

20. The Book of Philippians 4:10-20

Joy in Giving-Part 3

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

Today we will finish our study in Paul's letter to the Philippians—where we have been looking at its theme of 'joy' topically.

So far, we've looked at:

- I. Joy in Fellowship—1:3-6
- II. Joy in Proclaiming the Gospel—1:12-18
- III. Joy of Faith—1:25
- IV. Joy in Unity—1:27-2:2
- V. Joy in Service—2:12-18
- VI. Joy in the Lord—3:1; 4:4

And the 7th and final one in our series—“*A Journey in Joy thru Philippians*” (so pray about our next study!):

VII. Joy in Giving—4:10-20

Philippians 4:10, 15–20 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity...

¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

So here Paul is thanking them for the generous gifts of money the church in Philippi had sent to him for his ministry. The Bible has a lot to say about giving and tells us if it is done with the right heart—it brings us great blessings!

I believe that where God guides, He provides so I never feel like I need to put pressure on people to give to the work of God—He's a big enough God to take care of that without my help.

And so, my position when it comes to teaching on giving is simple—as we go verse by verse thru the Bible, when we get to a passage that talks about money, I'll talk about it, but I usually won't bring it up otherwise.

Now that's not to say that the subject of giving isn't important or that the Bible doesn't have a lot to say about it.

Larry Burkett, author, Christian and financial expert said that the subject of giving, stewardship and other financially related topics occupies some of the largest number of verses in the Bible.

As I said last week, giving to God is a subject that permeates the Bible from cover to cover and is tied to the blessings of God both in heaven someday but also on earth right now—not the least of it being great joy when it's done in the right way and from the right heart.

As we said last time, the Bible likens giving to God to the sowing of seeds in a field which will result in a 3-fold harvest of blessings.

I. It Blesses God

Here in Philippians 4:18, Paul is writing to the Philippians in part to thank them for a gift of money they had given to him and calls it—"**a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God.**"

Giving someone a gift of money to help them in a time of need or in support of the work of God—blesses the heart of God!

Don't forget that giving to God and the proper handling of money is not only a big part of Christian stewardship—it also becomes a form of worship.

Even as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:18 it becomes an acceptable sacrifice which ascends to His throne like a sweet-smelling aroma and becomes to Him—the '*fragrance of worship*' (check out last week's message).

II. It Blesses People

Philippians 4:10, 16

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly [for your generosity] ... ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

Giving to others in need reflects a love for God and for those made in His image that goes beyond mere words and feelings and makes our giving a tangible expression of God's love to a lost and hurting world—

Warren Wiersbe—

"If we give ourselves to God, we will have little problem giving our substance to God. If we give ourselves to God, we will also give of ourselves for others. It is impossible to love God and ignore the needs of your neighbor."

So, giving must be done purely out of a love for God—and then it must be done out of a desire to help people—but only as God leads.

Let me stop here for a minute and provide a little background as to why Paul gets into the subject of giving here in Philippians 4—but even more specifically in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. One of the main reasons for Paul's third missionary journey was to take up an offering (a 'relief collection') from the Gentile churches to help the Jewish Christians living in and around Jerusalem.

The church there was suffering financial hardships for several reasons:

1. *The many new converts that had gotten saved on Pentecost (Acts 2) had stayed in Jerusalem to be disciplined. Many of them were from out of town, they had no homes or jobs, so they were housed and fed by the church.*
2. *The second reason for the poverty the church in Jerusalem was experiencing was due to persecution. New converts lost their jobs and businesses and were ostracized by their families and friends because they were seen as traitors and turn-coats to Judaism.*
3. *The third reason was heavy taxation by Rome which resulted in rampant unemployment and poverty in the region.*
4. *The fourth reason was a famine that was going on.*
5. The Jewish Christians tried to do all they could to help the poor in their area—even as we read in Acts 2:44-45:

Acts 2:44-45 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

We also read in chapter 4:32—

Acts 4:32 (NKJV)

³² Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

But eventually the resources ran out and all the Christians living in the area began to feel the effects and the pain of these extreme conditions.

Paul not only saw this offering as a way to meet physical needs in the name of Christian love—but even more importantly as an opportunity for the Gentile churches to show their appreciation to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem for sending out missionaries to evangelize the Gentiles with the gospel.

Paul hoped that this act of love would bridge the gap that still existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians and finally help them become one in Christ practically speaking.

As we said a few minutes ago, the Bible likens giving to God to the sowing of seeds in a field.

If given out of the right heart and for the right reasons it will result in a 3-fold harvest of blessings.

I. Blesses God

II. Blesses People

III. It Blesses the Giver

Philippians 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

Acts 20:32–35 (NKJV)

³² “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴ Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. ³⁵ I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

As I just said a moment ago, giving to others in need goes beyond mere words and makes our giving a tangible expression of God’s *love* to this lost and hurting world.

But our giving also becomes an expression of *faith* as we give to God and have faith that He will provide our needs—even as He told Israel:

Malachi 3:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

It is clear from both the Old and New Testaments that God blesses us financially as we bless others in need. This of course should never be our motivation for giving—but something we need to realize about our giving—

Luke 6:38 (NLT)

³⁸ Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

We are promised by God that if we use our resources on earth to build His Kingdom and help others in need—we are sowing seeds that will produce a great harvest of blessings—both now and forever for us personally.

Proverbs 11:24–25 (NKJV)

²⁴ There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more; And there is *one* who withholds more than is right, But it *leads* to poverty. ²⁵ The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.

