



Philippians Masterclass

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5.0 Overview Part 3

5.1 Taking Hold of... (3¹²⁻¹³)

We come now in verse 12 to another famous passage of Paul's writings, which is often remembered by the phrase *pressing on*. You may recall in our aims we set out to put passages back into context and so, where necessary, to restore other aspects of the contextual meaning rather than the snippet we tend to carry around in our heads. Here is one such occasion, where the latter can obscure the former for us.

5.1.1 Pushing or Pulling?

Pressing on gives the picture of a walker out of puff, half-way up a hill, gathering themselves together to push on for the summit. This is not the picture Paul is painting. For the moment therefore, if you can, forget this image and we shall hopefully see something new.



Look back at verse 11 and notice that Paul talks about attaining to the resurrection from the dead. And then in verse 12 he talks about not having already obtained all this (that which he has outlined in verses 9-11). The verbs he uses seem to be about getting hold of something, rather than pressing into something. This is important because of this important verse:

*“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to **take hold of** that for which Christ Jesus **took hold of** me.”¹*

... Cross Reference

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

Romans 8:29-30

What we see is a **taking hold of** – both by Paul and by Christ. Paul is taking hold of something (Greek present tense) and Christ has taken hold of Paul (Greek past tense). There is a picture here of Paul being grabbed by the scruff of the neck by

¹ Philippians 3¹²

Christ – this was a one-off event (Greek past tense), Paul’s encounter with Christ on the Damascus road² and in turn Paul is now reaching out for and grabbing something else (Greek present tense). What Paul is introducing here is the concept of the heavenly pull on his life (and ours), which he hinted at in the first chapter when weighing up his decision to stay or depart to be with Christ. Eugene Peterson, when paraphrasing another of Paul’s letters, draws on similar language concerning the pull of eternity upon us: -



“The lines of purpose in your lives never grow slack, tightly tied as they are to your future in heaven, kept taut by hope.”³

This is a wonderful section of paraphrase; beautifully crafted! Paul is saying that the believers are anchored into eternity. It’s almost as if Jesus threw a rope down from Eternity and lassoed us! He is now pulling us heavenward and it is our hope which keeps that line taut etc. There will be times when we feel weak and that rope will keep pulling us heavenward!

5.1.2 Attainable Perfection?

Paul uses a Greek word here which most translations render as *perfect*: -

“Not that I ... have already been made perfect.”⁴

Most of these translations are misleading in this rendering. The Greek word Paul uses is *teleios*, which when applied to something means *having reached its end, completeness*⁵. It comes from a root word, *telos* which means *end, purpose, aim or goal*. The word in common usage was used thus:

“Originally, it is applied to a piece of mechanism, as a machine that is complete in its parts.”⁶

The word might be used to describe how a tool is perfect for a job, like a screwdriver perfect for a certain screw. The word is therefore functional and not talking about abstract flawless perfection. What Paul is saying is that he has been called into the Kingdom of God for many things and he has not yet fulfilled his purpose here on earth - which is why we found earlier on that he could not depart and leave the Philippians. In verse 15 we find Paul uses the same word but this time the NIV translators chose to use the word *mature*, which seems much more appropriate when we know what *teleios* actually means.

² Acts 9

³ Colossians 1^{5A} (The Message)

⁴ Philippians 3¹²

⁵Endnotes

An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (with their precise meanings for English Readers): Vine, W E; © Thomas Nelson Inc. Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

⁶ Barnes’ Notes on the Old and New Testaments, Barnes, © 1983, Grand Rapids: Baker Books House

5.2 In Pursuit of ... (3^{13b-14})

5.2.1 A Healthy Obsession

Now in verses 13 and 14 Paul changes his language and brings in another picture for us, from the world of the Greek athlete which the Philippians would have been very familiar with as we said in our background sweep (Section 2): -

