



Transcendent Joy: Learning How to Rejoice No Matter What

Message #22: The Impact of a Generous Church (Philippians 4:14-23) – May 14, 2023 - Pastor Jeff

- Paul closes his letter with some thankful words about the impact of the Philippians financial generosity toward him and his need. The Lord speaks often and clearly about our relationship to Him and the financial side of life as it has a way of revealing our heart's faithfulness (Lk 16:11), preoccupation (Mt. 6:21), and loyalty (Mt. 6:24). Paul uses their financial gift to speak of its blessing in ministry.
- It is helpful to remember that the Philippians from Macedonia were poor, yet they acted like they had all the wealth in the world to give away (2 Cor. 8:2: *"that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality"*).
- Using the word GIVER, we can draw out five ways generosity makes an impact in our faith and ministry.

❶ Gift: Generosity pours out a blessing on others (4:14-16, 18a)

- The first impact is about what a financial gift can and will do to bless the receiver (it meets their needs).
- Paul highlights the special bond he had with the Philippians as they had repeatedly blessed him 10 years earlier with financial assistance (v. 15-16) and now again, another gift had deepened by their fellowship (v. 14: *"share with me"*; also in v. 15). It was a tangible expression of their *"concern"* (v. 10)
- Though Paul was content, he couldn't help but describe this blessing from the church. He sees himself as a wealthy man in prison (*"I have received everything in full"* (1:9, 26; 4:12) and *"have an abundance"* (1:11; 2:2); *"I am amply supplied"* (v. 18a). The Philippians didn't skimp on their gift to Paul.

❷ Investment: Generosity profits your eternal account (4:17)

- The second impact of their gift was what it did for the giver (the Philippians)
- Paul is not motivated by the specific material investment though it met his material needs (*"not that I seek the gift itself"* – he's a contented man), but he was motivated by the eternal interest being accrued to the Philippians heavenly account (*"but I seek after the profit which increases to your account"*)
- God blesses (in many ways) those who give (Prov. 11:24-25; 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 9:6)

❸ Vehicle: Generosity propagates the gospel (4:15-16, 21-23)

- The third impact of a generous church is gospel proclamation. Paul's gospel ministry was in part fueled and funded by the financial support of the Philippians (both *"at the first preaching of the gospel"* and while Paul was imprisoned)
- In Paul's benediction (v. 21-23), Paul mentions some of the fruit of gospel ministry in *"Caesar's household"* which Paul highlights in chapter one, verses 12-13.
- God has chosen the means of financial support for some who are serving the Lord in the gospel ministry (Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:11, 14).

❹ Enjoyment: Generosity pleases the Lord (4:18b)

- The fourth impact of a generous church is what it does for God. It pleases and honors Him.

- Paul uses some Old Testament sacrificial terminology to describe how our offerings honor the Lord.
 - It's a sweet-smelling offering ("*a fragrant aroma*" to God). It is a gift motivated by thanksgiving (2 Cor. 9:12), priority (Prov. 3:9), joy (2 Cor. 9:7), pre-planning (2 Cor. 9:7) and generosity (2 Cor. 9:6)
 - It's a sacrificial offering (Mal 1:6-14: give God your first and best) – 2 Chron. 24:24; Eph. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-5 ("*they first gave themselves to the Lord*").

⑤ Receptacle: Generosity prompts Gods rich supply (4:19)

- The fifth impact of a generous church is the limitless riches and provision of God that is directed toward your needs when you live a generous life.
- Our union "*in Christ Jesus*" is the source of God's promise. If you are "*in Christ Jesus*" by faith, then the privilege of giving and the promise of God's faithfulness is given to you.
- The riches of God for all my needs is the sufficiency of God's promise. We are blessed not "*out of*", but "*according to*" His riches.
- "*My God*" is the surety of His promise. God is able and never fails to provide for His people (Rom. 8:32; Ps. 37:25)