

SLIDE 1 Philippians Fighting for Joy

Slide 2 We are Partners

WE ARE PARTNERS

Celebrating Partnerships in Giving and Receiving

Philippians 4:10-23

INTRODUCTION

- I've kind of drawn book-end assignments having given the second sermon in the series back in November and now the grand finale today! And I appreciate the solid teaching that Ben and Dave have been giving throughout the series.
- I am excited about sharing this passage as it has some wonderful concepts and encouragement for us as a body of believers.
- I hope today to strengthen our understanding that when we are involved in a congregation, we aren't just going to a service, but when we commit to a body of believers as followers of Christ, we become co-laborers – A partner is one of two or more people who run a business or organization together. WE ARE PARTNERS TOGETHER IN SHARING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.
 - So you can turn to someone other than your spouse right now and shout across your six feet of social distancing – Howdy Partner!
- Together we are to be fulfilling The vision for our congregation: Because God first loved us, we exist to love God, and to love our neighbors.
- We are on Mission together for God – what an incredible partnership to be part of!
- When I first started my current work as partnership and donor relationships guy with the Orphan Helper mission, I often thanked our donors for helping us bring life-change to the youth in the government centers in Central America. . . . But it hit me one day, I should be thanking them for their partnership – that we are a team of donors and staff working together to accomplish our mission. To celebrate that THEY are helping change the lives of the youth – not you and us, but WE!
- The same is true here. You are not here to help Ben, Dave, Dilan and Elisha to do ministry. In fact, they are here to teach and equip all of us to do ministry together. It takes all of us to accomplish our mission. WE ARE THE CHURCH – Say it with me: WE ARE THE CHURCH!
- WE ARE EACH PARTNERS IN THE TALLGRASS MINISTRY!

SLIDE 3:

- Let's look at our text today as the Apostle Paul, the first great missionary in church planting, talks to the believers in the church he planted in Philippi and refers to their partnership.

A. THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI AND PAUL

SLIDE 4

- a. Philippians 4:10: *"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity."*

Don't worry, we will come back to vs. 11-13 later.

Philippians 4:14-18: *"Yet it was kind of you to share in my trouble. 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."*

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Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I see the fruit that increases to your credit. 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.

SLIDE 6

b. Review the Partnership

1. The first church planted in Europe on Paul's Second missionary Journey. Philippi was on the upper end of the Greek peninsula in the Macedonian province of the Roman empire – today the biblical Philippi is in Northern Greece.

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2. Paul says in vs. 15, Philippi was the only church that "entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving" as they funded Paul while he was church planting on this 2nd Missionary Trip in Macedonia and beyond. This was all following his first journey, planting churches in Asia.

SLIDE 8

3. When Paul later was in Thessalonica, about 100 miles from Philippi (now in Northern Greece), it was then the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. Paul says in vs. 16 in today's text, "Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again."

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4. We know that Paul did return to Philippi on his 3rd missionary journey when he was collecting funds to take back to the birthplace of Christianity in Jerusalem to help them during a severe famine and to show solidarity with the Jews by the Gentile churches. Paul is recorded in II Corinthians 8:1-5 saying that the churches in Macedonia, though they were very poor, gave generously beyond what they were able. He was using this praise to goad the church at Corinth into fulfilling the commitment they had made but were not fulfilling.

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II Corinthians 8:-1-5: *"We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia. During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. I can testify that, according to their ability and even beyond their ability, of their own accord, they begged us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, and not just as we had hoped. Instead they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will."*

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5. In Phil. 2:19-30, we learn that after his missionary journeys, when news came to the believers at Philippi that Paul was in prison in Rome, the church sent a generous offering with a member of their church named Epaphroditus, who was commissioned to stay with Paul to offer him whatever support he needed. Later, when Epaphroditus fell ill and almost died, the church at Philippi heard he had been sick and Epaphroditus wanted to return to them, Paul sent him back so they

all would be less anxious, sharing his gratitude for their gifts and personal support as partners in his mission work!