Language	Meaning
<i>But one thing I do</i>	<p>Literally this should be translated <i>But one thing</i>. “I do” has been inserted by the translators. Paul is summing up his approach to all that he is looking to take hold of⁷.</p> <p>He is single minded and so should we be!</p>
<i>Forgetting</i>	<p>The Greek here is stronger than simply forgetting something. It means when a runner is in a race, he may block out his opponents. Just as the runner could be put off by the footsteps of competitors behind him, so a Christian’s onward progress could be hindered by dwelling on past failures and sins, discouragements and thwarted hopes and plans.</p>
<i>Press On</i>	<p>Again, this is not the picture of half way up a mountain but instead the runner with his eye on the finishing line. It literally means <i>to stretch forward after</i>, like those 100m sprinters who dive forward for the photo-finish.</p>

⁷ Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament: Wuest, Kenneth S © 1942 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

<i>Toward</i>	This is from a preposition meaning “down” and has the idea of “bearing down upon” in the direction of a goal.
<i>Goal</i>	This refers to a target for shooting.

Paul is painting us a picture of an athlete bearing down upon the finish line, with single-minded determination, nothing else mattering more in that moment of obsession! This is how even fallen mankind has accomplished much in the natural and is really what the Lord is urging us to be like when he said: -

Can we run the race without looking for the finish line?

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”⁸



5.2.2 Always Moving Forward

There is another aspect here for us. To run a race with any kind of success we need to run forward and not backward. This happens in two ways: -

- Sanctification: -

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”⁹

- Revelation: -

As we mature in our faith, if we are open and do not clutch (in the sense of the word that we saw in Philippians 2⁶, Appendix Four) onto “our doctrine” the Spirit will lead us into ever greater revelation.

We must expect this as the years progress and as it will continue until we join the Lord in glory: -

⁸ Matthew 6³³

⁹ 2 Corinthians 3¹⁸

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. We see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”¹⁰

Until then the Holy Spirit will lead us into ever greater truth¹¹.

5.3 Holding on to ... (3¹⁵⁻¹⁶)

5.3.1 Breaking New Ground

It is not enough for us to break new ground in our revelation of spiritual things. We must hold that ground as well. When we enter into a new area of revelation, such as understanding how we are free from poverty, or that we overcome sickness, or the power of creative words, then that old serpent will be back because he does not like it at all!



It is often the Christian’s experience to then be under attack in one of those particular areas – which often the Lord will allow because it produces character and strengthens our conviction in this area, so it is more than just mental assent.

5.3.2 Testing

Now, remember Paul’s prayer for the Philippians was that their love would abound in *knowledge* (Section 3.1.4). We noted that this word, *epignosis* speaks of knowledge gained by experience as contrasted by intuitive knowledge. If we weren’t tested in our new revelation it would perhaps always remain theory for us – and God is not a God of theory but of practice, which is one of the reasons he came in the flesh to show us how it’s done!

5.3.3 Consolidation

This is why Paul says to us in verse 14; let us live up to that which we have already obtained. He is saying that we should walk in the revelation we have received, which is why he says to the Romans: -

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 13⁹⁻¹²

¹¹ John 16¹³

“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”¹²

We should only move in the measure of faith that we have. If we don’t have faith to raise people from the dead then it is unlikely to happen if we lay hands on the dead. Equally, when we have expanded our faith and revelation we should not yield that ground when the enemy attacks us. Consider what the writer to the Hebrews has to say: -

“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.”¹³

They had received light and were under attack as a result. Learn to expect it, but not to fear it, for if God is for us, who can be against us?! We are more than conquerors and cannot be separated from his love¹⁴.

5.3.4 Cling On With All Your Might

Although we have said (cf. 5.2.2) that we should clutch “our doctrine” closely to our chest, we should cling on to the revelation we have received and not let the enemy take this away from us.

