

## Philippians Lesson 4

### Philippians Chapter 4

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**Introduction:** In chapter 3, Paul told of how he could boast of the flesh if anyone could, but he did not. He wanted to be known as a person who was saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and know about Jesus' resurrection, and to grow in the knowledge and fellowship of His sufferings.

#### **I. Paul Exhorts Church to Unity and Joy**

*Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. 2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Evident is the deep spiritual bond between Paul and the Philippian church. They were “dearly beloved and longed for.” He further refers to them as “my joy and crown.” The word translated as **crown** (stefanov *stephanos*) was that awarded to the victors in the Greek games.

At the least, he used the term as a metaphor of his joy in them. It may further refer to a crown to be awarded at the Bema. Some have called it the soul-winners crown because Paul had led many of the brethren at Philippi to Christ. However, the flow of the context seems rather to indicate a more generic, figurative sense of rejoicing.

His whole point of the *therefore* was for them to “stand fast in the Lord.”

The phrase, *stand fast*, is translated from the Greek word ‘steko’ and has the sense to ‘stand firm,’ to ‘persist,’ or to ‘persevere.’ The thought is quite similar to Paul’s injunction to the Ephesian church in Ephesians 6 where he admonished them to stand—and having done all to stand. Therefore, just keep on standing. It is an imperative!

*Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

*Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

Paul addresses two women in the church, *Euodias* and *Syntyche* in verse 2. There evidently was friction between the two. Whether these were the heart of the problem addressed in 2:2-4 or whether this was an unrelated matter is not clear. In any event, Paul directly implored both of them: that they be of the same mind in the Lord. Friction between members in a church is as spiritually destructive as virtually any one thing.

Paul admonished them to resolve their differences and get back on the same wave length.

He also addresses and implores one as **true yokefellow**. To whom this refers is not clear. It has been advanced by some that he is actually referring to a man by the name of *Syzygos* from which “true yokefellow” is translated. That probably is the case.

On the other hand, this ‘true yokefellow’ may have been an unnamed, faithful coworker with Paul at Philippi. In any event, Paul directed him to help those women which laboured with me in the gospel. The word translated as laboured with (*sunaylew sunathleo*) is of interest. It literally means to ‘strive together’ as a team.

The base word is (*aylew*) *athleo* from whence the English word *athlete* derives.

It is evident that some women in the church worked together with Paul as a team in advancing the gospel at Philippi. The clear role of women workers in the church is apparent and Paul urged help for them. He likewise directed the ‘true yokefellow’ (*Syzygos*) to help Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

This is the only mention of Clement in Scripture. However, early church tradition suggests that he may be the Clement who went on to become the pastor of the church at Rome toward the end of the first century. However, Clement was a common name of the day so there is no certainty they are one and the same. In any event, Paul admonished ‘*Syzygos*’ to help him and other coworkers. He refers to these as having their names written in the “book of life.” This is the first of

eight times the phrase “book of life” appears in the New Testament. Though not clearly defined, it refers to the saved.

From these first three verses, it seems logical to conclude that this church may not have been perfectly joined together in the same mind. Perhaps this is one of the greatest problems facing the New Testament churches today. But God’s desire is for us to be like-minded in all things. Paul calls these at Philippi “My Brethren” and “My Joy and Crown”. And as always, he exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord. God needs faithful men, women, and young people to take a stand on ‘thus saith the Lord’ and to not be moved away by false teachings and doctrines of evil.

And we can be if we do not study and grow in the scriptures daily. Our minds focus on something all through the day. If we are walking in the Spirit, I think we will be thinking of the Holy Scriptures. Young Timothy was a man who had known the scriptures from a child.

