

# Gaining By Giving (2)

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

[ 1 : 03 ] But I have all and abound. I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen. What a great, great way to end such a profitable and joyful letter with such doxology at the end of that.

As Paul says, now glory be to God forever and ever. And what is it that leads him into this great doxology? It is a discussion about what the Philippians had done for him.

It was the joy that he had experienced in their partnership. And it was the excitement that he sensed as he saw Epaphroditus come through that small, tiny prison apartment in Rome bearing a gift from his loved ones in Philippi.

[ 2 : 11 ] Last week we began the study in these verses and we only made it through really the first section of it. And today we're going to finish in verses 18 and 19.

To help my study and maybe even perhaps to help your study of this particular passage, I've really just had three headings, each just a single word. We got to the first word last week which was share.

And we see that in verse number 15 as Paul once again uses this word group in the Greek, the koinon word group or koinonia. As he says that no one communicated is the word that he uses here that is translated here for us.

No one communicated in giving and receiving except you only at a particular partner's ministry. The word there is fellowship, partnership in, sharing in. And as we begin to understand the context of chapter 4, this part of chapter 4, we see that what Paul is referring to is the sharing in material resources that the Philippians had shared with the gospel ministry of Paul.

But then what they had also had a share in, in the benefits and the fruitfulness of the gospel. And so we see in these headings, the first one is share. And then we get to this second heading in our study today which comes to us from verse 18.

[ 3 : 26 ] And here's the word that we find, sacrifice, sacrifice. Look with me at verse 18 again. Paul says, As Paul continues writing out his thank you note to the church here, We can sense again the joy and the excitement that he would have experienced having received this gift.

Knowing that without the gift that was coming from other laborers in the ministry, without the gifts that were coming from Philippi and perhaps other churches as well during this imprisonment, he wouldn't even be able to have the basic needs of life, the basic needs of nourishment and food and warmth and closing.

All of that came by way of the giving of others. And he writes in this encouragement thank you note and he says, I want you to know, Philippi, that I'm full. I have everything that I need.

Because of you, I have been fully supplied as Epaphroditus has brought this gift on your behalf. But again, it wasn't the material gain and the gift that he joined in the most.

It was what the gift represented, which was the faithful worship of the Philippian church. Which is why in the second half of this verse, he says, I am full, I'm excited, I am joyful having received this gift from you because this gift is an odor of a sweet smell that is acceptable and it is pleasing to the Lord.

[ 5 : 12 ] Paul compared the giving of the Philippian church here to the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. And doing this, he tied their generosity directly to worship of God.

In fact, the Old Testament routinely uses this analogy, the aroma of the burnt offering as an analogy to God being satisfied and pleased by the worship of those who genuinely love and obey him.

And it's not the first time that he's done this in the letter. In fact, flip back just a page over to chapter 2 and look with me at verse 17. Paul's done this once before. He says, There he's making a reference to the drink offering that would have been poured out.

And he was essentially saying, if my suffering, if my work, if the issues that I'm facing is used faithfully by God as a drink offering that is pleasing to him, that uplifts an aroma to the Lord that pleases him and is acceptable to him, that I am willing to face whatever I need to face.

And here again, he ties it back into their giving. And he says, I'm so thankful and I joy in what you have done because what you have done in this gift shows that you are committed to the worship of your heavenly Father because your gift has arisen to him in the way that the Old Testament burnt offering would have had an aroma that arose and was well-pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

[ 6 : 47 ] Paul was saying that their gift was an act of worship. And truly, giving is foremost a matter of Christian worship. And worship is by nature sacrificial.

Giving is foremost a matter of Christian worship. And worship is by nature sacrificial. To truly worship is to offer something to God that reflects his worth.

The word literally comes from an old English word, worth or worth-ship. In other words, the worship is the offering up of what we feel God is worthy of receiving from us.

It is to ascribe a value to the thing that we are worshiping in that moment. How is it that you ascribe value to your heavenly Father, to your Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit and his work in your life?

That's what our worship is. This term has been misused in modern Christianity. People try to box it up. They would describe worship as just a portion of a service when we would sing.

