

Philippians 4:10-23 — Giving And Receiving For The Gospel

August 9, 2020

Good morning CrossWinds! Today is the last message in our study of Philippians. Like you, I am sorry to see this book go. It has been a good book that taught us more about Jesus and how to live for him. Pastor Kris Neider will preach next week. Pastor Andy Messick will preach the following week. That will bring us to August 30. At that time, we will resume our studies in the Gospel of Mark. We paused that book when COVID hit. It will be good to get back to it. We will pick up in Mark 13, which is about the end of the world. Given the state of our society, that seems like an appropriate topic.

This morning, we are in Philippians. Turn to Philippians 4:10. We will study from there to the end of the book. While you are turning, let me set the background for our study. Remember Paul wrote this letter while he was under house arrest in Rome awaiting his trial. He didn't know if he would be executed or if he would live. Paul was relatively sure he would be set free, but as you know in the legal system, you never know how things will go. As Paul awaited his trial, as a kindness, he was allowed to stay in a rented house, chained 24/7 to a Praetorian guard. That was much better than being thrown into a dungeon and waiting for his trial there. Anytime you are above ground, it is better.

The problem is that if Paul couldn't pay the rent and his utilities, he would be thrown into a Roman prison.

Thankfully, the Philippians heard about his predicament. They took a large offering and sent it to Paul by a man named Epaphroditus. Their offering supplied Paul's financial need. Paul could pay his rent, so he wrote a thank you letter to

the Philippians for their generous gift. That thank you note is the book of Philippians in our Bible. Epaphroditus, who was the messenger from Philippi that brought Paul the money, would soon return to Philippi carrying this thank you letter known to us as the book of Philippians. Because Paul was Paul, he couldn't help himself. He was always talking about Jesus and teaching about Jesus, even in a thank you note.

As Paul closed this letter, he returned to the thank you note focus of the letter. As always, Paul couldn't help but weave biblical truth into everything he did, even when he was saying thank you to people he loved.

Let's read the text. As we do, notice Paul's thankfulness to the Philippians for their giving, but more importantly, notice what Paul teaches us the truth we need to know about giving and receiving money in the kingdom of God.

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. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 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. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 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. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:10–23 (ESV)

This morning, we are going to look at seven principles about giving and receiving money for the kingdom of God that are found in these verses. Before we launch into them, there are a few more introductory items we should cover.

False God's are takers. The true God is a giver.

First, as soon as we talk about money in the church, everyone grabs their wallet and holds it tight. Everyone expects the preacher to be a prosperity preacher that is trying to rip you off. We all know those types of preachers. They are crooks. They are manipulators. Nobody, especially me, wants to be associated with them. That is why most evangelical pastors don't talk about money. To avoid the topic of money would not be fair, though. The Bible has a lot to say about money. One Bible scholar estimates there are more than 800 passages in the Bible that talk about finances. Twenty-five percent of Jesus' teachings related to the use of money. If I talked like Jesus, we would have a giving sermon once a month.

That being said, when the Bible talks about money, don't think God is interested in taking from you. Our God is a giver. False gods are takers. False gods give you lists of obligations you must meet to be made right with them. They give you financial obligations you must pay to them. All the false gods are takers. One false god says you must make a pilgrimage to Mecca to get in his good graces. You must pray facing Mecca multiple times a day to get in his good graces. You must give that god money or you have no chance in that god's eyes. Another god says you need to reincarnate and try harder next time or come back as a house fly. All the fake gods are taking from you.

As Christians, we worship the one true God in the universe, and he is the exact opposite. He is a giver. Though we sinned, he gave us his son. We don't do anything to save ourselves other than trust what Jesus has done for us. Our God is such a giver. He doesn't just take away our sin, he gives us the purity and perfection of his own son credited to our lives. We don't deserve to be forgiven of sin. We don't deserve to be made holy, pure, and like Jesus, but God gives that to us. Our God doesn't just take away our sin but he gives us new bodies after our current bodies die. He gives us resurrection bodies. Our God gives us his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us into truth. He convicts us of sin. Our God gives us the Bible, which is truth. In our world, truth is in short supply. Everything is spun and twisted. The Bible is the unvarnished truth, and God gives it to us because it is only the truth that will set us free.