Remember we saw in verse 12 (cf. 5.1.1) a taking hold of by Christ and by Paul, this is Paul’s bit. As Christ was pulling him heavenwards, the enemy was attacking on all sides trying to get him to lose his revelation through disillusionment, but it is this very revelation that helps him keep the line taut between him and Christ¹⁵, so now that he has taken hold of it, he clings on with all his might – he leads us well by his example. This is what Paul is saying when he says to us: -

“Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”¹⁶

5.4 Looking Forward to ... (3¹⁷–4¹)

5.4.1 The Heavenly Pattern

Hopefully by now Paul has begun to work his message into our hearts. He has given exhortations to the Philippians who were no doubt in need of such and

¹² Romans 12³

¹³ Hebrews 10³²⁻³³

¹⁴ Romans 8²⁸⁻³⁹

¹⁵ Colossians 1^{5A} (The Message)

¹⁶ Philippians 3¹⁶

offered them concrete examples to follow in all of this. As he says to them at the beginning of chapter 3, it is no trouble to repeat the lessons to them, in fact it safeguards them. So he reinforces his command here in verse 17, to follow the pattern they have been set by Paul and his co-workers.

As he has said to the Galatians, concerning someone else coming with *another gospel*, they are to only listen to others who also live by this pattern Paul has demonstrated in Christ, himself, Timothy and Epaphroditus: -

“Take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you”¹⁷

Now Paul opens his examples up to the world in general; he contrasts those who live according to the heavenly pattern with those around them choosing to live according to the pattern of this world. Paul is clear of the pattern which they are to follow and we find his command to the church in Rome the same: -

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”¹⁸

Now, a central theme throughout the WORD of God is the reproduction of the heavenly pattern on earth. This began when God made man in his image and told him to fill the earth as God himself filled the heavens. Later on we find the tabernacle’s specifications being given to Moses and then to David so that the heavenly pattern could be reproduced on earth. Finally you will recall Jesus’ words: -

“... your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”¹⁹

It is vital that we see the differences between the pattern of this world and the heavenly pattern. Let’s look at the following verses which further lay out the differences for us, which as Paul has said requires constant remembrance to us, so that we can be safeguarded ...

Pattern of this World	Pattern of the Kingdom of God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Destined for destruction (v.19)</i> <p>There are at least two Greek words to take note of here. The first is destiny (NIV) which comes from the same root Greek word as the word,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Destined for Heaven (v.20)</i> <p>Paul draws on their cultural background again, when he reminds the Philippians that our citizenship is in heaven. Just as,</p>

¹⁷ Philippians 3^{17b}

¹⁸ Romans 12^{2a}

¹⁹ Matthew 6¹⁰



telos we looked at in section 5.1.2 relating to verse 12, *perfect*. In other words those who fit the pattern of this world are maturing into an object fit for destruction - so they are becoming increasingly qualified for destruction, like the screwdriver which fits the screw perfectly, that will be their place in the age to come.

Paul is using the same Greek word here to contrast with his own statement about himself in verse 12. Saints and sinners are both maturing, into opposite things.

The second Greek word is *Apoleia*, translated as destruction (NIV) which means a *perishing, ruin, destruction, which consists of eternal misery in hell*. Our outer body is perishing, but for the saints their souls are not. For those who conform to the pattern of this world their body **and** souls are perishing²⁰.

when this church was born, the local townspeople had complained to the magistrate that they were being invited by Paul to do things which were unlawful for them as citizens of Rome, so now Paul was telling the church that they were citizens of heaven.

This means that we are subject to its rules and also entitled to the rights it affords as well. We **can** live in this world and not be *of* it. We **can** be more than conquerors in all things.

- ***Their god is their stomach***

Can you remember one of the first examples in the WORD of God of someone who put their stomach above all else? - Esau! He was willing to trade in his birthright for the sake of a meal. Esau was a biblical type, which we see again in Judasⁱⁱⁱ.

