

## JOY ON THE JOURNEY - Joy in Giving

**Text: Philippians 4:14-23**

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Church, today we come to the end of our *Joy on the Journey* series in Philippians.

And what a beautiful way for Paul to close this letter.

He closes with joy.

He closes with gratitude.

He closes with generosity.

And that matters, because when many people think about giving, they do not immediately think about joy.

They think about pressure.

They think about obligation.

They think about duty.

They think about what they might lose.

But Paul shows us something different.

He shows us that in the kingdom of God, giving is not first about loss.

It is about love.

It is not first about subtraction.

It is about participation.

It is not first about money.  
It is about worship.

**BIG IDEA:** And here is where we are going today: *Joy overflows when grateful hearts offer their time, talents, and treasures to God's mission.*

That is the truth Paul gives us here.

Joy does not grow when we cling tighter.  
Joy grows when we live open-handed before God.

## **OPENING**

Let me start with something many of us have experienced.

Have you ever had a moment where you gave something away, and somehow it felt better than keeping it?

Maybe you helped somebody who was really in need.

Maybe you made room in your schedule for someone who was hurting.

Maybe you used your gifts to serve when nobody else saw it.

Maybe you gave financially to something that you knew mattered to the kingdom of God.

And when it was over, there was something deep in your heart that said, "That was right."

Not just happiness.

Not just excitement.

Something deeper.

Joy.

And yet that is not how the world teaches us to live. The world teaches us to hold on.

Hold on to your money.

Hold on to your time.

Hold on to your energy.

Hold on to your opportunities.

Hold on to your gifts until it is convenient, safe, and beneficial to you.

The world says, "Build your life by protecting what is yours."

But the gospel says something very different.

The gospel says your life is not built by clutching what God has entrusted to you.

Your life is formed by surrendering it back to Him.

That is what Paul is teaching here.

Paul shows us that joy is not found in what we keep.

Joy is found in what we release to God.

Before we go any further, let's hear the Word of the Lord together.

Because everything we're about to talk about today is not built on opinion... it is built on Scripture.

As we read, listen for three movements: how the Philippians partnered in the gospel, how Paul speaks about God's provision, and how their giving becomes worship.

## **INTRO — WHAT ARE WE HOLDING ON TO?**

And that raises a very honest question for all of us.

What are we holding on to?

For some of us, it is our treasure.

We do not mind loving Jesus, but when it comes to our finances, we want control.

For some of us, it is our time.

We are willing to pray, willing to attend, willing to agree, but slow to serve, slow to show up, slow to make room for the work of God in our lives.

For some of us, it is our talents.

God has gifted us, but we keep those gifts in reserve.

We delay obedience.

We keep saying, "Maybe later. Maybe when life slows down. Maybe when I feel more ready."

And underneath all of that is a deeper issue.

It is not really about money.

It is not really about schedule.

It is not really about giftedness.

It is about trust.

Do I trust God enough to release what He has placed in my hands?

Because the truth is, whatever we refuse to surrender often reveals where we are still trying to be our own source.

And Paul writes to the Philippians and says, in effect, "This church understood something beautiful. They did not just believe the gospel. They participated in it."

Before we walk through the passage, let's hear the text together.

**TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 4:14-23**

Paul writes: *14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

This is the Word of the Lord. And in these verses, Paul shows us three movements of joyful generosity:

What we offer, how we trust, and what our lives become.

Before we step into those movements, let's understand the setting.

## **THE CITY OF PHILIPPI — A CHURCH LIVING DIFFERENTLY**

Philippi was a Roman colony. We see that in Acts 16:12.

That means Philippi was shaped by Roman values.

Honor mattered. Status mattered. Security mattered. Citizenship mattered. Power mattered.

It was a city where people understood social standing, personal advancement, and financial importance.

In other words, it was not unlike our world.

And into that kind of culture, the gospel creates a different kind of people.

A people who do not live for status, but for service.

