

The Comfort of Giving
Philippians 4.14-23

Intro:

Why is financial support so important? Why do we get uncomfortable when preachers start to talk about money and taking special offerings? Perhaps you're not uncomfortable with the money talks in church, but I have been leery of them for a long time, perhaps because of a mistrust that was instilled in me as a kid! I remember my grandfather telling me a story as a kid about my uncle who was a pastor. He was talking to my uncle about taking a new position from one church to another one. My grandfather looked him dead in the face and said, "Do me a favor. When you get up and tell your people in your old church that you are leaving, would you please just be honest with them? Don't tell them that God is moving you, or that you feel "led" to go and that you're trusting God in this time of uncertainty. Just tell them the truth, that you are leaving because you wanted a pay raise and they just couldn't afford to pay you as much as you think you're worth!"

Needless to say, my grandfather didn't have very high regard for preachers talking about money. It was not uncommon for me to hear preachers referred to as crooks, or "only after your money. My grandfather said it, my mom said it, and we've all felt that way when we watch televangelists (or wannabe televangelists) preach for large offerings, and we question what is really happening with the money.

Transition:

Well, I think that ministry, just like any type of work, requires money! Of course, to walk up to a friend and tell them about Jesus is free, but to take them to coffee in order to do it costs at least \$5, right?

So money talks for me in ministry, while they may be far and few between, are not difficult because I understand that the church has a great role to play in the financial support of the Gospel being proclaimed! Plus I know that my salary is not affected in any way based on how I preach a sermon on money!

So, as we finish Philippians, Paul spends some time thanking the Philippian church for their financial support, and gives an

encouragement to them in the form of a promise! (We will spend some time in this text, then I want to talk about these 2 organizations that I want us to support.)

Read Philippians 4.10,14-23

Let's spend some time here and unpack what is happening:

**v. 10 – They had evident concern at one time, and now again
The reason it was revived is that now they apparently had an
opportunity to support the work he was doing!**

***Remember I said last week that this verse was connected to verses
14-23 and that v. 11-13 were parenthetical. So, it's important to re-
visit this verse as we look at 14-23.**

***So, at one time, this church had wanted to support Paul, but had
no opportunity. Perhaps it's because Paul wasn't coming there, or
because they weren't charged to go out of their way to support
him. Either way, he is recognizing that they are indeed aware of
the Paul and his work, and they are now excited to partner with
him for the work he is doing!**

***Well, this is true for us too! We hear about a ministry or
organization and we think, "Man, what a worthy cause! It would
be cool to support or get involved with them!" But that's as far as
it goes, probably because we don't hear enough about it, or we
don't get an opportunity to really be concerned with them.**

***I just came back from GC, and in the exhibit hall are hundreds of
booths for ministries with worthy causes looking for your concern
and support. When you walk by and inquire, or get aggressively
approached, you learn about them and understand the call for
their work, but you don't always feel a heavy burden for them.**

***But with the Philippians, they felt a strong burden for the work of
their pastor, their apostle and teacher, Paul! And Paul uses strong
language to affirm their concern – REVIVED!**

**v. 14 – Paul not only acknowledged their REVIVED concern, but
that they SHARED in his trouble, or work.**

***The idea here is that they had fellowship, or a personal commitment to partnering with his work! The work for shared there is the same root that we get fellowship – Koinonia, they shared intimately with Paul’s struggle and work in ministry! They made it their priority because it was Paul’s priority! They SHARED IN IT! There was a relationship between the Philippian church and the work of Paul! That excited Paul, and gave him a confidence to make them a promise (coming later).**

*****Troubles in this passage were not referring to a “right now” issue. He was not referring to a current struggle that they alleviated, rather he was talking about the broader scope of his calling, work, mission. For them to be concerned with is trouble was to be concerned and committed to the greater apostolic work he was doing.**

v.15-17 – Giving AND Receiving, Paul affirms that they were participating in both, and only they were participating in both. They gave to Paul, and the received the blessings of God and of Paul’s ministry.

***Then he shows how regular it was for them to support, they gave once and again! This does not give precedence to a specific number of times, except that it was more than once. It’s tough to make the case that there hundreds of times, but it’s hard to make the case that it WASN’T hundreds of times. All we know is that they supported Paul more than once.**

***What it does show is that as they were in fellowship with Paul’s work, they were committed to supporting it financially! They were COMMITTED to this ministry!**

***So for Paul, there was a real comfort in knowing that THIS church in particular (remember that he highlighted the “only you” aspect of their commitment) would be a church that supported him.**

***But he went on to say that he wasn’t excited about it so that he could have a lot of money, but he was excited about the fruit of their giving – he was excited about what would happen in the**

Kingdom of God as a result of their FELLOWSHIP with his work, and their COMMITMENT to him! (And it was to their credit!)

v. 18-19 – He encouraged them that their support pleased God – *Fragrant offering (cultural language with offerings of incense, etc), sacrifice, acceptable, pleasing to God! Not only did it bless Paul and give him comfort, but it was pleasing to GOD and acceptable to him!

***Here's the comfort for us as we give, especially in times when it's a sacrifice (as in 2009).**

***AND MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY EVERY NEED OF YOURS ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY IN JESUS CHRIST!!!**

***A life dependant on God as our supply is a life at peace, even in troublesome times!**

***This passage is not about God giving you cool stuff because you followed the give and take formula of giving – the 100 fold increase that often creates a sense of greed in us. Rather, God is the supplier of all that we need, not only in financial things, but also spiritually and communally!**

All that said, I see a few keys out of this passage that I want to highlight...

- 1. There is Revived Concern with Opportunity to support**
- 2. There is a Fellowship with the Cause and Mission**
- 3. There is a Commitment to Provide; sacrificial, acceptable and pleasing to God**
- 4. There is a Trust that God Shall Meet our Needs (which is our comfort)**