When Jesus was on Earth, he was always giving to us, not taking from us. He was healing the sick. He was feeding thousands. He never asked anyone to give him anything. He lived in simplicity and poverty and had no place to lay his head. He even gave his very life for our sin.

Our God is a giver. Jesus is a giver. False gods are all takers. Before we approach the topic of giving, know that everything God says to us about giving is good truth he is giving to us. He is not taking from us. Whatever God says about financial giving is good for us. It is right for us. It is beneficial to us. It is the good and right way to live. You can take your hand off your wallet. You do not need to fear. What God says in his word about finances is all good, liberating, and kind.

The churches in Macedonia, where Philippi was located, were model givers.

The church in Philippi had a great understanding of God's desires when it came to financial giving and receiving for the gospel. They didn't just know this truth but they lived this truth. They put it into practice. When Paul wrote to the wealthy Corinthians, in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, he held up the churches of Macedonia as model givers. Philippi was in Macedonia. It was a key city in that region. The Philippians were the model givers Paul encouraged the rest of the churches to follow after.

In addition, the Philippians had the first church to financially partner with Paul and support him as he traveled around the ancient world telling people about Jesus. They had done this for more than a decade.

So the churches in the areas of Macedonia, of which Philippi was one, were generally poor, but they were extremely generous.

It was more than a decade since Paul planted this church. The last time he was in Philippi was four years prior. Paul was praying about his rent in Rome. He didn't know how he would make his rent payment when Epaphroditus showed up with an unexpected check from the Philippians. That answered Paul's prayer. It provided rent and food. God is good. In response Paul wrote this thank you letter called the book of Philippians. Let's work our way through the text and see what Paul teaches us. The first two points of the message are what he teaches us about receiving God's financial goodness through others. The rest of the points are about giving to further the kingdom.

1. We should express gratitude when God provides for our needs.

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. Philippians 4:10 (ESV)

We should express our gratitude to generous people.

Paul said he was thrilled that the Philippians renewed their financial support of him. He didn't say why that support went away. Maybe it was COVID. I honestly think they just lost Paul's address. After all, imagine a world where you couldn't text people, call them or find them on Facebook. To the younger than 20 crowd, the world used to be that way. When they shipped you to Rome, and you didn't know where you are going, people lost your address. Paul said it was not that their concern for him had fallen by the wayside but that they didn't have an opportunity to express their love for him through their financial gifts.

There is a simple point of application for us — if someone blesses us and is used by God to meet our needs, we must thank them and express our appreciation to them. We live in an entitled society where everyone thinks the world owes them something. Gratitude is in short supply. That may be the society in which we live, but that is not the way a Christian conducts himself or herself. As Christians, we are to be grateful people. We are to be appreciative people. We are to express our gratitude to people for how God has used them to provide for our needs either face-to-face or with a written note, a letter of gratitude. After all, we wouldn't even have the book of Philippians if Paul didn't write a thank you note from a heart of gratitude.

As I thought about how I can apply this, the first thing that came to mind is the great team I get to work with at CrossWinds. I sometimes don't thank them enough. I have a rockstar staff team on both campuses.

Even more apropos this morning is my thankfulness for you. Without your financial generosity, I would not be preaching this weekend. This building would not exist. The lights would not be on. Kids would not be coming to Christ at AWANA on Wednesday night. Youth would not be meeting Jesus and growing in their love for Jesus on Wednesday night. It is your sacrifice. It is your generosity that makes this church possible. Thank you! Thank you for helping the light of Christ to shine from this corner around our community.

We should express our gratitude to our generous God.

When God provides for our needs through the generosity of other people we should not just go out of our way to show our gratitude to the people who provided for God's work but we must go out of our way to show our gratitude to the God of the universe who was working behind the scenes to make that generosity possible.

