

10. Learning to Trust God to Supply All of Our Needs

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to experience the peace of God in their lives. We saw that the way to experience the peace of God in our lives was to make the choice to rejoice in all things. Then we need to bring our requests to the Lord with thanksgiving because thanksgiving shows our faith in the Lord. The third thing that is needed in order to enjoy the peace of God is to learn to change our thoughts so that we think about the things that come from the Lord instead of thinking about the things that come from the world. As we do these three things we will experience the peace of God and show our children how to experience that peace. Today, we want to help our children learn to trust God to supply all of their needs.

Philippians 4:10-14 says, “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. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 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. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.” In these verses, we see some lessons that Paul had learned in his life as he had followed the Lord.

Paul had learned to experience joy as a key part of his life. The reason is given here because Paul tells us that he rejoiced in the Lord. This is a reminder that the Lord is the One who is the source of joy. Here, we see that the Lord had used the Christians in Philippi to cause him to rejoice. We saw in chapter two that Epaphroditus had come from Philippi to Rome to help Paul with his daily needs since Paul was a prisoner. The church at Philippi had also sent a financial gift with Epaphroditus for Paul. Here, we see that Paul rejoiced because the Philippians had shown their care for him again as they had done in the past. They had not been able to show that care in the recent past. The Romans had kept him in prison in Caesarea for two years and then had sent him to Rome so the Philippians had not known for a period of time where Paul was located.

The gift was not the primary cause of his joy because Paul had learned to be content regardless of how much or how little he had. Instead, Paul rejoiced in the Lord because of the love that the Philippians had shown by sending Epaphroditus to help him and the financial gift was just another evidence of their love. The word that is translated “content” in this verse means *to be satisfied in whatever situation a person finds himself*. Hebrews 13:5 says, “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’*” Paul was content with whatever the Lord supplied for him.

As a result, Paul had learned to be content when he was abased (had very little). Paul was also content when the Lord caused him to abound (to have more than enough). Paul had joy when there was adequate food to supply his needs. Paul was still filled with joy even when there were times that he had to go hungry. Paul had learned to have strength in every situation because he knew that the Lord was the One who gave him the strength that he needed. As a result, he had the strength that he needed even when he suffered from hunger. At the same time, Paul wanted the

Philippians to know that He greatly appreciated their help in his time of tribulation due to the fact that he was a prisoner.

Paul went on to commend the Philippians for their faithful ministry. Philippians 4:15-17 says, “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. For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.” Paul reminded the Philippians that they had been the only church that had shared (become a partner with him by sharing) at an earlier time. When Paul was at Thessalonica, the Christians at Philippi had sent a gift to help him with his needs. Then they had sent another gift to him at that time. Here, we see a church that had a concern to minister to the needs of Paul as he ministered to people in other cities. This was a church that gave an example to follow.

Paul also pointed out another reason why he had such great joy about the giving of the church at Philippi. He was not seeking the gift for his own benefit. Instead the Philippians were actually storing up spiritual treasure in heaven. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Paul was rejoicing for the fact that by their giving, they were storing up treasures in heaven. However, even more important, Paul rejoiced because it showed that the desire of their hearts was to serve the Lord.

Paul was not concerned about his own needs because he knew that the Lord would supply them. However, he was very thankful for the Philippians. Philippians 4:18-19 says, “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. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that Paul expresses his appreciation for the gift that Epaphroditus had brought to him from the church at Philippi. Paul said that this gift was more than enough to supply the needs that he had as a prisoner in Rome. Paul said that the Lord had used the Philippians to abundantly supply his needs.

However, Paul also gave them three thoughts to help the Philippians to understand how God viewed their gift. First, Paul said that their gift was a sweet-smelling aroma to God. This word is used in Ephesians 5:1-2 where we read, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” In these verses, we see that the offering of Christ as a sacrifice for our sins was a sweet-smelling aroma to God. Paul is certainly pointing out that God was joyful about their gift.

Second, Paul said that their gift was an acceptable sacrifice to God. Acts 10:35 says, “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” In this verse, Peter told those gathered at the house of Cornelius that God accepts people from every nation that fear Him and work righteousness. Paul is making it clear that God accepted the gift of the Philippians in

the same way that He accepted the faith of the people that were gathered in the house of Cornelius. Third, Paul said that their gift was well pleasing to God. This same word is used in Colossians 3:20 where we read, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” Again, this verse makes it clear what pleases God. As a result, Paul used three different expressions to help the Philippians understand that God was very pleased with their gifts.

Based on the fact that God was well pleased with the gifts of Philippians, Paul could say that he knew that God would supply the needs of the Philippians. The word that is translated “needs” speaks of the basic things that the Philippians needed for their lives. Just as the Lord had used their gifts to supply the basic things that Paul needed in Rome, Paul knew that God would supply their needs. We also see the way that God would supply their needs. Paul said that God would supply according to His riches. Christ said in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Here, we see that Christ told the people that they would receive just as they had given to others. That is why Paul could say that he knew that the Lord would supply the needs of the Philippians.

The word that is translated “supply” means *to fill up or to supply liberally*. It is translated “that you may be filled” in Colossians 1:9 where we read, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Here, we see that Paul prayed that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, that they would be filled with all wisdom and that they would be filled with spiritual understanding. In Philippians 1:11, Paul prayed, “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Paul knew that God was able to give spiritual blessings generously. He also knew that God would supply the physical needs of the Philippians because they gave generously to help others.

Paul also encouraged the Philippians to greet one another. Philippians 4:21-23 says, “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Here, we see that Paul wanted his spiritual family in the city of Philippi to understand the importance of greeting one another. This is one of the things that helps other Christians to feel accepted. As a result, Paul encouraged them to greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Paul also sent greetings from those who were with him. This included the people that ministered with him. This greeting also included all of the saints that were in the city of Rome. This greeting especially included those in the household of Caesar that had become Christians. Here, we are reminded that the Lord had used Paul to spread the Gospel into the very household of Caesar. In the same way, we want to encourage our physical and spiritual children to learn to greet others and make them feel accepted. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that they can trust God to supply all of their needs as they serve Him.