[ 8 : 03 ] And singing is just that. It's just singing. It's a part of worship. It's not the totality of worship. Neither is a worship service the totality of worship. Worship is a response to how you view God.

And it's not only a response that is done for an hour and a half on a Sunday morning. It is a response that is demonstrated in your life 24 hours a day, seven days a week. What kind of value do you hold God with in your life?

Paul ties this worship directly to the giving of the Philippian church. And this is really where we see in other passages in the New Testament that our eyes are opened to the spirit of the Philippians. Listen to this passage from 2 Corinthians chapter eight. Paul was encouraging the Corinthian church in their giving and he uses the Philippians as his example. Here's what he says. Moreover, brethren, we want you to know of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how then a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their generosity.

In other words, they had nothing, but they gave what they have. They were generous to give even in the midst of poverty. For to their power, I bear record, Paul writes. Yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, begging us earnestly that we would receive the gift and take upon us, here's that koinan word again, take upon us the fellowship, the sharing of, the partnership of the ministering to the saints.

[ 9 : 42 ] And then listen to how he closes it in verse five. And this they did, not as we expected, but they first gave of their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.

This first giving of their selves is not a reference to first in time, but first in priority. That the giving materially of the Philippian church to these other churches that were in need wasn't just a form of obligation or form of tradition.

It was the overflow of how they had first in priority given everything of themselves to the Lord. They had first offered themselves to him.

And as they had offered themselves and their whole being and their whole life, it didn't matter to them that they were in poverty. They were willing to give whatever they had in order to show their worship to the Lord, to ascribe this value to their creator.

They had taken what Paul had written to the Roman church in chapter 12 to heart. I beseech you therefore, brethren, Paul wrote, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual worship, he says.

[11:00] What is God worthy of receiving from you today? The simple answer to that is everything. Everything. God is not interested in your money.

He's interested in you. He doesn't need your money, but he wants you. And as we offer ourselves, our whole being, our spirit, our worship to him, the natural overflow of that is we will give whatever is necessary for us to give, however it is that the Lord leads us to give, in order that we can demonstrate our worship to him.

we can't look at this passage and consider it without seeing first the implication of sacrifice as the Bible teaches about our spirit of giving.

For many of us, really, giving isn't much of a sacrifice. We have been so tremendously blessed that we are capable of really regularly giving, many of us, without it having too much of an effect on our lives.

It doesn't really drastically affect the way that we live. But the Bible teaches that we are to be ready to give even when it's inconvenient and a great sacrifice to do so.

[12:16] In fact, many of us, even to my own shame, I make this statement, would do well to structure our budgets around our giving rather than around our wants and give whatever's left over.

I wonder how many of us have ever actually structured a budget that way. Julie and I prayed about this this week and really in a response to our study last week and talking about how few times we've viewed our giving as anything but just another kind of category on the budget list every week or every month.

But how many times have we sat down and thought, how much can I actually live on to have my needs met so that I can give as much as I can to the Lord, to His work?

Very few of us do that. Really, sacrifice is a huge part of giving. It's a huge part of the spirit of our giving. The Philippian church, as we've already seen, gave out of their poverty at times.

And rather than use that as an excuse, they willingly sacrificed for the pleasure and the glory of God. Jesus taught this lesson to His disciples in Mark chapter 12 in a story that I'm sure you're familiar with.

[13:29] Here's what it says, and He sat down opposite of the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Can you imagine that? That would be such a poor thing to do in Christian churches today, wouldn't it?

We would hate for Jesus to do that to us. As we take up the offering in the service, what if I just kind of sat down and just watched every offering? Okay, make sure. How much did you give and how much did you give?

Jesus is setting our cross from the offering box. It was a box that many churches actually use today where they would, instead of passing a plate, they would drop their money in a box and they would have a moment of worship and prayer there as they gave to the Lord.

And that's exactly what Jesus is doing in Mark chapter 12. He's sitting and He's just watching people give. And it says, many rich people put in large sums, great amounts of money. But a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins which make a penny.

This penny wasn't even a day's wage. It was even just a portion of a day's wage. And He called His disciples to Him and said to them, truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.