Look at this from Paul's situation. He knew he was running short on rent that month. Things were getting tight. He began praying to God. He was asking God to provide for his needs. A few weeks later, Epaphroditus unexpectedly showed up at his door. God is the one who made that possible. God ordered circumstances so the Philippians finally learned of Paul's address. God prompted their hearts to financially give to him after they stopped giving for a long period of time. God ordered the timing of events so Epaphroditus showed up just in time to

help Paul pay his rent. God was working behind the scenes to make generosity possible. We need to thank him for answering prayers!

So when God financially provides for the needs of his people and the needs of his church, let us be filled with gratitude to the people that provide but also to the God who worked behind the scenes to make that provision possible.

We must learn to be content with what God provides.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. Philippians 4:11–12 (ESV)

While Paul was grateful for the Philippians' gift, he didn't want them to think of him as a money grubber. He could have said he was down to beans and rice. He could have told a sob story about how he couldn't even afford to eat at Taco Bell. He didn't go there. He told the Philippians that even though things were hard, he learned to be content without much in his pockets.

Contentment in whatever situation we find ourselves is a sign of spiritual maturity. It is a sign that someone is mature in Christ and has learned to trust in Christ to provide for his or her needs, no matter what situation he or she faces. Someone that is not content and is always living to buy something or to get more stuff because stuff is what makes him or her happy has a sign of spiritual immaturity.

Our culture does not teach contentment. Our culture teaches coveting. Our culture tells us to want what other people have. Just so you know, that is why television exists. It doesn't exist for the programming. Television exists for the commercials. The programs are only there to get you to watch the commercials.

Our culture wants you to covet so you will buy things you don't need with money you don't have. Advertisers want you to buy it on credit. That way you will be a slave to the lender. If you watch the rioters, they are always breaking into stores and stealing stuff. What does stealing flat screen TVs have to do with George Floyd's death? Nothing. Black Lives Matter and social violence is justified under the umbrella of social equality, but in reality it is to satisfy people's coveting. It is to satisfy their greed. Stealing stuff will not bring about social equality.

The problem is stuff can't buy happiness. Remember what it was like as a kid when you were looking forward to Christmas morning? You thought all the toys under the tree would make you happy. The problem was that by Christmas afternoon you were bored of all the new stuff. More stuff doesn't make anyone happy.

How can we learn not to covet? Let me give you two quick tips. One of the best ways to fight coveting is to pray over a purchase. I don't mean pray over it after you have purchased it when you are wondering how to afford the payments. I mean pray over a purchase before you make it. Ask God if what you are about to spend money on is what he wants you to spend money on. You will be surprised what happens when you pray about a purchase. It gets very convicting.

Another way to fight our coveting culture is to pay for things in cash. When we swipe our credit cards, the sales prices are just a number. It is hard to sense the size of a number. When you pay for something by laying down stacks of \$20 bills, it causes you to rethink your purchases. One time, I did that. I was in the store laying down stacks of \$20 bills for my purchase. I came almost to the end

of my pile of \$20s, and I realized how foolhardy it was to make that purchase. I literally pulled the pile of money back to my side of the table, walked away from the deal and left the store. The pile of money made it clear to me I was making a purchase out of greed. I was trying to buy happiness. It was a foolish thing to do.

It is not just our culture that teaches us to covet and not be content with what God provides in our lives, but one of the ways to recognize a false teacher is he or she teaches you to covet, rather than helping you learn to be content with what God provides.

Let me show you an example. This is a quote from Rod Parsley, a televangelist, prosperity gospel preacher. Whenever you have a pastor whose last name is a table garnish, you know that is not the name of a person you can trust.

Some of you better get ready to drive around in neighborhoods you never thought you would be able to afford to live. Some of you better go down to that Lexus and Mercedes dealership and just sit down in one of those things with all that leather all over it, and when they say, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'Well, I'm just feeling out what my Father is going to give me.'

Get real! How does that jive with Paul writing from prison saying he has learned to be content in whatever situation he finds himself, whether that is poverty or wealth? Parsley's quote is the exact opposite of everything it is saying in this passage.

