

Money, Money, Money!
Philippians 4:14-20
Sunday, April 27th, 2025
By Ryan Perry

Scripture

Philippians 4:14–20

[14] Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. [19] And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Let's Pray

Introduction

What's the first thing that popped into your head when you saw the title of this sermon? Was it the O'Jays song that goes **"Money, money, money, money. Money!"**

It was literally the first thing that came to me when I was thinking about this sermon. And the reason I went with it is because I was trying to be a little tongue-in-cheek about today's message.

Because when we come to a text that focuses on giving, it's easy to think that it's all about the money.

This is one of the reasons I don't particularly enjoy sermons on giving. It becomes all too easy for the preacher to get caught up in how much people are giving, or for church members to become jaded, thinking that the church is simply focused on finances.

But despite my misgivings about sermons like these (pun intended), our text this morning is not only going to be our last message in the book of Philippians, **but it is about giving.**

Paul, in the final section of his letter, is commending the Philippians for their financial support of his ministry and for meeting his physical needs.

So yes, one of the things we will talk about this morning is money. **However, money isn't the main focus.**

For Paul, his goal is to express gratitude for their gift and to help them see their giving as part of their gospel partnership with him and as a form of worship to God.

So this morning, we are going to focus on both of those things as we unpack his final words to the Philippians.

Within this final section will learn four things from Paul:

1. Giving is partnership in the gospel.
2. Giving is a genuine fruit of faith.
3. Giving is an act of worship.
4. God will supply all of our needs.

One final thing before we begin. Because of the circumstances of this letter, Paul is talking about their giving in purely financial terms.

However, we know that God tells us all throughout scripture to give, not just money, but our time, talent, and resources for the building of his body, the church.

So when I apply these points to our local church, I will broaden it to include these other forms of giving as well. Now, let's begin by looking at our giving as partnership in the gospel.

Giving is partnership in the gospel.

Philippians 4:14-16

[14] Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

If you think back through this whole book, there are so many things that Paul has been trying to teach and reinforce for the Philippians.

Things like rejoicing in the Lord, fighting for unity in the body, serving one another, rejecting false teachers, shining as lights in the world, imitating Paul and others who live like Christ, and running toward the heavenly prize.

With all that Paul has said, it's easy to forget that one of the reasons he wrote this letter was to thank the Philippians for their financial gift.

And I believe that was an intentional choice on his part. Paul left this thanksgiving until the end so that the Philippians would see that his focus isn't really on the money.

However, it is clear that Paul is excited that the Philippians put together an offering for him. As he said in verse 10:

[10] I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

Likewise, in verse 14, he points to their kindness and says:

[14] Yet, it was kind of you to share my trouble.

Paul was a man with needs and is genuinely thankful that the Philippians were able to meet them.

But his joy and excitement are not primarily focused on the money itself. Rather, it is on the partnership that this money created between Paul and the Philippians.

A partnership which he says in verse 15 is a partnership of “**giving and receiving.**”

This phrase “giving and receiving” was important in that day because it was a true mark of friendship in the ancient Roman world.

So if we have a back-and-forth relationship where we give to one another and receive from each other, then we are true friends and companions.

But in Paul’s mind, his relationship with the Philippians wasn’t just an earthly partnership or friendship. Rather, he sees it as a gospel partnership.

As he wrote in Philippians 1:3–7:

[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [7] It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

Paul’s excitement over their financial gift has everything to do with the fact that they are partnering with him in furthering the gospel. **They have become partakers with him, both in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.**

And according to Philippians 4:15, this is something that they have been doing since they first heard and believed the gospel, and they were one of the only churches to partner with him in this way, and to do it continually.

So he wants them to understand that money isn’t what’s important. Rather, it’s about their partnership in the gospel, which is part of the reason Paul tells them in Philippians 1:12:

[12] I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

That they would see how their gift and partnership are being used by God to advance the gospel in Paul’s circumstances.

Application

When we think about giving, I think we can tend to look at it sort of like a membership fee. As I mentioned in an earlier sermon, most of us are members of many different entities and are used to paying fees for those memberships.

Amazon Prime, Netflix, Sam's Club, the YMCA, AAA, and AARP are a few examples of memberships that many of us have and pay for.

So when it comes to our membership within the church, it's easy to see it the same way. I'm a member of this organization, so I give of my finances, my time, and my talents as a requirement for being here.

