the gospel is going forward even while I'm here in chains.

[6 : 25] And during this time, by God's providence, he wrote Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. If any of you love those books as I do, this is the time when he wrote them.

When he was, he probably had no idea that people thousands of years later will be reading these books. And learning about the gospel through them. So, he says when he went to Thessalonica, he received a generous financial gift from the Philippians to support his ministry.

And their giving came from an overflow of joy as a result of what Christ did in their hearts. The best supporters to gospel ministry are those who have been personally touched by those who minister the gospel to them.

The Philippians were extremely grateful for Paul for being that instrument that God used to bring them the truth of the gospel that led to their salvation.

And that result was a cheerful giving, right, to support his ministry. He was aware that he could always count on them. They were always there. They were one of the only churches that just were steadfast in those earlier missionary journeys.

[7 : 36] So, to kind of sum it up, what we'll walk through today can be kind of summed up with three points. And they all begin with G. Very clever.

I didn't come up with this. I just sort of changed it a little bit. But gratitude, glory, and grace. Gratitude, glory, and grace.

So, gratitude, point number one. We see this starting in verse 14 going through 19. But Paul focuses, again, on a deep gratitude for the partnership that they've shared by supporting his ministry.

In previous verses, Paul has spoken of possessing all he needs in Christ. We just read that. So, when you read someone say something like, Christ is all I need.

Christ is sufficient. I can do all things through him that strengthens me. That's amazing. But he wants to make sure that he wasn't trying to belittle their gift.

[8 : 39] He wasn't saying, you know, Christ is all I need, so I didn't really need your gift anyway. He's like truly grateful for what they did. And he adds, it was kind of you, very kind of you, to share my trouble.

He adds that clarifying note because he wants to make sure they understand that he is really grateful for their support. Less than declaring his, you know, independence of human aid, he should belittle their gift.

So, he's saying, though Christ is all I need, and he's all you need, I'm truly grateful for the support that you have given me. You've always been there. You've always supported everything that I've done.

So, even after a decade later, they're still supporting him. And no other church has stood by him longer. They contributed to his work after he left Macedonia.

You see that in verse 15. And even down the road when he was in Thessalonica, which is also in Macedonia, where Philippi is. And he uses, in verse 15, he uses some business terms.

[9 : 43] So, those of you who know me, like, oh boy, Clay's about to talk about business terms. Which, I don't have no clue about business at all. I could hardly run a yard sale if you tried to get me into that.

So, but there are a lot of people here who do understand. But, he uses some business terms. Giving, which refers to expenditures. Receiving, which refers to receipts.

And recognizing that the Philippians have invested wisely by giving financially to the work of the Lord. Their monetary giving had given them an account in heaven.

In other words, it was recorded for their benefit. And like an investment, it was already yielding an eternal rate of return to God. Paul gives them a disclaimer in verse 17, though.

Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. Meaning, he's not just thanking them merely just for their financial, you know, for their money.

[10:49] But rather the spiritual reward that it is gaining for them. Whenever someone invests in a business venture. Again, not me. I haven't much.

So, my brother has because he's a builder. Whenever one invests in a business venture. They're allowed to share in the profits that are earned. In that venture.

So, metaphorically, this is how the Philippians financial support is profiting them. Our Lord Jesus taught this as well. He said, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where neither moth nor rust destroy.

And where thieves do not break in and steal. That's Matthew 5, 20. So, this is earning eternal dividends that will be posted to the Philippians account. They've invested wisely in eternal things by supporting the ministry of Paul.

We see that further on. This is in verse 18. It is a pleasing to God what they did. When we generously sacrifice our finances to the Lord, it pleases Him.

[11:57] Paul wrote that he had received full payment and more. He says, I am well supplied. Their gifts had given him far more than he even needed.

He was just like overwhelmed with thankfulness. Epipartitus had delivered those gifts to Paul. And he says, when we give to the Lord in such a way, right?

It is a fragrant offering. A sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. Verse 18. So, their giving, their stewardship was an act of worship unto the Lord.

And he gives us some Old Testament imagery there of a sacrifice being made to God. And incense being poured out on top of the sacrifice. Releasing a fragrant aroma that kind of ascended up into heaven.

Kind of a picture, I guess. A sweet smelling fragrance pictured the pleasure that such a sacrifice brought to the Lord. Meaning their gift to the Lord was sweet.

[13:01] It was an expression of worship to God. He only takes pleasure, right? In a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9. 7. But the ultimate goal of any giving as followers of Jesus that we partake in is to glorify God.