*2 Tim 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*

*2 Tim 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

*2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

*2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

*2 Tim 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;*

*2 Tim 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

*Eph 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

*Eph 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

*Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

In verse 2, Paul speaks of Euodias and Syntyche who could not pull together. We

should all be able to work for God in the same harness. We are told to put on Christ and that His yoke is easy. But it does mean we are to work and get the yoke on. Yokes went around the shoulders of the mule or horse years ago to pull the plow or the wagon. God wants us working in synchrony one with the other, and when Jesus is the team member, He is the one carrying the heavy load, not us. If we are going to be successful as a church, we have to all be of the same mind and not be afraid of work. What can you do?

There are many things that a church needs to function. Probably being willing to go out and witness on visitation might be our most important job that we can do. But if all we do is greet visitors, visit the sick and the elderly, or perhaps be a mentor to a young person, these are all things that honor and glorify the Lord.

Perhaps we can show a young person just a small sampling of Christianity, that may be the spark needed to light that flame to get them involved in the things of God. And when they see the whole truth, they perhaps will accept Jesus as their Savior and will be workers for God for all their life. See how just doing a small thing for God can return great things when we do it God's way. David Jeremiah recently said that God gave him a thought about the verse where Jesus taught the disciples that the widow who cast in her two mites gave more than all the rich did.

*Luke 21:2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.*

*Luke 21:3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:*

*Luke 21:4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*

For years we have know she gave her all, but by her example being taught through the years, how many have given more to the service of God by her sacrifice. And perhaps those giving because of her example could indirectly be counted towards those two mites. Interesting if it is accurate teaching. Think of the potential of the thousands upon thousands of dollars who may have given because of her sacrificial life. Our lives count and we affect MANY around us.

Paul beseeched the church in Corinth to be of the same mind. And there was a price to be paid when they did not do this.

*1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos*

*watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

*Phi 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.*

In light of the previous, blessed truth (having our names written in the book of life), Paul therefore directed them to **rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say Rejoice**. He repeated the injunction 'rejoice' twice. Both times it is in the imperative mode.

Though Paul knew he might soon face the executioner's blade, it is clear that he himself rejoiced and he thus enjoined his brethren in Philippi to likewise rejoice. Their names were written in heaven. The object of such joy is as simple as it is clear. It is "in the Lord." He is our joy and that joy is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

*Neh 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

We are directed to so rejoice **alway**. The word so translated (*pantote pantote*) literally means 'at all times. To rejoice is not reflexive. It is commanded. Whether we happen to feel like rejoicing is irrelevant. We are commanded by God's Spirit to rejoice in the Lord, period.

Everything we do, we should do it for the honor and glory of God. In our example in these first verses, it appears that Epaphroditus was the true yokefellow. He wanted the true believers who were willing to work to help those women who had labored with Paul in spreading the Gospel. This is not inferring that they were preachers in the church, but they helped Paul and most likely did have great testimonies and were not ashamed to share what God had done for them.

*1 Timothy 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

Paul points out that these labourers had their name written in the book of life. It is an interesting study to determine when the name is written in the book of life. But we must have our name written there or there will be much bad befall us one day. Only those saved will enter into heaven.

*Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

*Revelation 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Only those who have their names written in the book of life will have the privilege to enter into the new city of Jerusalem.

## **II. The Peace of God**

*Phi 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

*Phi 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

There are two important things that we need to learn from verse 5. He says to let our 'moderation' be known to all men and that "The Lord is at hand." Moderation means calmness, patience, and gentleness. I think it speaks of living a life under control that is Godly and not extravagant, and certainly within our means also. Christians should be special people, and all look to God with faith for our provisions. Our lives should be such that Jesus is shown by our works.

*Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

The Lord is at hand might point to his soon coming, but the greater meaning is that His presence is with us at all times. The Holy Spirit takes up His dwelling inside us when we are saved, and we are never far from God. He truly lives inside every believer.

The Apostle now shifts to several other concluding comments. They are rich indeed. "*Let your moderation be known unto all men.*" The statement again is an imperative. The word translated as **moderation** (epieikhv *epieikes*) has the sense of 'equitable,' 'fair,' 'mild,' or 'gentle.' The idea is of being pleasant, reasonable, fair, gentle of spirit, or temperate of attitude.

