

Lesson 10 Philippians 4:10-23*Lessons 1-9 in Review***Lesson One****Chapter 1:1-8**

Paul expressed his joyful thankfulness for the join-participation of the Philippians in the gospel. Paul did not correct their doctrine in this letter. This caused Paul to be confident that He who began a good work in them would be faithful to complete it.

Lesson Two**Chapter 1:9-18**

Paul prayed for them that their love would abound still more and more in real knowledge and discernment. He told them that his current state of being under guard turned out for the progress of the gospel. Those who held him prisoner heard the gospel. Another good result was that those who weren't in prison were bolder to preach the gospel. He spoke of those who were preaching the true gospel but not for the best of motives, but even so, he rejoiced that Christ was proclaimed.

Lesson Three**Chapter 1:19-30**

"For me to live is Christ. To die is gain." These are very much the focus of Paul's letter to them. Paul rejoiced because he believed that Christ would be exalted in his body, whether by life or by death. For Paul to die would mean he could be with Christ. If he lived, he could go on sharing the gospel. His choice was to live on so that he could continue to minister to them. Paul asked them to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; in other words to "behave as citizens" of the gospel, and to strive together for the faith of the gospel. He encouraged them to not be alarmed by their opponents. He reminded them that they had not only been granted the privilege of believing in Him, but of suffering for His sake.

Lesson Four**Chapter 1:1-11**

Paul instructed them that since there is encouragement in Christ, since there is consolation of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, since there is affection and compassion; to make his joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, to be united in spirit, and intent on one purpose. Don't live focusing on yourself. Regard others more important than yourself. Look out for other's interests, not just yours. This comes from having the same attitude as Christ had. He left heaven and humbled himself in the form of a man, even to the point of death on a cross. (This does NOT mean He emptied himself of His deity. He was God in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us.) Because Jesus humbled Himself, God highly exalted Him and gave Him THE name that is above every name. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is God to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11 Wuest Expanded Translation

Because of which voluntary act of supreme self-renunciation, God also super-eminently exalted Him to the highest rank and power, and graciously bestowed upon Him THE NAME, the one which is above every name, in order that in recognition of THE NAME belonging to Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and of things under the earth, and in order that every tongue should plainly and openly declare that Jesus Christ is LORD, resulting in the glory of God the Father.

Lesson Five**Chapter 2:12-18**

Because God was at work in the Philippians to both want to do God's will and to do God's will, He encouraged them to work out their own salvation (work out/walk out what was already accomplished in them) with fear and trembling (an expression of respect, not dread).

*Let us be clear first of all as to what this exhortation does not mean. It does not mean to work for one's salvation, and for two reasons; first, Paul was writing to those who were already saved, and second, **salvation is not a work of man for God, but a work of God for man, a work that was accomplished at the Cross.**-Wuest*

*It almost seems like He's gone too far. Truly God is demonstrating here what one might call "hyper-grace"! Wasn't it enough that He humbled Himself to the point of the cross? What amazing grace that goes with us into living out our salvation that he would give us both divine **DESIRE** and divine **ABILITY** to please Him.-cdhildebrand*

Paul encouraged them (because of what God has accomplished) to do all things without murmuring and disputing with each other. Compared to this crooked and perverse world in which we live (who is constantly grumbling and complaining) we stand out as lights. He told them to hold fast to the word of life—the gospel. For Paul, if they did not do this, it would be as if he'd labored in vain among them. Paul was pouring his life out as a sacrifice for them and he rejoiced in this and shared his joy with them. He encouraged them to do likewise.

Lesson Six

Chapter 2:19-3:3

Paul told the Philippians that he was sending Timothy who was like Paul in that he sought the interests of others, not his own. Timothy served Paul as a child serves his father. Afterward, he hoped to visit them himself. In the meantime he would send Epaphroditus whom he called a fellow worker and fellow soldier, a minister to his need, and their messenger. Epaphroditus had been sick unto death making up for what the Philippians were unable to do. God had mercy on him and healed him averting much sorrow by both Paul and the Philippians. Paul sent him so that they could see he was well. He encouraged them to receive him in high regard because of the sacrifices he'd made and to hold people like him in high regard. Again, Paul encouraged the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord. He didn't mind repeating himself. Repetition is a safeguard for us. He warned them to be "constantly observing with a view to avoiding" (Wuest) the Judaizers whom he referred to as dogs, evil workers, and the false circumcision. He assured them that he and they, the Philippians, were the true circumcision—who worship in the Spirit and glory in Christ Jesus putting no confidence in the flesh.

