

*Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

**The Philippians' Gift to Paul**  
**Philippians 4:10-20**  
**Part 5**

There is so much emphasis today on financial security. Certainly this topic is of great interest to those who are approaching retirement age. Though I am not planning on retiring it still does not mean that I am so naive as to think that I will always be able to work. There certainly is the very real possibility that at some point in my life that I might be forced, perhaps because of my health, to stop working. And if that time comes, will I have enough resources to take care of my needs and the needs of my family?

Most people, when they approach this question for themselves, will invariably be thinking about how much they should be saving. But I would propose to you, based on the clear teachings of the word of God, that professing Christians should be giving much more consideration to what they are giving rather than to what they are saving. I believe that this point will be well made in our study this weekend.

We will once again go back to **Philippians 4:10-20**. Let me read this passage for you **“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. (11) Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. (12) I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. (13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (14) Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. (15) And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. (17) Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. (18) But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. (19) And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (20) Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

**Philippians 4:10-20** records for us Paul’s response to a very generous gift that he received from the Philippians to meet his expenses while under house arrest in Rome. This response went far beyond a simple thank you.

The question that I began to address several weeks ago in light of **Philippians 4:10-20** was, “What did Paul’s thank you to the Philippians involve?” The first thing that we saw in Paul’s thank you to the Philippians was.....

Thanking the Philippians involved telling them how their gift made him feel. Let us read **verse 10**, **“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.”**

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How did the Philippians' gift to Paul make him feel? Paul tells the Philippians that their gift made him feel joyful. What else was involved in Paul's thank you to the Philippians?

Thanking the Philippians also involved clarifying that their expression of care was a greater spiritual benefit for them rather than for him (Philippians 4:11-17). This is spelled out for us in **Philippians 4:11-17**. He shares with them this clarification in order to make sure that they did not somehow misunderstand why he responded as joyfully as he did.

Paul began this clarification by looking at the spiritual benefit of their gift to himself (Philippians 4:11-13). We found this clarification in **Philippians 4:11-13**. Let us read these verses, **“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. (12) I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.” (13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**” What was Paul saying in these verses? Paul in essence was telling the Philippians that though he felt great joy as a result of them giving him this generous gift, the gift itself provided him very little personal benefit.

Paul saw very little personal benefit to himself because he did not see their gift or any other earthly circumstance as critical in achieving the ultimate goal of his life. What was Paul's ultimate goal? What was Paul's passion? The goal of Paul's life was to get to know Christ better and ultimately perfectly at the resurrection from the dead. This is what drove his life. This is what explained his life.

As long as Paul was able through the strength of Christ to keep his heavenly focus and demonstrate steady progress toward his goal he was content in every circumstance.

Having begun his clarification by telling the Philippians that the great joy he felt in response from their gift did not originate from a sense of circumstantial desperation, he concludes his clarification by focusing on the benefit of their gift to them.

Paul concluded his clarification by looking at the spiritual benefit of the gift to the Philippians themselves (Philippians 4:14-17). Let me read for you **Philippians 4:14-17**, **“Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. (15) And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. (17) Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.”**

Paul begins this section of verses by making sure that the Philippians do not think, in light of what he just shared in **Philippians 4:11-13**, that he was ungrateful for their gift. We see this in **Philippians 4:14**. Yes, in terms of what was most important to him in his life their gift had little impact. This is true. But this did not change the fact that he was extremely grateful for their gift. He may not have felt he needed their gift in order to continue his pursuit of the resurrection from the dead and perfect conformity to Christ, but this did not mean that the gift had not ministered to him.

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He saw their gift not only as a demonstration of genuine concern but also as an attempt on their part to share in his affliction. In fact, he saw their attempt to share in his affliction through their giving as totally unique from all other churches, which he outlines for us in **Philippians 4:15-16**. Paul was extremely appreciative of their gift.

But even though he was extremely appreciative of their financial commitment to him, he did not see himself spiritually benefiting nearly as much as he saw them spiritually benefiting from their gift. Why was this?