A people who do not live for accumulation, but for generosity.

A people who do not just receive grace, but become channels of grace.

That is the Philippian church.

And Paul points to them as an example of joyful partnership in the gospel.

So here is the first truth Paul teaches us.

## **1. JOY GROWS WHEN WE OFFER OUR LIVES TO GOD'S MISSION**

### **Philippians 4:14-16**

Paul says in verse 14, "Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles."

That word "share" is powerful.

It is the language of fellowship, participation, partnership.

It is the idea that they did not remain distant from Paul's suffering or from Paul's mission.

They entered it.

They joined him in it.

Then Paul says, "Not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only."

What a statement.

Out of all the churches, the Philippians distinguished themselves by their generosity.

And Paul says they sent aid “more than once” when he was in need.

In other words, this was not random generosity.

This was repeated generosity.

This was intentional generosity.

This was a pattern of participation.

Now here is where I want to widen the lens for our church today.

The immediate context of this passage is clearly material support.

Paul is thanking them for financial generosity. That matters, and we should not weaken that point.

But the principle underneath it is bigger than finances alone.

The Philippians did not just send money. They gave themselves to the mission of God.

And that is where this message meets us today.

Because one of the best ways to understand joyful participation in ministry is through these three words:

### **Time. Talents. Treasures.**

We give our treasure through financial generosity.

We give our time through service, presence, prayer, availability, and sacrifice.

We give our talents by using the gifts God has placed in us for the building up of the body and the advance of the gospel.

Paul is praising a church that said, "We do not want to be spectators. We want to be participants."

Church, hear me lovingly today:

The kingdom of God does not move forward through spectators. It moves forward through surrendered people.

It moves forward when somebody says, "You can count on me."

It moves forward when somebody says, "I will show up."

It moves forward when somebody says, "I will use my gifts."

It moves forward when somebody says, "I will give sacrificially."

It moves forward when somebody says, "This is not just their mission. This is our mission."

That is what the Philippians did.

And that is why there was joy in their giving.

Because generosity is not just about what leaves your hand.

It is about how your life joins God's work.

## **TRANSITION**

Now that leads to the next question.

If we are going to offer our lives to God's mission, what gives us the courage to do it?

Because generosity always feels risky to the flesh.

Giving away treasure feels risky.  
Giving away time feels costly.  
Using your gifts can feel vulnerable.

So how do people become open-handed?

Paul shows us the answer in the next movement.

## **2. JOY DEEPENS WHEN WE TRUST GOD AS OUR SOURCE**

### **Philippians 4:17-19**

Paul says in verse 17, "Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account."

That is such an important verse.

Paul is saying, "I am grateful for what you sent, but what thrills me most is not what I received. What thrills me most is what God is producing in you through your generosity."

That is a profound pastoral insight.

Paul is not manipulating them.

He is disciplining them.

He is not centered on getting something from them.

He is centered on seeing God do something in them.

Because generous giving is not only an external act.

It is internal formation.

When we give, God does something in our hearts.

He confronts our fear.

He loosens our grip.

He exposes our idols.

He teaches us trust.

He trains us to live as children of the Father rather than slaves of scarcity.

Then Paul says in verse 18, "I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied."

And then he says in verse 19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

Now this is a verse many people love to quote.

And rightly so.

But remember the context.

Paul is speaking this promise to a generous people.

To people who have released what was in their hands for the sake of God's mission.

This is not prosperity preaching.

This is not a formula.

This is not "give to get."

This is something far deeper and holier.

This is a Father teaching His children that He can be trusted.

When we give our treasure, we are saying, "God, You are my source."

When we give our time, we are saying, "God, You are Lord over my schedule."

When we give our talents, we are saying, "God, these gifts came from You and belong to You."

Every act of generosity becomes an act of trust.

And I want to say this clearly today: one of the greatest spiritual battles in our lives is the battle over source.

Who is my source?

Is my source my bank account?