Now, to be clear, we believe that giving is biblical and serving one another and the church is necessary.

This is why Paul told the Philippians to look to the interests of others in Philippians 2:4 and why he gave Jesus as the ultimate example of servanthood in 2:6.

It's also why he talks about being a cheerful giver in 2 Corinthians 9:7, and why there are 59 one another commands in the New Testament. **God wants each of us to use our finances, our time, and our talents to serve one another and the church.**

But what we're doing is so much greater than fulfilling the requirements of an organization. Rather, the money we give, the time we invest, and the gifts we use to build up the body are all part of our partnering in the gospel.

So that Christ will be proclaimed and people will come to know and love him. This is one of the main reasons we give and serve, and it's why we believe it is so important.

And yet, our gospel partnership isn't only about giving, but according to Paul, it's also about receiving. Look with me at Philippians 4:17.

Giving produces spiritual fruit.

Philippians 4:17

[17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

If you were here two weeks ago, you will remember that I preached on the topic of contentment in Christ from Philippians 4:10-13.

Now, in that particular text, we got to see both the joy that Paul had as the Philippians were meeting his needs, and the contentment he had in Christ, whether they met them or not.

As he said in Philippians 4:11: ***[11] Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content.***

And when we combine that with the first part of verse 17, which says: ***“Not that I seek the gift,”*** it’s another reminder that the money and his needs weren’t really Paul’s focus.

Instead, what he cares about most is that Christ would be proclaimed, and secondly, that their gospel partnership with him would produce fruit in their lives.

As he says in the 2nd half of verse 17: ***“but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.”***

What Paul wants for the Philippians, in their giving, is to grow spiritually through their giving. This desire is not only seen in verse 17, but it’s the whole goal of his ministry to the Philippian church.

We can see this when we look at his prayer in Philippians 1:11. He prays that they would be: ***[11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.***

Or in Philippians 1:25 he says:

[25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,

Spiritual growth and becoming more like Christ is what Paul is looking for in the lives of the Philippian believers.

Now, does this mean that if we simply give of our money, time, and talents, then we will grow spiritually? No. In fact, Jesus makes this clear when he says in Matthew 6:2-4

[2] “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [3] But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4] so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

If we do the right things, according to scripture, but we do them with wrong motives, they will have no spiritual or eternal benefit in our lives.

However, verses 3-4 also show us the flip side of that coin. If we give freely of ourselves and follow the commands of God from a heart of genuine faith, he says that we will be rewarded by the Father.

On the one hand, there are rewards in an eternity with Jesus, which is why he tells us in Matthew 6:20 to ***“store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”***

But on the other hand, he will also use our obedience to produce spiritual fruit in our lives today. As the psalmist wrote in Psalm 1:1-3

***[1] Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,***

*nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
[2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

*[3] He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.*

Application:

Now, I realize that for skeptics, this can sound like we're selling some kind of snake oil.

“Here, give me your money, resources, and service, and I will give you the greatest thing ever. However, here’s the catch: you can’t see it. But don’t worry, it’s there, and it’s so much better than your money and the other resources you have.”

And yet, our whole Christian life is built on the premise that we are serving an unseen kingdom and that we are not citizens of this world. We are citizens of a heavenly kingdom who are waiting for an unseen Savior who will transform our bodies and will give us the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

Look with me at the following verses:

Philippians 3:20–21

[20] But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1 Peter 1:8–9

[8] Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

So all that you are doing today, whether it be faithfully raising your kids, loving your spouse, serving well in your vocation, or serving the church through your time, talent, and resources, it is all about growing you into a person who is ready and excited to spend an eternity with Jesus.

To receive the upward call of God in Christ Jesus that Paul talked about in Philippians 3:14. The point is that your giving is doing something: It is being used by God to spread the gospel, whether that’s here or across the globe. And he is using it to grow you spiritually and prepare you for an eternity with him.

Because giving isn’t merely a physical action, but it actually is an act of worship.

Giving is an act of worship

Philippians 4:18

[18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Paul's doing two things here. First, he is letting them know that they've done well. He's received their gift from Epaphroditus, and it is far more than what he actually needs. So this is another place where Paul is basically saying, **“Well done, guys, you hit a home run with this gift.”**

Second, he's telling them that their financial gift to him is a sacrificial offering to God.

Now, we know that Paul is pulling on the Old Testament language of the sacrificial system here.