Let us now look at **Philippians 4:17**, “**Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.**” Paul saw their giving as “profit” (KARPON) or more literally Paul saw their giving as “fruit.” In other words, Paul saw their giving as the natural outflow of who they were. And who were they? They were the righteous, having been saved by grace through faith, and were now in their giving to Paul, bearing the fruit consistent with who they were. In other words, they were bearing the fruit of righteousness that Paul prayed for in **Philippians 1:9-11**.

Why is this such a big deal? Their giving, their profit, or in other words, their fruit confirmed that they were heaven bound. Their giving confirmed that their heavenly account would ultimately pay off big time at the resurrection from the dead when they would be perfectly conformed to Christ. This is what Paul meant when he talked about the profit increasing to their account.

Yes, Paul was excited about their gift. Their gift produced in Paul a great joy. A joy that flowed out from the certain knowledge that they genuinely cared for him but even more so because their sharing in his affliction confirmed to Paul that they would one day be with him in glory.

Jesus taught His disciples that it was more blessed to give than receive. The apostle Paul totally agrees with him. People who are eager to financially support ministers and ministries, such as the Philippians, demonstrate that they are heaven bound. Those who are not eager to financially support ministers and ministries do not demonstrate that they are heaven bound.

Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? Because those who receive only benefit materially but those who are committed to giving are benefited spiritually. Hopefully all of us in this room not only understand this but will also take this to heart. But can't this lead to financial problems?

What will happen to us if we like the Philippians, out of our concern for various ministers and ministries, begin to approach giving much more seriously? What will happen to us if we, like the Philippians, out of our concern for various ministers and ministries, begin to give generously and sacrificially? What will happen to us? Will we somehow through our commitment to giving undermine our own financial security? The answer to that is, no! This leads us to the a third thing involved in Paul's response to the Philippians' gift.

Thanking the Philippians also involved an evaluation of the financial benefits of their gift (Philippians 4:18-20). Let me read for you **Philippians 4:18-19** “**But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.**”

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**(19) And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (20) Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.** Paul in Philippians 4:18-20 is transitioning from the spiritual benefits of their gift to the financial benefits of their gift. And what were those financial benefits?

The first financial benefit of the Philippians' gift was that all of Paul's present financial needs had been met. **“But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent.”** Though Paul had been evaluating how their gift had spiritually benefited him, as well as the Philippians, in **Philippians 4:11-17**, Paul was not oblivious to how their gift had ministered to him in terms of his earthly needs.

Let us look at the first phrase of **Philippians 4:18**, **“But I have received everything in full.”** If this phrase were literally translated it would read, **“But I have everything.”** But you can see in your NAS Bible that it says, **“But I have received everything in full.”** Why is it translated this way? The word translated “I have” (APECHO) was frequently used as a technical term for receiving a sum of money in full and giving a receipt for it. Understanding how the word is frequently used, as I have just explained, combined with the commercial flavor of **Philippians 4:17** the NAS has done well in translating this phrase, **“But I have received everything in full .”**

Yes, Paul had ministered spiritual things to the Philippians and certainly according to the principle of reciprocity, which we see taught in a number of different passages in the New Testament such as in **1 Corinthians 9**, the Philippians had a biblical responsibility to support him financially. This is true. But Paul is making it very clear to them that whatever debt they may have felt they owed him had been fully paid.

Paul did not consider in light of what he had just received that he was owed anything more. In fact, he went on to say in the next phrase **“and I have an abundance.”** The word “abundance” (PERISSEUO) is used by Paul as an expansion and amplification of the sufficiency of what he had received. If anything, the Philippians' gift not only had paid whatever they might have felt they owed to Paul, they exceeded in Paul's mind what they owed.

Having made his total satisfaction with what they have chosen to give him clear, Paul goes on and restates what he has just said, adding a little bit more detail in the very next phrase. Let me read this next phrase for you, **“But I have received everything in full and have an abundance I am amply supplied having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent.”** When he says that **“I am amply supplied having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent”** he is simply restating what he had just said earlier in the verse when he said **“But I have received everything in full and have an abundance.”** Except he tells us who delivered the gift.

