

**PHILIPPIANS 4**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Philippians chapter 4 as we continue our study through the Word of God and tonight, we will be finishing up this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

Keep in mind that when Paul wrote this letter he was in prison in Rome for his faith. And like I have said, this letter has been known as the Epistle of Joy!

How can he be in prison and be filled with joy? Because he was focused on the Lord, that was the joy of his life and no one could ever take that away from him.

Not only that, but he saw the Lord working even in these difficult times. The guards that were chained to Paul were getting saved. Christians who were discouraged to hear Paul was in prison, when they saw what God was doing, they were encouraged in the faith.

No anger, no bitterness, no frustration and no worry for Paul. How can that be when many Americans and even Christians are not free from these things, especially worry!

Because we have lost our focus!

Interestingly enough our English word “worry” comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means, “to strangle.”

How fitting that is as worry tends to strangle people physically, emotionally, and yes, even spiritually.

Thus, as we read through these verses here in Philippians chapter 4, we can learn some powerful lessons from Paul, who – did not worry about people, Philippians 4:1-5.

He did not worry about circumstances, Philippians 4:10-14.

And he did not worry about the material things of life, Philippians 4:15-19.

Again, how did he do it?

He was aware of God's presence in his life as he shows us in Philippians 4:1-5.

He was aware of God's peace and he speaks of that in Philippians 4:6-9.

He was aware of God's power in his life and he speaks of that in Philippians 4:10-14.

And he was aware of God's provision for his life and he speaks of that in Philippians 4:15-23.

Thus, may we learn the lesson so we don't let worry get a stranglehold on our life or if it already has, that we may break free from its grip upon us as we learn God's presence in our life, His peace, His power and His provision.

Also, we need to keep in mind that the chapter divisions and the verses were added to the Scriptures at a much later date and they were added for ease of access. They are not inspired but helpful for us to find what we are looking for in the Scriptures.

A man named Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters in the year A. D. 1227. Langton was a professor at the University of Paris and later he became the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Robert Stephanus (Stephens), a French printer, divided the verses for his Greek New Testament. It was published in 1551.

The first entire Bible in which these chapter and verse divisions were used was Stephen's edition of the Latin Vulgate (1555).

The first English New Testament to have both chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560).

And the reason I am bringing this up is because Philippians 4:1 should really be with Philippians chapter 3, it flows from what Paul was saying and we will see that in a minute as we dig into the text.

With that said, let's begin reading in Philippians chapter 4, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

### **PHILIPPIANS 4**

#### **VERSE 1**

What we see here is that Paul is linking this verse to what he just spoke of in Philippians 3:20-21, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

In other words, since you are going to be raised in glory why don't you start living it now, why don't you stand fast in the Lord!

You see, there are going to be all kinds of things that will come upon your life to sway you, to knock you from the firm foundation.

Thus, be aware, be strong *IN* the Lord no matter what comes your way.

As the Philippians heard this, they had plenty of reasons to stand fast in the Lord and so should we!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-13, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

We are in a battle for our faith and yes, the enemy can't take our faith away, but he can cause us to stumble, he can destroy our witness of Christ.

Thus, be aware, pay attention and ***STAND FAST IN THE LORD!***

Now, one more point here that we need to deal with.

What does Paul mean when he speaks of the Philippians being his crown?

He is not speaking of the crown of a King or a DIADEMA; but a STEPHANOS or a laurel wreath given to victorious athletes.

In other words, they were his proof of effective service, his wreath or trophy.

Paul also spoke of the Thessalonians in this manner as he tells us in I Thessalonians 2:19-20, **“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.”**

Paul had the love of God for the brethren and their faith, their walk with the Lord brought him great joy as your walk with the Lord brings me great joy!

John picked up on that in III John 4 as he wrote, **“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”**

And now we come to a problem in the church there in Philippi. And let's face it, a church without any problems is a church that has no people. Again, problems will be around, it is how we deal with them that is important! Listen to what Paul wrote.

### VERSES 2-3

I know that some have a hard time with this, how in the world can Christians fight with each other?

Because of that flesh nature we have!

And thus, we see here that Paul mentions a dispute between two women from the church at Philippi. They are Euodia (yoo-od-ee'-ah) and Syntyche [SUNTUCHE, (soon-too'-khay)].

