

Blessed together in Christ

Philippians 4: 14-19

Drawing near the conclusion of his letter, Paul once again offered a word of gratitude for the church in Philippi. They had certainly benefited greatly from the love and devotion of Paul, and yet he knew his commitment to them had not been without consequence. The church loved Paul, and they were committed to him as well. This had not been a one-sided affair, where one was expected to give without receiving anything in return. They all had benefited from their relationship and fondness for one another.

Again we find a beautiful picture of how the New Testament church should look. As we come together, united by faith in Christ, we share and receive with one another. We all benefit from our fellowship in the Gospel. As we stand united in faith, individual needs are met, and the body is strengthened. Such unity of purpose and strength offers blessing to all.

As we consider the [blessings](#) Paul mentioned in the text, I want to preach on the thought: [Blessed together in Christ](#).

I. Paul spoke of Faithfulness (14-16) – In these verses, Paul spoke of the faithfulness of the Philippian church. Consider:

A. Their Generosity (14) – [Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction](#). Paul had just spoken of the difficulties he faced in ministry, and his learning to be content regardless of the situation. Desiring to ensure his gratitude for their faithfulness, Paul commended their generosity. They had sought to assist Paul in his adversity, contributing to his need. While some sought his hurt, and others neglected him, Paul rejoiced that Philippi had proven a faithful partner in ministry; they had done well.

- I am certain Paul received monetary contributions that were a blessing to him, but he likely thought of their prayers and spiritual support as well. Many tend to believe the church is only interested in financial contributions from its members. While those are necessary to maintain our ministries, they are not the only contributions needed today. I am thankful for the opportunity to give of what the Lord has blessed me with, but I am also aware of the need for spiritual contributions as well. Every believer is gifted of the Lord and provided an opportunity to invest their gifts in the lives of others.

B. Their Accountability (15) – Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. Paul reminded them of their faithfulness during the beginning stages of his ministry, even when others refused to contribute to his need. Philippi knew they stood alone in supporting Paul at times, and yet they continued, regardless of what others gave or withheld. They refused to allow the actions of others to dictate their giving and commitment to Paul. They knew his labor was worthy of their support, and they felt accountable to support him, even if others did not.

- We live in a day of decreasing support for missions and interest in the Gospel altogether. Many churches who once were very supportive of the Gospel have decreased, or even suspended their support. We will not be accountable for what others do, but we remain accountable for our actions. I pray we will continue to support the work of the Lord, even if others choose to abandon their efforts.

C. Their Consistency (16) – For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Paul remembered their faithfulness while he served in Thessalonica. They did not send a onetime contribution, but sent unto him time and again. Philippi had proven faithful, being very consistent in their support of Paul.

- I appreciate your faithfulness to the work of the Gospel and your consistency in giving. Fellowship has always viewed missions as a priority, and we must continue to do so. We can never develop an attitude that we have given enough, or view the work as unimportant or unnecessary. I pray we too will continue to give time and again in support of the Gospel.

II. Paul spoke of Fruitfulness (17-18) – Here Paul spoke of the fruitfulness obtained through joint efforts in ministry. Consider:

A. His Contentment (17a, 18a) – Not because I desire a gift. ^[18a] But I have all, and abound. There faithfulness had produced fruit which enabled Paul to be content, even while bound in Rome. He wanted the church to know that he was not disappointed in their efforts or accusing them of neglect. Their commitment had allowed him to rejoice, being full and abounding in the Lord.

- We have no way of knowing the amount of fruit our commitment to the Gospel will produce. Your contributions, regardless of size, have the potential of generating much fruit in Christ. The smallest of gifts can generate the greatest of blessings to others. We have the opportunity to be a blessing to others, helping them to abound in the faith through our cooperation in ministry. (Think of the blessing a few dollars provides to those that Brother Todd ministers to in India.)

B. The Disbursement (17b) – *Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* Paul rejoiced in their faithfulness, knowing it would produce fruit that would be added to their account. God would honor their sacrificial giving and bless them accordingly. They may not have seen the full benefit of it in their lifetime, but Paul knew God was keeping a record. As they stand before Christ at the Bema Seat, their faithfulness will be remembered and rewarded.

▪ This is one of the great joys and benefits of partnering with others in ministry. Often we give, and never know exactly how that money was used for kingdom work. While we may never know, God always does. That is not why we give, but we can rest assured that as we partner with others in ministry, fruit from the joint-effort is being added to our account. *Matt.10:42 – And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Matt.25:40 – And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Heb.6:10 – For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

C. The Achievement (18b) – *I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.* Here Paul spoke of the aspects of their fruit, referring back to the Old Testament principle in giving unto the Lord. He viewed these as a New Testament equivalent of the former offerings. Notice:

- **The Abundance** – *I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you.* Their giving had allowed Paul to live a life of abundance, receiving their support from Epaphroditus. We can assist others, and help them live a life of fullness and contentment.
- **The Fragrance** – *an odour of a sweet smell.* Their support of Paul provided a sweet smelling fragrance unto the Lord and bore witness of His faithfulness to others, both inside and outside the faith.
- **The Acceptance** – *a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.* Their support of Paul was acceptable to God and well pleasing to Him. He received their sacrificial giving as an act of worship.

III. Paul spoke of Fullness (19) – *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Having experienced fullness in Christ, he sought to encourage the church to receive the fullness available through Him. He mentioned:

A. The Supply – *But my God shall supply all your need.* Paul wanted them to rest in the provision of God, knowing He was able to supply all their need. He had more than enough to provide whatever need they had!

B. The Source – *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory.* While Philippi knew what it was to deal with limited resources, facing poverty at times, such was never the case with the Lord. He has the riches of glory at His disposal. A believer will never encounter a need that God doesn't have the necessary resources to provide. He is not in danger of bankruptcy. All of the power and resources of heaven are at His disposal.

C. The Sovereign – *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Finding yet another opportunity, Paul reminds the church that every blessing they enjoy, and every need that is met, is the result of their relationship with Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior. Without Christ, we would not enjoy the blessings we receive!

Conclusion: There can be little doubt that Paul and the Philippian church mutually benefited from each other. He had invested much in them spiritually and they had in turn supported him in the work of ministry. The church was operating as the Lord intended. They were blessed of each other through their faithfulness to the Lord.

Nothing compares to being a part of the body of Christ and being in fellowship with a local body of believers. We share and receive from one another, mutually benefiting from our fellowship in the Lord. We have the awesome privilege of partnering with others outside of our fellowship in kingdom work. As we work together, we are blessed together in Christ.

If there are needs in your life, especially salvation, I urge you to seek the Lord today. He is able to provide whatever need, if you will come before Him by faith!