

Philippians #9
Final Remarks
Phil 4:10-23

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*****Important Announcement: Dec. 2-4 Digital Fast**

Philippians is first a letter about the relationship between Paul and the Philippians.

We are wrapping up Philippians today; two weeks ago we talked about the book of Philippians having several moments where it could be the end of the book ... and then it's not. This book is primarily a letter about the relationship between Paul and the Philippians...when we read this, we may find it hard to hold onto the big picture, which is the relationship Paul has with this group of people.

The hallmarks of a Jesus-following community are joy and service.

Next, according to this letter, the hallmarks of a Jesus-following community, the hallmarks are JOY and SERVING. These are repeated throughout the letter. Joy is the pleasure of God's company.

Philippians is first a letter about the relationship between Paul and the Philippians.

The hallmarks of a Jesus-following community are joy and service.

It's important to remember the context for what we're talking about. Here is a brief history of Philippi:



A map of modern-day Greece and Turkey. The area at the top of the map is Macedonia and you can see Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi just above the Aegean Sea. In the 4th century BC, 352 B.C., a Macedonian king, Philip, annexed this area because he wanted the gold and silver

mines around it and named it after himself, Philippi. Philip was the father of Alexander the Great, who used this area to establish a route to conquer most of the known world.

300 years later, Julius Caesar was the Roman emperor but he was murdered by Brutus and Cassius to kick off a civil war between Octavian and Mark Antony. In 42 B.C. the Battle of Philippi for the right to rule Rome ensued. Octavian and Mark Antony won. About 10 years later, Marc Antony was defeated by Octavian, who became Caesar Augustus, the ruler who declared a decree 30 years later for a census and that is why Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem for Jesus's birth.

This is important because Octavian (Caesar Augustus) used Philippi as a place to house retired soldiers. Hence it was a small community that had the favor of the emperor where people enjoyed tax breaks and much wealth. Paul visited there and met a woman named Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman who traded purple cloth (important in an imperial city). Lydia helps him establish the church there.

Later, a fortune-telling slave girl is following and annoying Paul and when he casts a demon out of her, her employers are mad and Paul is thrown into jail. When angels free him from jail, the jailer of Philippi (an important position) becomes a believer along with his household.

The Roman citizens in Philippi are powerful, well-off, enjoy tax breaks and this is the first church in Europe! The magistrates there are upset that Paul is a Roman citizen who has been thrown into jail so they ask Paul to leave. He goes to Thessalonica, a much larger city with a synagogue and Paul teaches there, plants a church, but the Jews kick Paul out he has to leave for Berea. Then the Bereans kick him out and he heads for Athens.

In Acts, this all seems to happen very fast but churches in Philippi and Thessalonica were established. Paul was there long enough for trouble to develop. This context is important because Philippi is an important city with wealthy and powerful people. Keep this in mind as we read the passage for today:

Renewed Relationship

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

...

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

Last week, we read this verse. I think this verse has a lot to do with what we're talking about today.

Paul is happy about the care the Philippians gave him but I think there is MORE to this.

Renewed Relationship

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid **MORE THAN ONCE** when I was in need.

This is actually a **renewed relationship** between Paul and the Philippians.

Imagine you have a friend who helps you out, who is always there for you. They call you when you are struggling and offer to talk about it. They pursue you and care for you.

Then you don't hear from them for a while; maybe you move away? But if they were to suddenly call you and renew your relationship, there would be a special JOY in this for you. When Paul goes to Thessalonica, he moves on but he was clearly there for long enough for the Philippians to send him care again and again. There is a long-standing relationship between Paul and the Philippians: they are able to care for him. It wasn't just once: it was a pattern of relationship.

The Accounting

17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

These were AMPLE gifts: like someone paying your rent for the next two years! Paul says they have cared for him above and beyond what he needs.

The Accounting

17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have **MORE THAN ENOUGH**. I am **AMPLE SUPPLIED**, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Paul has learned to be content in plenty and in want, in all situations. But now he says they have cared for him very abundantly .

The Accounting

17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your **ACCOUNT**. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

The word ACCOUNT makes us think of a bank, a transactional relationship: *I give so I can get back*. I care for you so it goes better for me. This bothered me; I went to multiple translations to figure out what this means. We really do interact with one another this way A LOT! When we listen to our spouse, we expect them to listen to us in return. But there is no way for Paul to pay them back in this situation. This really bothered me all week!

I found that this word is actually LOGOS (word). Why translate this as *account*? This is the name we give to Jesus! What does it have to do with our life? If you look at your bank account, it's the story of how you use your money. This is really about the account, the story, of your life! Their STORY in the Kingdom of God has grown, as you can see from the letter to the Philippians. Their story has gone forth and it is fragrant, acceptable and pleasing to God. The idea of giving to get back is really the story of the Gospel, the kingdom that has gone forth and is growing.

Needs and Longings

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Following this, Paul says God would meet their needs.

Needs and Longings

19 And my God will meet all your **NEEDS** according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The word **NEEDS** is interesting: we mix up our **NEEDS** and **WANTS**. My dad used to say this to me: do you need it or want it? The reality is that we have far more than we need!

(Maslow's hierarchy: as your baser, foundational needs are met, you continue to 'need' more.) What do I long for and desire? These are (often) good things. I want my wife to understand me and my kids to listen to me. I want a new car and a nice meal at a steak restaurant. You have wants and desires but when we turn these into **NEEDS**, they become

DEMANDS which are poisonous to our soul and relationships. Paul has learned to be content with God in every situation! I

The Gift of Jesus

21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings.

22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

But there's more! People in Caesar's household are believers! The Gospel is going forth in Ephesus, Rome, and Philippi!

The Gift of Jesus

21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings.

22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The **GRACE** of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

I want to highlight the word **GRACE**: let's go back to the first week where Paul identifies himself as a servant. **GRACE** (Karis) is a gift, like an engagement ring that a woman can receive or not receive. Either way, your relationship is forever different. The gift of Jesus changes us now and forever: we can go before God with all confidence and pray for our longings and needs, the relationships with people around us. This grace leads us to **REJOICE**. This settles us into our

future hope which establishes us here and now. We can now live in the kingdom and grow in the Gospel today: this gift changes our relationship forever. If we live out of this gift, we can rejoice in the king, make much of Jesus, and love and serve one another.

To make much of Jesus is to tell HIS story often in our lives.