And make no mistake about it, they were servants of Christ! How do I know that?

Because these two women, who were obviously believers, fellowshipped together in the church at Philippi and they worked with Paul for a time in spreading the good news of Jesus. They were assisting in that work but now they were at odds with each other and their behavior, their fighting was affecting the church in Philippi, the people!

What was the problem?

Paul doesn't tell us.

Who was right?

Paul doesn't care!

Then what is the point?

They forgot the Lord, they forgot that they are sisters in Christ and because they were so self-centered instead of Christ-centered that it affected their behavior, and like I have said, it affected the church as well there in Philippi!

And notice what Paul tells them to do. He tells them to *“Knock it off! Grow up!”* I’m paraphrasing of course, but Paul tells them to put on the mind of Christ, let whatever happened melt away in the love of Jesus!

There is that little poem that kind of sums this up for us, getting along with the brethren that is. It goes like this,

To live above with the saints we love,

Oh, that will be glory.

But to live below with the saints we know,

Well, that’s another story.

- Source Unknown

Now we laugh at that, but it is a reality and these fights, these disagreements have to be let go. Here’s the thing. It is not a matter of being right or being wrong, it is a matter of forgiveness.

Now please understand I am not speaking of false doctrine or false teachers; they do need to be dealt with and exposed.

This is relationship issues, likes and dislikes, someone rubbing you the wrong way.

If Jesus has forgiven you of all your sins, why can’t you forgive others?

The reason is really simple. ***YOU DON’T WANT TO FORGIVE!***

“That is not fair Pastor Joe. You don’t know what that person said or did. I just can’t get along with them!”

No, it is not that you can’t, you just won’t get along with them. It is a choice on your part.

And yes, there are times when the other person won't heal the relationship, but you do your part and let God work on that person to heal.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 2:1-5, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”**

Thus, get back to where you once belonged, back to Christ, for there is too much work to be done than to fight amongst ourselves! Put on the mind of Christ and don't work in the flesh but walk in the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit – *LOVE* – flowing from your life!

And if Paul is mentioning this it had to be a big deal. And I don't think disputes are ever a small matter, they affect too many people and they are self-centered.

Thus, Paul not only urges these women to heal their relationship, but he urges some people in the church to assist them in the healing, to motivate them to get right.

First of all, Paul speaks of a **“true companion”** or **“yokefellow.”**

Who is Paul speaking of?

There are many ideas on who Paul is speaking of. Some say the elders of the church in Philippi. Others say it is the church members in general. Some even say it was Epaphroditus.

But, by the context, SUZUGOS, (sood'-zoo-gos) is probably his name. That is what the Greek word for **“true companion”** or **“yokefellow”** is.

So Paul is admonishing this person to help these women out in their dispute.

But not only this person, we also see Paul call on Clement and the rest of the fellow workers to assist these women to come together in Christ and not to be at odds with each other!

Folks, God takes this issue very seriously and so should we!

When there is no unity there is instability in the church!

Thus, Paul tells us that we need to deal with it before we let the enemy get the better of the situation!

And here lies the problem. We are told in this poem,

Believe as I believe, no more no less

That I am right and no one else, confess;

Feel as I feel, think as I think,

Eat as I eat and drink as I drink;

Look as I look, do as I do

Then I'll have fellowship with you.

- Leslie Flynn, Great Church Fights

Again, we laugh at that, but it is true. Now I am not saying we just agree with anything anyone is saying and neither is Paul. The idea here is that we are solid on the foundational truths of our faith. There may be differences here and there but the foundational truths are established.

You can't have unity apart from Christ and the Christ of the Bible, not the one that people make up in their own minds. Put on the mind of Christ and you will be able to get along.

Now, what does Paul mean when he speaks of the book of life?

All the names of every person are written in the book of life.



Does that mean that everyone is saved?

Not at all, for Jesus said in Revelation 3:5, “**He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**”

If all our names are in the book of life, then the question is “How do we get our names blotted out from the book of life?”

Good question.

By rejecting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that is the only sin that will keep you out of heaven, (John 16:9).

Thus, John tells us, “**And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**” Revelation 20:15.

It is our choice to accept Jesus or reject Him.

