**Learn to be Abound and to be Abased**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Philippians 4:9-23**

**Wednesday Evening**

**April 6, 2022**

**Philippians 4:9-23**

9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. 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. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

**9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

Saints, Paul had lived out and was continuing to live out his words, so he could urge the believers to put into practice what they had learned from him (from his teaching and training). The Scriptures were not compiled into a Bible until later, so the standards of belief and behavior were embodied in the teachings and example of those in authority.

Paul could speak confidently; people could follow his example because he was following Christ’s example (1 Corinthians 11:1).

**1 Corinthians 11:1**

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”

If the believers would keep on practicing the virtues that Paul cited above, they would experience the God of peace. God is the source of peace for all believers.

**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.**

Saints, Epaphroditus had been sent to Rome from Philippi with a generous financial gift for Paul, and it had come during a time of need. Paul’s words sound harsh, but that harshness is absent in Greek.

The second phrase explains that the church had always been concerned for Paul, but didn’t have the chance to help. Whatever the reason for that lack of opportunity, Paul rejoiced not only at the gift and God’s wondrous provision for his needs, but also for the church who cared so much about him and had not forgotten him.

Though Paul never asked for money for himself, he accepted the Philippians’ gift because they gave it willingly and because he was in need. In 1 Corinthians 9:11-18, Paul wrote that he didn’t accept gifts from the Corinthian church because he didn’t want to be accused of preaching only to get money.

**1 Corinthians 9:16-18**

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

But Paul maintained that it was a church’s responsibility to support God’s ministers.

**1 Corinthians 9:14**

“Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel”

**11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:**

Saints, at this point, Paul took pains to make sure that his words were not misunderstood. The fact that the Philippians had not sent help sooner did not mean that Paul had been disappointed in them or that he had been put in desperate straits at that time.

Instead, he had learned an important secret to the Christian life—that he could get along happily with whatever he had, whether much or little. Paul had learned this—such contentment is not a natural human response.

Paul explained that his sufficiency was in Christ alone, who provides strength to cope with all circumstances. How do we get to that lofty goal of contentment? It is important for believers to realize that biblical “contentment” is not fatalism or acquiescence to one’s lot in life.

Such thinking would smother God’s ongoing guidance. Rather, contentment involves one’s perspective on life. To have real contentment, remember that everything belongs to God and what we have is a gift from him.

Be thankful for what we have, not coveting what others have. Ask for wisdom to use wisely what we do have. Pray for grace to let go of the desire for what we don’t have. Trust in God to meet our needs.

**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.**

Saints, the following verses give a bit of Paul’s personal testimony. Paul knew what it was like to live on almost nothing (see also 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10).

**1 Corinthians 4:11-14**

11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. 14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

**2 Corinthians 6:4-11**

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. 11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

Saints, although he taught that the churches should support their leaders, Paul himself did not demand salaries from the churches that he had planted.

**13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Saints, Paul’s contentment was not gained through stoic self-discipline. Instead, it was through Christ alone. In every possible circumstance, Paul could truly be content because he did not let outward circumstances determine his attitude.

Saints, Christ was giving him the strength to continue with his ministry and the work of spreading the gospel whether he had plenty or was in need. Paul had complete confidence that, no matter what the circumstance, Christ would give him the strength to meet it.

**14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.**

Saints, the Philippians shared in Paul’s financial support while he was in prison, thus communicating their sympathy with him. The sense of this phrase, lost in the English translation, is a closeness between the apostle and the Philippian believers.

That they had been willing to share in his present difficulty refers to having fellowship in them, identifying with the apostle on behalf of his work for the gospel. Paul commended them for this.

**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.**

Saints, the “sharing” the Philippians had done with Paul refers to their partnership with him, revealed in the practical expression of financial support.

Only the Philippian church had been ready to give financial help to Paul while he was ministering to them, and then when he traveled on from Macedonia to minister in other places.

It seems that other churches did support Paul’s ministry later but that the Philippians had been especially attentive and generous, sending gifts not only while Paul was in Thessalonica, but later when he was in Corinth.

**2 Corinthians 11:9**

“And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself”

**17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.**

Saints, Paul made it clear that his thankfulness for the Philippians’ generosity was not a veiled request for more. Instead, Paul focused on what their good works on his behalf were benefiting them in heaven.

He knew that they would receive a well-earned reward because of their kindness. When we give to those in need, we benefit as well as the receiver, as we grow in the grace of giving.

**2 Corinthians 8:1**

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia”

**2 Corinthians 9:14**

“and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you”

Paul appreciated the Philippians’ spirit of love and devotion more than their gifts.

**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.**

Saints, this was Paul’s acknowledgment that he had received the Philippians’ most recent gifts and that Epaphroditus had faithfully fulfilled his mission.

Their generous gift was more than Paul needed. Surely the Philippian church rejoiced that they had been able to meet Paul’s needs.Paul described the Philippians’ gift as a sweet-smelling sacrifice. Their very gifts were acts of worship, and God was the true recipient. They had given in faith, not so much to Paul as to God. That should be the ultimate goal of every act of love, care, concern, and charity—to help, but also to please God.

**Hebrews 13:16**

“But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”

**19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

Saints, the same God who had taken care of Paul would also supply all their needs. The Philippian church was not wealthy. God had met Paul’s need through the generosity of the Philippian church.

Saints, God would more than repay that generosity by supplying the need of the Philippian church. Not only would God supply all their needs, but he would do it from his glorious riches.

Believers cannot begin to comprehend God’s riches in glory—his riches are limitless, infinite. If it is from that storehouse that believers’ needs are met, then the Philippian believers could rest assured that God would indeed meet every need, no matter how large, desperate, or hopeless it seemed.

**20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Saints, God the Father was both Paul’s God and the Philippians’ God—and he is also our God. God who supplied Paul’s needs and met the Philippians’ needs is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and he promises to meet our needs.

To God belongs all glory forever and ever. Paul broke into a doxology of praise as he remembered God’s great love and provision. God alone deserves all glory from his creation. Amen, so be it.

**21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.**

Saints, Paul sent his personal greetings to all the Christians in the Philippian church; he probably knew each by name. In addition, the brothers with Paul in Rome (his coworkers, such as Timothy) also sent their greetings to the Philippians.

**22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.**

Saints, Paul expanded his message to include a greeting from all the other Christians—that is, all the believers in the Roman church, some of whom are probably listed in Romans 16:1-15.

**23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

Saints, this letter to the Philippians begins and ends with grace. Paul had experienced God’s undeserved favor, and he never tired of praying that others would also experience that grace.

Saints, in many ways the Philippian church was a model congregation. It was made up of many different kinds of people who were learning to work together. Paul recognized, however, that problems could arise, so in this thank-you letter, he prepared the Philippians for potential difficulties they might encounter.

Though a prisoner in Rome, Paul had learned the true secret of joy and peace—imitating Christ and serving others. By focusing our minds on Christ we will learn unity, humility, joy, and peace. We will also be motivated to live for him.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**