[14:38] For they all contributed out of their abundance. But she out of her poverty has put in everything that she had. All she had to live on. Jesus isn't instructing that when you come to church on Sunday you're to give every penny in your bank account.

That's not what He's instructing there. Please don't mistake what I'm saying. What He's saying is the value of what she gave though it was so small in everyone else's mind was great to Him.

Why? Because she gave out of sacrifice. All of the people that were parading in front of the offering box that out of their wealth were giving large sums of money and maybe even positively doing that and helpfully doing that Jesus sees this poor widow come and He values the gift that she gave even though it was so small because she gave it in a spirit of worship and a worship that was by nature sacrificial.

And He began to teach His disciples about it. He also instructed later that our hearts are to be set on spiritual things in order that our money might be given to God's work instead of our own wealth. Listen to what He said in Matthew chapter 6. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth destroy and where thieves break in and steal but lay up yourself treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

[16:10] No one can serve two masters Jesus said. Either He will hate the one and love the other or He'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money He says.

What is the key to giving? Understanding that our giving is actually worship and worship is by nature sacrifice and many times will be called upon by the Lord to give sacrificially to His work out of a sense of worship.

This is the reason we actually take up an offering every Sunday morning not because the Bible says you must pass a plate or have mast and gloved ushers that walk around and hold out a plate to you in these days.

The Bible doesn't tell us that. We can put up offering boxes and it would be just as fine but the reason we have a designated time in our service every Sunday is to emphasize that as we give this is our worship to the Lord.

We're not to take it casually or thoughtlessly. It's to be a time that we contemplatively worship as we reflect on what God has done for us in Christ as we reflect on the providential care that He has demonstrated and what He has given to us and then in worship in joyful cheerful worship we say we give this back to you with the same spirit that we anticipate casting those crowns back at His feet in heaven.

[17:33] We give back to the Lord during this part of our service in worship and it's there for a reason that we might think on it in that way. Many of us probably give online.

Julie and I our habit many times is actually to give online but the danger in that is that we lose the sense of worship in the service as we come and we reflect on what we're actually doing and so when we look at verse 18 we see that this second heading there is sacrifice it's worship and He was commending the Philippian church on that and then thirdly and finally is supply their share their sacrifice and their supply look with me at verse 19 I love this but my God shall supply all of your need Paul says in verse 18 he said God through you has supplied my need I am fully supplied I'm full I'm overflowing now because of your gift and now He's saying but my God that has just supplied my need He's going to supply your need how?

according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus isn't that great? what an encouragement that when we come to the Lord many times even with that touch of fear in our minds in our heart and we want to give and we desire to sacrifice not just in material things but in our time and in our efforts and in our spirits and we want to give back to the Lord in worship but we have that tinge of fear that exists and then we can be reminded of verse 19 that says but my God will supply all of your need well how's God going to supply all of your need because of His infinite riches in glory and we can be encouraged and we can dispel that fear after Paul expressed this gratitude he issues a wonderful promise God will supply your need every need according to His infinite resources but how could He say it with such certainty because He was a living testimony of the sustaining power of God He had given everything up at one point for Christ in fact He's talked about that in this passage flip back to verse or chapter 3 and look with me at verse 7 Paul after spending a few verses talking about everything that he had considered gain in his life he gets to verse 7 and he says but what things were gained to me those I counted loss for Christ yea doubtless I count all things but loss for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord he says for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him what was Paul's spirit he didn't have to worry he was happy to give he was happy to sacrifice he was a living testimony of the great and infinite supply of God he had literally given everything that at one point was the focus of his life he had counted it all loss in order that he could pursue