Now here’s the thing that Paul is saying to the Philippian church. Your name is written in the book of life, you are going to spend eternity with the Lord and with each other. Thus, get along now, don’t wait for heaven!

Something for us to think about in regard to our relationship with other brothers and sisters in the Lord!

#### VERSES 4-5

Now you might think that this is kind of a strange statement as Paul just finished up telling these women to stop fighting with each other and get along. But it fits perfectly with what Paul has just said!

First of all, do you think these two women were happy with the situation they were in?

Of course not, even though they may have put on a façade. But the reality is this did not fool anyone.

Think about it, Paul was aware of what was going on there, the fighting between these two women. So whatever smile they might have put on when they saw each other, it was not real, and it did not fool anyone.

Everyone knew what was going on. The church knew, Paul knew of their animosity towards each other and thus Paul not only tells them to put on the mind of Christ but also to rejoice in the Lord!

Paul uses the Greek word CHAIRO, (khah'-ee-ro) for “**rejoice**” and it is in the present tense, which means to be constantly rejoicing.

Now don't think Paul is saying you need to have a positive mental attitude, but he is saying your focus must be in the Lord for only in Him can we rejoice because He never changes. You see, you can't rejoice in the Lord when you are fighting with the brethren.

Then Paul speaks of “**gentleness**” and the word that Paul uses for “**gentleness**” is the Greek word EPIEIKES, (ep-ee-i-kace) and it carries with it the idea of patience, forbearance. It speaks of a spirit that is yielded to the Lord and thus, His nature flows from their lives.

Now think about that for a minute because it flows from what Paul was saying about these two women who were fighting. This gentleness was something these women in Philippi were not manifesting and thus, they were at odds with each other.

You see, instead of people seeing your wrong behavior, let them see the gentleness of God flow from your life – why?

Because the Lord is at hand or He is present with us!

Again, keep in mind in Philippians 4:1-5 Paul is showing us we don't have to worry about people, who's right and who is wrong because the Lord is present with us.

Also, I think Paul is saying that the Lord's return is coming soon so be ready. Knowing He is coming back will help us to live better as we anticipate His coming.

John, in speaking of the Lord's return for His bride, the church, tells us in I John 3:3, **“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”**

So, because of His presence, because He is returning soon, live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, walk accordingly!

It is like he said in Philippians 3:20 to 4:1, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.”**

Now, in Philippians 4:6-9 Paul is going to show us that we don't have to worry because we have the peace of God in our lives.

And I will break these verses up into two parts. First, Philippians 4:6-7 which deals with not being anxious and how we can be free from that anxiety, that worry in our lives.

And then, in Philippians 4:8-9 we see Paul speak about what our lives are to be filled with so we will not give the enemy room to cause worry to fill our lives.

Important stuff that we can apply to our lives!

VERSES 6-7

First of all, let me share this with you and then we will deal with what Paul is saying here.

One writer put it like this as he wrote,

Rejoicing in the Lord is not a luxury – it is a necessity!

Until the Lord comes back, all of us are going to experience excruciating stresses, interpersonal woes, humiliating sicknesses, our own deaths, and if we live long enough, the wrenching deaths of loved ones and friends.

But in every and all circumstances, we are to “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

How so?

At the very foundation we must press close the fiery record of the joy of our salvation.

We must take David’s words to heart as they were fulfilled by the ultimate Son of David:

*He drew me up from the pit of destruction,*

*out of the miry bog,*

*and set my feet upon a rock,*

*making my steps secure.*

*He put a new song in my mouth,*

*a song of praise to our God.* (Psalm 40:2, 3)

- R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians – The Fellowship of the Gospel*, pp. 166-167

And thus, Paul says, “**Be anxious for nothing . . .**”

Now please understand that this is not a suggestion or an option but a command by Paul not to worry about anything.

That does not seem so easy does it? How in the world can we accomplish something like that?

I think for many of us if not all of us we struggle with this from time to time.

In fact, what Paul is saying may even seem cold when you consider the situation you are in now.

Let's try and put this into perspective.

First of all, is worrying going to help you or hurt you?

It will hurt you and it will eat away at you; it will strangle the life out of you!

Remember what we said about the word "worry."