As we saw in section 4.5.3 concerning the True Circumcision, it is preoccupation with the physical

- ***Consumed by their King***

The people of God on the other hand are totally consumed with living to please their King, Jesus.

This is one of the reasons why the NT writers so often referred to his coming. They lived in eager expectation and wanted to present their people to God - Paul goes on to describe the Philippians as his *crown*²².

²⁰ This same word *Apoleia*, Jesus used in referring to Judas, calling him *son of perdition* (John17¹²). Judas was another type, like Esau, symbolising those who were consumed with the little of this world and gave up God's best to obtain it.

²² Philippians 4¹

appetite which marks out carnal man – driven by his flesh and not by his spirit. Paul is most likely here warning Christians who have been tempted by the Epicurean lifestyle²¹.

In both cases, the legalists or the libertarians, there is a refusal to lay down life which is what is at the heart of the Cross, so they become its enemies.

Paul sums up their one consuming focus, the culmination of all they worked toward and gave their lives for: -

“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.”²³

- ***Minds fixed on earthly things (and worries)***

Paul uses the phrase *enemies of the Cross*. What does he mean by this? Well, the Cross represents the death of all human achievement (we die with Christ, cf. Romans 6).

The enemies of the Cross invest everything in human effort and achievement. In the case of the *dogs* Paul talks about, this is made manifest in their quest for righteousness through physical circumcision.

He is also referring to those who live for today (eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die), consumed by all this world has to offer.

- ***Minds on things above***

Paul urged the Colossians to set their hearts and minds on things above²⁴. What was he saying to them? To always be walking around looking at the heavens? If that was the case we would be of no earthly use. No, Paul was telling them to be mindful of the things unseen so that they become more real to us than the physical world around us.

Abraham was like this when he believed God’s promise over the state of his physical body²⁵. So here we find he tells the Philippians to likewise set their sights on all that is Godly and live accordingly²⁶.

- ***Glory is in their shame***

- ***Glory in Christ Jesus***

²¹ The Epicureans represented a Greek school of philosophy which taught that the satisfaction of the physical appetites was the highest aim of man. Some Christians were fooled by this and allowed Christian liberty to degenerate into licence. Compare Galatians 5¹³.

²³ Colossians 1¹⁸

²⁴ Colossians 3¹⁻⁴

²⁵ Hebrews 11¹¹⁻¹²

²⁶ Philippians 4⁸⁻⁹

This is perhaps even less surprising to us today, where those indulged in what God calls wicked, do so and parade it before society with a sense of pride.

We saw earlier²⁷ how the true circumcision make their boast in Jesus.

5.4.2 The Coming Adoption

We find again Paul confirms our coming transformation. It is something of which the early church always seemed mindful. We saw in section 3.3.4 how this *adoption as sons*²⁸ follows either an intermediate state after death or sometime during our life on this earth he will appear and be seen by every eye and we shall be transformed in an instant to be like him. Paul fills this out just a little more (shame he did not go into more detail!!) here confirming how our *lowly* bodies will be transformed to be just like his!



“... by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”²⁹

Anyone for a new superbody?

The Greek word used here translated transform, *Metaschematizo*, which means to transform the outside appearance of something.

So we ask ourselves, what will that be like? Jesus' new resurrection body could appear and disappear, go through material objects, and ascend to and descend from heaven. He could eat when he chose but did not necessarily have to. His body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death, but able to live eternally³⁰.

5.5 Leaning on ... (4¹⁰⁻¹³)

²⁷ Philippians 3³

²⁸ Romans 8²³

²⁹ Philippians 3²¹

³⁰ Systematic Theology (An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine): - Grudem, W © 1994 Wayne Grudem, published by Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, UK.

We finish our exposition with this last section where Paul once again returns to the warm bond between him and the Philippians. As we have noted already, this church supported Paul when he moved on to Thessalonica³¹ and their gifts and support, through fellow-workers such as Epaphroditus, kept coming.