Lesson Seven

Chapter 3:4-16

Paul shared how that if anyone could put his confidence in their flesh, he more than anyone. Then he gave his religious pedigree and accomplishments, even saying that according to the righteousness that is in the law, he was blameless. Paul said that he gave up his righteousness based on the law so that he could receive the righteousness based on faith in Christ.

For Paul it is a theological truism that grace and self-confidence are in radical antithesis; grace plus anything cancels out grace.-Fee

Gaining Christ, being found in Him, knowing him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death, and attaining to the resurrection from the dead are all received when we receive righteousness by faith (when we are saved). In other words, these are not things Paul was trying to obtain...they were things he did obtain when he gave up law-based righteousness.

Being righteous and knowing Jesus are inseparable.

It is because we are righteous BY FAITH that we know Jesus.

In verse 12 Paul addressed the topic of our perfection AND taking hold of the thing for which Christ took hold of Him. He was not discussing salvation here or obtaining righteousness. Even our perfection is His doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

In verses 13-14, Paul talked about the “goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”. Paul’s goal and ministry was to “testify of the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24). He pressed toward that goal until the day he died.

Lesson Eight

Chapter 3:15-4:1

Hebrews 10:14 says that we are perfected (telieoo) forever, and Paul says in Philippians 1:6 that God will be faithful to complete (epiteleio) what he started. This confuses some. Are we perfected or are we not?

Using Hebrews 10:14 and Philippians 1:6 we can conclude that we are both perfected (telieoo) in regard to everything Jesus accomplished on the cross, and subsequently brought to a state of completion (epiteleio), which most certainly refers to our maturation, or one might say, to fulfilling what Jesus already accomplished. C. D. Hildebrand AWPAG¹

Paul encouraged them to follow his example and the examples of those like him. The he told them weeping (heavily crying out) that there were also bad examples, those who were “enemies of the cross of Christ”. This deep crying gives rise to the likelihood that these were believers, people whom he knew, who were not only not reaching forward, but were going back. False teaching will stunt our growth and even cause us to go backwards, becoming “estranged from Christ” and “falling from grace. The thought of any believer being “an enemy of the cross of Christ” is unthinkable, yet, there are believers, even those who seem to understand the gospel of grace, who use “grace” as a license to sin. This deception is as powerful as the one that teaches we need to perfect ourselves by not sinning.

Next, Paul spoke of the joys that were to come. He stated their citizenship is in heaven, and that they eagerly waited for a Savior who would transform their mortal body into an immortal one by His glorious power. In doing so, they stand firm in the Lord which means to persevere. We are to stand firm in the faith (not law), in our current maturity (not subjecting ourselves to sin), and against the enemy. Paul called them his “joy and his crown”

1 Thessalonians 2:19

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

Lesson Nine

Chapter 4:2-9

Paul spoke to both Eudoia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. They were women who labored with Paul in the gospel. He asks Syzygus to help them. He spoke of the book of life where all the names of those who have faith in Christ are written. He told them to rejoice again and then again.

¹ AWPAG: Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel?

In the midst of their present adversity, the Lord, to whom they belong, has graciously set them free for joy – always. At the same time others should know them for their "gentle forbearance" toward one another and toward all, including those who are currently making life miserable.-Fee

Verse 4:6 “The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made know to God.”

How do we deal with situations that cause us to be anxious?

- a. Recognize that the Lord is at hand. He is near. In the Greek this sentence could go with either the one before it or the one after.
- b. Be anxious for NOTHING. Nothing means nothing. Not one thing.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING. TELL GOD WHAT YOU WANT. THEN THANK HIM.

Verse 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Some people never discover the joys of verse 7 because instead of doing what instructed to do in verse 6, they continue to be anxious about whatever it is they face. They “pray about it”, but don’t take the recommended steps in order to find peace. So, they *don’t* find peace. They just keep worrying. Only in the doing of verse 6 can you experience the peace in verse 7.-cdh

The words "shall keep," are from a military word, "shall mount guard." God's peace, like a sentinel, mounts guard and patrols before the heart's door, keeping worry out.-Wuest

Stop perpetually worrying about even one thing, but in everything, by prayer whose essence is that of worship and devotion, and by supplication which is a cry for your personal needs, let your requests with thanksgiving for the things asked for be made known in the presence of God, and the peace of God which surpasses all power of comprehension, shall mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.-Wuest Expanded Translation

Instead of meditating (thinking repeatedly) on our troubles, we are to meditate on (think repeatedly about) these things.

