

Giving and Needs

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, let's pray. God, we thank you for all the good things that you have done for us. We thank you for how you have given to us life and breath and everything else.
- And we pray that as we go through and look at your word, that our minds and our hearts should be convicted by the truth, that we would be encouraged, and that we would walk in the life that you've given us.
- And we pray all this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Now come on in. So we're in Philippians chapter 4 today, verses 14 through 18.
- And so if you have your Bible, you'll want to turn there. There are a few other passages we'll go to today. We're going to go to, I can just tell you the books real quick. We're going to go to Matthew.
- We're going to go to 2 Corinthians. We're going to go to 1 Timothy. And that'll be it. So just so you know. So we're winding down on Philippians.
- [0 : 5 9] And Paul has been talking to this church. You know, the whole reason that he wrote this letter is because of what we're going to see today. Their representative came to them, came to where he was.
- Because they provided for his needs. And he's about to leave. And so he wants to write up basically a letter of thanks. And so from that sort of situation, we get then this whole letter of Philippians that speaks so much about joy.
- As a matter of fact, probably next week, one of the things we'll do is we'll walk through, as we hit the last few verses, we'll come back and look at some of these places where Paul talks about joy and some of the things he talks about rejoicing in.
- But let's take a look at the text first. We're going to begin in verse 14. And hear the word of the Lord. It says, Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.
- 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. For even in Thessalonica, you sent a gift more than once for my needs.
- [2 : 0 9] Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have abundance. I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus, that's how y'all like to say it, Epaphroditus, what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.
- So it's pretty clear that the theme of this passage is going to be about giving. And so I just wanted to talk about that for a second, because this is like a hard subject that a lot of churches, pastors, and people just don't like to talk about.
- Now, I can't tell you the number of pastors, when you're behind the scenes, I'll just give you a glimpse behind the curtain, when all the pastors get together, they talk about and they pride themselves on how little they've ever talked about tithing.
- They're like, I've never preached a sermon on tithing. And part of that is fear, because there is this mindset out there and this thought that if you talk about it, then obviously you are money hungry, and you're greedy, and you want stuff.

But here's the fact of the matter. Jesus talked so much about money himself. Money is just a tool. And so if we can get past the stigma of talking about it and looking at it properly, then maybe we can have a better attitude about it.

[3 : 42] It is interesting, though, and I do, to some degree, kind of put a little blame on some pastors and some ministers for this sort of stigma about it.

I'll give you this one story. I went to serve at a church as a youth minister. This was years ago. And the youth minister who was there before me had been fired by the church because they found that he had embezzled \$40,000.

Now, the way that he did it was actually quite ingenious, I suppose, from a criminal mindset. I'm not saying it's really ingenious, but just from a criminal mindset, just letting you know.

Anyway, so he was the treasurer of the local ministerial alliance. And when he would go and purchase something for the church, he would purchase, like he's going to purchase food for a fellowship, he would purchase it out of the ministerial alliance money, turn in the receipt as though he paid it out of his own pocket, and got money put back into his own pocket for that.

Over 10 years, \$40,000. Without good checks and balances, there's all kinds of problems that can happen in a church.

[5 : 05] I know of another church, because they did not count the money, so they didn't count the money properly. You're supposed to, for safety's sake, when you take that offering money and you go into the office, two people who are not related to one another are supposed to count that money, put it in something that locks, and both of them sign it.

Then it goes into a safe or whatever, and the next person who comes along, usually like a secretary or a treasurer or somebody who's going to deposit that money, there's two signatures in how much is there.

So they go deposit it, and they bring that deposit slip back and put it together with the two signatures in how much was given and how much was deposited so those match. Well, I mean, I know churches who, you know, there was this sweet lady.

She was probably the sweetest lady you would have ever met. She was in the Sunday school office, and after a season they began to think, well, maybe something's wrong. Time to find out she had been skimming off the top of everybody's tithes for 20 years.

You know? And it's not, it's not, nobody goes into the Sunday school office, nobody goes back to try to count the money with the intent of like, I'm going to give you some money. You know, nobody does that.

[6 : 16] But when temptation is there, and we don't put checks and balances, and we trust our own selves, we can get into a lot of trouble.

So it is definitely one of those things that talking about it just has all kinds of stigma to it. But Paul just didn't even blink an eye at it. And so we just want to look at what he has to say.

And really, what he's doing is he's encouraging the Philippians in their giving, and sort of, you can kind of see three sort of benefits that come from being a generous person and giving for gospel ministry.

And the first one's found in verses 14 through 16, and that is that it is a kindness, or it's a good thing to give. Look at verse 14 through 16 again.

Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. 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 the giving and receiving, but you alone.

