



Peninsula City Church

Finding Joy in Unexpected Places

Philippians: Joy Working through Heavens Currency

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The Letter to the Philippians: Joy Working through Heavens Currency

An Introduction

Q. What is the most valuable currency that you know about?

Have you ever thought about what is the most valuable currency? Now I know that we have things that have sentimental value to us, but they may not have the same value to others. What is meant here is the most valuable currency or commodity at this time. Following is a list of currencies against the US dollar the usual standard. As of today (5th September 2016) the AUD is buying 76 cents see the following list of world currencies as of the 5th of September 2016,¹

1. Kuwait Dinar (KWD): This is the highest value currency in the entire world. The value of is much greater than the US Dollar; hence 1KWD is equivalent to \$3.32 more or less.
2. Bahraini Dinar (BHD): This is the second most valuable and expensive currency in the world and the currency code is represented as BHD. The value of 1 BHD is equivalent to 2.65 USD.
3. Omani Rial (OMR): Oman is legitimately referred to as a sultanate of Oman and is an Arab state located in southwest Asia. The value of 1 OMR is equivalent to \$2.60 USD.
4. Latvian Lats (LVL): Latvia is located in the Baltic region of Northern Europe and Riga is its official capital city. When equated to USD 1 LVL, it is about \$1.61.
5. Jordanian Dinar (JOD): The currency of 1 JOD is equivalent to 1.41 USD.
6. UK Pound Sterling (GBP): The value of 1 GBP is equivalent to 1.33 USD.
7. Cayman Islands Dollar (KYD): Their currency is actually one of the most costly among others since 1 KYD is equal to \$1.22 more or less.
8. European Union Euro (EUR): Formally introduced in the year 1999, this multinational currency didn't begin changing hands up until January in the year 2001. 1 Euro is equal to about \$1.12 USD.
9. Swiss Franc (CHF): The value of this currency is in fact greater than the USD since 1 CHF is equal to \$1.02 more or less depending on the economy of the country.

Then there are commodities like metals or ores. The three most expensive metals in the world as of the 2nd of September 2016 are,²

1. Gold: The value is \$1312 USD per troy ounce (1 troy ounce is 31.1035 grams). To give some idea of this weight, an Australian 50 cent piece weighs 15.55 grams. So, that is just over the combined weight of two 50 cent pieces.
2. Rhodium: The value is \$650 USD per troy ounce. It is a silvery-white metal that is used in jewellery.
3. Platinum: The value is \$1051 USD per troy ounce. "It is used extensively for jewellery. Its main use, however, is in catalytic converters for cars, trucks and buses."³

¹ "Top 10 Most Expensive Currency in The World Today." <http://sassyfeeds.com/top-10-expensive-currency-world-today/> (5th September 2016)

² Quandl. <https://www.quandl.com/collections/markets/rare-metals> (5th September 2016).

³ "The Periodic Table." <http://www.rsc.org/periodic-table/element/78/platinum> (5th September 2016).

However, there is a currency that outstrips these exponentially. It has an impact here on earth, is from heaven. It is mentioned throughout the Bible, but it will be dealt with from the close of the letters Philippians. However, firstly we will need some context for the letter.

1. A brief context for the letter to the Philippians

Q. How would you understand the context of the letter to the Philippians?

In the first message of this series, it was pointed out that the local church at Philippi was the first local church that Paul planted when he landed in Europe. This local church was actually planted by Paul while on his second missionary trip in 49 or 50AD, (Acts 16:6-42). Then in 60 or 61AD while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16-31), he wrote to the Philippian church.

Over the previous weeks we have seen how Paul dealt with topics like:

- Joy found in connecting with others in the gospel: Phil 1:1-11
- Joy found in the maturing work of life's trials: 1:12-30
- Joy in unity through humility: 2:1-18
- Joy in collaboration: 2:19-30
- Joy as Jesus Christ crafts you, His masterpiece: 3:1-4:1
- Joy in the unity and wholeness of heart and mind: 4:2-9

Here the following topic will be dealt with in closing,

- Joy working through the heavens currency: 4:10-23

In the closing section of Paul's letter to the local Philippian church he dealt with the topic of the joy that works through heaven's currency. That is generosity and blessing. Now this may take any form, but it far exceeds anything that is found here on earth. Although, having said that God would often use the things that are found around us to show heavenly generosity that extends as a blessing.