That our English word "worry" comes from an Anglo-Saxon word that means, "to strangle."

How fitting that is as worry tends to strangle people physically, emotionally, and yes, even spiritually.

But listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:25-34, **“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**

Worrying about things will solve nothing in our lives, and, like I have said, it will hurt us in the long run! We need to have a correct perspective and keep our eyes on the Lord and live for today and not worry about tomorrow.

Then what should we do when we find ourselves in difficult situations?

Give it to God in prayer, which is a general request; and in supplications, which is more of a specific request.

God wants to hear from us and when we do come before Him may we do so with an attitude of gratitude or thankfulness.

Don't come before God complaining but thanking Him for who He is, for His love for us and-so-on.

Now here's the thing. As we bring our concerns before the Lord, He fills us with His peace.

What if you don't feel His peace right now?

Maybe it is because your mind is not focused upon Him but upon the situation or situations you are in right now.

In Isaiah 26:3 we are told, **“You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.”**

This is not a peace from the storms of life but a peace through the storms of life. It is a peace that is from God, not based upon our efforts, it is beyond our understanding that we can be at peace in the midst of a storm and yet God has given that to us if we would only receive it by faith.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

Long ago a man sought the perfect picture of peace.

Not finding one that satisfied, he announced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, and paintings arrived from far and wide.

Finally the great day of revelation arrived. The judges uncovered one peaceful scene after another, while the viewers clapped and cheered.

The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd.

A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed.

Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise.

Could this be peace?

A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain.

In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power.

A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.

- Berit Kjos, A Wardrobe from the King, pp. 45-46

That is the peace that Paul is talking about. That is the peace that Jesus is talking about. That is the peace that the Scriptures are talking about.

Jesus put it like this in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

Jesus is saying that in this life we will endure storms, tribulation because the world is against us as it is against God. But don't focus on what the world is doing to you, focus on the Lord and understand, He has overcome the world and one day He will rule and reign over it! In Him we have peace!



And in John 14:27 Jesus said, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

This peace that Jesus gives to us causes us not to be afraid, not to be troubled, but we are able to rest in Him!

And that is what Paul says here in Philippians 4:7, that as we give these things to the Lord, as we lay them at His feet, with thanksgiving we let Him know what is on our heart, that **“. . . the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

First of all, Paul says that this peace that is from God will guard our hearts or our emotions.

We are not anxious, fearful and-so-on because His peace is guarding our hearts.

Think about our emotions, we can get them racing and they can be all over the place depending upon the situations we are facing.

But Paul wants us to focus on the Lord and not the situation, because we will have tribulation in this world. Thus, let the Lord guard your emotions and you can rest, your heart will not be racing.

Not only that. Paul also tells us that His peace guards our mind or our thoughts.

In other words, the enemy can't mess us up because our thoughts are upon the Lord and based in the truth of His Word!

But, if we start to focus on everything that we are going through, it is going to be tough!

One survey I read showed that only 8% of what people are worried about is legitimate, which means that 92% was not!

And yet, we still think, “What about this?” “What about that?” “What am I going to do?”

No, don't focus on that, but focus on the Lord and let that peace that God has for you, that peace that goes far beyond your human understanding, give you rest. You see, as you look at the situation you should not be at peace. But as you look at Jesus you will find that peace through the storms of life.

It is as Peter is admonishing us in I Peter 5:7, “**casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**”

Now, I think many times we are so focused on this world that we lose perspective of things. Paul is going to show us what we need to focus upon as we read on.

#### VERSES 8-9

Here's the thing. Are you filling your life with thoughts that will invite the peace of God in your life or are you filling your life with thoughts that will cause you to worry, fret, be anxious and-so-on?

Remember the old adage, “***Garbage in, garbage out***”? And it is funny to think it is an old adage, but it is, and it is very applicable here and it is very true.

Again, what are you filling your mind with because that is what will come flowing out from your life.

Paul tells us that instead of filling your mind with the garbage of this world, “**meditate**” or take an inventory of these things in your life – things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, things that are of good report, things that are proper, and things that are praiseworthy!

Paul put it this way in Romans 12:2, and this is from The New Living Translation,  
**“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.”**

And The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].”**

It is not just information but application to our lives!