Here is another quote from a prosperity preacher named Creflo Dollar. When a pastor's name is Dollar, and he is asking for money, you know he is a crook. Here is what he says:

See, there are some people that believe not in prosperity. They don't want to hear about that God is a God who wants to put money in your hand. Well, you

need to hear about money because you ain't gonna have no love, and joy, and peace until you get some money.

According to him, love, joy, and peace don't come from Jesus. They all come from money. That is not true! In another passage, Paul said the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, not the secret of love, joy, and peace.

So our society teaches us to covet. It teaches us we can't be happy unless we have a bunch of stuff. It teaches us to go into debt to get more stuff. False teachers are the same way. Instead of teaching us to be content with what God provides, false teachers will tell us we can't be happy unless we have money, which is the exact opposite of what Paul said in these verses.

Contentment is not connected to our circumstances.

Paul said our contentment is not related to the stuff we have or the stuff we don't have. More stuff doesn't make us happier. A bigger house doesn't make us happier. A faster car doesn't make us happier. A bigger boat doesn't make us happier. With boats, it is called four-foot fever. It is the desire to get a boat that is just four feet longer so you can keep up with your friends. It is easy to think the key to your happiness is in the extra four feet. Paul said none of that is true.

Paul said contentment is learned. It is learned when we realize that having Jesus is more important than having money. Jesus loves us. Jesus cares for us. Jesus died for us. Jesus will be with us. Jesus promises to provide for us.

Having more and more money will not bring the contentment in our hearts, a contentment only God can provide.

[He who loves money will not be satisfied with money... Ecclesiastes 5:10 \(ESV\)](#)

If you are about money, you will never have enough money.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 1 Timothy 6:9–10 (ESV)

Notice Paul didn't say money is evil. He said the love of money is a trap. It ruins people's lives when they live for their greed. This is the father who loses his wife and children because all he does it work because money is more important than family.

Think of it this way. Would you rather be Bill Gates with lots of money and no Jesus, or would you rather be an ordinary person that has Jesus? Having Jesus is much better than having money.

Contentment comes from our relationship with Jesus.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

This brings us to one of the most famous verses in the Bible. It is a verse that has been put on T-shirts for athletic teams. It is a verse written on the ceiling above the bench press in the weight room. You see this verse quoted by football players. It is a favorite verse for people to tattoo on their bodies. The problem is 99 percent of the time this verse is misrepresented. This verse does not mean that if you rely on Jesus you will be able to throw a football like Tom Brady. It does not mean you will become a successful athlete or business executive.

Remember context governs meaning. What was Paul talking about in these verses? He was talking about learning to be content in times of plenty and times of poverty. He said Jesus had taught him to be content in whatever financial state he found himself. Having Jesus was having enough. When people quote this verse thinking it will help them to be a successful athlete, they

misquote it, not realizing it actually means that because of Jesus they can be content even if they are miserable failures as athletes.

The writer of the Hebrews says the same truth.

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

When Paul said he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him, all things was not just being content in hard times. It was knowing Jesus would carry him through those hard times.

Giving to the gospel is partnering to share the gospel.

Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 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. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Philippians 4:14–16 (ESV)

Notice that Paul told the Philippians their financial support of him was more than just a check. Their financial gift was partnering with him to help him share the gospel. Their financial gift enabled Paul to use his spiritual gifts. In the same way, our financial gifts help our church and our missionaries to share the gospel. Your financial support of CrossWinds enables others to take time to teach the Bible and share the good news in our church and community. We often think the only way the gospel makes progress is if we can verbally share the good news. That is not true. Those who are generous with their resources help the gospel make progress by enabling other programs and people to share the good news in their place.

There is an inseparable relationship between financial giving and gospel sharing. I ask you, are you partnering with your church family at CrossWinds?

Are you someone who receives the benefits of teaching, worship, children's programs, and youth programs but you expect it all to come for free? This is a little hard to say, but it is true. Children are the ones who expect to receive everything for free. Adults take responsibility and want to pay. When it comes to your involvement, are you more of a child or an adult? Are you someone who expects to receive the teaching for free, your kids to be involved in the children's programs for free, listen to the worship team for free, or are you an adult? Have you taken financial responsibility for what takes place in your church? Are you partnering with us to make sure AWANA takes place, youth group takes place, missionaries are supported and God's Word is taught?