Is my source my talent?

Is my source my hustle?

Is my source my strategy?

Is my source my control?

Or is my source the living God?

Because until God becomes your source, generosity will always feel terrifying.

But when God becomes your source, generosity becomes worshipful trust.

This is why giving is such a powerful means of grace.

In our Wesleyan understanding, the means of grace are those practices through which God forms and transforms us.

And giving is one of them.

Giving does not earn the favor of God.

Giving opens our lives to the shaping work of God.

God uses generosity to make us more like Jesus.

So let me say it this way:

You do not lose anything in God's hands.

You place it where it can be used for eternal fruit.

## **TRANSITION**

But Paul does not stop with partnership, and he does not stop with provision. He takes us even higher. Because in the end, generosity

is not merely practical. It is not merely financial. It is not merely strategic. Generosity is worship.

## **3. JOY OVERFLOWS WHEN OUR LIVES BECOME WORSHIP**

### **Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16**

Paul says at the end of verse 18, "They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God."

That is temple language. That is worship language.

Paul takes their material gift and says, "Do you know what this really is? This is not just support. This is sacrifice. This is not just assistance. This is an offering. This is pleasing to God."

In other words, what left their hands rose to heaven.

That is such a beautiful picture.

Their generosity was received by Paul, but it was ultimately offered to God.

Church, this matters so much. Because when we think of worship, we often think only of singing.

And singing is worship.

Prayer is worship. Praise is worship. Lifting our hands is worship.

But Paul reminds us that generosity is worship too.

When you serve faithfully, that is worship.

When you show up and make time for the work of God, that is worship.

When you use your gifts to strengthen the body, that is worship.

When you give sacrificially to the mission of Jesus, that is worship.

Romans 12 says that we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:16 says, "Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

That means your life can become an offering.

Your time can become an offering.

Your gifts can become an offering.

Your treasure can become an offering.

And when that happens, joy overflows.

Why?

Because you were not made merely to consume.

You were made to worship. You were not made merely to hold things. You were made to offer your life to God. And the deepest joy of the Christian life is found there.

## **TRANSITION TO GOSPEL CENTER**

Now before we challenge ourselves to give, serve, and surrender, we have to anchor this message in the gospel.

Because if we are not careful, a message like this can become moralism.

Try harder.

Give more.

Serve more.

Do better.

But Christian generosity does not start with what we offer to God. It starts with what God has offered to us in Christ.

## **THE GOSPEL CENTER — JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE GIVER**

The reason we can live generously is because Jesus first gave Himself for us.

Second Corinthians 8:9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

Jesus gave His life.  
Jesus gave His blood.  
Jesus gave His righteousness.  
Jesus gave His peace.  
Jesus gave us access to the Father.

So we do not give to earn love. We give because we have received love. We do not give to manipulate God. We give because grace has transformed us. We do not serve to prove ourselves. We serve because Christ has already taken hold of us.

Every act of Christian generosity is a response to the generosity of Jesus.

So if you are here today and your heart is closed, do not first stare at your hands. Look at the cross. Because at the cross, you see the most generous act in human history.

You see the Son of God giving Himself for sinners.

And when that grace gets down into your heart, it changes you.

Closed hands begin to open.  
Fear begins to loosen.  
Self-protection begins to fade.  
And joy begins to rise.

## **THE SECRET OF JOY**

And do not miss this: Paul writes all of this from prison.

He is not writing from comfort. He is not writing from ease. He is not writing from abundance in worldly terms. And yet he is full of joy.

Why?

Because joy is not rooted in circumstances. Joy is rooted in Christ.

And when your life is anchored in Christ, generosity no longer feels like death. It feels like freedom.

## **CHALLENGE**

So now let me bring this home with a direct challenge.

Church, this message cannot remain abstract. We cannot say, "Amen, that was good," and then leave unchanged.

This text calls for response. Not vague inspiration. Not general agreement. Concrete response.

So let me ask you plainly: Where is God calling you to greater generosity?

Is it in your **time**?

You love Jesus, but your life is so guarded that there is little room for service, little room for discipleship, little room for showing up for the mission of God.

For some of you, the challenge today is simple: stop saying you care about ministry while refusing to make time for it.

## Is it in your **talents**?

God has gifted you, but you have kept those gifts on the sidelines.

You know you can teach.

You know you can lead.

You know you can encourage.

You know you can organize.

You know you can welcome.

You know you can pray.

You know you can disciple.

But you have buried what God gave you.

For some of you, the challenge today is this: stop waiting for perfect timing and start offering what God already placed in you.

## Is it in your **treasure**?

For some of you, the most direct application of this text is financial generosity.

Not because the church wants something from you, but because God wants something for you.

And maybe the truth is, you love the idea of trusting God, but when it comes to your money, fear still has too much power.

For some of you, the challenge today is this: stop treating generosity like an occasional emotional impulse and begin practicing it as a joyful act of worship and trust.

Let me say it even more clearly.

If Jesus is Lord, then He is Lord over your calendar. He is Lord over your gifts. He is Lord over your finances. And anything we keep back from Him reveals an area where surrender is still incomplete.

This is not condemnation. This is invitation. But it is a serious invitation. Because a church that withholds its time, talents, and treasures will never fully experience the joy of participating in the mission of God.

And a believer who insists on living closed-handed will eventually find that closed hands cannot receive much from God either.

Do not leave this sermon with a feeling. Leave with a decision. A real decision.

Where will you say yes? Will you commit your time? Will you offer your talents? Will you trust God with your treasure? Not someday. Now.

## **RESPONSE**

So I want us to respond before the Lord.

Let me ask you three honest questions.

What are you still holding back from God? Where is God asking you to trust Him more deeply? What would open-handed obedience look like for you this week?

- Maybe your prayer today is, "Lord, I will serve."
- Maybe your prayer today is, "Lord, I will step into ministry."

- Maybe your prayer today is, "Lord, I will trust You with my resources."
- Maybe your prayer today is, "Lord, my whole life is Yours."
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## **MOVE TO THE ALTER WITH A GIFT TO THE LORD**

- "Jesus, teach me to live open-handed."
- "Jesus, I trust You as my source."
- "Jesus, my time belongs to You."
- "Jesus, my gifts belong to You."
- "Jesus, my treasure belongs to You."
- "Jesus, make my whole life an offering."

Take a moment and bring that before the Lord.

## **CLOSING**

Church, one day we will stand before Jesus. And on that day, we will not wish we had clung tighter to temporary things.

We will not wish we had protected ourselves from every cost of obedience. We will not wish we had stored up more comfort while giving less of ourselves to the kingdom of God.

On that day, we will see clearly that every hour surrendered to Jesus was worth it.

Every gift offered to Jesus was worth it.

Every dollar released for the mission of Jesus was worth it.

Every act of service, every sacrifice, every hidden obedience, every open-handed yes was worth it.

Because the joy was never in what we kept. The joy was always in what we released for the glory of God.

So remember this, church:

Joy grows when we offer our lives to God's mission.

Joy deepens when we trust God as our source.

Joy overflows when our lives become worship.

So let us be a people who do not merely admire generosity.

Let us be a people marked by it.

Let us give our time.

Let us give our talents.

Let us give our treasures.

And let us discover again that joyful giving is not losing our lives. It is finding them in Christ.

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, thank You for giving Yourself for us. Thank You for the cross. Thank You for grace. Thank You that You are our provider, our portion, and our peace. Forgive us for the ways we cling to what You have entrusted to us. Forgive us for closed hands, fearful hearts, and delayed obedience. Teach us to trust You more. Teach us to live open-handed. Help us to offer our time, our talents, and our treasures for Your glory. Make us a generous

church. Make us a joyful church. Make our whole lives a fragrant offering, pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.