So when Paul calls their gift a *“fragrant offering,”* he's using imagery from Leviticus and other places in the Pentateuch where burnt offerings are said to be a *“pleasing aroma to the Lord.”*

Likewise, the use of the phrase *“acceptable sacrifice”* points back to when the law required the right kind of grain or unblemished animal for an offering or sacrifice.

And he ends verse 18 with the phrase “pleasing to God,” because when these offerings and sacrifices were administered properly, **they were said to be “pleasing to God.”**

But the problem here is that we are New Testament children of God. Paul, has already told us in places like Romans 6:14 and 7:6 that we are released from the law and are no longer bound by it.

This means that we no longer need to burn animal or grain sacrifices to be made right with God, because Jesus did that by dying and making the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins.

So then why is Paul continuing to use this language when referring to the money that was given to him by the Philippians?

It's because now, through Christ, the sacrifices we offer to God are things like praise, good works, and service that are done **by the power of his Spirit within us.**

As it says in Hebrews 5:15-16:

[15] Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. [16] Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

When we give of our resources, it's not only working to help spread the gospel, it's not only growing us spiritually, but if it is truly done by faith in Christ, **it is a genuine act of worship that is pleasing to God.**

Application:

Now, I think most of us inherently get this when it comes to giving money to the church. Because a good portion of us grew up in a church culture where giving the tithe or offering was a part of the service, and was seen as a reverent and worshipful act, **which it is.**

However, I think we tend to forget that worship isn't simply about sitting in church, singing songs, listening to the preaching of the word, and giving our weekly or by-weekly offering.

Instead, the author of Hebrews wants us to see that worship involves so much more than our Sunday gathering.

Rather, worship is supposed to be continuously offered to God by the things we say, and through the good we do, especially in serving others.

What this means is that our entire life is meant to be lived for the purpose of worshipping God. As Paul writes in Romans 12:1:

[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

We live in a world where most people think of their money, time, and talent as something that they can use for their own pleasure and purposes. But for us as Christians, the author of Hebrews, along with Paul, is telling us that we need to see these things as the sacrifices of worship that God has given us.

This means we need to seek God and ask him how he wants us to use those things to build up his kingdom and his church.

So I encourage each one of us to consider the following questions:

1. How does God want you to give out of the abundance of your resources to build his kingdom?
2. How does he want you to serve others in the church and in your community so that Jesus would be seen through you?
3. How does he want you to use your gifts and your talents to build up the body?

Because God is calling each of us to be more than spectators in the kingdom and the church. Instead, he is calling us to be worshipers who give freely of our resources so that the body would grow and be unified, according to Ephesians 4:13.

Now, I realize that asking these kinds of questions can at times feel hard.

Maybe you feel like you don't have a lot of resources. Maybe your schedule feels really full, and the thought of adding one more thing feels daunting. Or maybe, you find it hard to step out to serve because you are unsure of what you're good at?

And if you find yourself thinking any of these things, I want to end today by giving you an amazing promise that is being shouted from the rooftops of scripture.

God will supply all our needs.

Philippians 4:19-20

[19] And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

We talked about this earlier in this book, but the Philippian church, despite meeting Paul's needs, was very poor. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 8:1-4:

[1] We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, [2] for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. [3] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, [4] begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—

For all of the internal issues that the Philippians had, one of the enduring marks of their ministry is the fact that they were willing to give freely of themselves, even when they didn't have much.

This was true as they were seeking to bring relief to the suffering believers in Jerusalem, and it was true as they amply supplied Paul for his ministry.

Realizing this, Paul encourages them by reminding them that God, who met all of Paul's needs when he had plenty and nothing, is the same God who will abundantly meet all of their needs, **even when they have very little.**

Conclusion

Now, I don't know if you would consider yourself someone who has an abundance of time and resources, or if you would consider yourself to be in a deficit in those areas.

But what I do know is that God has given us the example of the Philippians and this letter from Paul, because he wants us all to see ourselves as givers.

That we would become a body of believers who freely and sacrificially give of our finances, our time, and our talents so that God's kingdom would be built.

And that we would see our giving as true worship to God, as part of our spiritual growth, and as an integral part of fulfilling God's great commission here in the Coulee Region.

Finally, that we would give with joy, believing that God will provide for us, he will meet all our needs, and he will continue his good work in us and in the church until the day of its completion when he returns. The day when heaven and earth bow to him and all creatures give him the honor and glory he deserves. As Paul wrote:

[20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Let's pray