You see, what we mediate on, what we focus our minds upon really does matter!

I will give you an example to show you what I mean.

A few years back I use to watch the Fox News Channel and as I watched it, I became angry, mad, furious at what was going on in our country.

And then, as I thought about it, I saw that I had lost my focus. I am not saying we should not be aware of what is going on in our country and the world, we should. The problem is that you can get consumed by these things and before long you have lost hope, you are anxious, you are mad, and you should not be!

I don’t watch it anymore, and thankfully, I don’t even have the option anymore because we don’t get that station. I don’t watch the national news either, same effect on me.

Instead, if you want that peace, then fill your life with the things of God, things that will build you up and not bring you down! It makes sense and yet, so often we get sucked into these things.

And to drive home the point, Paul says, “**The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**” Philippians 4:9.

Paul walked the walk so he could say, “*Follow me as I follow Christ!*”

And not only will you have the peace of God in your life as you follow after Christ, surrender your life to Him, but the God of peace will also be with you!

Paul put it this way in Colossians 3:15-17, “**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**”

In other words, let your walk match up with your talk and as you let God rule in your life they will match up!

Now, as we read on, we will see in Philippians 4:10-13 that Paul shows us how we are not to worry because of the power of God in our life.

VERSES 10-14

First of all, we see Paul speaking of the gift the Philippians sent to him by Epaphroditus.

Paul spoke of this in Philippians 2:25 where he said, “**Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need.**” (Also see Philippians 4:18)

Now Paul is not rebuking them here saying that prior to this gift they were insensitive to his needs or didn't care about Paul's needs.

Paul is saying that they wanted to help out before, but they lacked the opportunity to do so at that time for whatever reason.

Paul wanted them to know he understood, and he is rejoicing in the Lord that at this time they are able to help him out.

And now Paul wants them to understand that whatever state he is in, whatever happens to him, he is content in life!

Wow, contentment for Paul and yet for the world, it seems to be an unattainable goal.

Why is that?

Because they seek contentment where it can't be found; like money, possessions, jobs, power, freedom from difficulties and-so-on.

In this fallen world that is impossible to attain.

Then how in the world can we find contentment as Paul did?

Not by looking to the world to find it but Paul found contentment that was based on the person of Jesus Christ and not things.

Thus, when he had much it was great, when he had nothing, praise the Lord, it didn't matter to Paul because he knew God was in control and thus, he learned how to be content in all things!

This was not just some theoretical idea, Paul lived it out in his life and thus, he could speak with certainty regarding these things.

Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs put it this way in regard to contentment. He said, "Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition."

The key of course for Paul and for us is the power of God working in us, not relying on our own strength, on self, but upon Him who enables us to do all things!

You see, it is as Jesus said in John 15:5, "**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**"

God will accept nothing that is not done in Him, by Him through us. Anything that is done out of His care is not real fruit but fake fruit!

Thus, the power of God in our life causes us not to worry in the situations we are in!

It is as Isaiah 40:29-31 tells us, "**He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.**"

And folks, think about it. God's power indwelling a believer is more than sufficient to strengthen and sustain us no matter what we are going through.

And let's put this into perspective because I don't think we look at things like this. But if we are honest with ourselves, we would see that both abundance and loss will pass, but Christ will remain the same! He is the Rock in our lives!

Again, Jeremiah Burroughs tells us, "A Christian finds satisfaction in every circumstance by getting strength from another, by going out of himself to Jesus Christ, by his faith acting upon Christ, and bringing the strength of Jesus Christ into his own soul, he is thereby enabled to bear whatever God lays on him, by the strength that he finds from Jesus Christ . . . There is strength in Christ not only to sanctify and save us, but strength to support us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Christ expects that when we are under any burden, we should act our faith upon him to draw virtue and strength from him." Absolutely!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, "**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**"

May we not forget that as the storms are crashing down upon us! When the world does not treat us fairly! When life gets tough! Our peace, our rest, our hope is in Jesus!

Let me add one more point because it will flow into what Paul says next.

Remember in Matthew 25:40 where Jesus said, "**And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'**"

In other words, as we give, as we minister to people, as we help others, the reality is we are ministering to Jesus because that is how closely He relates to us.

And Paul's point is that giving is more beneficial to the giver than the receiver.