Too many people in our culture have a sense of entitlement. They expect everyone else to pay. Mature Christian adults want to be givers. They want to partner together to help the gospel go forward through their church in their community.

God rewards the giver.

**Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.
Philippians 4:17 (ESV)**

Paul was not talking about the importance of financial giving to partner with him to help spread the gospel. Now he flips the table. Giving for the spread of the gospel does not just help the gospel go forward through your church, but it is even more of a benefit for the giver. It is always better to be the giver of a financial gift to help spread the gospel than a receiver of a financial gift to help spread the gospel.

Why is it always better to be a giver? God loves to reward those who give.

God rewards givers in this life.

Don't misunderstand this point. This is not prosperity theology motivated by greed where the TV preacher tells people to give him \$50 because God will give them back \$250. That is not what we are saying. All I am pointing out is the Bible is clear that when people are generous to help others and to spread the gospel in this life, God loves to give them more resources to continue that generosity.

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. Proverbs 11:24–25 (ESV)

The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor. Proverbs 22:9 (NIV)

Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you. Luke 6:38 (ESV)

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV)

A generous life is the kind of life God blesses. He blesses that kind of life because those are the people who will get God's resources where he wants those resources going. They aren't the kind of people who will hoard those resources. They are the kind of people who will use those resources.

God rewards givers in the next life.

The Bible is also very clear that how we use our resources in this life will have a direct bearing on the rewards we will enjoy from God in the next life.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal... You can not serve God and money. Matthew 6:19–20, 24 (ESV)

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:17–19 (ESV)

Financial giving for the gospel isn't just partnering for the gospel that helps the gospel be shared, but it is the kind of life God loves to bless, in this life and in the next life.

For many of us, we have been putting money into an IRA to be prepared for our retirement years. Generosity toward the gospel is putting money into an ERA, that is an eternal retirement account. God promises to reward us in heaven for our financial generosity toward the growth of the kingdom now.

Giving is an act of worship that pleases God.

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. Philippians 4:18 (ESV)

Paul switched from teaching us about the rewards of giving, to teaching us about financial giving as an act of worship. He went back to the Old Testament sacrificial system. Sometimes we forget the smell of Old Testament worship. Animals were burned on the altar. If you have ever smelled a good barbecue, that is what it smelled like when animals were sacrificed. In addition, there were libations. Those were drink offerings of wine that were thrown on the hot coals. Wine and incense turned into vapor that rose into the air and left a sweet but unique smell to the area. It was an aroma that was pleasing to God.

Paul said the Philippians' generosity to him to supply his needs and to enable him to continue sharing the gospel in Rome was like one of those Old

Testament offerings. The Philippians' financial generosity was a smell that pleased God. Just as a good smell puts a smile on our faces, when we are financially generous for the spread of the gospel, it puts a smile on God's face. It is pleasing to him.

So when we give sacrificially, generously, joyfully, and proportionately for the spread of the gospel, it brings pleasure to God. It is not that we have to give. It is that we get to give. It is part of our worship. For the mature Christian, giving is not a burden. It is a joy. It is a privilege. When mature Christians write checks, they know they are pleasing God. God is filled with joy when he sees them being generous toward the growth of his kingdom. He can't help but be pleased.

Don't give because a church or ministry wants your money. Give because it is the way we please God with our lives.

We watch our words to please God with our language.

As Christians, why do we not cuss and swear? It is not to be saved. We are already saved by Jesus. We watch our language because we want to please God with our lives.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)

We watch our sexuality to please God with our bodies and minds.

As Christians, why do we not attend strip clubs? Why do we save our sexuality for marriage? It is because of our gratitude for what God has done for us. We want to please God with our lives.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor... 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4 (ESV)

We give to the gospel to please God with our wallet.