2. Joy in Philippians in generosity and blessing - Phil 4:1-10-20 (the closing of the letter)

Q. How do you understand joy in generosity and blessing?

As pointed out throughout this series, joy in the Lord is a central teaching of the letter. In this closing section that covers Phil 4:10-23, Paul deals with joy in the Lord expressed through generosity and blessing. The whole understanding of this heavenly kind of generosity has been expressed as,

"Simple goodness, which gives itself without reserve, 'without strings attached', 'without hidden agendas' ...ingenuousness"⁴

Paul begins by revealing that he now turns his thoughts to the thoughtful and practical affection shown by his brothers and sisters in the local church when he said,

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived (bloomed or blossom again) your concern (empathy) for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity" (Phil 4:10 ESV).

⁴ James D.G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem: Christianity in the Making*. Vol 2. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 941.

His joy was founded in his relationship with the Lord. But also, that they sought to generously bless him.

Paul then went on to unpack what he meant by this truth. He pointed out the following truths regarding his understanding of the heavenly currency of generosity and blessing when he said,

- Not that I was ever in need: v11
 - For I have come to learn how to be content with whatever I have: v11
 - I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything: v12
 - I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is satisfied with a full stomach or hungry with an empty stomach, with plenty or little: v12
- Because, I can do everything through the strength of Christ, who continually gives (infuses) me strength: v13
 - Even so, you have done a beautiful thing to share (be fellow-partakers) with me in my present difficulty: v14
- Now, as yourself also know: v15
 - Philippians you were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then travelled on from Macedonia. No other church did this: v15
 - Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once: v16
 - I don't say this because I always want gifts from you: v17
 - Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness: v17 (this is where the meaning of Paul's joy lay, in their giving and thereby their accumulating interest to their heavenly account)
- At the moment I have all I need—and more, I have been filled and am full to overflowing: v18
 - I have been generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling fragrance of sacrifice that is acceptable and well-pleasing to God: v18
 - And this same God who takes care of me will supply (satisfy) to the full all your needs in full from His glorious (lavish, or magnificent) riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus: v19
- Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen: v20

The letter closes with Paul's final greetings given and to be given all round. This closing section is full of blessing in heavenly terms. The greeting is filled with Jesus Christ's extravagant and overflowing grace.

- Give my greetings to each of God's holy people—all who belong to Christ Jesus: v21
 - The brothers who are with me send you their greetings: v21
 - And all the rest of God's people send you greetings, too, especially those in Caesar's household: v22
- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit: v23

So, we can see by Paul's closing words to the Philippians that, he was in a place of joyful rest in Jesus Christ. But, in that place, He finds great joy in the Philippians themselves as they bloom again into new life. The evidence of this is joy in their great generosity and blessing in Christ. This generosity is not merely a handout, but rather it is the extravagant heavenly currency that is lavish and utterly magnificent.

Paul says that, in Jesus Christ is a great rest that is undisturbed, unshakable and unflappably content. This is the context that Paul uses the statement that, "I can do everything through the strength of Christ, who continually gives (infuses) me strength," in verse 13. He had learned the secret of living in every situation hidden in Jesus Christ.

So, the Philippian church has the opportunity to live from a place of generosity and blessing is a great joy. He reminds them that their giving is part of the extravagant heavenly currency. It is from this position and in this context that Paul says, this same God who takes care of him will supply to the full all their needs in full from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus, verse 19.

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. As a Christ-follower, do you now know what the most valuable currency is?

If you are a Christ-follower, you already have the joy of the Lord. If you are not a Christ-follower, you can receive the joy of the Lord. Paul highlighted the truth that, joy can be found in Jesus Christ. As a Christ-follower, we can live in joy filled rest that is undisturbed, unshakable and unflappably content. We are not to be those who are dejected and sad, due to the trial that comes our way. Remember that, the Lord is our infused strength. As a Christ-follower, we already have that joy, right now in every situation as we are hidden in Jesus Christ.

This joy is evidence that we have been blessed with His great generosity. This generosity is not merely a handout, but rather it is the extravagant heavenly currency that is lavish and utterly magnificent. Now, it needs to mature, but that will take time and the tests of time that will come our way.

So, when push comes to shove, in light of what has been discussed here, where to from here? Here are a few questions that may help to try to get some direction.

- What do we know now regarding being joyful as recipients and givers of the joy working through heavens currency that we did not know before?
- What new biblical idea about being recipients and givers of the joy working through heavens currency are you going to share with our family, friends, and those in your social circle?
- What action are we going to take RIGHT NOW regarding being recipients and givers of the joy working through heavens currency that has come our way?

That is, what are you prepared to do 'STARTING RIGHT NOW,' or change to put this new knowledge into practice in real-life situations?

It is time to develop real-life solutions & processes from what you have heard today & apply them to your real-world problems, issues & relationships, etc.

So, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.