I tend to think both are blessed by giving.

Paul, in II Corinthians 9:6-7 tells us, **“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”**

Now, in Philippians 4:15-23 Paul shows us how not to worry because of the provision of God in our life.

### VERSES 15-18

Paul is speaking of his ministry in Philippi some 10 years earlier when the church got started and how generous they were in their giving to Paul, supporting the work of the ministry.

Now Paul says that he was not seeking this gift, why is that?

Because he knew that God would supply his needs one way or another.

Also, he was interested in seeing the fruit that would come to them as they freely gave for the work of God.

And Paul saw their giving was done out of love, not constraint.

The Philippians had a deep love for Paul, and it was not in word only, they showed it.

Paul takes this giving to a higher level by telling them it is a sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God, that is how God looks upon our giving and it is well pleasing in His sight when you give with the right motives!



Notice what Paul said of the Philippian believers in II Corinthians 8:1-5, **“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”**

The Macedonian churches included Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. That is the right kind of giving!

#### VERSE 19

Let me share with you how Spurgeon summed this up for us because many have taken this to unbiblical conclusions. He wrote in regard to what Paul was saying to them, “He says to them, ‘You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs-my need of clothing and of food: I have other needs in which you could not help me; but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store; but my God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory.’”

Notice that God will supply all we **NEED** not necessarily all we **WANT** as we give out of the right motives.

Learning contentment in whatever God has given to you is the key, it is something you must put into practice in your life.

Make no mistake about it, God will supply exactly what we need for the work that He wants us to do. Hudson Taylor often said, “When God’s work is done in God’s way for God’s glory, it will not lack for God’s supply.” Exactly.

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 3:20, “**Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.**”

We tend to think that Paul is speaking of material things, wealth and many teachers lead their people down that path and that is not what Paul is saying.

He is speaking of spiritual blessings and yes, we are blessed materially speaking also, but don’t use God like the stock market.

You invest in His kingdom out of love, not because you are going to get something in return.

God will provide what you need in this life and it is all based in Jesus Christ!

I like the example of resting in God to supply our needs that Warren Wiersbe gives to us. He wrote,

A young pastor came to a church that had been accustomed to raising its annual budget by means of suppers, bazaars, and the like. He told his officers he could not agree with their program.

“Let’s pray and ask God to meet every need,” he suggested. “At the end of the month, pay all the bills and leave my salary till the last. If there isn’t enough money for my salary, then I’m the one who suffers, and not the church. But I don’t think anybody is going to suffer!”

The officers were sure that both the pastor and the church would die, but such was not the case.

Each month every bill was paid, and at the end of the year there was a surplus in the treasury for the first time in many years.

- Warren Wiersbe

Make no mistake about it, “**. . . my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**” Philippians 4:19.

#### VERSE 20

After all that Paul has spoken in regard to what God has given to us, how He has supplied all of our needs, Paul gives to us a brief doxology or a short praise of God and ends it with an exclamation mark or an *AMEN*, which means, “*so be it.*”

#### VERSES 21-22

As Paul begins to close this letter to the Philippians with words of love and then Paul speaks of greetings from Caesar’s household.

What in the world is Paul saying, Caesar, his household, his guards were ruthless killers!

Here’s the thing. Remember that the Roman soldiers were getting saved. And, not only that but also some of Nero’s own family had come to the saving faith of Jesus Christ!

This was fine until Nero turned against the Christian faith and even murdered, burned to death members of his own family who had become Christians in around 64 A. D.

The point that Paul is making again is that the work of God continues on, even in prison.

God will provide for us in any circumstance and thus, don’t worry, rejoice in the Lord!

VERSE 23

Here is a question I will give to you before we close.

Why does Paul begin and end this letter with the grace of God?

Because the Christian life begins with the grace of God and it ends with the grace of God working in us, and thus, all that is in between our salvation and glorification is because of the grace of God in our lives! Never forget that fact!

Let me close this letter and this study with these words from Habakkuk who learned contentment, he learned not to worry in the situations he found himself in and thus, he was able to say, **“Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls - Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.”** Habakkuk 3:17-19.

May we be able to do that knowing that, **“. . . my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:19.

And that, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Philippians 4:13.

May we not lose sight of what God has for us!