

PHILIPPIANS – 6th CD

VI. CONCLUDING MATTERS (4:4-23)

A. THE PEACE OF GOD. (4:4-7)

v4 Another call to rejoice in the Lord - the distinctive mark of the believer. Circumstances may be difficult but our joys are in the Lord and therefore transcend circumstances.

Joy referred to 16 times in the letter - 8 times Paul's and 8 times theirs.

v5 Let your gentleness (NAS forbearing) be made known to all men
N.B. v6 let your requests *be made known* to God.

- Compare 1 Pet 2:23, Christ's example - while being reviled, He did not revile in return: while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.

v6 Be anxious for nothing - "Fear not!" A frequent Bible exhortation - often on Jesus' lips.

- A command that clears the way for faith.

In everything - let your requests be made known to God.

- in a context of confident thanksgiving;

Thanksgiving replacing anxiety and leading to:-

v7 The peace of God - which guards hearts and minds.

God's peace transcends all understanding.

- Fee "Even though the experience of God's 'peace' happens first of all at the individual level, it is doubtful that 'peace' in this context refers only to 'the well-arranged heart'. For Paul peace is primarily a community matter. As noted below (v9), the ascription 'God of peace' occurs in Paul in contexts where community unrest is lurking nearby. Not only so, but the mention of peace in his letters (apart from the standard salutation) occurs most often in community or relational settings. Thus Christ is 'our peace' who has made Jew and Gentile one people, one body (Eph 2:14-17), who are thus urged to 'keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace' (4:3); similarly in the argument of Rom 14:1-15:13,

Jew and gentile together are urged to 'make every effort to do what leads to peace' (14:19); or in the community paraenesis of Col 3:12-4:6, they are urged to 'let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, *since as members of one body you were called to peace*' (v15)."

B. THE GOD OF PEACE (4:8-9)

v8 Whatever is true, honourable etc.

- Fee "The six adjectives and two nouns that make up the sentence are as uncommon in Paul as most of them are common stock to the world of Greco-Roman moralism."
- Fee "Thus, he appears to be dipping into the language of the hellenistic moralism, in his case tempered by Jewish wisdom, to encourage the Philippians that even though they are presently 'citizens of heaven', living out the life of the future as they await its consummation, they do not altogether abandon the world in which they used to, and still do, live. As believers in Christ they will embrace the best of that world as well, as long as it is understood in the light of the cross."
- Fee "This sentence offers clear evidence that the distinctions between 'secular' and 'sacred' are most often of our making, based on our embracing an O.T. point of view regarding 'holy things', even though it was brought to an end with the coming of Christ and the Spirit. Paul takes a different view, that being 'in Christ' sanctifies whatever else one is and does, so that what is honourable, lovely, and pleasing, as long as it is also worthy of praise, is also embraced by life in Christ. Although the articulation of a later time, this passage seems to embrace the notion of 'common grace'. Here is where Mozart and Beethoven (not only Bach!) come under Christian embrace."

v9 Imitate me! and God will be with you!

C. ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR GIFT: PARTNERSHIP AND THE GOSPEL (4:10-20)

Paul now begins to thank them for their gift expressing ongoing fellowship.

The section contains two famous promise verses, v13 and v19.

(1) THEIR GIFT AND PAUL'S CONTENTMENT (4:10-12)

- v10-11 At first Paul's attitude seems strange.
He makes no reference to the details of his needs. Rather the opposite, he tells them he has learned to be content whatever his circumstances.
- v12 He has 'learned the secret' - primarily a technical term for initiation into mystery religions.
- Paul, of course, has learned a Christian secret.
He has not learned this by opting out of the world and entering a monastery, taking a vow of poverty.
He could handle poverty or prosperity with contentment.

His secret is:

- v13 "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
NOT - "I find the atmosphere of a quiet church helpful."
NOR - "Some people find that 'saying a prayer' brings psychological release."
The secret is a Person - Him, who strengthens me!
The gospel is a person.
1:21 "For me to live is Christ."
3:8 "I have suffered the loss of all things - to know HIM - the surpassing worth of knowing Christ."

- Motyer "I am able for all things through one who endues me with dynamite."

(2) THEIR GIFT AS PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL (4:14-17)

- v14 NASB - you have done well.
NIV - it was good of you

- both too bland.

- Fee says American slang fits:- "You did good."

The word can mean good, beautiful, noble, splendid.

Why good? - it was not casual, nominal or a token.

- they "shared" - they were participating - expressing partnership - joint ownership - Koinonia
- Paul and the Philippians were in partnership.
- They excelled above other churches.
- He boasted about them in 2 Cor 8.

(3) THEIR GIFT AS A GOOD INVESTMENT. (V17)

NAS The profit that increases to your account.

- Fee "Being entered into the divine ledger as accumulating interest which will find its full expression at the coming of Christ."
- Motyer "He seems to suggest that this is a proper motivation for Christians to cultivate; they should seek out opportunities to expend their generosity upon the needy, because by selling what they have and giving alms they would make for themselves 'purses that do not grow old...a treasure in heaven that does not fail.'" (Luke 12:33)

- see also 1 Timothy 6:17-19. READ

(4) THEIR GIFT AS A FRAGRANT AROMA.

- an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

- Hendriksen "The gifts are 'an odour of a sweet smell', 'an offering presented to God, welcome and very pleasing to him'. They are comparable to the thank offering of Abel (Gen 4:4), of Noah (Gen 8:21), of the Israelites when in the proper frame of mind they brought whole burnt offerings (Lev 1:9, 13, 17), and of believers generally in dedicating their lives to God (2 Cor 2:15, 16), as did also Christ but he in a unique manner (Eph 5:2). He acknowledges that their deed was not merely an act of sympathy shown to a friend in need but a genuine offering, presented to God."

God delights in a people dedicated to him. He delights in their fragrant sacrifice.
(cf Malachi 2:8-10)

(5) THEIR GIFT AND THE PROMISE OF PROVISION.

v16	You have supplied for my needs abundantly.
NOW v19	My God shall supply all your needs.

- according to their need? - NO!
- out of his riches? - NO!

According to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
In keeping with his glorious wealth.

(6) THEIR GIFT AND THE RESULTING DOXOLOGY.

- One glimpse at the glory of Christ Jesus sets Paul praising!

D. CLOSING GREETINGS (4:21-3)

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