Christ and he had learned that God always supplied him with the strength and the resources necessary to accomplish what is God's purposes for his life and we studied about that in chapter 4 in verse 13 in that famous verse I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me Christ has called us to give how are we going to do that well God will supply he will supply the strength to endure whatever it is that he calls us to in life their gift was an example of God continuing to supply his need in prison he could declare the blessing of the divine supply because he had experienced it first hand there's two ways I think that we can even acknowledge in this verse that God supplies all of our needs the first way is through temporal supply temporal supply look at the beginning of verse 19 again but my God shall supply all of your need according to his riches and glory and we got to be careful to understand what this passage isn't saying contrary to the prosperity preachers of the day [ 22 : 01 ] God does not promise to supply us with everything that we want so long as we give a certain amount to any given church or ministry that's not what he's saying he's not saying that if you faithfully put in the offering plate every week or if you send a check to this guy on TV and he sends the handkerchief back or whatever it is he's not saying that just because you give means that this whole list of things that you want in life is all of a sudden going to be provided that's not the promise here the promise is that he will supply all of your need and we got to be careful here to remember too that the law of sowing and reaping still applies even as believers sometimes we can just be poor stewards and not use very much wisdom get a little too excessive with the credit card and not be diligent to budget and run up a sea full of debt and then pray verse 19 Lord supply all my need it's not that God hasn't been supplying your need it's that you haven't been stewarding well his supply and we can't expect that God would just erase everything that we've done and not allow us to face the consequences of that that's not what this passage is saying what's it saying the promise is that those who follow him in faithful obedience will always have what they need in accordance with his divine purpose for their life could we look at

Paul's life and say that he was receiving all that he needs from our perspective we would say no way he spent four years in prison for nothing he hadn't done anything wrong he's just awaiting a trial to appear before a man that historically we know to be one of the most hateful men in regards to Christianity the Emperor Nero of Rome we say no what Paul needs is to be able to get out of prison so he can continue his ministry but Paul's already dealt with that in this book in very first chapter he says all of these things that have fallen out to me have been for the advancement of the gospel what I need is for God to use my life not to get out of prison God supplied that need Paul's not getting everything that he needs he's struggling just to make it as far as his food and his clothing but here walks in Epaphroditus and once again God has created this supply the promises that God will supply all of your need according to his divine purposes for your life and that should bring us great joy

God's promise is not to make you wealthy though he may indeed see fit to make you wealthy his promise is that he will meet your need according to his purposes in life many Christians that don't faithfully give as we have mentioned neglect the command out of fear but listen to these reassuring words that Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount have you ever seen pictures of in Israel where people believe that Jesus actually preached this message you can google it after the service today and you'll see pictures or many of you I'm sure have seen them before it's really just a big open field where they think this might have happened and there was a city kind of off in the distance that was way up on a hill so that Jesus might have used that as an illustration a city that is on a hill cannot be hid that was a part of this sermon but you can imagine all of these people sitting around Jesus on this sermon on the mount they're outside plenty of object lessons for Jesus to use and it's in the midst of this setting that Jesus says these words therefore I tell you do not be anxious about your life what you will eat or what you will drink nor about your body what you will put on is not life more than food and body more than clothing and then perhaps he sees!

some birds! fly around and he says look at the birds of the air they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns yet your heavenly father feeds them are you not of more value than they this is the creator and sustainer of everything in his reassuring words that's looking at creation it says look how I provide for them are you not more valuable than them yes to me you are more valuable than them Jesus says and then he goes on he says and why are you or excuse me he says are not you of more value than they and which of you being anxious can add a single hour to a span of life and why are you anxious about clothing consider the lilies of the field if you come to my house there are no lilies it is all burnt as the illustration goes on to say consider the lilies of the field how they grow

they neither toil nor spin yet I tell you that even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these they're so beautiful when they blossom but if God so clothes the grass of the field which is here today or in my case six weeks ago and tomorrow which is today is thrown into the oven will he not there oh that's really the heart of the matter isn't it therefore Jesus says don't be anxious saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the Gentiles seek all of these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them all but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you what Jesus saying I love you he's saying I love you more than I even love the birds and the lilies of the field I will care for you seek first my kingdom seek me first seek to please me seek to worship me and all of these things that you need I already know that you need them I will supply them how according to my infinite resources as

[ 27 : 48 ] Paul says according to the riches of glory and then we're reminded of Solomon's words in Proverbs 3 honor the Lord he says worship the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of your increase seek first the kingdom of God essentially Solomon saying so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine the supply of God isn't limited to material provision either we get to verse 19 many of us and all we really think about is material provision that if I give to the Lord on Sunday maybe my car won't break down this week and maybe I'll get a bonus in the mail or we've all heard those stories about the guys that have given you know the Lord just laid it on my heart to give \$342.62 in the offering this week is this the day that you that's really a skewed perspective in it the