You may remember one of our aims at the start of our studies was to put familiar passages back into context. Here we have two verses which may be familiar with which we can do just that.

5.5.1 I Can Do All Things ...

Often theologians and expositors get hung up here on whether the “plenty” Paul talks about (in verse 12) here is before he came to know Christ, as a well-off young Jewish Pharisee Zealot who had become a poor tent-maker ever since or as someone who had times of plenty and times of little³². To focus on this is missing Paul’s point – which is not that our circumstances should mirror Paul’s in any way, but that we too should look to be autonomous to our situations *whatever* they are.

Paul was talking about the circumstances he had faced, being humbled at times – here he uses the same word (*Tapeinoo*) as he did of Christ³³ – and at other times having plenty (the Greek word actually means overflowing), but remaining autonomous to it all.

In fact Paul uses a pagan word here imported from the culture into which he was speaking. He says in verse 12, that he has learned the *secret* of being content³⁴. This Greek word *Mueo*, meant to *initiate into the mysteries*, a technical word used by pagans for those being initiated into secret rites. Paul had learned a secret known to few in this world – a complete non-reliance upon people or circumstances.



Was Paul one of the Self-Sufficient Stoics?

Now here we should be careful, after all is this not simply Stoicism that Paul is modelling for us? The Stoics were contemporaries of Paul, who believed that we should be absolutely independent of all things and of all people, a state which could only be reached by mental discipline and self-will³⁵. The Stoics proposed to

³¹ Philippians 4¹⁶

³² These two views are used as supporting pillars in arguments about whether Christians should be constantly poor, wealthy or experiencing times of both during their time on this earth.

³³ Philippians 2⁸

³⁴ *Chortazo* - to feed with herbs, grass, hay, to fill, satisfy with food, to fatten animals.

³⁵ Stoicism was one of the new philosophical movements of the Hellenistic period. The name derives from the porch (*stoa poikilē*) in the Agora at Athens decorated with mural paintings, where the members of the school congregated, and their lectures were held. Unlike ‘epicurean,’ the sense of the English adjective ‘stoical’ is not utterly misleading with regard to its philosophical origins. The Stoics did, in fact, hold that emotions like fear or envy (or impassioned sexual attachments, or passionate love of anything whatsoever) either were, or arose from, false judgements and that the sage--a person who had attained moral and intellectual perfection--would not undergo them. The later Stoics of Roman Imperial times, Seneca

eliminate all desire as true contentment could only be obtained when a man or woman had come to a stage at which nothing and no one were essential to him.

You may well ask why Paul's readers would suspect him of promoting this kind of philosophy? It is his import of one of the great words of pagan ethics, translated here (NIV) as *content* – *autarkēs*, (used nowhere else in the New Testament) which means complete *self-sufficiency*. Once again we find in this letter an alternative philosophy Paul hints at to his readers, which is not the gospel but was trying to replace it – just like the legalists (physical circumcisers!) and the epicureans we saw earlier – Stoicism was also rooted in humanity!

5.5.2 ...Through Him

So Paul is advocating an independence of our circumstances, but does this mean we rely upon ourselves instead? Thankfully Paul qualifies this with his greatest statement of this passage: -

*"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."*³⁶

... Cross Reference

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

2 Peter 1:3

Paul had not learned some secret of the Stoics. He had instead been initiated into a divine secret – Christ-sufficiency! He was deliberately referring to this human philosophy and saying, *oh yes, I agree that we need to be content and unaffected by our circumstances, but this is not achieved through any self-reliance. On the contrary, "Self" must die with him in those steps down into death, we have been raised Christ-dependent through whom we can then do anything because he lives in us!*