Proverbs 11:24–25 (NLT)

²⁴ Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. ²⁵ The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed [talk about how Word of Faith teachers abuse this].

Proverbs 22:9 (NKJV)

⁹ He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So *let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.

Paul uses a farming metaphor here—in farming you’ll only reap in proportion to how much you sow—you can’t sow five or six seeds and expect to harvest an entire field. Again, when Paul said in 2Corinthians 9:6, “*He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully*”—he was applying this principle to giving and is essentially saying that we can’t ‘out give God’!

That if you give to Him with the right heart, He will take it, multiply it, and use it for the work of His Kingdom—resulting in great blessings (and joy) for us.

A good example of this was the little boy who gave his ‘*sack lunch*’ of 5 barley crackers and 2 small, pickled fish to Jesus—who then multiplied it and fed thousands of men, women and children.

The Bible is clear that God only wants us to give to Him out of out what we have—you never go into debt to give to God.

Some ‘Word of Faith’ teachers teach that even
if you don’t have any money—“*borrow it or put it
on your credit card—give it to God as a
‘seed faith’ offering and trust Him to
multiply it back to you.*” → **It is Not biblical!**

As we said last week, one of the principles of sowing is—you will reap *more* than you sow. In other words, if you plant one apple seed, you will get an entire apple tree with many apples on it each containing many seeds.

If you plant one grain of wheat, you will get a whole stalk containing many grains of wheat. With that principle in mind, remember that the harvest we will reap in heaven will *far exceed* what we have sown here on earth.

Here on earth, we serve the Lord for 30, 40, 50 years—but in heaven we will reap an eternity of blessing—however the same is true for the unbeliever.

What are *you* sowing in your life today—and are you going to be happy with what you’re going to reap down the road in this life and for eternity?

- Why don’t you fall on the ground and die to self now by repenting and receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

If you start sowing a life of obedience to Him now—you will reap blessings in heaven forever. The choice is yours; the stakes are high—I hope you make the right decision!

That concludes our series, “*A Journey in Joy*” through the Book of Philippians—let me recap quickly.

The epistle to the Philippians is one of four epistles that Paul wrote from prison! Paul was accused by his enemies of inciting riots and leading insurrections throughout the Roman Empire.

Paul was arrested and spent two years in prison in Rome waiting to stand before Caesar to present his case—a trial that could very well have ended in his execution—and yet the theme of this epistle is “joy in the Lord”! In fact, many have called Philippians the “*Epistle of Joy*” because Paul uses the word ‘**joy**’ and ‘**rejoice**’ over a dozen times in the four chapters that make up this epistle.

How was it that Paul could have so much joy while in such a terrible place with his very life on the line?

Well, Paul's secret was that he learned to fill his mind with Jesus!

We see this clearly in the first chapter alone where Paul uses **“Christ”** and **“Jesus Christ”** 17 times—which figures out to more than once every two verses!

And so even though Paul talks about **joy** quite a bit in this epistle he talks about **Jesus** much more!

And that was the reason he had so much joy in the midst of his difficult circumstance—he cultivated a heart that didn't focus on the problem, but on the Person of his Lord Jesus Christ!

One author wrote—

“How much Christians need to learn this. There is so much bickering in Christian circles, so much complaining, so much unhappiness. This was never meant to be. Christians were meant to be filled with love and joy and peace—in short, with all the virtues that are the result of the life of Christ within the Christian...To be filled with Christ is the secret of real Christian living—it is the secret of true happiness (joy).”

When we started this series, we said that when we were born-again, we were made partakers of God's divine nature and as such the 'joy of the Lord' became available to us through our relationship with Jesus. (2 Peter 1:4; Galatians 5:22)

But notice the 'warning' that Jesus gave to us in John 15:11—

John 15:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

I want you to notice what Jesus is saying here—He is saying that His joy, once planted in the heart of a believer at salvation, won't automatically *remain* in their heart—it can be *driven* out or *stolen* from us—how?

Paul tells us in Philippians that there are *four* things that will steal our joy (if we let them)—*circumstances; people; selfishness and worry*. (Check out our study on Philippians)

What is the antidote to these joy stealers?—Jesus gave us the answer to that in John 15—

John 15:1, 4-5 (NKJV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...

Again, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians 5 is—JOY!

John 15:7-8, 11 (NKJV)

⁷ If you abide in Me [continue, remain, stay in communion with], and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be ['prove yourselves to be'] My disciples... ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

Did you notice that Jesus said, *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...you will bear much fruit.”* Or in other words, you will have “much joy”—and that your joy would remain!

Abiding in the Word, filling your mind with the Word and allowing it to transform your thinking about circumstances, people, self and worry (the 'joy' stealers) is the key to Jesus' joy remaining in us and overflowing our lives.

That in a nutshell was the secret to Paul's ability to have joy while in prison with the possibility of execution hanging over his head—he learned to fill his mind with Jesus!

In fact, Paul uses the word '**mind**' 10 times; '**thinking**' 5 times; and '**remember**' 16 times in Philipians—the epistle of joy.

It's because the secret to Christian joy is found in your *mind* (it's rooted in the heart but accessed in your mind) in how you think about life, how you approach it—

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Someone has said that that your 'uplook' will determine your 'outlook.'

Cultivate an 'eternal perspective' of life—

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 Corinthians 7:29–31 (NLT)

²⁹ But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So, from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. ³⁰ Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping [*their sorrow in earthly losses or disappointments*] or their joy [*in physical earthly blessings*] or their possessions. ³¹ Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

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