

## **A Declaration of Faith**

### **Phil 4:10-20**

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

As Paul writes this letter to the church at Philippi he is setting in the prison at Rome. He is awaiting his own execution at the hands of the Roman government. This is probably one of the last letters of Paul.

The church at Philippi had always been a favorite of Paul's. They were one of only two churches that had ministered to his needs during his ministry. Remember Paul made tents to support himself. But the church at Philippi, although it was poor in material things, was rich in spiritual riches of love, mercy, kindness. They longed to help Paul spread the message that had brought liberty to their own souls and had time and again supported him.

But it seems that for one reason or another for about the past 10 years they had left off that good work. But now, as Paul is in prison and dependant upon others to meet his needs, they have once again sent a generous gift.

I think most of you know that I do not refer to myself very much in the messages. Paul preached Christ and Him crucified, and I try to do the same.

I heard a story of a preacher that was celebrating his 10<sup>th</sup> year at the church and they presented him with a complete autobiography based on his sermons over the last ten years. I don't think you could do that from my preaching here for past 17 years. But due to the events of the past week I feel compelled to give you more information and more of my life's philosophy.

I cannot tell you the phone calls and cards Nancy and I have received this past week. One question that keeps coming up is, "What do you need?" Everyone's concern and care for us has been such a refreshment. I cannot express how much that has meant to me and my family.

I had more money in my pocket this week that I ever had at any time in my life. But then I spent more money this week than I ever spent in my life as well. But Nancy and I live with what we have. Like Paul who know how to live with an abundance, and how to live with very little. We

have for the very most part been content with the things that we have.

One reason is that things have never been a big issue in our lives. We never have had the nicest furniture and things like that, but my wife can make a cabin on a lake, that has no electricity or inside plumbing a home filled with love. And that is what is important. As a matter of fact, when we went to look at house plans, she picked one of the least expensive ones.

If anything has bothered me throughout the years of my ministry, it was not being able to provide some things for my children that everyone else provided for theirs without ever thinking about it.

Nancy, Victoria and I are doing fine. We have everything that we need. Over the next 6 to 9 months we hope to get our lives back to normal.

The passage this morning is the basis of my lifestyle. I hope that you would make it the basis of your lifestyle as well.

- I. Their care for Paul is a reason for him to rejoice.
  - A. 10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.
  - B. **flourished again:** Paul uses an agricultural word found only here in the New Testament to picture a plant that “shoots up” or “sprouts again,” describing a condition of prosperity or abundance. <sup>1</sup>
  - C. He had **learned ... to be content**, no matter what his financial condition might be. Contentment is really greater than riches, for “if contentment does not produce riches, it achieves the same object by banishing the desire for them.” <sup>1</sup>
  - D. Self-sufficient, not needing outside help, able to make ends meet. Paul was totally independent of man because he was totally dependent upon God. Paul’s satisfaction and sufficiency were in Christ (II Cor 12:9).<sup>2</sup>
- II. Paul’s needs were based on the real world, not with keeping up with the Joneses
  - A. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
- III. Christ was the source of Paul’s strength
  - A. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
  - B. **I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.** In all things I continue to be strong by the One who infuses the power into me. Paul has such strength as long as Christ keeps pouring the power (Gr *dynamis*) into him. A

living Christ on the inside is more than sufficient to endure the circumstances on the outside. What Christ wants Paul to do, Christ enables Paul to do. Where the finger of God points, the hand of God provides the way.<sup>3</sup>

IV. The past support of the Philippians.

A. 14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.

B. **concerning giving and receiving.** Paul used 3 business terms. “Concerning” could be translated “account.” “Giving and receiving” refer to expenditures and receipts. Paul was a faithful steward of God’s resources and kept careful records of what he received and spent.<sup>4</sup>

V. Paul’s concern was not for himself but for them.

A. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

B. The Philippians’ stewardship was a barometer of their spiritual condition. One can give without loving, but he cannot love without giving. Love takes the *stew* out of stewardship. The love gift pleased God, relieved Paul, and enriched the Philippians.<sup>5</sup>

VI. God’s is the one keeping accounts and they will receive the full benefits of their gifts.

A. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: The Nelson Study Bible : New King James Version. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1997, S. Php 4:11

<sup>1</sup>MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments. electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Php 4:11

<sup>2</sup> KJV Bible Commentary. electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 2450

<sup>3</sup> KJV Bible Commentary. electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 2450

<sup>4</sup>MacArthur, John: The MacArthur Study Bible. Electronic ed. Nashville, TN : Word Pub., 1997, c1997, S. Php 4:15

<sup>5</sup> KJV Bible Commentary. electronic ed. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 2451