SLIDE 12

6. As time lapsed between his last visit to Philippi and his imprisonment at Rome, Paul acknowledge a lack of connection but didn't blame his Philippian partners for that lapse. He says in vs. 10 of today's text. *"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.*
7. **No slide**, but failed to list Euodia and Syntyche and Clement and fellow workers who Paul describes in Philippians 4:2,3 *"who have labored side by side with me in the gospel"*

TRANSITION:

Let's move on from this great example of "partnership in the gospel" and go back to vs. 11-13 that we skipped over and talk about this great concept Paul introduces of being content in all circumstances!!!

SLIDE 13

B. A RELATED SIDE LESSON ON CONTENTMENT

Philippians 4:11-13: *"¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me."*

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Not controlled by circumstances, whether:

- 4:12a: "have plenty" or "in need"
- 4:12b: "well fed" or "hungry"
- 4:12c: "in plenty" or "in want"

SLIDE 15

Phil. 4:11,12 Two perversions of Paul's teaching on being **"content whatever the circumstances"** . . . and being **"content in any and every situation."**

1. POVERTY MENTALITY
2. PROSPERITY GOSPEL

SLIDE 16

POVERTY MENTALITY PERVERTS SCRIPTURE

- Bound up in fear, not faith
- Misinterprets teachings on money
- Fails to understand God's creation of man to be productive and creative. Failure to trust creative abilities and gifts God has given us
- Believing you can't escape being very poor
- Afraid to take risks; safer to stay where you are
- Fearing success can't be sustained
- Loss of hope
- Feeling righteous for not being selfish or rich

Scarcity Mentality Similar but Different

- Thinking there is only so much to go around, so I have to grab my piece of the pie before others do. Leads to selfishness rather than generosity.
- Believing other's success takes away from my own
- Resentful and unable to rejoice in other's success.
- Constantly comparing ourselves to others situations
- Living in fear and anxiety about missing out
- Failure to live in gratitude for what one does have

ILLUSTRATIONS OF OVERCOMING POVERTY MENTALITY

SLIDE 17: Illustration of Nilson



"We have never had anything like that!" - Those were the words uttered by Nilson after the Orphan Helpers team in El Salvador recently delivered his new refrigerator.

- Nilson works very hard to make ends meet after his incarceration and he has become an entrepreneur and started his own pizza making business.
- Without a refrigerator, his perish-able food items would go to waste. He would buy cheese, but much of it would turn old before it was used.
- Now, he can focus on growing his business and supporting himself and his family. His 88-year-old grandmother is especially excited for him, as she has never owned a refrigerator.

SLIDE 18 Illustration of Katherine



- Accepted Christ in a Girl's Juvenile Prison
- After release, her Mother died and now she is raising her brother (10) and sister (6). Received legal custody of her siblings at 19 years of age.
- She has finished high school while caring for her siblings and starting a tortilla business, and is joyful and grateful! Believers are her new FAMILY & PARTNERS
- COVID RESTRICTION HAS KEPT HER FROM SELLING HER FOODS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD,. SO IT HAS BEEN EXTRA HARD. JOHANNA is helping her.

SLIDE 19

B: PROSPERITY GOSPEL PERVERTS SCRIPTURE

- **Misinterprets the promise in this text:**

Philippians 4:19 – *“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

- **NEED NOT WANT! NEED NOT WANT!** (When I said I needed something like ice cream, my granddaughter Evie when she was about 6 or so, would say, “Want, not Need Grampa!” - Glad she learned that early, but showing up Gramps, I don’t know) 😊
- **CHRIST’S RICHES, NOT EARTHLY RICHES**

+No slide. Abundance Mentality Different than false focus of the Prosperity Gospel

- *Living Generously and Gratefully!*
 - *Belief that success is possible for everyone*
 - *Able to rejoice in other’s good fortune and achievement*
 - *No need to compare ourselves to what others have*
 - *Using the creative talents God has given us*
 - *Trusting God will be with us in poverty or plenty*
 - *Belief that our ultimate riches are in Christ Jesus*
- **Philippians 4:19,20:** *“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To Our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

It is true that following Christ and living by spiritual principles often brings success and abundance. The Scriptures even promise these things happen: Malachi 3 – bring the tithes into my storehouse and be blessed; Jesus in Luke 6:38: Give and it will be given to you;

On the other hand, there is no guarantee it always goes well – just asks the Apostle Paul and the other disciples when you get to heaven! They faced lots of hardship. Life happens – hurricanes, earthquakes, cancer, famines, economic depressions, corrupt government – **we try to be responsibly prepared for these things**, but sometimes Christians just get caught in the crosshairs! And sometimes we just make bad decisions – the wrong investment, the wrong business partner, the wrong insurance policy, etc.