When it comes to our finances, we give to the gospel because we know that giving to the growth of God's kingdom puts a smile on God's face. It is the way we please God with our money. It is part of our worship.

Giving is an act of faith because it involves trusting God to provide for our needs.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Philippians 4:19–20 (ESV)

The Philippians supplied for Paul's needs. Then Paul assured them that God would supply for all their needs. Paul didn't promise God would provide for all their greeds but for all their needs. This is one of those promises in the Bible that is hard to absorb because it is so bold. Many times we tell ourselves we can't give to the progress of God's kingdom because we will need the money. Paul promised that when we give to the progress of God's kingdom, God promises to provide for all our needs. Sometimes we lose our jobs. We find ourselves with just an unemployment check. The first thought is that we can't afford to give as an act of worship because we may need that money. The future looks too uncertain. The truth is we can't afford not to worship God by giving him a bit of that money. It is only when we joyfully worship him with our resources that he promises to provide for all of our needs, which is the reason we worry and feel we can't give.

Paul said the same thing to the Corinthians.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

God is fully capable of supplying for our needs so we are to be confident and comfortable when it comes to generosity toward God's kingdom. He promises to take care of those who are giving to his kingdom.

Giving to the gospel grows God's kingdom in ways we couldn't accomplish and wouldn't expect.

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:21–23 (ESV)

In Paul's final word of greeting in this letter, there is one part that stands out. It is that the Christians in Caesar's household also sent their greetings. That is notable. Up to this point in history, the Christian faith was reserved for common people. Those in Caesar's household didn't know about the good news of Jesus.

As we learned earlier in our study, because the Philippians had supplied Paul the money for rent and food, he was able to stay in a rented house in the city, not in a Roman dungeon while awaiting his trial. Since Paul was in a rented house, that meant he was chained to a Praetorian guard soldier 24 hours a day. There were four guards a day, and they worked in six-hour shifts. Praetorian guards were the elite body guard unit for Caesar and his household. Since those guards were chained to Paul in six-hour shifts, they were forced to listen to Paul talk about Jesus. Do you think Paul was a good evangelist? You bet he was. Those guards were coming to Christ. They were returning to Caesar's household and telling other people about Christ. The gospel was now spreading, and people in Caesar's own household were becoming Christians.

What made this possible? The Philippians' generosity. It was their generosity that enabled Paul to stay in a rented house, which meant he was chained to a member of the Praetorian guard, which led to them returning to Caesar's own house so the gospel made progress in Caesar's own family.

My friends, the Philippians had no idea their financial generosity would be used by God to lead members of Caesar's own family into the kingdom of God.

The same is true for us. I am convinced that if not in this life, for sure in heaven, there were be people thanking you for giving to Christ and his kingdom. It was your financial generosity that kept an AWANA program going when a child came to Christ which led to him becoming a godly father or a godly mother. It was your generosity that helped keep a missionary on the field and now there are people around the world who have come to Jesus in part because of your generosity. In heaven you will meet them. In heaven, they will thank you.

My friends, we have no idea how God will use our generosity to the kingdom of God to grow the gospel. What we do know is God will use our financial generosity in ways we wouldn't expect and couldn't even imagine.

Conclusion

So my friends, I challenge you this morning to be financially generous for the kingdom of God. Partner with your church to work together to make sure the gospel is proclaimed in this community or at your home church.

Realize your giving to the gospel is to partner with others to help spread the gospel, but it is also the way God will reward your life. God loves to reward his givers both in this life and the next.

Realize your giving is an act of worship. Our generosity toward the kingdom puts a smile on God's face. It is pleasing to him. Know that when we give, it will always be an act of faith where we will need to trust God to provide for our needs. The amazing promise of God is he promises to always provide for all of the needs of his givers. We can't afford not to give. We all need God to provide for our needs.

Lastly, when we give, God will use our resources in ways beyond what we could ask or even imagine for the progress of the kingdom of God.

My friends, do not leave here today and let all of this be nothing more than biblical information. Take it to heart and let it be biblical transformation. Let this message change the way you give toward the gospel for the rest of your life.



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