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## Philippians - The Blueprint for Joy #15

Welcome to OIC. We are glad you are here. Today we will complete our study of the letter Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. The entire letter is only 104 verses but it is packed with instructions about how to experience the joy that God intends for us in our Christian lives. Remember, Jesus told us in John 15:11 that He came so that our joy could be complete. God's instruction for living is found in this letter, things like trusting God, encouraging one another, living in the present, not letting circumstances rob us of our joy. Paul has taught us that joy can only be found in a relationship with Jesus. Why? Paul has taught us that joy is not predicated on circumstances. With Jesus as our Lord, we see the "big picture". Our citizenship is in heaven. So the primary purpose of the letter was to be a blueprint for joy but this letter had a second purpose. It was to serve as a thank you letter for the gift he had received through their messenger Epaphroditus. Our support text today is Philippians 4:15-19

### Philippians 4:15-19.

<sup>15</sup>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; <sup>16</sup>for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

We easily could call this message "the joy of giving to God". Within this passage we find perhaps the greatest promise in the Bible. Verse 19. God has made a promise to meet our needs and take care of us. One of those needs was the need of a Savior to be a ransom for our sins. Today let's look at some reasons why the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to pen this great promise. Remember, we had concluded our last message with another great promise "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Today, let me show you two reasons that led Paul to conclude with the promise from verse 19.

### #1 Giving is an encouragement

#### Philippians 4:15-16

<sup>15</sup>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; <sup>16</sup>for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.

The Philippian church was not a wealthy church but God had impressed upon them that helping others allows the recipient to expand their ministries. Paul commends them for their generosity toward him. He really felt a partnership relationship with the church at Philippi. A silent partner, if you will. In verse 15 there is a phrase that puzzles some readers. Circle the word giving and receiving as you read verse 15. When the church helped Paul, there was a twofold effect. There was giving and

there was receiving. Their gift was an investment from the church to Paul's ministry but there was more than a financial aspect to it. The receiving was the satisfaction they gained in knowing they had supported Paul's ministry. Let me support that with this Scripture text.

I Timothy 6:18,19

<sup>18</sup> *Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

The only currency in heaven is love. In verse 16 something else happens when we see how encouraging it can be to help someone else.

Philippians 4:16

<sup>16</sup> *for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.*

Giving becomes consistent. They gave again and again. The second reason that Paul gave that great promise that we'll find in verse 19 is this.

#2 Their giving put God on display.

Philippians 4: 17-18

<sup>17</sup> *Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. <sup>18</sup> 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.*

Not many preachers can say what Paul said in verse 17. You see Paul wasn't concerned about whether he could survive financially. He was more concerned with what may be credited to their eternal account. As a missionary, I have lived on support of generous churches and supporters. I have seen incredible instances of how God used people in my path to put God on display. Let me tell you a story about what happened during one of our furlough times when we were raising support. Nancy and I were near Detroit Michigan travelling through pre-appointed churches asking for their help. We drove up to one church on a Sunday morning with a quarter tank of gas and about \$5 between us. This church was not large but generally we could expect them to commit to support our ministry long term. We left the church around noon and were walking through the parking lot wondering how we were ever going to get to the next church which was 180 miles away and we needed to be there by 6:00. Just as we approached our car, a man from the church asked us if he could take us to lunch. Without hesitation, we said YES. After lunch had concluded, when he went to pay the bill, he asked the cashier if he could write a check and she apparently knew him well. So he wrote a check and when the cashier handed him the change, I wasn't paying much attention but as we left and were saying goodbye he shook my hand and when he had finished I discovered he had put \$100 us dollars in my palm. The result was this individual put God on display. We drove to the nearest gas station and filled the tank. The aroma coming from the gas fumes was a fragrant aroma, not only to God, but to me. We made it to the next church and received one of the largest offerings we had ever had. God is good. Now, here we are 27 years later and we take every opportunity in our lives to put God on display. Now finally, the promise

Philippians 4:19

<sup>19</sup> *And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

God is not a force. He's a person. He wants a personal relationship with us. Notice verse 19 doesn't say he will meet SOME of our needs. No!! He will meet ALL of our needs. He doesn't promise to give

you everything you want, but He does promise to give you everything you need. This promise is not unconditional. God is not an ATM. The condition seems to be embedded in faithful, generous and sacrificial giving. I see nowhere where God will meet all the needs of believers who are stingy, lazy and irresponsible. God expects us to be responsible with our possessions. My greatest need was met by Jesus on the cross. That was need for grace. Without His grace, I would be dead in my sins. As Paul wrote the letter, he knows that by the grace of God he is now in a long term, forever relationship with Him. And that brought him the joy that he could experience regardless of circumstance, because he could see the big picture. Paul concludes the letter with a few personal remarks and some personal greetings. It is the most cordial of all the letters that Paul ever wrote.

### **Conclusion**

Can we see giving is an encouragement to others? – We can partner with them. Can we see that giving puts God on display for others to see and that giving has a twofold aspect? The giving and the receiving. Remember our supply source is not us. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. It's an inconsumable supply. God's love is displayed in that promise that He will supply our needs because He loves us.