More importantly to seek riches is the wrong goal and strategy. This leads to pushing aside spiritual values and selfish hoarding, mistreatment of others and all kinds of misdeeds. The love of money is the root of all evil. This is very different than living abundantly for Christ in ways that bring blessings to our lives – the goal and motivation is entirely different! **Manthei Family! Pasquale; Mike** – so many I work with who have achieved great financial success, but they live and give generously as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, “Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you” but also “In this world you will have troubles”!

IT IS ALL ABOUT BEING SOLD OUT FOR JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD HE USHERED IN!

The final minutes I want to talk about us here at Tallgrass Church.

SLIDE 20

C. THE TALLGRASS CHURCH PARTNERSHIP IN GIVING AND MISSION

- **Understanding Missional Partnerships.** All of us working together to Love God, Love our neighbor and one another because God first loved us. We are all partners in this mission!

SLIDE 21

- **An Opportunity to give during the March Gladness Challenge**
 - Explain March Gladness and the role of Thrivent Financial in challenging local churches to extra giving this month in a friendly all-win type of competition!
 - Talk about Tithing (10%) of our coming stimulus checks **IN ADDITION TO OUR REGULAR GIVING.**
 - Together depending on how many participate and also whether you tithe on adults and children's payments, **AND SOME OF US CAN DO MORE THAN 10% WITH THIS BONUS INCOME WE WEREN'T COUNTING ON –**
 - We can easily raise 5K to 10K OR MORE this way and should be able to reach our goal of the March budget of \$14,907 plus the \$5000 or rounding off a total of \$20,000!
 - God provides in many ways, with Uncle Sam giving us some of our taxes back!
 - We understand that if anyone has been out of work or way behind on rent, etc., they may not be able to do this, but most of us are able! Let's earnestly beg for this opportunity to be generous just like the Christians at Philippi!
 - So if you are giving online, or writing a check, please designate this extra giving to March Gladness – whether from your stimulus checks or not – but any giving above and beyond your regular giving, designate to the **BUILDING FUND** - Yes, we don't currently have a building except via rent of this one, but it includes our equipment and the trailer needed to transport all this stuff for music, PowerPoint, etc. . . . and thanks for bringing your chairs so we don't have to buy and haul those as well.

SLIDE 22

- **Let me hasten to say "A Gospel partnership is much more than financial.** It involves Living Generously. It involves many things at Tallgrass.
 - ✚ Inwardly for ourselves,
 - it involves doing music,
 - helping with set-up,
 - helping with the children's program, or youth program, etc.,
 - doing discipleship 101 to learn or mentor another;
 - participating in fellowship activities and life groups
 - praying for one another
 - sharing meals when people are sick or a new baby arrives, etc.
 - loving and encouraging one another – having each other's back!
 - ✚ Outwardly
 - It involves sharing our faith with others
 - Looking for opportunities to love our neighbors by meeting their needs and caring for them.

- Inviting others to Central Gathering or Life Groups, or Fellowship Activities or special classes such as the Sexuality Class or if we do marriage, or parenting, or financial management, etc.
- It involves being partners in neighboring well and through loving caring relationships, bringing the gospel to those who don't know Christ.

SLIDE 23

○ Partnership flows from being sold out to Christ as our Lord, Hope and Purpose

Share my heart on this.

SLIDE 24

It's a wrap – The end of our Philippian Study, But so no verse is left out, here are Paul's final words in 4:21-23

Philippians 4:21-23: “²¹Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

Quick comment on how Paul used his opportunity in prison to share Christ and bring salvation to members of Ceasar's household!

SLIDE 25 - I am very glad to be on this journey with all of you as Partners in the Gospel of Grace and Love!