Lord's provision is not limited to material provision think about all the things that Paul has instructed this church on in the book of Philippians what does the Lord supply us with he supplies us with joy he supplies us with endurance which is a common thing he supplies us with strength he supplies us with humility when necessary he supplies us with unity he supplies us with peace when you cast yourself on the one true God you avail yourself to the infinite dispensary of his riches and of his power and that's not limited to money he will meet all your need according to his riches and glory well that's the temporal supply quickly and finally there's the eternal supply look at the last part of this verse is so significant he will supply according to his riches and glory three more words by Christ Jesus this is not just a temporal supply it's an eternal supply it's an eternal spiritual supply that comes through

Jesus alone he was looking beyond the temporal things of this life to the eternal blessings of heaven those blessings only come by way of Jesus as God's son his death on the cross supplied our greatest need forgiveness of sin salvation from the eternal wrath of God for all who come to him trusting in his sacrifice believing in his resurrection and following him as Lord will receive the unending supply of eternal life through Christ through Christ we receive life through Christ we can receive righteousness through Christ we can receive forgiveness we have everything that we need in Christ Jesus Jesus explained it this way in Matthew 13 he said the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered it up then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field and then he says the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding the one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and he bought it what's

Jesus saying that when you find the truth of Christ you have all that you need in Christ the treasure in the field is Christ the pearl of great price is Christ and just like Paul when you come to understand the love that Christ has for you that he has sacrificed himself for the sins of man if you will just come to him believing casting yourself in faith on him following him as Lord what you receive is the treasure hidden in the field the pearl of great price and like Paul in Philippians 3 you can say I counted all things but lost at that point for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus Jesus said that the only way to eternal life is through him plainly he said I am the way I am the truth I am the life no man comes to the father but through me your giving won't gain you salvation but Jesus is giving will gave himself why for you for all who will come to him in faith will believe and follow him and you can trust him today we quoted the song a couple of weeks ago great is thy faithfulness I think it's fitting to do it again all I have needed thy hand has provided great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me all I have needed yeah Jesus is truly all that you need then we get to verse 20 and we'll look at this in conclusion Paul says now unto God and our father be glory forever and ever amen we'll conclude where Paul concludes after contemplating the goodness of

[ 33 : 25 ] God providing this gift from Philippi he couldn't help but burst into a worshipful doxology you can imagine maybe as he's sitting there perhaps Timothy or Epaphroditus or someone else was functioning as his secretary in that moment as he would dictate and they would actually write it down you can imagine as he's thinking through these words not being distracted by the actual writing of them and he thinks back to the contentment that he feels and how joyful it was when Epaphroditus comes in and then he thinks through the wonderful fruit that will be applied to the Philippians account which was really the desire of his heart and he gets excited about that and then he thinks about the sacrifice that they had made for that and he reflected on the Old Testament sacrifices and the aroma of that burnt offering and then he gets to this point where he really is trying to encourage the

Philippians but probably encourages himself at the same time by saying God's going to supply all of your need I know it he will supply every all you need is Jesus and then it burst in verse 20 into this doxology now be glory to God evermore to him when the race is complete still my lips shall repeat yet not I but through Christ in me that's the doxology that Paul echoes here our entire existence is contained within this doxology we exist to bring God glory and that's exactly why we should give we express our praise to God upon the receipt of his provision we also express our praise to God when we are the instrument of his provision because we can rejoice in the

Lord using us but the thoughts of Christ bring us to the heights of true praise as I hope will be your experience in just a moment as we come to the Lord's table the ideas of this passage might be centered on giving but the theme is the same as every other passage in scripture it's the person in the work of Christ we share and give to the gospel of Jesus that's the share we sacrifice to worship our God and Savior who is Jesus we are supplied by the infinite and eternal resources of Jesus so what is giving really about it's about Jesus our giving is about Jesus thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church feel free to share it wherever you'd like please do not charge for it or alter it in any way without express written consent from

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