Verse 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Paul was not just teaching theory here. The things he told them to do, he did. The Philippians heard and saw these things in him.

We have both the peace of God and the God of peace.

Verse 10

*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.*²

10. This isn't the first time the Philippians have sent provision for Paul.
- a. "I rejoiced greatly": Paul could have simply said that he rejoiced, but he uses the adverb "greatly".
 - b. Used only here in the New Testament, "flourished again" is *anathallo*, "to flourish anew" (*ana*, "again, anew," *thallo*, "to flourish or blossom"), hence, "to revive," is used metaphorically in Phi_4:10, RV, "ye have revived (your thought for me)," KJV, "(your care of me) hath flourished again."
 - *The NKJV brings out the meaning nicely. It's almost as if their care for Paul is a living plant that blossoms and brings forth fruit.*³
V 4:10 NKVJ
But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again
 - c. The word "concern" (*phroneō*) has to do with taking thought, not being anxious as in verse 6 (see Wuest below).
 - d. "As noted, Paul's greater joy is in what the gift represents – tangible evidence of the rejuvenation of 'friendship'," Fee
 - e. "Lacked opportunity" is *akairēomai* (*ak-ahee-reh'-om-ahee*)
From a compound of G1 (as a negative particle) and G2540 (meaning unseasonable); to be inopportune (for oneself), that is, to fail of a proper occasion: - lack opportunity.

The words "hath flourished," are the translation of a word found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in the clause, "have made the dry tree to flourish" (Ezek. 17:24). It means "to sprout, to blossom again." Vincent translates, "Ye caused your thinking on me to bloom anew, ye revived your thought for me." Alford translates, "Ye budded forth again in caring for my interest." Expositor's offers the rendering, "You let your care for me blossom into activity again." The word "but" arrests a subject which is in danger of escaping. It was concerning the gift which the Philippians had sent by Epaphroditus. Paul had in a most delicate way thanked them in 1:3-5, using a definite article before the adverb "now," the article being a Pauline finger pointing to the gift. And while the apostle mentions the gift in so many words now, yet he is most careful in his treatment of the matter in hand, because of the base slanders that had been directed against him in the churches of Corinth and Macedonia, slanders to the effect that Paul made the gospel a means of livelihood. "Wherein" could be rendered "about whom," referring to Paul, or "in which," referring to Paul's wants. The words "were careful" are from a Greek word speaking of the act of taking thought, not from the Greek word translated "be careful" of verse six. Translation: But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that already once more you let your care for me blossom into activity again, in which matter you were all along thoughtful, but you never had an opportunity.-WUEST

² All Scripture is quoted from the NASB, unless otherwise noted.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all definitions are taken from Strong's.

Verses 11

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

11. Paul is not writing this because he needs their help.
 - a. Paul would not have asked for their help because he had learned contentment in all circumstances.
 - b. “Content” isn’t necessarily how we might think of as a state of mind, but has to do with being self-sufficient, only Paul’s contentment/sufficiency was in Christ (see v 13).
 - “Content” is “autarkēs”; *self-sufficient, sufficient*: - content (1).-Vine’s

The words "have learned" are in a construction in the Greek which speaks of entrance into a new condition. It is, "I have come to learn." Paul had not always known that. He had been reared in the lap of luxury, and had never known want as a young man. The "I" is emphatic. It is, "I, for my part, whatever others may feel."-Wuest

The word "content" is the translation of a Greek word used by the Stoic school of philosophy which taught that man should be sufficient to himself for all things. It means "to be independent of external circumstances." It speaks of self-sufficiency and competency. But Paul's self-sufficiency was not of the Stoic kind. It was Christ-sufficiency. Paul's independence was not Stoic independence, but dependence upon Christ. He found his sufficiency in Christ. He was independent of circumstances because he was dependent upon Christ. Translation: It is not that I speak as regards want, for, so far as I am concerned, I have come to learn, in the circumstances in which I am placed, to be independent of these and self-sufficient.-Wuest

He has just urged them not to be anxious about anything, but to leave their situation in God's care, who as "the God of peace" will keep their hearts and minds in Christ. Paul now models what that means, that in Christ one can truly know "contentment" in any and all circumstances. Fee

Verse 12

I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

12. During Paul’s life/ministry, he had experienced living with humble means and living in prosperity. He knew how to “get along” in either.
 - a. “Humble means” has to do with humiliation.
 - “Tapeinoo” signifies "to make low, bring low," (a) of bringing to the ground, making level, reducing to a plain.-Vine’s

After thanking the Philippian saints for their gift in 4:10, Paul, in view of the slanders to the effect that he was making the gospel a means of his livelihood, informs them in 4:11 that he has come to learn, in the circumstances in which he is placed, to be independent of these and self-sufficient. That being the case, he certainly is not bending any efforts at making money in gospel preaching, attempting to meet the requirements of a certain standard of life. In 4:12, he tells them that he knows how

to suffer hunger and how to enjoy affluence. The words "to be abased" are the translation of the Greek word which is rendered "humbled" in 2:8, and "vile" in 3:21, and means "to make low, to humble, to humiliate." The expression refers to Paul's ability to keep himself low as respects the needs of the daily life. Paul thus assured the saints that he knew how to live on a very small income. -Wuest

- b. While at times Paul lived abased. He also had seasons of superabundance. "Abound" is "perisseuō", (per-is-syoo'-o) to superabound (in quantity or quality), be in excess, be superfluous; also (transitively) to cause to superabound or excel: - (make, more) abound, (have, have more) abundance, (be more) abundant, be the better, enough and to spare, exceed, excel, increase, be left, redound, remain (over and above).
- c. "Being filled/full": chortazo "to fill or satisfy with food"-Vine's
- d. As a result of his ministry, Paul suffered. "Going hungry", peinao, "to hunger, be hungry, hungered,"-Vine's
2 Corinthians 11:22-27
Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. ²³Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—
- e. Paul repeats the word "superabound" in order to contrast it with being in need. Thus to "suffering need" is the opposite of "superabounding". "Hustereō" (hoos-ter-eh'-o); to be later, that is, (by implication) to be inferior; genitively to fall short (be deficient): - come behind (short), be destitute, fall, lack, suffer need, (be in) want, be the worse.

"I have learned the secret" of what it means "both to be well fed or go hungry, both to abound and to be in need." Although the verb "learn the secret" is primarily a technical term for initiation into the mysteries, Paul is obviously using it metaphorically. Fee

Here is his way of handling the warning to Israel given in Deuteronomy 8 that they not forget the Lord once they have experienced plenty. Thus, this passage is not an expression of Stoicism, not even a christianized version of the Stoic ideal; rather, it is but another of scores of such passages that indicate the absolute Christ-centeredness of Paul's whole life. Fee

Verse 13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

- 13. This verse does not stand alone. It is deeply connected to what Paul has been talking about. When Paul says that he can do all things, he is clearly referring to being able to live in any circumstance produced as a result of being in ministry.

- a. How is it that he could be content-sufficient in superabundance or in need? It is through Jesus who strengthened him.
- b. No matter what we go through in life, Jesus is why we can go through it. He is the source of our always-contentment.

The worst expression of this abuse occurs with v. 13, which is sometimes made to say that "I can do all things (especially extraordinary things) through Christ who strengthens me." Very often the application takes a form exactly the opposite of Paul's – with a bit of v. 19 thrown into the mix, "when in want I shall receive plenty" because of my relationship with Christ. Paul's point is that he has learned to live in either want or plenty through the enabling of Christ. Being in Christ, not being self-sufficient, has rendered both want and wealth of little or no significance. Experience in the church should teach one what the Stoics themselves recognized, that either "want" or "wealth" can have deleterious affect on one's life, those in "want" because their "want" consumes them, those in "wealth" because their "wealth" does the same. The net result is a tragically small person. Fee

- c. This verse is widely used by Christians as an encouragement that we can do anything, but is this what Paul is saying? Can we really do anything? Logic would teach us that no, we can't. Can we do anything He calls us to do? Absolutely. Can we get through difficult times? Yes, we can. How so? Through Christ who strengthens us.

AMPLIFIED

I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].

