

“Financing the Mission” 10/20-21/07 9 & 10:45 a.m.
Philippians 4:10-19

OPEN to Philippians 4:10 (**PAGE** 1830)

INTRODUCTION

“Our mission is to influence our friends, our community and our world to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ ... one life at a time.”

To fulfill some parts of the mission God has given, finances are required.

So, today we want to look at how this works, in the context of the book of Acts and some of the rest of the Scriptures.

The letter to the Philippians was written by Paul. You’ll remember, in Acts 16, that Paul and his team were led to Philippi by a vision from God where he saw a man from Macedonia pleading, **“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”**

Within that large region of Macedonia was an influential city named **Philippi**.

It was in **Philippi** that Paul and his teammates

- lead **Lydia** to the Lord,
- cast a demon out of a **slave girl**,
- were illegally **beaten and thrown in jail** and
- then led the **jailer and his family** to faith in Christ.

These are some of the people to whom Paul is writing in Philippians.

And, of course, the Philippians knew all that had gone on while **Paul** was among them ...

- they knew it was **Paul** who first brought *The Message* about Jesus to them,
- how he **suffered greatly** for doing so, and
- how he looked out for their welfare and spiritual growth.
- And it was **Paul** who, when ejected from the city, left some of his **ministry partners** behind so that the new believers could grow in their faith and establish the church.

So, in his letter to the **Philippians**, we see a degree of relational tenderness and confidence expressed that is unique in Paul’s letters.

We see and feel it in what Paul writes and also in how the Philippians express their trust and appreciation for him.

I. We Give in the Context of Valued and Trusting Relationships (v. 10)

READ Philippians 4:10-19

It's important to grasp this first point because we need to understand that financial giving to a ministry, to the church, is not about pressuring people or manipulation ...

... two of the key ingredients are valuing and trusting the leadership and what the ministry is about.

Since we give in the context of valued and trusting relationships, let's look a little earlier in this letter to see how tightly Paul and the Philippians are welded together in relationship and mission:

Philippians 1:4-5: "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now ...

Paul values the **relationship** and the **mission** they share together in Christ, partners in taking *The Message* about Jesus to people both near and far.

Philippians 1:7-8: "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains [Paul was in jail when he wrote this] or defending and confirming the Gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."

Words of warmth, expressing deep friendship, a close and trusting relationship.

Philippians 2:25, 29-30 "But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me."

Paul is saying here that since the entire church couldn't come to visit him, they sent **Epaphroditus** to represent them ... and what a representative!

In the process of finding Paul and taking care of his needs, **Epaphroditus** became so sick that he almost died.

He was sent with **financial assistance** for Paul and an update on how things were going in the church ... the good news and needs, problems they needed help with.

What we see here is the trust and affection and commitment the Philippians have towards the man who brought them to Christ and who cared for them. Now they are going to great lengths to care for his needs.

Now, back to chapter 4: This attitude of valued and trusting relationships is what we see a reflection of in Philippians 4:10:

Philippians 4:10 **“I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.”** (see v. 18a)

Distance had separated the **Philippians** from **Paul** and made communication and support more difficult. Now that **Epaphroditus** has come, Paul is deeply encouraged and refreshed to see him because **Epaphroditus** is the tangible expression of their continued friendship and partnership.

And the financial support they have sent does more than meet Paul’s physical and ministry needs, it encourages his heart. (v. 10-11a)

He’s not *“out of sight, out of mind.”*

The Philippians **value Paul**, and they **trust** him. They also **value** his ministry and they trust that he is about fulfilling it.

ILLUSTRATION

I was talking to a couple who had been a part of this church for many years. They moved to another state, and were back in town.

They shared with me how they were checking out different churches where they lived, and found two that were real possibilities for a new church home, but they hadn’t yet reached a decision.

Then they added something that reflected what we’re talking about today:

They said that even though they were no longer a part of this church, they were still giving financially here; they were still giving their tithe.

They said it was because they knew the ministry of this church, had benefited from it, and trusted it.

They said that when they found a new church home and settled in, they would then start giving their tithe through that congregation. But, until that time, their giving would come here.

Value and Trust ... because of a long-term relationship, they **trust** that what they give is going to accomplish something **valuable**: the purposes of God for His Church.

If you're new to this congregation, you should know that we take financial matters very seriously. The money we all give is to the Lord to accomplish His purposes.

To make sure that purpose and integrity is maintained, we have a system of accountability: the deacons review, analyze and approve each year's budget, and, on a monthly basis, review both income and expenditures.

On a day-to-day basis, the business office confirms that expenditures are appropriate and have the proper documentation.

At the end of every year, we have a complete financial audit, performed by an accountancy firm ... CPAs who report directly to the deacons on what they find re:

- the financial statements of the church,
- the methods we use for paying bills and keeping track of finances,
- deposits to the bank, etc.
- And we always receive a clean bill of health.

