**Lesson 17: The Joy of Giving**

Text: Philippians 4:14-23

**Introduction**

It has been my prayer that our study in Philippians has helped you to find joy in Christ. Circumstances, people, pursuit of possessions and worry threaten your state of joy. It is only as we find our joy in Christ that we have real, lasting joy. In this final lesson, we will see that joy in Christ produced generosity in the lives of the Philippian believers. They were glad to give because of the ways God had enriched their lives. Paul commended them for their giving and trusted God to supply their need. Let’s study this passage and apply it to our lives today to discover the joy of giving.

1. Paul commended the generosity of the Philippian believers. (v. 14-16)
   1. Although he had learned to be content regardless of his circumstances (v. 10-13), he did not want them to think that he was ungrateful for their gift. They sent a love offering through Epaphroditus. Paul wrote to express his gratitude.
   2. They did *well* (right) in giving.
   3. *Communicate* means “to be associated in some joint activity; to be in partnership with” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament). (v. 14)
      1. Paul and the Philippian believers were joined together in the gospel enterprise.
      2. We are privileged to partner with missionaries in the endeavor to spread the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.
      3. In this context, they communicated or partnered with Paul by their financial contribution.
      4. Their help came at the right time! Paul was experiencing *affliction* (trouble). It not only helps missionaries when we support them financially, it helps them spiritually. Paul was encouraged by their giving.
   4. The Philippian church had a long history of missionary support. (v. 15-16)
      1. They began giving immediately after being saved during Paul’s second missionary journey. (v. 15a)
      2. They gave when others were not giving. (v. 15b)
      3. *Once and again* indicates that they gave several times to his need. (v. 16) Regular giving benefits the Lord’s work.
      4. This was a generous church!
2. Central Idea: Paul encouraged continued generosity on the part of the church in Philippi because he was confident in God to reward their giving and to meet their need. (v.17-19)
   1. He was confident that God was faithful to reward their investment. (v. 17)
      1. He was not commending them because he was seeking an additional gift.
      2. While he benefited from their generosity, he desired fruit for their account.
      3. “Paul looked on their missionary gift as an investment that would pay them rich spiritual dividends….The Lord keeps the books and will never fail to pay one spiritual dividend.” (Wiersbe)
      4. Giving to the Lord’s work is a wise investment because it is an eternal investment!
   2. He was confident that God was pleased with their giving. (v. 18)
      1. Their gift brought Paul to a place of abounding. He had what he needed because of their giving. (v. 18a)
      2. Their gift was an acceptable sacrifice to God. (v. 18b)
         1. He used terminology from Leviticus to describe their gift as an offering to God.
         2. Their gift was an *odour of a sweet smell* like the ointment used to anoint Jesus (John 12:3).
         3. This phrase was also used to describe the sacrificial offering of Christ (Eph. 5:2).
         4. Sacrificial giving is very pleasing to God.
   3. Paul was also confident that God would supply their need as they gave. (v. 19)
      1. “Paul did not see this gift as simply coming from Philippi. He saw it as the supply of his need from heaven.” (Wiersbe)
         1. They met Paul’s need.
         2. God would meet their need.
         3. Ultimately, it was God meeting Paul’s need through the church in Philippi.
         4. That is how God meets the needs of missionaries today. He does so through our giving.
      2. We can be confident in our source of giving since it is *according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*.
         1. They gave out of their poverty, but God gives out of His riches in glory!
         2. “Our heavenly Father is a very experienced One. He knows very well that His children wake up with a good appetite every morning….He sustained 3 million Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. We do not expect He will send 3 million missionaries to China; but if He did, He would have ample means to sustain them all….When God’s work is done in God’s way for God’s glory, it will not lack for God’s supply.” (Hudson Taylor)
   4. He desired for God to receive glory for ever and ever. (v. 20)
   5. Paul closed the letter by sending greetings to all the saints in the church at Philippi and passing along greetings from believers in Rome. (v. 21-23)
3. Application: We should participate together as a generous church because God rewards and meets the need of a giving church.

**Conclusion**

Those who have found joy in Christ should help others find joy in Christ. Generous giving is one way to do just that. As you find joy in Christ, you will find joy in helping His servants. Are you consistently participating in the Lord’s work through your tithes and offerings? If not, begin today. God will meet your need as you do.