and Epictetus, emphasise the doctrines (already central to the early Stoics' teachings) that the sage is utterly immune to misfortune and that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Our phrase 'stoic calm' perhaps encapsulates the general drift of these claims. It does not, however, hint at the even more radical ethical views which the Stoics defended, e.g. that only the sage is free while all others are slaves, or that all those who are morally vicious are equally so. Though it seems clear that some Stoics took a kind of perverse joy in advocating views which seem so at odds with common sense, they did not do so simply to shock. Stoic ethics achieves a certain plausibility within the context of their physical theory and psychology, and within the framework of Greek ethical theory as that was handed down to them from Plato and Aristotle. It seems that they were well aware of the mutually interdependent nature of their philosophical views, likening philosophy itself to a living animal in which logic is bones and sinews; ethics and physics, the flesh and the soul respectively (another version reverses this assignment, making ethics the soul). Their views in logic and physics are no less distinctive and interesting than those in ethics itself [Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy; more at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/#Phil>]

³⁶ Philippians 4¹³

We have now arrived at where Paul wanted us to be – he started with his own troubles and those seeking to hinder the Philippians as well. He wanted to show them the secret he had learned and could not sum it up better than through Christ’s self-offering unto death to be raised to glory, showing them that this was their only course to victory also.

After looking at how that secret worked out through the great examples of saints around them³⁷ and how advocates of the flesh³⁸ in contrast sought their own way, Paul brings them his main point – **they can only truly overcome these things if they have followed Christ down into death.** In writing his second recorded letter to the Corinthians, Paul explained to them how God had used the enemy’s opposition to show Paul this great secret of Christ-sufficiency: -

“But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”³⁹

Ever since Adam and Eve chose independence, when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, men have stumbled around in the dark ever since looking for a way to overcome the world and themselves – to be masters of their own destiny.

For Paul, the answer to this problem – this great divine secret broke in on him as a great light on the road to Damascus, immediately removing his physical sight so that he could see things that God wanted to show him⁴⁰.

5.6 Living to Give (4¹⁴⁻²⁰)

We finish our overview now with another verse that we should put back into context. Paul has frequently made reference to the Philippians’ generosity to him. Here he expands more on this, telling the Philippians that despite his Christ-sufficiency he was glad to receive their gifts – why? Because he wanted them to be blessed by God because of their giving! He did not want them to miss an opportunity to be generous.

... Cross Reference

³⁷ Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus

³⁸ Legalists, Epicureans, or Stoics

³⁹ 2 Corinthians 12⁹⁻¹⁰

⁴⁰ In Acts 9 we find that Paul was blinded by Jesus on the Damascus road and during that time God showed him his destiny.

“You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will recall we noted in our background sweep, in section 2, that the Philippians led the way in this generosity. Here in verse 15, he reminds them that they were alone in supporting him when he was first in Macedonia, but we find only a few years after this when he wrote to the Corinthians, he talks differently about the churches in the region: -

“... we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.”⁴¹

The Philippians had reproduced this generosity in the churches around them - they were leaders by example!! (cf. section 4.4). We should ask ourselves, how did they give beyond their ability to give? Paul gives us the answer here: **it is because of this generosity that he was able to say: -**

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”⁴²

We must remember the context of this verse, for it is a favourite verse to the needy and those seeking comfort in God’s provision. We should be careful we give people the context with it. When we are looking for God’s provision, he is looking for us to be generous with what we have: -

“As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ‘I tell you the truth,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”⁴³



How does God respond to such a generous spirit? For the answer to that let us go back to the context of the letter above where Paul refers to the Macedonian churches: -

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 8¹⁻³

⁴² Philippians 4¹⁹

⁴³ Luke 21¹⁻⁴

⁴⁴ 2 Corinthians 9¹⁰



God gives more seed to the sower! Those who sow - receive the seed from God, not those who don't! The Philippians *lived to give* to the work of the gospel; they were running hard after all that God had called them to and Paul urged them on even harder, as one man with one mind and one purpose⁴⁵, to dive for the finish line in eager expectation of their coming King!

⁴⁵ *omothumadon*