

Sermon Series: "One in mind, love, spirit and purpose"

Sermon Summary and Bible Study 7

Rejoice in Helping

Philippians Chapter 4 verses 10 to 23

In these final verses the Apostle Paul returns to the reason for his thankfulness in Chapter 1. A financial gift has come to him via way of Epaphroditus from the Christians in Philippi to support his ministry and those with him in Rome (4:10 and 18). It was proof and appreciation to Paul of their long term "partnership in the gospel of Christ" with him (1:7). In these final verses, Paul also reminds those who are financially supported by the Church (ministry staff like Paul) to learn to be content in whatever circumstance they may find themselves in (4:12-13). To trust God and not stress over where or when the next financial support might come from. For God will give them the strength to be content in plenty or in want. But in doing so he reminds them and the rest of the Church that God uses them towards providing that strength through their giving.

It is good to share in our brothers and sisters "troubles" as Paul says in verse 14. The word he chooses to use is *thlipsis*. A word that describes troubles, hardships one faces as God's people in the days leading up to the end (the end of one's life or more likely the end of time and Christ's return). It has in mind doing what is really important in matters of meeting another's needs - whatever they may be - knowing that "the Lord is near" (4:5). To share in our brothers and sister's troubles is appropriate thinking and behaviour for Christians, God's holy people. It's having the same mind set as that of Christ Jesus – one in mind, love, spirit and purpose. Looking not to one's own interest but joyfully to the interest of others (2:4).

The *thlipsis* Paul has in mind is the financial supporting of God's work through the Church by the Church. It's good to be reminded that ministry staff do get anxious about this. It can be a *thlipsis*. In bringing it to the churches attention he does so in a positive way that recognises and appreciates the concern and care the Philippian Christians have for Paul while in Rome awaiting his trial whatever his outcome might be. It is obvious to Paul that they want to provide for his needs. But more importantly, Paul acknowledges that they have understood that they have to take the initiative to provide that support. Being anxious about the financial wellbeing of a church whether they can pay the bills and support staff is an anxiety a *thlipsis* I am sure you'll agree is one we don't want our ministry staff to be overwhelmingly concerned about. The prioritising of our giving on a regular and sacrificial basis is a sign to ministry staff of a churches appreciation and support for the work of God by them. Thank you. "To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

A Bible Study

Pray to begin with - *Almighty God and loving heavenly Father, guide me and teach me of yourself from your Word. Help me to see the wisdom and value to my life of living it according to what I read and learn in it. Amen.*

Read Philippians Chapter 4 verses 10 to 23.

Read Sermon Summary – (See over)

Questions:

1. Why does Paul "rejoice greatly in the Lord" (verse 10)? What is he rejoicing over?
2. In your opinion what guides you as to how much you give financially to support the work of your Church, your ministry staff and church expenses? Is it something that comes easy, willingly and planned? It's been said that, "You can test the appreciation of Christians as to their thankfulness to God and support for gospel ministry by where giving is on their priority list? Would you agree?"
3. Some say, 'We are to give according to our means'. What do you think they mean by that?
4. What do you learn about the motivation and pattern of giving from the Philippian Church?
5. In these verses, what advice does Paul give to ministry staff, like himself, with regards to the giving of their church to support them financially, pay the church bills and their church programs?
6. If we are anxious about giving and find it hard to priorities it, what does God promise? (See verses 19 & 20. Read also Psalm 37 especially verse 25)
7. The letter ends verse 21 with Paul sending greetings and a prayer to the Christians in Philippi. How encouraging is something as simple as this within the life of a church?

A Prayer to end - *Thank you God for guiding and teaching me of yourself from your Word. There is wisdom and value for my life in living it according to what I have read and learnt. Amen.*

This concludes the Sermons and Bible Studies through Philippians. Conclude by rereading the letter in one sitting reflecting on what you have learnt.