Paul has transitioned in **Philippians 4:11-17** from an evaluation of the spiritual benefits of their gift to the financial benefits of their gift. And what was the financial benefit of their gift to Paul? Their gift had met all of Paul's present financial needs. What is the second financial benefit of their gift?

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The second financial benefit of the Philippians' gift to Paul was their financial needs would be met by the Lord Himself. We will see this in the last part of **verse 18** and **verse 19**.

Let us begin by reading **verse 18** again but this time let us read the whole verse, **“But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”** When the Philippians gave their financial gift to Paul it did not go unnoticed by God. The value of their gift according to Paul in the sight of God was spelled out by him using terms associated with the Old Testament sacrificial system. What did he say about the gift they gave him? He called their gift, **“a fragrant Aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”** Paul looked upon their gift as a spiritual sacrifice to God.

They were doing exactly what God had called them all to do. Listen to **1 Peter 2:5**, **“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.”** We as the church no longer have to bring animal sacrifices to a bloody altar in anticipation of Christ's death but as priests we are to continue to bring spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5). What kind of spiritual sacrifices can we bring to God? We do not have to look any further than this passage.

The Philippians, in giving a financial gift to Paul in order to support his ministry, had from his standpoint offered up a spiritual sacrifice to God.

Let me ask you a question? Do you think that bringing spiritual offerings to God is a one way street? And the answer is, absolutely not. Bringing spiritual offerings to God is not a one way street at all. Let us read **Philippians 4:19**, **“And my God shall supply all your needs.”** What a wonderful promise. But what exactly does this mean?

What does Paul mean by “all your needs?” Paul had been speaking about his financial need being met through their gift, therefore the promise that God would supply all their needs is primarily financial. Giving money as an expression of concern for the financial supply of ministers and their ministries will not threaten you financially but rather it will secure you financially, according to **Philippians 4:19**. But let us not become confused by this statement.

Paul did not say that God would supply all their wants, but he said God would supply all their needs. What are our needs? According to **1 Timothy 6:8**, our needs include food and clothing. How much food do we need? We only need enough food for today. How did Jesus tell us to pray? “Give us this day our daily bread.” How much clothing do we need? Enough to protect us from the elements, that's it.

Someone here might say, but the verse says, **“according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”** Doesn't this mean that since God is rich we will be rich too? And what is the answer to this? Of course not. Certainly this was not the experience of the Apostle Paul. “According to His riches in glory” simply assures us of an infinite supply of resources to meet our basic needs. According to His riches in glory is not meant to assure us that God through His infinite supply will exceed our basic needs.

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Someone might think of this as a let down. It is only a let down for people who are earthly minded rather than heavenly minded. The heavenly minded will not need to be assured of anything more than simply having enough food and clothing to sustain them in the pursuit of their heavenly goal.

If you want to travel around the world and enjoy the best restaurants as a way of life more than investing your money in the work of God then you might as well keep your money. But if what is most important to you is getting to know Christ better, and ultimately perfectly at the resurrection from the dead, then I would strongly encourage you, based on the teachings of God's word to stop thinking so much about what you are going to buy or what you are going to save and get more focused on what you are going to give.

Is it more blessed to give than receive? The answer is absolutely!

### CONCLUSION

There certainly is the very real possibility that at some point in my life that I might be forced, perhaps because my health, to stop working. And if that time comes, will I have enough resources to take care of my needs and the needs of my family? As long as I am seeking to supply for ministers and ministries as an expression of my loving concern for them and the Lord's work, I will not have to worry about it. What did Paul tell the Philippians in **Philippians 4:19**, "**And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**" What have we learned from **Philippians 4:10-19**?

Not only will giving pay off spiritually as we have seen in Philippians 4:11-17 but it will also pay off financially according to Philippians 4:18-19. "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen."