



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL
SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:14-23
DATE: JULY 17, 2026

INTRODUCTION

In our passage today, Paul continues to express his gratitude to the Philippians for the financial gift they had sent to support him. Perhaps you have experienced the generosity of someone else in a way that left you feeling as though a simple "thank you" could never fully express your appreciation. Paul seems to feel something similar.

Rather than ending with a brief note of thanks, Paul turns the Philippians' generosity into a lesson about Christian giving and gospel partnership. Although the subject of giving can feel uncomfortable or even sensitive today, Paul does not avoid it. He understands that giving is much more than a financial transaction; it is an act of worship and an expression of fellowship in the gospel. With great wisdom, Paul expresses genuine appreciation for their gift while also addressing common misconceptions about giving, receiving financial support, and the eternal value of generosity.

Text

Philippians 4:14-23

¹⁴ Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵ And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

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

Explanation

Thank You

Having explained that he had learned the secret of contentment in every circumstance, Paul now returns to the Philippians' gift. Although he wanted them to understand that his joy was not dependent upon their financial support, he also did not want to minimize the kindness they had shown him. Their generosity deserved to be recognized and commended. As Paul reflects on their gift, he teaches several important truths about Christian generosity, gospel partnership, and the worship of God.

Paul begins by expressing his gratitude once again. He writes, "Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble." Though imprisoned, Paul did not view the Philippians merely as people who had sent him money. He viewed them as partners who had entered into his suffering. They could not release him from prison or remove the hardships he faced, but they could stand beside him by meeting his needs. Their financial gift was a tangible expression of Christian fellowship. Genuine gospel partnership is not demonstrated only during seasons of comfort and success. It is most clearly seen when believers willingly

bear one another's burdens during times of hardship. While we may not always be able to remove another person's suffering, we can faithfully come alongside them with encouragement, practical help, and prayer.

Paul then reminds the Philippians that this was not a new pattern of generosity. From the very beginning of their relationship, they had faithfully supported his ministry. Shortly after the gospel first came to Philippi, they began participating in what Paul calls "giving and receiving." This is significant because their response to the gospel was not merely intellectual or emotional. Their faith immediately affected the way they viewed their possessions. Jesus taught that no one can serve both God and money (Mt. 6:24). The Philippians demonstrated from the outset that their money belonged to the Lord and could be used for the advancement of His kingdom.

Even more remarkable, Paul says that after he left Macedonia, no other church entered into this kind of financial partnership with him. The Philippians supported him because they were personally convinced it was the right thing to do, not because other churches were setting the example. Their generosity allowed Paul to continue preaching the gospel in new cities without placing a financial burden upon the churches where he was ministering. This protected both Paul's testimony and the credibility of the gospel. While Paul firmly believed that ministers have the right to receive support (1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; Gal. 6:6), he frequently chose to surrender that right when it would remove unnecessary obstacles to the gospel (1 Cor. 9:15-18). At other times, he supported himself through manual labor, demonstrating that his ministry was never motivated by financial gain (1 Thess. 2:9-10; Acts 18:1-4; 20:33-35).

Paul specifically recalls that even while he was ministering in Thessalonica, the Philippians repeatedly sent assistance for his needs. Acts records that Paul was forced to leave Philippi because of persecution (see 1 Thess. 2:1-5 also), and Thessalonica became his next major place of ministry. Writing later to the Thessalonian believers, Paul reminded them that he worked "night and day" so that he would not become a burden to them while preaching the gospel (1 Thess. 2:9). Even though Paul willingly labored with his own hands, the repeated gifts from the Philippians undoubtedly strengthened and encouraged him. Their generosity allowed him to devote himself more fully to proclaiming Christ while maintaining his testimony before the Thessalonians.

What it Means to Give

Perhaps the most surprising statement comes in verse 17. Paul writes, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit." Paul wants to make his motives unmistakably clear. He is not manipulating the Philippians into giving, nor is he interested in personal financial gain. Instead, his greatest desire is that God would bless them because of their generosity. Paul understands that giving is never merely a financial transaction between people. It is an act of obedience toward God that produces eternal fruit. While Paul certainly benefited from their gift, he was even more excited about the spiritual reward that awaited the Philippians because they had invested in God's kingdom.

Paul models a remarkably healthy attitude toward both giving and receiving. He neither pursued money greedily nor refused legitimate support out of pride. He worked diligently whenever necessary, yet he also gratefully received assistance when fellow believers desired to partner with his ministry. He understood that their gift represented far more than financial assistance. It was an expression of friendship, fellowship, and shared commitment to the advance of the gospel. Rather than viewing himself as the sole worker deserving recognition, Paul delighted in sharing the blessings of gospel ministry with those who faithfully supported it.