We are the only Bible most people in the world will ever read. It is not our place to be indignant, angry, assertive, pushy, demanding, or arrogant. Though not stated, the thought is to let the world see Christ in us. And he goes on to note, "*The Lord is at hand.*" Varying thoughts have been advanced as to the intent of this phrase.

The word translated as **at hand** (egguv *eggus*) can refer to either proximity of place or of time. The latter thought would imply the Lord's soon return. The former His presence.

In verse 6, Paul adds another imperative. "*Be careful for nothing.*" The word translated as **careful** (merimnaw *merimnao*) has the sense of 'anxious' or 'worried.' Here it denotes the idea of a hesitation of action based on impending consequences. That is a hard directive to follow. The following imperative is essentially, pray about it. He eloquently directs, "*but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*"

Herein is a wealth of teaching on prayer. No less than three and actually four different descriptives of prayer are mentioned in this one clause. Again, it is an imperative (an injunction from the Holy Spirit).

The first word, **prayer**, is translated from (proseuch) *proseuche*. It has the more narrow sense of 'prayer as addressed to God.' It refers to the intrinsic matter of communion with God via the link we commonly call prayer. It is the essence of directing our heart and mind toward heaven. Then, he mentioned **supplication**. The word has more to do with 'seeking,' 'asking,' or 'entreating.' The focus is, after having addressed God (*proseuche*), perhaps in praise and worship, to then make request, in this case about that which we are anxious.

He then noted to let our *requests* be made known to God. The word translated as **requests** (aithma *aitema*) has to do with the actual petition or need. Finally, in every case of prayer, it ought always be seasoned with *thanksgiving*. The greater thought is that rather than worrying about a problem, pray about it as thus described. Address God in praise and worship. Entreat His favor. Make specific request. And do all of the above with thanksgiving.

*Phi 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*



Paul tells us that the peace of God will keep our hearts. We truly should not worry about ANYTHING. Worry is basically doubting God, and that is not what we should do. By faith we should expect the best from the Heavenly Father who loves us so much. And if negative things befall us, we need to accept this and know that God may be using the trial to mold us into greater men and women of faith. We don't gain a lot unless we are put to the test. Under fire, we can become a vessel mete for the Master's use.

Paul here is not referring to peace *with* God as described in Romans 5:1. Rather, he is touching upon the peace *from* God which can descend upon our heart and mind. The greater composite thought is, rather than worrying about a matter, take it to the Lord in prayer and He will give peace of heart in the matter.

How often we worry when we could have the peace of God within. He touches upon the essence of living by faith, for there is no more basic way to live by faith than to take our anxieties to our heavenly Father. As we by faith take our problems and concerns to the throne of grace, He has promised to "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The word translated as **keep** (frourew *phroureo*) has the idea to 'guard' or 'protect.' Rather than worry, God's Word directs us to, in faith, take the problem to the Lord and His peace will guard our minds. What a wonderful analogy. Moreover, the boarding pass to such peace is "through Jesus Christ."

He is the door by which not only peace *with* God but also the peace *of* God are available. Hence, we as God's people never have a valid reason for anxiety or worry. There is an infinite quantity of God's peace readily available if we only will in prayer take our burdens to the Lord.

The King James Study Bible said this about verses 5 and 6.

**4:5. Moderation** means "graciousness" or "sweet reasonableness." The believer who is at peace with his fellow Christian (v. 2) and who rejoices always (v. 4) is indeed a gracious, reasonable person. **The Lord is at hand** means two things. First, His return to earth is near. His imminent coming as judge encourages the Christian to be "gracious" **unto all men**, for He will judge the believer for all of his actions toward all people, and will avenge all wrongs committed by others against him. Second, the "Lord is at hand" spiritually. The Lord's being presently near should free the Christian from fear and anxiety. Hence the command of verse 6.

**4:6. Be careful for nothing** means "don't worry about anything." The Lord's



nearness (v. 5b) leads Paul to forbid his readers from worrying. This is no summons to irresponsibility or an invitation to dismiss legitimate concern. The solution to undue anxiety is prayer **in every thing**, “in any matter of life.” The way to be free of anxiety is to be prayerful about everything. While God is eager to hear our requests, they are to be accompanied **with thanksgiving**.

The word careful in verse 6 speaks of not being anxious for things. Rather, we should pray and give thanks unto the Lord. James tells us to make our requests known unto God.

*James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

*1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

There is a difference in the “Peace of God” and “Peace with God.” We have made peace with God by what Christ has done for us.

*Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

*Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

The Peace of God comes over us and gives us comfort that this world has never known, particularly when we are in tune with the Holy Spirit and walking in God’s Will for our lives.

*Col 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

*Col 3:16 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.*

*Col 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

### **III. Good Thinking gives the presence of the God of Peace**

*Phi 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned,*

*and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

The final directives of the Apostle will herein be set forth. Eight virtuous qualities are mentioned. However, the final four words, “think on these things” is the primary thought and imperative. As Christians, we are enjoined to so direct our thought lives along these lines. Think on whatever is **true**.

The word so translated (alhv *alethes*) pertains to that which is truthful or is the truth. In a world of endless dissembling, trickery, and ‘spin,’ we are enjoined to channel our thinking through the filter of truth. Think on that which is **honest**. The word thus translated (semnov *semnos*) actually has more to do with that which is honest, venerable, or honorable. We live in a day and age of endless trash. A Christian’s thought life ought be in a higher direction.

Then, we are directed to think on that which is **just**. The word so translated (dikaiov *dikaios*) is the basic word for ‘righteous.’ The values and philosophy of the world tend toward unrighteousness. We are enjoined to think righteously. Then, we are enjoined to think in terms of that which is **pure**.

*Hagnos* refers to moral purity, being chaste, and having modesty. It is closely related to the more basic concept of holiness. Indeed, in a world overflowing with sensuality and immorality of all forms, the thought life of a Christian ought to be channeled through the filter of purity.

Next, we are enjoined to think of that which is **lovely**. The word so translated (prosilhv *prospfiles*) has the idea of pleasing, pleasant, or ‘nice.’ In a world in which nastiness, bitterness, sarcasm, and rudeness prevail, God’s people ought to think along the lines of civility and pleasantness *“for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”*

*Pro 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

Then, we are directed to think along the lines of that which is of **good report**. The word thus translated (eufhmov *euphemos*) is whence the English word ‘euphemism’ derives. It has the idea of thinking kindly rather than in retaliation or bitterness. His sentence structure changes, perhaps for variety. But the greater train of thought continues.

*“If there be any virtue.”* The word translated as **virtue** (areth *arete*) has the thought of moral excellence or virtuous thought. We likewise are enjoined to so think. Finally, *“if there be any praise,”* that is, if something is praiseworthy, we ought so to think.

It is so easy to find the fault in another and ignore his or her good qualities. We are directed to so think on the latter. These together form a matrix and pattern for the thought life of a Christian. We are enjoined to so order our thought processes.

In fourfold fashion, Paul directed them to recall all they had learned from him, received from him, heard from him, and seen him do. Then, he directed, do the same. The word translated as **do** (*prassw prasso*) has more of the sense to 'practice.' He thus used himself as a prototype, urging them to practice all they had observed and learned in him. Thus ends, the dictates of the epistle. The final paragraphs are more personal in nature and of encouragement.

We are truly given many things here to think on that will help us to have that peace of God that every believer so desires. We are to think on things that are true.

*John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

*John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

We should think on things that are honest, things that are just, pure, lovely, and good. People flock to hear the bad news, but we should be of a different mindset and seek to think and seek good things. If we follow the example Paul set, we will have peace that God gives from His presence.

*Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

#### **IV. Christian Contentment**

*Phi 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

Paul rejoiced in that the Philippian church had again at length been able to send missionary support. He used the analogy of a plant blossoming (i.e., *flourished*).

They certainly had been concerned for him, but had not had an opportunity to deliver their support to him at Rome. Advanced as the Roman Empire was, there

were not safe and reliable ways to send funds apart from personal delivery. That apparently is what Epaphroditus had done. He had personally journeyed all the way from Macedonia to Rome with their missionary offering.

## V. Christian Contentment

*Phi:4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Paul mentions 3 things that he had learned to be content with.

1. In verse 10, he speaks of being content with worldly provisions.
2. In verse 11, he speaks of being content with our present condition and position.
3. In verse 12 he speaks of being content with every-day surroundings and occasions.

It is easy to say all of this, but to learn to really live like this takes years of trust in the Heavenly Father and a lot of faith. Paul had this. He writes this from a prison cell and speaks of knowing how to be abased. He told Paul that 'godliness with contentment' brings great rewards to the Christian.

*1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

How can we learn to be content like Paul? We must trust God and believe verse 13. It says we can do **ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST**. Do we believe this or is it just a nice sounding verse. This verse is every where as true as John 3:16. When we look to Jesus for power, and we trust in God's provision and sovereignty, there won't be anything we can't accomplish within God's Will for our lives.

I've mentioned the story about how that at the age of 11, there was nothing more important to me than to have my own pony. Probably every boy has that desire sometime in his childhood. In Sunday School that week, the teacher had been teaching on the fact that if we truly believed with the faith of a mustard seed, we could literally move a mountain. But we had to really believe. So Sunday night, I got serious with God and prayed for that pony.

When it wasn't there on Monday morning, I got pretty upset. But I wasn't giving up. So on Monday night I prayed again truly believing that I'd have that pony on Tuesday morning. As silly as this sounds, to me it was a big deal back then.

When no horse materialized on Tuesday, I had a real heart to heart talk with my mother about why the bible was not true.

She carefully and lovingly pointed out that wanting a pony might be important to me, but that might not be what God had in mind as the best for my life. And these verses about trusting and getting answers to our prayers do involve doing the will of God.

Many times he does give us not only our needs, but many of our wants. So I kept praying, and on Saturday morning, my dad came in and told me and my brother to get up and get ready to go to town. We went and picked out the most beautiful grey dappled Shetland pony I ever saw with a creme colored mane. I got to pick her out of about 50 ponies. That just shot my faith up unbelievably. But as I got older, I added it all up that mom went to dad and asked him to go and buy me that pony.

Mother died in 1997 and I never got to ask that question because deep down I didn't want to know the answer. But in 1998(over 35 years later), I finally asked my dad why he ever bought me that pony. He said why do you ask? I flat out told him I wanted to know if Mother put pressure on him to buy me that horse cause he rarely bought us things in my childhood. He said she never said a word, it was all his idea.

That horse almost killed me, but boy was I glad to get it when I could stay on it. I tell you all that to tell you that God hears the prayers of even a child, particularly when we look to him with total faith. He may not always give us our pony, but sometimes he does. Paul knew that his strength came from one place, and that was from Jesus Christ.

*Mat 19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.*

*Mat 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

Paul wanted them to know that he was not in dire straits. The word translated as **want** (usterhsiv *husteresis*) has the sense of 'lack' or 'poverty.' He had adequate means. Moreover, he had learned in whatever situation he might find himself, to therewith be *content*. As he not long thereafter would write Timothy, "*godliness with contentment is great gain,*" (I Timothy 6:6.)

*Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Paul knew what it meant to be humbled through poverty and he knew what prosperity meant. The final phrase of this verse has the thought, '*In all things and in*

*all ways, I have learned what It means both to be full and to be hungry, both to prosper and to have need.'* In either case, he was content. He is an example for us all.

The reason for such contentment is profound. He knew the source of his strength. *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

The source of our power and strength is the Lord. Moreover, He also is our provision and the promise thereof. With His help, anything is possible. That is why Paul could have such a peaceful contentment. Don't forget, he nevertheless remained a prisoner under arrest not knowing whether he would be released or executed. His strength was Jesus Christ.

## VI. Christian Communications

*Phi 4:14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 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. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

Though he has been modest to the point of being embarrassed about them sending him monetary support, he now thanks them again. The word translated as **communicate** (sugkoinwnew *sugkoinoneo*) literally means 'to become a partaker together with others', or to 'have fellowship with a thing.'

Here, Paul used it as an euphemism for their giving. They had communicated monetarily with him. He bares his heart to them a bit in this regard. The "beginning of the gospel" undoubtedly refers to when he had first preached to them. (See Acts 16.) Since that time, no other church had given financial support to him ("giving and receiving"). He recalls when he was in Thessalonica, not long after having left Philippi, they had sent support to him on at least two occasions. Later, when he was at Corinth, they sent support again.

*2Co 11:9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

In verse 17, Paul sought to make clear that he did not seek further gifts from them. Rather, he sought "fruit that may abound to your account." As Paul was able to continue to win people to Christ and further the work of the ministry through the

missionary support sent from Philippi, he clearly implied that fruit, in part, would be reckoned to the account of the Philippian church.

What a blessed thought. As we give for the furtherance of the gospel, particularly through missions, the fruit which accrues therefrom, in part, is reckoned to our account by God. Paul communicated two things with the church. He told them of his sufferings, and he told of his physical needs. We as a church should be very sensitive to the needs of our missionaries and do our best to make special offerings when we can when they have problems arise. And you know from your own life, things come up sometimes that we can barely deal with.

And many missionaries are truly living on the mission field with meager support looking to God in faith. All things are in the Father's hand, and what a privilege it is to be used to provide a need through the local church to help that missionary. When we give to help them through the church, all the honor and glory goes to God.

*Phi 4:18 But I have all, and abound: 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. 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Their support had enabled Paul's every need to be met. He acknowledges what they both already knew and that was that Epaphroditus had been the messenger who had conveyed their giving to him. He likened their gift as a sweet savour offering to God.

The analogy was of the pleasant aroma of a sweet incense offering made upon the altar of incense at the Temple. Even as such a sacrifice was pleasing to both God and man, their offering to Paul served the same purpose.

Therefore, and in that context, Paul makes a profound promise. The context clearly has been of their sacrificial giving to God's work and missions in particular. From that contextual perspective, he uttered the promise, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

Though the general promise of provision undoubtedly is there, the specific promise is in the context of their aforementioned giving. From the riches of heaven, God has promised to meet the needs of His people. That is particularly true for those who have carefully honored Him in their faithful giving to His work.

*1Sa 2:30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and*



*they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*

*Phi 4:20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Paul did not necessarily desire a gift, but the fruit that would abound to the account. It would be God that supply the need for both he and those in the church of Philippi. All of this would be according to the riches in glory by Christ Jesus. When he says the saints salute you, he was not speaking of Caesar's immediate family, but of his slaves and servants.

Paul's benediction begins here. It is due in any event. However, this blessed doxology is in the direct context of the preceding promise. As God provides our every need, He indeed is due glory for ever and ever. He sends his greeting to all of God's people in the church at Philippi. "*Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*" The brethren which were with him at Rome sent their greetings as well. Moreover, within the vast system of the palace of the emperor of Rome were a large number of attendants. It is clear some of them had received Christ. From these Paul sends their greetings to the Philippian church. They are here referred to as they "of Caesar's household."

As in so many of his epistles, the Apostle closed with the benediction, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*" Once again, the great Apostle invoked God's grace to his readers and ends with the ever blessed, *Amen*.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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