

# An Exposition of Philippians

## Lesson #14 4:15-23

**Preceding Context:** In last week's lesson (#13) we learned of our obligation to manage our minds by setting them on true and righteous and excellent things. We are not to dwell on the corrupt and perverted things of the world.

Paul spoke to us of the necessary skill of living in gratefulness for all that God provides for us and to avoid discontent as a matter of faith. As part of this being contented, we learned that we can have victory over all kinds of troubles, turmoil and persecutions that may come our way, only as allowed by our sovereign God for His loving purpose in our lives.

Scripture Text NASU	Commentary
<p><b>4:15</b> <i>You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first <u>preaching</u> of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> <u>preaching</u> <i>ευαγγελιου euaggeliou</i> (Str. 2098) 76x glad tidings; good or joyful news; preaching; instruction in the gospel</p> <p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul here recounts to these Philippian saints that no one supported him with financial gifts except them. Here Paul is encouraging them through an informed compliment in order to edify them in their faith. There is a need for church leadership to encourage the saints as appropriate to make their faith stronger.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> Here Paul rebukes certain attitudes amongst the Corinthian saints. <b>Read</b> 2 Cor 11:1-6 leading up to this passage:</p> <p><b>2 Cor 11:7-11</b> <i>Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? <sup>8</sup>I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; <sup>9</sup>and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. <sup>10</sup>As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. <sup>11</sup>Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!</i></p>	
<p><b>16-17</b> <i>for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> None</p> <p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul here continues his edifying and encouraging commentary on their faithfulness, ensuring that it has not gone unnoticed.</p> <p>Verse 17 clarifies that Paul did seek the gift for his own comfort and/or enrichment, but rather, Paul wants to be enriched spiritually, that his children in the faith will receive great rewards and blessings due to their faithfulness and worldly sacrifice. He wants them to be credited with virtue for their faithful support of his ministry.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b></p> <p><b>1 Cor 9:9-14</b> <i>For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? <sup>10</sup>Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. <sup>11</sup>If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? <sup>12</sup>If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? <sup>14</sup>So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.</i></p>	
<p><b>18</b> <i>But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, <u>a fragrant aroma</u>,</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> <u>abundance</u> <i>περισσευω perisseuω</i> (Str. 4052) 39x To be, over and above, to exist in full quantity, <u>to abound in sufficiency.</u></p> <p><u>a fragrant aroma</u> See 2 Cor 2:14-16. - - <i>we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma of death to death, to the other an aroma of life to life.</i></p>

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<p><i>an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.</i></p>	<p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul under house arrest in Rome has received everything in full and lives in abundance. Epaphroditus, the Philippian’s representative, has supplied him with all that they have sent and also serves Paul in support of his ministry. These gifts are to God a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.</p> <p>Can we imagine the pride and encouragement that these Philippians had regarding Paul’s kind and gracious words. How much more could they have been rewarded, but that their father in the faith (Paul) credits them with such support for his vital ministry in the seat of the Roman empire, where lost people are in need of the gospel? What a glorious privilege they had and took that privilege in service to their Lord and Savior!</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> <span style="float: right;">Textual Variation – “<u>us</u>”</span>  <b>Eph 5:1-2</b> <i>Therefore be imitator of God as beloved children; and walk in love just as Christ also loved <u>you</u> and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as <u>a fragrant aroma</u>. See Gen 8:20-21 &amp; Ex 29:18</i></p>	
<p><b>19</b> <i>And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> None</p> <p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul here is assuring these Philippian saints that God is faithful to His people and will supply all of their needs because they were faithful. It certainly seems apparent that Paul is primarily talking about their material needs here based on the context of verse 18. Such supply will be in accordance with His riches in glory that is found in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p> <p>There may be many unanswered questions here such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the “needs” to be supplied?</li> <li>2. Are these needs limited to just material or only spiritual needs?</li> <li>3. Are their “desires” included in this supply?</li> </ol> <p>Some thoughts for consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In material gifts/needs, God gives that which is “good” individually for each of His saints.</li> <li>2. In spiritual gifts/needs, God gives much more than that which is “necessary” for us to serve Him in the utter richness of the truth of God’s perfect and sovereign providence.</li> </ol> <p>In this case we have a forward looking context that must be considered, namely verse 20 below which is a “punctuated” doxological proclamation that affirms that such gifts will always lead us to glorify the Father in all circumstances.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> None</p>	
<p><b>20</b> <i>Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> None</p> <p><b>Exposition:</b> Here is the final “doxological” statement in this epistle where Paul gives all of the glory implied by its contents to the Father.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> Another example of a powerful doxological statement of similar content but somewhat expanded.</p> <p><b>Gal 1:3-5</b> <i>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.</i></p>	
<p><b>21</b> <i>Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> <i>household</i> οἰκίας οἰκίας (Str. 3614) 93x A place of abode, where people live within a living space unit.</p>

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<p>you. <sup>22</sup>All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's <u>household</u>.</p>	<p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul wants the Philippians saints reading this epistle to greet every saint I Christ Jesus in the Philippian church. There are no unimportant people. There are no "newbies" or "oldies" or any other exceptions.</p> <p>The brethren with Paul in Rome also greet these Philippian saints. Here Paul is referring to those who are directly with him in his imprisonment and in his ministry.</p> <p>Paul also greets these Philippian saints with greetings from all other saints in Rome and mentions especially those who have become followers of Jesus within Caesar's household.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> None</p>	
<p><b>23</b> <i>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.</i></p>	<p><b>Key Words:</b> None</p> <p><b>Exposition:</b> Paul wants these Philippian saints to be strongly connected in reality with the grace of Jesus Christ in their inner spirit, certainly testified to by God's Holy Spirit within them.</p>
<p><b>Cross Reference(s):</b> <b>Rom 8:14-17</b> <i>For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.</i></p>	

### Some Important Quotes

Moral behavior, if it is to be good in any biblical sense, must be motivated by the desire to give God glory. Not only following the right rules, but doing it for the sake of God's honor is the only acceptable supreme good, the summum bonum. This kind of goodness is simply not possible without God. Nor is it possible outside the power of the gospel. Only when we have been gripped by the grace of the Lord can we seek not our own welfare but the good of our neighbors (1 Cor 10:24). **William Edgar**; from *Table Talk of 9/10*; p. 13

All too often, sanctification is thought of in relation to one's own growth in grace. While sanctification is so related, it must not be pursued individualistically. Perhaps there is an implied rebuke of the kind of individualism that was beginning to disrupt the unity of the church at Philippi in the very form of this command. Some commentators have pointed that out, and it cannot be excluded given the emphasis on "oneness" in the epistle. If instead of one's own "salvation", the "well-being" of the body of Christ were to be considered - and the noun can be so understood - then the danger of becoming individualistic would be lessened. The command would then be endorsing the exhortation previously given to "let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests [or needs] of others" (2:4). **Hywel R. Jones**; *Table Talk of 4/18*; p. 64