Why do we do this? Because we all need to be able to **trust** that what we give financially is going for God's purposes, and is being handled with integrity.

I. We Give in the Context of Valued and Trusting Relationships (v. 10)

II. We Give So That *The Message* Will Reach More People (v. 15-16)

Philippians 4:15-16 **“Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the Gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.**

Thessalonica was where Paul went immediately after leaving Philippi.

The Message about Jesus had not yet been taken there, so, again, Paul and his team went to where people had not yet heard the Good News.

And, the Philippians were so grateful for what the Lord had done in their lives through Paul and his team, and they came to understand that the Lord Jesus had given us the mission to reach all the people of the world with The Message, and so they joined Paul in their financial giving.

This is why we, as a congregation, support people who are taking *The Message* to unreached people around the world.

Let me share just a few examples:

Example 1:

We support an organization in **Indonesia** called the **Sundanese Christian Fellowship** which ministers among the largest unreached people group in the world (Muslims).

There are 35 million Sundanese who mostly live in West Java and have never heard The Message of Jesus Christ.

Although there is much persecution from the Islamic radicals, over the last year, 1,100 Sundanese heard the Gospel for the first time! 97 of them accepted Jesus, and new house churches were planted. They also have a sponsor-a-child program, because many poor families cannot pay for their children's education especially as many parents lose their jobs when they become Christian.

The leader of this ministry ("Domu") will be with us Sunday (tonight) at 4:30 pm in the Pavilion Garden level.

Example 2:

We assist a ministry called **NightLight** in **Bangkok, Thailand**. **Bangkok** is the "capitol" of the sex trade market of the world.

In about a five-block neighborhood where **NightLight** concentrates, there are approximately 20,000 young women who work the streets. (some merely children)

NightLight builds relationships with these women by going to them and sharing about God's freedom and real love. Those who are willing are employed in a jewelry-making business, where they are taught the skills to make high-quality jewelry that is then sold around the world.

Each day they have worship, Bible study, life-skill education and meals.

Three women have accepted Christ this month. One of them had been in prostitution from the time she was 14. The second was pregnant. The third has been considering Christ, but was unwilling to give up ties to demonic spirits. After two years of being "almost ready" she decided to give her life to Christ. She was also delivered from evil spirits as they prayed with her.

Example 3:

As a church, we have literally “adopted” the country of **Slovenia** to partner with the national church to see churches multiplied. The week, the 31 member New Hope singing and drama group, from our church, joined with a number of Slovenes, to present concerts throughout the country, at the invitation of **Slovene** church planters.

These concerts are laying the ground work for a major event next year, when the 500th birthday of the Father of Slovenia, a man named Trubar, will be celebrated.

Our church is writing and directing a drama, to be presented by Slovenes, to present the life of Trubar, a man who loved God and wanted to tell everyone about *The Message* of Jesus.

If God opens the doors, this drama will share with every Slovene (over 2 million people) that their national identity stems from a man named Trubar, who loved God and wanted to tell everyone that God loved them.

We also support the work of **Todd and Sarah Hunnicutt**, assist **three national church planters** and a number of other **church and national projects**.

Example 4:

“Barbara” is working in a limited access country, at a hospital that focuses on the care of girls and women. In a society where women are kept in the shadows, she and her team have been able to share God’s love in many ways besides medicine.

Example 5:

A few years ago, our church began to partner with a group who had a vision to see 300 churches planted over a three-year period in the predominately Muslim region of **Central Asia**. Almost 500 churches were planted!

Now, the **Central Asia 1000** project has the goal to plant 1,000 churches by the end of 2008!

Lord willing, we’ll soon be sending a family that will be a part of this ministry.

These five ministries are only a few of the 42 ministries we assist around the world.

And, we are involved locally as well:

children: with about 700 children to minister to every weekend, there are expenses involved:

youth: approx. 350 from JH through College-aged; and increasing!

MNC: 300+ fed weekly and 100+ attending the worship service

And there are more than 200 local ministries that are directly under the umbrella of this congregation, and several beyond that that are not directly under our umbrella.

II. We Give So That *The Message* Will Reach More People

CONCLUSION

The Bible says that when someone entrusts their life to Jesus Christ, they become “**a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!**” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The old sins are washed away, forgiven, gone. The Holy Spirit of God Himself comes to live within us and starts transforming our lives, our desires, our will, our character, our relationships.

If you have met the Lord, you value what He has done in your life and you trust Him.

And, you desire that others will know Him.

Commitment Weekend is two weekends away; November 3-4.

We bring our financial commitments to the Lord for His work through FBC.

Let’s pray, and let’s come with excited and grateful hearts!

*“Father in Heaven, thank You for those who brought *The Message* about Jesus to me. I will give so that others may know Him as well! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”*