[7 : 23] For even in Thessalonica, you sent a gift more than once for my needs. So what thing did the Philippians do well in according to those verses? Giving aid.

Giving aid. That's exactly right. They were sharing with Paul. As a matter of fact, he uses the word, no church shared with me, but you shared with me in verse 14.

That's where the word for fellowship comes from, the koinonia aspect. It's the idea of sharing with one another. This particular version of it has the idea of sharing in physical needs.

Right? Sharing in physical needs. So how does verse 15 show us the importance of the Philippians giving? How important was it to Paul that they were giving?

According to verse 15. Because no other church was sharing. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there was no other church from the first preaching of the gospel and after I left Macedonia.

[8 : 23] So if you think about this, Macedonia, Philippians, remember who we're talking about here. It's okay. This is where he's gone to the riverside and he's preached and God opened up Lydia's heart to the gospel.

Then we have... Then we have the slave girl who was doing the fortune telling. Then we have the Philippian jailer.

Right? Those are the people who are involved in this church. So he's preaching. And what he's talking about is from his first time preaching with them until he left, nobody sent anything to him there. And then when he gets to Thessalonica, still nobody is sending anything to him except for the Macedonians or the Philippians themselves.

So Paul is pointing to the fact that the Philippians have exercised a particular kindness to him. This word do well is the idea of doing good.

It's this Greek word for good. And this word good is the idea of things that are beautiful before God. That these are things that have God's approval.

[9 : 33] Now Paul was a tent maker. Right? And there are times and seasons that he provided for his own needs by working. But his point is is that now that he's in prison he can't do that.

So they have provided for him not only in prison but also at other times. So let's talk some application then of this. when we give whether it's our normal regular tithe or when we give special offering what we're doing is we're partnering for sharing the gospel.

You know if we have missionaries and we give like just recently we collected all the money to be able to do the Jesus film project and the Bible project for the Hines. Right? If we do that what we're doing is we're placing ourselves there with them to do the ministry.

We can't all purchase tickets and go over there and so we're giving money so that they can do that project. We're partnering with them in that. And this is a good thing.

We're supposed to support them. Well the same thing can be said about in the local church. When we give in the local church we're partnering together together because the money goes not just for salaries but it goes for the building and it goes for resources and training and equipping for you that you might be who you ought to be that you might be a witness that you might be someone who disciples other people and as those resources then are used upon you then anybody who's giving within the church they're partnering with you as you go disciple your loved one.

[11 : 07] Does that make sense? It's just a partnership that we are gathering together. Paul does not hear say in this passage Paul is not saying that everyone ought to give.

Okay? We'll talk about that here in a little bit but in this passage you cannot pull from this passage and say here's the command to give but he is talking about the benefits of giving.

So you have to kind of keep that in mind as you read this. It's this beautiful thing. Here's what's interesting about most churches. I don't know if you know this. These are stats and figures.

They don't apply to every church but just so you understand the general consensus is that 20% of members give 80% of the money of most churches.

20% of the members give 80% of the money to most churches. Now with that that means that there's going to be churches that you know are way more than 20% of the members and churches that are way less than 20%.

[12 : 16] It's an average. There's one study that says that only 5% of memberships in any local church actually give for ministry.

So you got two competing sort of thoughts and ideas but one study lowers the number compared to the other one. So the truth is is that there probably ought to be giving and it's not necessarily ought to be giving because of a command but more about the benefits that you receive from this.

But let me take you to a couple of passages. Turn over to 2 Corinthians. chapter 8. 2 Corinthians chapter 8.

Again this doesn't command us to give but it gives just an idea of this goodness of the giving. You begin in verse 1 and here's what's interesting is that Paul's going to bring in Macedonia.

He's going to bring in the Philippians into this conversation with the Corinthians. He says in verse 1 He says Now brethren we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

[13 : 42] So they had affliction and they had joy and they had deep poverty. So they were not very wealthy but they were joyful in the ministry and they were under affliction and all of that came together for them to overflow with liberality in their giving.

Okay? Verse 3 For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord begging us with much urging for the favor of participating in the support of the saints.

Please can we give? Please can we give? Is their mentality, right? verse 5 In this not as we had expected but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

So we urge Titus that as he had previously made a beginning so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. In other words so what we see happen in the Philippians and the Macedonian churches we're wanting that to happen in you.

We want you to have such joy we want you out of whatever situation you're in to overflow with this liberality so we're sending Titus to you to come back and preach to you again to minister among you to do this so that you end up looking like the Philippians that's what he's saying, right?

[15 : 03] Verse 7 But just as you abound in everything in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in love and in the love we inspired and you see that you abound in this gracious work also Now you can probably see that as a command I don't see it as a what we call a strict command but more of an example because then he says in verse 8 I am not speaking this as a command but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also In other words you say you say you love me you say you love the gospel you say you love the ministry you say you love the Lord prove it give that's what he said so so what we have then is this idea that giving is a good thing it is a good thing for us to give for the support of local churches for the support of missionaries it's good and it's beautiful let's go to the next point then and that it's spiritually profitable for us to give we have in

Philippians chapter 4 verse 17 Paul says not that I seek the gift itself but I seek for the profit which increases to your account now that word profit there is literally the word fruit right and so what he's saying is that the fruit that increases to your account and the NASB uses the term profit because that's really what the idea is is that you've got this money concept so it's carrying over the analogy you give so you're profiting spiritually you're profiting spiritually Paul wants their profit the word see when Christians give from the right motives with the right attitudes expecting the right outcomes then they get good spiritual fruit in their lives and I'm trying to emphasize good spiritual fruit because we have a lot of people out there that say that if you give then you're going to get a car or if you give you're going to you know have other kinds of wealth come to you

I mean every TV preacher except a few they're all saying these kinds of things and there is there is a prosperity that comes to God's people but it is a spiritual prosperity it's a spiritual fruit so let's talk about how that works in Matthew chapter 6 verse 19 through 21 I'll give you a chance to turn over there this comes from the sermon on the mount and Jesus is talking about all kinds of things related to one another righteousness in chapter 6 and when he gets to this place he's really talking about the kind of righteousness we have with ourselves and our hearts related to loving other people so he comes into giving here right and so he says in verse 19 do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys where thieves do not break in and steal and here's sort of the principle for where your treasure is there your heart will be also where your treasure is there your heart will be also here's another way of saying that your heart follows your treasure your heart follows your treasure let me let me see if I can illustrate this if you were responsible in your family to be the one who worked for the family to bring in income in order to provide for your family and the only job that you could find was in

London England you would have to figure out how to live in London England but what would you do with the excess let's just say that you made enough to be able to provide a basic living basic transportation basic food needs then you have excess what would you do with that excess exactly because where your treasure is there your heart is also heart and treasure go together if my heart is with my family I'm sending my treasure there if I send my treasure to my family my heart follows as well and so what Jesus is saying is that rather than storing up things here we should store up things in heaven that we should send our treasure on ahead of us and so how do we do that how do we send our treasure on ahead we do that by giving for the sake of the gospel people whether we give to some of us find different ministries that we love and want to give to some of us find different missionaries and then the local church there's all kinds of ways but the point is is that if you don't give your heart still follows your treasure so what are you spending your money on did you know that in

America we spend probably more we probably and I meant to look this up I've looked it up before back in 2006 and 7 and the numbers were just astronomical back then but the amount we spend on pets compared to the amount we spend on missions is somewhere in the tune of like 70% more on pets than on missions now that's America as a whole and I understand you have a lot of lost people here in America but the point is is that we spend a lot of money on things that are of no eternal significance I'm not saying that's wrong to spend money on your pets you can spend money on your pets what I'm saying is are we spending money on the advancement of the gospel because that is the only thing that will be of eternal significance and reward it is a spiritual good for us we receive from the

[21 : 22] Lord spiritual profit because we are giving for the sake of the gospel alright the last thing is that it's an act of worship it's an act of worship you can look at verse 18 in Philippians chapter 4 he says but I have received everything in full and have an abundance I am amply supplied having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent a fragrant aroma an acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God what is Paul assuring them of pleasing to God well he's assuring them of something about himself he's grateful for what they have given him because that he can put it forth to something else yeah because he's fully supplied he's amply supplied he's got enough right it's sufficient he doesn't need anymore right so he has this abundance he wants them to know he's giving them things and he calls this three different things and Jack this is what you were doing after he calls this gift that they've given three different things what does he say about it sweet smelling aroma acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God well pleasing to God all three of those things are pointing to the same sort of analogy what is the analogy that's being brought forward here he is able still yes to do that yes but when you think about a fragrant aroma an acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God what's the image what's the illustration or what's the symbol that Paul's using the lamb right you think about all the sacrificial system go to the book of

Leviticus right and in the book of Leviticus you've got all of these sacrifices and we're told exactly how they're supposed to be done and there's one sacrifice the burnt sacrifice right the burnt sacrifice not only is the animal slaughtered but what what else happens to it the blood is collected then the priest takes the blood he walks around the synagogue seven times sprinkling the blood outside what blood is left inside the bronze receptacle is taken inside of the holy and then taken care of right and then the rest of the animal they burn this thing they burn it and what happens is that the smoke of that rises up and the scriptures say that God says this is a pleasing aroma so this whole idea of a pleasing aroma as the Philippians have given this money to Paul Paul is saying this is your Levitical priesthood sacrifice you have given it's an act of worship is what he's saying you know

I was serving at a church and we were debating the idea of whether or not to put a box at the back of the sanctuary for people to put their tithes in or to pass the plate right traditional we have passing of the plate I was all for putting a box in the back okay one of the reasons that I was all for putting a box in the back is because I felt like the passing of the plate kind of disrupted the service a little bit and it was just weird and I didn't give my money that way anyway because being a minister I'm always up on stage or something and so I couldn't get to the plate so I just kind of brought my money to the office and gave it in the office you know so for me it just wasn't that but the other pastor as we were talking about it he kind of came to this concept and he says this is an act of worship this is something we do to worship the Lord when we give it's just as much worship as singing a song and I was like wow you're right you're right and so we just kept passing the plate because it's like well this gives people an opportunity when that comes by this is your opportunity to worship the

Lord and as you do you worship him it's also it's an acceptable sacrifice so when you think about that then you gotta think that one it means that God is honored when we give two we if we don't give we miss an opportunity to honor and worship God in this way three the attitude of our heart the direction of our thinking about giving must be and always be very God word we should be thinking about God when we give you know if Jesus showed up at your door Sunday morning before you came to church and said today I want you to give \$200 and you knew it was Jesus like we're not this is no fake thing we're just kind of we are pretending here right just just bear with me though if you came to church that morning and you gave \$200 you would be doing so because you were thinking about

Jesus I'm just saying that every time you give you should always be thinking about Jesus without him appearing in front of you in some vision because here he is in his word telling us what we should do and so every time we give it shouldn't be about me it shouldn't be about you it should be about Jesus you know because there's some people that when they give that they paid their dues and they're a part of the club and so now they get to participate in the benefits of the club and some people look at the paying of their tithe like they're tipping you know well I've gotten good service so I'm going to go ahead and tip this month because the pastor has done a pretty decent job you know what I'm really mad!

[27 : 34] all of that is a worldly perspective none of that you give because Jesus saved you because you want to see more people know about Jesus and if that is not I'll be this way and say it this way if that's not your attitude then just keep it just keep it why because I want you to prosper spiritually before the Lord and I want you to give out of the cheerfulness and out of the sense of wanting to see the glory of God be expanded and the gospel be spread and not be one of these mindsets that's just unbiblical just keep it if that's the mindset right because God will do with the little that he gives us more than if we had millions of dollars so we just will trust him in that I think the last couple things I was going to say is that it is a sacrifice to give you know it talks about it being a sacrifice

I know that we could you know like if I'm not I'm not a big stickler about saying that it has to be 10% of gross a lot of people are big sticklers but I mean the New Testament says each one should give as he's determined in his heart but if somebody were to ask me where's a good place to start is 10% because that is what the word means however I we've got checks and we've got facts and figures and we've got this kind of thing but you think about the people of this time and you think go back to the Old Testament and think about their sacrifice you've got goats and sheep you need those goats and sheep to survive you eat those goats and sheep they provide for your clothing they provide for your food directly!

right? it's visceral it's right in front of you like if animals were to come and attack your flock and all of a sudden you've got a bunch of dead animals you're a little freaked out because it's like what are we going to do and what does God say to the Old Testament people bring he will but what does he want from them bring me your best bring me your number one me the first born bring me the one that's not all sick and lame bring me the one that is the best of the flock and sacrifice it to me and you know what happened to Malachi Malachi is the prophet he's preaching to them and one of the things he's telling them he's listen you've been bringing your diseased animals you've been bringing your sick animals and it talks there in chapter 1, how they brought it and they sacrificed the animals and then they just left a mess.

They haven't cleaned it up between sacrifice times. And so there's this sense in which the temple is becoming overrun with all of this nasty from the sacrifice and it smells.

And there's even this place where Malachi says, you sniff at it. It's almost like they walk in and they kind of go like, ugh. And it's like Malachi is saying, you did this.

[30 : 53] You did this because you refused to give to God the best. Both of your heart, your attitude and of your flock. The other example of giving was the widow.

Right. Her mite. And I didn't know how small a mite was. But it's not, it's just barely a portion of one of our one cent pennies.

Yeah. But she had lost it. Yeah. But she lived the life to find that one mite. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. You know, I think to myself that when you look at the way the Old Testament saints lived and what God required of them, God is not less holy in the New Testament than He was in the Old Testament.

Just because He sent His Son to pay for our sin does not mean He is less worthy of such reverence. Matter of fact, I would say that He's worthy of more reverence.

Because now we see not just the command for holiness, but we see the provision of grace. And so, this is what I think we're at here is that we should give because it's good for us and Paul shows us how it's beneficial for us and it's an act of worship.