And so, we have this promise that also follows in verse 19. So, when we give to God in a selfless way, totally just wanting to honor Him, to advance the message of the gospel.

It is a sweet smelling aroma to God. But then it's followed with a promise. The Philippians had done this for Paul because such sacrificial giving.

He announces in verse 19. Verse 19. God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

So, this comes by way of a promise from God that not only would they receive an eternal reward for their giving, but God would also help provide even their physical needs as well.

[14:10] I had an old friend that I got to see this weekend, the past weekend, at my dad's memorial. His name is John Howard. He runs Howard's Hardware, if any of you are aware of that, over in Oakwood.

But, such a tremendous man. And he once said, you can't out-give God. Very cliché, but he was the first person that ever said that to me.

And this is a promise that God had said. Luke 6, verse 38. Jesus said, give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.

For with this measure, you will use it, will be measured back to you. So, this generosity from God comes from the riches of His glory, which are unending.

Though every one of us come to God and look to Him to give us what we need, His treasure chest of glory is never diminished, no matter how many people are coming to it.

[15:18] He will never go bankrupt. Put it that way. His resources will never be depleted. So, God's giving would be in proportion to the vastness of His resources.

And that's what He says. So, Jesus says that we should distribute the things that we are given, but not to accumulate them.

Jesus says that possessions on earth are not for accumulating, but for distributing in ways that honor Christ. Right?

So, the remedy for hoarding is giving. That's like what we see in the Scripture over and over and over. So much is talking about money and the Gospels and elsewhere, not because we're just trying to take your money, but because it really does reflect our hearts in a lot of ways.

Money, in many ways, shows where we are in our spiritual walk. It's what we spend it on, what we do with it personally, corporately, all those things.

[16:25] And Jesus knows that if we just hold on to it and possess it just for ourselves, that will eventually destroy us. Right? The Scripture says the love of money, the obsession with money, the worship of money is the root of evil.

Right? And so, the remedy for hoarding is giving. Proverbs 22, verse 9. He who is generous will be blessed.

Acts 20, verse 35. It is more blessed to give than to receive. So, God blesses us with money and possessions so that we use them and apply them in such a way where it's obvious to people that are looking on that those things are not our treasure, but Christ is.

Where people just are blown away. Like, why would you do that? That makes no sense. If this world is all there is to it, why would you do such a thing? Because of Christ.

Because we're trying to store up treasures in heaven and not on the earth. We can't take anything with us when we go. So, why not invest them in an eternal deposit?

[17:40] Luke 12, verse 33. Jesus said, Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old. With a treasure in the heavens that does not fail.

Where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. So, again, I have been blessed over the years.

Some of you know that, like, a lot of my own income comes from support that people give. And anybody who's done it, you hate doing it.

You hate raising support for gospel ministry. The Lord has to do a work on my own heart. But I would say the most steadfast, generous supporters of what I do are the young men who eventually get married, have kids.

That's kind of where most of them are now, not all of them. But they have, in some way, by some miracle, God has used me to help them while they were in college. And they desire to give back to that.

[18:55] So, a very small picture compared to what Paul is talking about. But, again, when we support gospel ministry, we also get to share in the profits of that.

And so, we ought to be prayerful, giving to our local body here, the Christ family, thinking about all the different ways that that money goes out. And it does go out.

And to empower us to do gospel ministry here in North Georgia. We have some people that are leaving this summer and even for a few months down to come who are going overseas to some closed countries to do gospel ministry there as well.

And so, pray about, be prayerful about what you ought to give. So, a question a lot of people say was, you know, how much? We're not going to ever say.

We're not going to tell you. A tithe is always a good place to start. But it is not a command, necessarily, at all in the New Testament. God, so I'm just going to read this awesome quote, I think, by C.S. Lewis in regard to giving.

[20:08] He said, I do not believe one can settle how much they ought to give. I'm afraid that the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare.

In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, and amusements, etc. Is up to the standard of the common among those who earn the same income as we do, we are probably giving away too little.

If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say that they are too small. So, if giving is going to be sacrificial, it has to somewhat hurt a little bit.

We have to trust God, not just to give out of our excess or what we have left over, but to give in a way that it is sacrificial. That it almost makes us a little uncomfortable to lay down those sort of things.

So, there are many different people, missionaries, organizations that we try to give to. And so, be prayerful. But the gospel has to advance.

[21 : 16] I hate money more than anybody. I can't stand money. But it's one of the things that are just necessary for us to deal with in this life. And so, be prayerful about how you ought to give.

This brings us to our second point. So, that was gratitude. He was grateful for their giving. Number two, glory. And that's found in verse 20. He says, To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. So, he concludes this section by drawing the reader's attention once again to the glory of God. Paul gives us a doxology, the Greek word for glory, doxa.

Which in Hellenistic cultures express primary values of vital importance. Doxa focused on the attention that one held by others on an individual's value or worth based on their accomplishments or achievements.

So, if you had accomplished and achieved great things, you would have great glory. In other words, in this case, none has done greater things or accomplished more than God Almighty.

[22 : 29] From creating the world and the universe to redeeming mankind. No one is more deserving of doxa than our God.

Psalm 71 verse 19 says, For your righteousness, O God, reaches the heavens. You who have done great things. Who is like you?

There's none worthy to be compared. So, first, Paul is glorifying God because of their generosity. Because he knows that it originated with him. But also, it is right and proper to say this after all that Paul has written in this letter to the Philippians.

He is glorifying God for being the Father of grace in chapter 1. The worker of our salvation.

Remember, he who began a good work in us will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

He is the exalter of Christ. That's chapter 2. He is the father of all believers. Also in chapter 2. He is the giver of peace.

[23 : 38] That's in chapter 4. And here we land on this idea that he is the supplier of our needs. So, he says to our God and Father, Be glory forever and ever.

Amen. I pray that all of us are obsessed and can't shut up about the glory of God.

Any ministry or any church that makes it more about them and their show or their success are going to be in grave danger one day. Either we are honoring God or we are honoring ourselves.

There is no other way to slash that. And we believe that everything ought to be pointing towards him. Giving attention to him.

Not because we are just supposed to. It is because he is worthy. In Revelation 4, remember, Worthy are you, our Lord and our God. For you created all things and by your will, they existed and were created.

[24 : 45] Everything begins and ends with God. Everything belongs to him. I once heard of a ministry, even recently, one of our friends was trying to write out his testimony to share.

And he wrote in it, I really desire to glorify God with my life. They wanted to take it out.

And say, say something different. I'm very close to going to talk to some of those people. I keep hearing these kind of reports. Everything begins and ends with the glory of God.

Romans 11, verse 33. Oh, the depth and riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.

For who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor? Or who has given him a gift? To him that he might be repaid. For from him, through him, and to him are all things.

[25 : 56] To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. So, Paul begins with glory in chapter 1. Now he's wrapping it up with glory as well.

Sandwiched in, the letter of Philippians. Finally, grace. Three, grace. He says, Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you.

All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. So, greet every saint.

He doesn't use the collective law. Like, hey, just greet everybody. Thomas said hi. He says, Greet every saint. His affection ran so deep for those individuals.

He says in chapter 1, God is my witness how I yearn for you with all the affection of Christ Jesus.

He says to the saints, those who have been saved by Jesus, regenerated by his spirit, and set apart for holy use.

[27 : 05] Set apart from the life of sin, and to be set apart for a life unto God. The saints. The brothers he's referring to, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, and probably around maybe eight people all together that are there with him.

He's like, they also greet you. He's kind of writing on their behalf. But he also says, I love this part, greet those especially of Caesar's household. So men, women, and children that were serving in the emperor's palace on the Palatine Hill, overlooking the Tiber River and much of the city of Rome. They even had had people saved inside Caesar's own palace, not the one in Las Vegas. The real one. Both are houses of sin, but they both were bad places.

But it could include members of Caesar's own family. We don't know that, but more than likely, it actually refers to slaves, servants, cooks, food tasters, musicians, stablemen, custodians, heralds, body servants.

It probably just refers to all those people that actually worked in that house. And again, at this time, the emperor was Nero, one of the final whack jobs in that line.

[28 : 21] But Paul specifically mentioned those of the imperial guard, the Praetorian guards. So those even guarded the emperor. So possibly even had converts inside that elite military group.

So then he ends with grace, right? The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Grace, our, it's hard to even define it really. The typical, unmerited, undeserved favor of God in the lives of his people. It's the wellspring of like all that we do as believers in Christ. It's the wellspring and the heartbeat. Grace saves us, sanctifies us, keeps us, and preserves us until the end.

And I pray that we all find ourselves there. And if you're struggling today, grace, grace to you. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

And so I hope that as we conclude our letter to the Philippians, that it's been a blessing to your soul. It's been so good to walk through it. And we'll look forward to moving ahead to what we talked about earlier.

[29 : 40] So join me in prayer.