

Joy in Generosity

Philippians 4:14-23, ESV

1. Assurance of Their Gifts' Benefit (verses 14-16)

¹⁴Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. (Philippians 4:14-16)

2. Assurance of Their Gifts' Value (verses 17-18)

¹⁷Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. (Philippians 4:17-18)

- A. Receives compounding spiritual interest
- B. Is pleasing worship to God

3. Assurance of Needs Being Met (verse 19)

¹⁹And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Philippians 4:19-20)

- A. Every need will be met
- B. It comes from His riches

4. Assurance of a Great Fellowship (verses 21-23)

²¹Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (Philippians 4:21-23)

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



SILVERDALE BAPTIST CHURCH
40 DAYS OF JOY
HOW TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S PROVISION
PHILIPPIANS 4:14-20
11/05/2017

MAIN POINT

Sacrificial love demonstrates our trust in a sovereign God who will provide.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the biggest sacrifice you have ever made?

What are some sacrifices you make in your everyday life? What are the motivations for these sacrifices?

In our day-to-day lives there are moments when we “bite the bullet” and sacrifice ourselves for the good of others. Sacrifice for God will transform us into new people who live out the gospel. Sacrifice is how we worship God and let God transform us into the likeness of Christ.

DISCUSSION

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about our topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:14-16.

If Paul had learned to get along without, why do you think he commended the church in Philippi for sending a gift?

What was Paul's motive for thanking the Philippians for their partnership in his ministry (vv. 15-16)?

Paul reminded the Philippians that they were the only church in the area that shared with him in the financial support of his ministry. The words Paul used for giving and receiving were terms from the world of business and commerce. They described the making or receiving of payments on loans or debts. Paul was saying that the Philippians had entered into a relationship with him in the matter of underwriting his ministry. In fact, they were the only church that had shared with him in that way. His words were intended not only to express his gratitude but also to encourage them.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:17-18.

Paul assured his readers that he was not looking for financial support from the churches. Rather, he was interested in their spiritual development. In this verse Paul continued using the language of the commercial or business world. He assured the Philippians that their earthly monetary investment in his ministry would produce spiritual dividends for them.

Read Matthew 6:19-21. How do Jesus' words help you better understand what Paul meant by the church's "account"? What types of "credits" do you think he was talking about?

How would you define treasures on earth? How do they compare with heavenly treasures?

Why is it so difficult for us to focus on our heavenly treasures? What is one way your life would look differently if you focused less on the things of this world this week?

Why do you think Paul used the language of "sacrifice" to describe the Philippians' gift to him? Read Leviticus 7:12-15 for insight on the Old Testament "thank offering."

Why do you think God values our sacrifices? What are some of the things (needs, wants, attitudes, etc.) that most often keep you from sacrificial living?

Paul characterized the Philippians' gift as a fragrant offering and a welcome sacrifice. Both of these phrases were associated with worship. In this way Paul assured the Philippians that their actions were equivalent to serving God, for they were pleasing to God. We should be reminded that, when we help others who are in need, we are doing that which is pleasing to God.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20.

Do you ever struggle to trust the truth in verse 19? Why or why not?

How does a believer draw on God's unlimited resources in daily life (v. 19)?

How do you know the difference between things you need and things you want?

Why is it important for us to know and believe that our sovereign God provides for us?

Paul assured his Philippian friends that God is well able to take care of all of their needs. Notice that Paul did not say that God would take care of their wants or desires. The New Testament nowhere suggests that all of our desires will be met because of our commitment to God in Christ. God will supply all of His people's needs through His own riches in glory. God has an abundant supply and He can take care of our needs in a glorious manner through Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

Looking at your daily life, are there areas where you tend to be selfish (such as time, money, vulnerability, etc)? How can you change those areas of your life as a result of this discussion?

How does giving to help others, even out of your own need, stretch and deepen your faith? Who can you help this week? How?

What need do you have right now that you would like God to meet? Give a voice to that need by sharing it with the group. As a group, commit to praying for each other's expressed needs this week.

PRAYER

Spend time praying for the specific needs mentioned in your group. Praise God for His sovereignty and His provision, and ask Him for the courage and strength to love and live sacrificially this week.

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS 4:14-20

Sometimes the Lord works through His redeemed people to meet human needs. Contentment did not do away with troubled circumstances (v. 14). Paul knew operating from a Roman jail cell, chained to a Roman soldier, was not operating from a position of power. He was in trouble. The present Epaphroditus brought from Philippi helped. Paul wanted the Philippians to know this and to know how commendable he considered their loving action to be.

The Philippians' gift was not unexpected. They had treated Paul this way before in the early days of his ministry in Europe (v. 15; see Acts 16:12-40). Paul described their relationship with him at that time in technical accounting terms. No other church entered into a financial partnership with him. In a sense, the Philippian letter is Paul's official receipt, acknowledging and giving credit for the church's gift to him. Paul went directly from Philippi to Thessalonica (Acts 16:12-17:1). Though we have no record of them, there the Philippians began sending him gifts (2 Cor. 8:1-9). Thus Paul acknowledged the depth and length of his relationship with the Philippian church. He also acknowledged that he had a need, even when he learned to be content.

Again the apostle revealed that the motive for his thankfulness of their partnership in his ministry was not to secure another gift (v. 17). His letter was not a fund-raising attempt. He wanted them to realize that their deeds would not go unnoticed. They have a deposit in heaven that will yield rich dividends. (See Jesus' words in Matt. 6:19-21.) Paul finds another way to show he is not writing to ask for another gift (v. 18). He retained his accounting vocabulary. The letter he sent with Epaphroditus was his receipt marked "paid in full" and more. His needs were met through the Philippians' gifts. These good deeds not only satisfied Paul but were a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Giving to God's servant for God's work is a gift to God, a first-class offering (compare Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:16).

Their obedience and generosity would bring God's reward, giving encouragement and expectation to the readers (v. 19). As they met all of Paul's needs (v. 16), so God would meet all their needs. God does this out of the abundance of His treasury, a glorious resource without limits. How does one draw from these unlimited resources? Through Christ Jesus. Only those in Him have access to God's account and can ask Him to meet their needs. Paul concluded the body of the letter with a doxology praising God (v. 20). The thought of God's providing our needs in Christ naturally led to praise and thanksgiving. The God of glory and honor is not far removed from us, however. He remains our Father ready to bring love and resources to meet our needs. Thus, glory belongs to Him forever—into the unseen ages.