After thanking the Philippian saints for their gift in 4:10, Paul, in view of the slanders to the effect that he was making the gospel a means of his livelihood, informs them in 4:11 that he has come to learn, in the circumstances in which he is placed, to be independent of these and self-sufficient. That being the case, he certainly is not bending any efforts at making money in gospel preaching, attempting to meet the requirements of a certain standard of life. In 4:12, he tells them that he knows how to suffer hunger and how to enjoy affluence. The words "to be abased" are the translation of the Greek word which is rendered "humbled" in 2:8, and "vile" in 3:21, and means "to make low, to humble, to humiliate." The expression refers to Paul's ability to keep himself low as respects the needs of the daily life. Paul thus assured the saints that he knew how to live on a very small income. The words "to abound" are the rendering of a Greek word which means "to overflow." Thus, Paul knew what it was to live on a little, and also to have more than he could use. The words "I am instructed" are from a technical word in the initiatory rites of the pagan mystery religions, literally, "I have been initiated," or, "I have learned the secret." The word is used in the New Testament of something which, while it may be obscure in nature or kept hidden in the past, is now revealed. The words "to be full" are from a very strong word in the original. It was used of the feeding of animals. It means in this connection, "to be filled," and so "to fatten like an animal." It means "to be satiated." Translation: I know in fact how to keep myself low; I know in fact how to have more than enough. In everything and in all things I have learned the secret, both to be

satiated and to be hungry, and to have more than enough and to lack. I am strong for all things in the One who constantly infuses strength in me.-WUEST

Verse 14

Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

14. Paul has just spoken of his sufficiency found in Christ. In other words, with or without the help of anyone, he could do what God called him to do. BUT, he hasn't had to "go it alone" because the Philippians have been faithfully supporting him. In this way, they have shared/fellowshipped in His afflictions.
- a. "Done well": You have done a beautiful goodness (see Wuest below).
 - b. "Shared with" is *sugkoinōneō* (*soong-koy-no-neh'-o*) From [G4862](#) and [G2841](#); to share in company with, that is, co-participate in: - communicate (have fellowship) with, be partaker of.
 - c. "Affliction" is *thlipsis* (*thlip'-sis*); pressure (literally or figuratively): - afflicted, (-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.
Vine's: "to suffer affliction, to be troubled," has reference to sufferings due to the pressure of circumstances, or the antagonism of persons, when used of the present experience of believers, refer almost invariably to that which comes upon them from without.

The word "notwithstanding," he includes, lest in declaring his independence of human aid, he should seem to disparage the gift of the Philippian church. The word "well" is the translation of the Greek word for "good" which refers to a beautiful goodness. The phrase "ye have done well" is in the Greek the equivalent of our present day "You did a beautiful thing" when you did that." The Greek word translated "communicate" means "to make one's self a fellow partaker in common with." The Philippians made themselves fellow-partakers with Paul in his needs. They made themselves responsible for the satisfying of his needs. The words "with my affliction," tell us that it was not the actual gift so much as the sympathy and fellowship of the Philippian saints in his sorrow, which the great apostle valued. Translation: All the same, you did a beautiful thing when you made yourselves fellow-partakers with my tribulation.-WUEST

Verses 15-16

You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

15. After Paul left the area of Macedonia (keep in mind that Philippi was in Macedonia), the Philippian church was the only one who supported Paul financially.
- a. Notice here that Paul uses the term "church" here to refer to different gatherings of people.

Three things lie behind the sentence: that "giving and receiving" is the first mark of friendship in the Greco-Roman world; that they had had a long history of "giving" to him (as vv. 15-16 make clear); that, as the various elements of this sentence indicate,

some (probably considerable) time has elapsed since they had last ministered to his needs in this way. Fee

16. The Thessalonians church was prosperous, but perhaps were not helping him.

The word "now" marks the transition to his first experience of their generosity. In effect he said to them, "But this is no new thing, for you have always been generous." Again, the word "communicated" means "to make one's self a fellow-partaker with someone else," and here refers to the act of the Philippians in making themselves fellow-partakers with Paul in the responsibility of spreading the gospel. The words "giving and receiving" are a business term referring to the credit and debit side of the ledger. The Philippian saints owed Paul much since he was the one who won them to the Lord and nurtured them in the Faith. Thus, Paul had certain credits on their ledger which they were obligated to honor. Paul referred to a like thing in 1 Corinthians 9:11, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" meaning by carnal things, material things. The phrase, "the beginning of the gospel," refers to the time when Paul first preached the Word to them about ten years previously. He speaks of Thessalonica, a much wealthier church. The Philippians had sent aid to Paul while he was in that city ministering to that church. Translation: But, you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the beginning of the gospel, when I went out from Macedonia, not even one assembly made itself a partner with me as regards an account of giving and taking except you only, that even in Thessalonica more than once you sent to relieve my necessities.-WUEST

As far as we have records to guide us, in Philippi alone among his churches did he accept patronage while present with them, in this case in the household of Lydia. When he went on to Thessalonica, he chose a different course, deliberately "working with his own hands" so as to set such a model before the Thessalonians (2 Thess 3: 7-10), a practice he continued when he went to Corinth (1 Cor 4: 12). Fee

Satan has three hounds with which he pursues those in ministry: pride, money, and sex⁴. Money is surely not the least of these. It is therefore of some interest for us to note how sensitive Paul is on this matter. He can scarcely speak about it, and especially his relationship to receiving it, without offering a demurrer such as one finds in v. 17. This may well account for his (apparent) change of policy when he got to Thessalonica. There were enough itinerant religious and philosophical hucksters about, who, according to Dio Chrysostom, "used flattery as a cloak for greed" (cf. 1 Thess 2: 4), for Paul to set out on a different course of maintenance upon leaving Philippi. Fee

Verse 17

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

17. The reason Paul is writing this, IS NOT to receive money from them. Even in encouraging them to give, he is doing so for their good.

Paul is still defending himself against the slanderous assertion that he is using the gospel as a means of livelihood, when he says, "Not that I desire a gift." The word "desire" is in the present tense which usually indicates habitual action. Alford translates it here, "Not that it is my character or habit to seek." The word "gift" has

⁴ We would add a fourth: power!

the definite article, Paul again using it as in 1:5 to point to the particular gift which the Philippian church had just sent. The words "may abound to your account" are terms used in the money-markets of the day, namely, "interest which may accumulate to your account." Translation: Not that it is my character to be ever seeking the gift, but I am seeking the fruit which is accumulating to your account. -WUEST

Thus he concludes that money – material support of his own needs – is ultimately irrelevant; what counts is what God is doing in their lives. Their gift serves as evidence of "fruitfulness" that will only gain interest toward their eschatological "reward." In an oppressively materialistic culture, these words are written off as saccharine spirituality – or "sour grapes" – so as to justify ongoing greed. Fee

b. Abounds to what account?

→ "Account" is "logos", "a word or saying," also means "an account which one gives by word of mouth".

→ "The words 'may abound to your account' are terms used in the money-markets of the day, namely, "interest which may accumulate to your account."-WUEST

- Most commentaries believe this "account" has to do with an account they will have when they stand before the Lord for all the good they have done toward Paul.

Matthew 10:40-42

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. ⁴¹ He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. ⁴² And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

- Others believe this has to do with reaping earthly rewards.

Luke 6:38

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

1 Corinthians 9:6-9

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. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹ As it is written:

"He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever."

- Some see the fruit which will abound to their account being the fruit of the furtherance of the gospel in their name.

1 Corinthians 9:10-15 (in context, continued from previous scripture)

¹⁰ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹ while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. ¹² For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings

to God, ¹³ while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, ¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

- Perhaps it is all of these.

Verse 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.

- 18. Verse 18 is an astounding statement considering that Paul was under house arrest.** How this must have thrilled the hearts of the Philippians to know that their gift not only had arrived, but that Paul was delighted by it; and not Paul only, but that God Himself was pleased with their gift. Giving to Paul was received by God as giving to God.

The picture is that of the "aroma" of the sacrificial fire wafting heavenward – into God's "nostrils," as it were. Properly offered, it becomes "an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to him." This, Paul says, is what their gift has amounted to from the divine perspective. Fee

And now Paul signs a receipt for the gift they sent him, possibly a bit of apostolic humor. The words "I have" are a rubber-stamp of the first century for, "I give you a receipt for what you sent me," or "I have received in full." The word "abound" in the Greek speaks of that which exists in superfluity. The Philippian gift must have been generous, and Epaphroditus must have been loaded down. What a demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit is seen in this act of generosity on the part of these former pagans, performed for one who in origin, training, and religion had been and in some ways was still so different from them, different in a sense which would naturally militate against Paul, Gentiles of the proudest and most exclusive race of antiquity, the intelligentsia of the world, loving one who belonged to a race that was looked down upon and despised.

Then Paul says, "I am full." The verb is in that wonderfully descriptive Greek tense, the perfect. Paul said in this one Greek word, "I have been filled full and at present am well supplied." How the Greek language is able to compress so much into one word! The words "an odor of a sweet smell" are used in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, of the odors of the Levitical sacrifices. The word "sacrifice" is the Greek word used of these sacrifices. Paul wished to invest the gift of the Philippians with the sacredness of the Jewish sacrifices. Indeed, a gift to an apostle or spiritual teacher in the early Church, seems to have been regarded as an offering to God. Translation: But I have all things to the full and overflowing. I have been filled completely full and at present am well supplied, having received at the hands of Epaphroditus the things from you, a scent of sweet savor, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.-WUEST

With a considerable change of metaphors, Paul suggests that the ultimate recipient of their service to Paul is none other than the living God. Their material gift to Paul functioned as a sacrificial offering to God. Fee

Verse 19

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

19. The best understanding of this verse is that the Philippians had given generously to Paul. Paul could not repay them for their generosity, but God would.

But having now "received" their gift, it is Paul's turn to reciprocate, which he does beginning in v. 17. The gift itself, he reminds them (cf. v. 11), is incidental; what he desires is for them to experience "an ever-increasing balance in their [divine] account" (= divine reciprocation), which in this first instance has to do with eschatological reward. Present "reciprocation" is promised in v. 19, now in terms of God supplying their various needs (including material ones). Fee

Friendship presupposes reciprocity, mutual giving and receiving . This sentence is a master stroke. Although he cannot reciprocate in kind, since their gift had the effect of being a sweet-smelling sacrifice, pleasing to God, Paul assures them that God, whom he deliberately designates as "my God," will assume responsibility for reciprocity. Fee

Referring back to their meeting his "need" from v. 16, he indicates that God himself will pick up Paul's end of the reciprocity by meeting all their needs. Fee

First, he promises that God's reciprocation will cover "every need of yours," especially their material needs, as the context demands – but also every other kind of need, as the language demands. Fee

In the midst of their "poverty " (2 Cor 8: 2), God will richly supply their material needs . In their present suffering in the face of opposition (1 :27-30), God will richly supply what is needed (steadfastness, joy, encouragement). In their "need" to advance in the faith with one mindset (1: 25; 2: 1-4; 4: 2-3), God will richly supply the grace and humility necessary for it. In the place of both "grumbling" (2 :14) and "anxiety" (4: 6), God will be present with them as the "God of peace" (4: 7, 9). "My God," Paul says , will act for me in your behalf by "filling to the full all your needs." Fee

They are his "in glory" in the sense that his "riches" exist in the sphere of God's glory, where God "dwells" in infinite splendor and majesty, the "glory" that is his as God alone. It is "in keeping with" all of this – not "out of" his riches, but in accordance with this norm, the infinite "riches" of grace that belong to God's own glory – that God's full supply will come their way to meet their every need. Fee

Verse 20

Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

When one thinks on the "riches of God" lavished on us in Christ Jesus, what else is there to do but to praise and worship? Christ is indeed the focus of everything that God has and is doing in this world and the next, but God the Father is always the first and last word in Paul's theology. "My God" is now "our God and Father "; and the living God, the everlasting one, who belongs to the "ages of ages," and who dwells "in glory," is now ascribed the "glory" that is due his name. Fee

True theology is doxology, and doxology is always the proper response to God, even – especially? – in response to God's prompting friends to minister to friends. Fee

Verses 21-22

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

Paul does not in fact say, as the NIV has it, "greet all the saints"; rather, he has, "greet every saint." Since he regularly uses the plural when he intends to refer to a congregation or group as a whole, his use of the singular here is deliberate, functioning in a kind of "distributive" way. The greeting is not to the community lumped together as a whole, but to each member of the community individually. Fee

Paul either has found or has made disciples of the "Lord" Jesus among members of the imperial household, who are thus on the Philippians' side in the struggle against those who proclaim Caesar as Lord! Fee

Verse 23

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

What we do know is that the distributive singular, "with your (pi.) spirit (sing.)," in effect, as with the first of the greetings in v. 21, individualizes the grace-benediction, so that each of them (in the "spirit" of each) will experience the desired grace that is here prayed for. Fee

"And the final grace is also "from the Lord Jesus Christ," so that everything in this letter, from beginning to end and everywhere in between, focuses on Christ, who as Paul's life (1: 21) is magnified both in his language and in the two narratives that point specifically to him (Christ's in 2: 6-11 and Paul's in 3: 4-14). To miss this central focus on Christ is to miss the letter altogether, and to miss the heart of Pauline theology in particular. Fee