This helps explain why Paul speaks so warmly about gospel partnership throughout Philippians. He understood that although not every believer is called to travel as a missionary, every believer can participate in the spread of the gospel. Those who pray, give, encourage, and support faithful ministry become partners in that work. Paul wanted the Philippians to know that the eternal fruit of his ministry also became theirs because they had invested in it. As God rewarded the advancement of the gospel, they too would share in that joy because they had participated in making it possible.

Finally, Paul describes their gift as "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God." This language reminds us that Christian giving is ultimately an act of worship. Under the Old Testament, worship frequently involved sacrifices offered upon the altar. While believers today no longer offer animal sacrifices, we still worship God through sacrificial giving. Our offerings are presented not merely to meet practical needs but as gifts offered to the Lord Himself.

Paul's description also reminds us that genuine generosity often involves sacrifice. The Philippians were not simply giving away excess wealth they did not need. Scripture indicates that the Macedonian churches were themselves

experiencing severe affliction and extreme poverty. Yet, as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:1–5, "their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity." They gave according to their ability—and even beyond it—not because anyone compelled them, but because they had first given themselves to the Lord. Their generosity flowed from hearts transformed by the gospel. They understood that everything they possessed belonged to God, and they counted it a privilege to use their resources for His glory.

Final Greetings

Paul commonly ends his letters with some final greetings. His final greeting in the Philippians letter is strikingly general. As much as he expresses his personal affection for the church, we might expect him to list several names.

In his closing words, he shares mutual greetings. He wants them to greet every saint. Those who are with Paul also send their greetings.

What stands out among the greeting is that Paul gives special notice that "those of Caesar's household" sent greetings. This gives further evidence that Paul was writing from Rome. And since he was in prison, it is also evidence that the gospel has been advancing, even within a place where one might least expect.

Discussion Questions

- Do you consider yourself a giving person?
- When you give do you tend to give begrudgingly or cheerfully?
- When you receive, are you happy because of the gift or because of the giver? In other words, do you enjoy the gift more or do you enjoy the partnership more?
- Suppose you were poor, do you think God still expects you to give?
- For you, does receiving more helps you to give more or does receiving make you want to receive more?
- Do you think that joy leads to generosity or that generosity leads to joy?
- How would you define Paul's words when he says, "riches of glory in Christ Jesus"?
- How does Paul's attitude toward receiving support differ from the way money is sometimes viewed in ministry today?
- Why is sacrificial giving often difficult? What tends to compete with generosity in our hearts?

- How would our church be different if every member viewed themselves as a partner in the gospel rather than merely an attendee?

Conclusions or Applications

THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM AND VARIOUS SBC OFFERINGS

One practical example of gospel partnership today is found in something many of us are familiar with—the Southern Baptist Convention's **Cooperative Program**. For nearly a century, Southern Baptist churches have voluntarily worked together by contributing a portion of their offerings to support missions and ministry around the world. Rather than each church attempting to accomplish these ministries independently, churches cooperate so that together they can do far more than any one congregation could do alone.

Through the Cooperative Program, churches help support state ministries, church planting efforts across North America, international missions through the International Mission Board, and the training of future pastors and ministry leaders through six Southern Baptist seminaries. Collectively, Southern Baptists contribute nearly \$200 million each year through the Cooperative Program, with approximately half of those funds supporting international missions. In addition to this cooperative giving, thousands of missionaries, church planters, and ministry workers are able to serve because churches faithfully partner together for the sake of the gospel.

As a church, Immanuel has also sought to participate faithfully in this partnership. This past year, we were recognized by the Southern Baptist Convention as one of its top-tier contributors to the Cooperative Program. We mention this not as a point of pride, but as an encouragement to continue investing in work that extends far beyond what our own congregation could accomplish alone.

Beyond our regular Cooperative Program giving, we also participate in several annual mission offerings. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering supports international missionaries, with every dollar going directly to global missions. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering helps fund church planting and compassion ministries throughout North America. The Dixie Jackson Offering, received each September, supports ministries throughout Arkansas, including disaster relief, pregnancy resource centers, collegiate ministries, and other strategic gospel efforts.

These ministries are modern examples of the very principle Paul celebrates in Philippians 4. The Philippians could not accompany Paul on every missionary journey, but through their generous giving they became partners in his ministry and shared in its eternal fruit. In the same way, not every believer is called to preach overseas or plant churches, but every believer has the opportunity to participate in the advance of the gospel. Whether we go, give, pray, or encourage those who serve, we become partners in God's kingdom work. Like Paul, we encourage faithful giving not because the church simply needs resources, but because generous giving is an act of worship, a blessing to others, and an eternal investment in the work of the gospel.