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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## What May Be Credited to Your Account

### Philippians 4:10-4:19

Two men owned farms side by side. One was a bitter atheist, the other a committed Christian. Constantly annoyed at the Christian for his trust in God, the atheist said to him one winter, "Let's plant our crops as usual this spring, each the same number of acres. You pray to your God and I'll curse Him. Then come October, let's see who has the bigger crop."

When October came, the atheist was delighted because his crop was clearly larger than the Christian's. "See, you fool," he taunted, "what do you have to say for your God now?"

The Christian farmer replied "My God doesn't settle all his accounts in October!!"

### Introduction: How Will You Save Up for Retirement?

Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*

What's the biggest misconception Christians have about giving? That when we give money away to a church or ministry, or to help the needy, it's gone. While we hope others will benefit from it, we're quite sure we won't. We think we're divesting ourselves of money, disassociating from it. Once it leaves our hands, we imagine, it has no connection to us, no future implications relevant to our lives.

#### **We couldn't be more wrong.**

What we think we own will be rudely taken from us, some of it before we die, and anything that's left the moment we die. But now is our window of opportunity not to divest ourselves of money, but to invest it in heaven. We don't have to have everything taken from us. We can give it before disaster or death strike. Now's our chance to give what we can't keep to gain what we can't lose.

Illus. Money changing in Japan... American money of no value in Tokushima

Triumphal Entry: expelling the money changers in the temple

Earthly currency must be exchanged for Heavenly currency... or we will lose it forever

## I. Paul Thankfulness for the Gift Itself

### A. "I rejoiced greatly"

1. Past tense used; refers probably to his reaction when he first received the gift from Ephaphroditus
2. Clearly attitude of joy pervades the whole letter

### B. The Immediate Use of the Gift for Paul

1. For all his attitude and theology, Paul still has a body and therefore basic needs
2. Prisoners at the mercy of those on the outside

### C. However, the gift meant more to Paul than simply that he would have his physical needs met

1. Paul's god is not his stomach
2. He knew that even this new gift would run out someday
3. Paul's real focus here is what the gift signified for THEM, not for him!!

## II. Paul's Attitude of Christian Contentment

### A. Proof: Extended Section on Christian Contentment

1. Basic messages: I know how to be content AND God is able to meet all my needs
2. Therefore, my real concern is for YOU Philippians

### B. Already Covered This Section in Detail

1. Paul's Life of extreme trials a great teacher for him
2. The "secret of Christian contentment": total reliance on the strength that Christ can give

## III. What the Gift Signified About the Philippians

Put simply... to Paul it was more than anything proof of the genuineness of their conversion

### A. General Characteristics

1. Basic goodness and generosity

**vs. 14 *Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.***

- a. Greek word for “good” is kalos... frequently translated “beautiful”
- b. their act of sacrificial love was a good thing, morally beautiful
- 2. Freedom from materialism and selfish greed
  - a. people who make money their god cannot be generous like this
  - b. their lavish generosity shows their freedom from materialism and greed
- 3. Concern for a Christian brother in need
  - a. it was also a picture of their conception of the body of Christ
  - b. Paul repeatedly speaks of the “fellowship” that their financial support
- 4. Concern for a persecuted messenger of the gospel

**B. Intensely Personal Characteristics**

- 1. Renewing of a history of relationship with Paul, their gospel messenger

**vs. 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.***

- a. Paul excuses their seeming lack of interest for a long time
- b. their love did not wax or wane... but it didn't always have opportunity
- c. the issue with the Philippians was not that they lacked interest but they had no opportunity
  - i) either they didn't know what was happening with him
  - ii) or they had no ability to do anything for him... perhaps the danger was too great, or they had no resources or didn't know where he'd been taken after his arrest
- d. past history:

**vs. 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.***

These Philippians had aided Paul early on, repeatedly, and when no one else was helping Paul especially stresses their faithfulness and repeated sacrifices on his behalf

## 2. Proof of ongoing progress in Christ

- a. however, the long delay perhaps raised some questions about whether the Philippians were still walking with Christ

Understand: a genuinely converted person can never lose his/her salvation

However, standing on the outside and unable to read people's hearts, we are not sure of the genuineness of the conversion until it is tested over time

To prove the genuineness of our faith, we must keep obeying day after day, as long as it is called today

***Hebrews 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.***

When Paul left a town like Philippi, all he could do was entrust them to God:

[Churches in Lystra, Iconium, Antioch]

***Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.***

To the Ephesian elders:

***Acts 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.***

- b. Paul constantly concerned about the ongoing health of the churches he planted

### 1 Thessalonians

***1 Thessalonians 3:5-6 For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless. 6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.***

### Galatians

***Galatians 4:19-20 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!***

Paul prayed constantly for the churches, was anxious over their spiritual welfare and progress, yearned for them to succeed to the glory of God

- c. Paul knew that a concern for him and his ministry was a strong indication that they were still walking well with Christ

Why did Paul care so much that the Thessalonians had pleasant memories of him and his fellow laborers in the gospel? Love for their father in the faith is a tangible test of their love for Christ

#### C. Ultimately: love for Christ Himself

1. The sacrificial gift of money by the Philippians meant they still loved Christ
2. They were still walking with Christ
3. They still were obeying Christ... the work of Christ in their souls was REAL, DEEP, LASTING, GENUINE, TESTED, TRIED, TRUE!!!
4. Their gifts were a direct offering of worship to God

***vs. 18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.***

This is clearly sacrificial language... like the animal sacrifices of old

The sacrificial gift of money now is like the giving of a prize heifer or bull to the Lord under the Old Covenant

This now is the significance of the gift by the Philippians

- 1) It was a beautiful and generous thing in itself
- 2) It signified their spiritual health and faith
- 3) It was a great encouragement to him as an Apostle of Christ and a preacher of the gospel
- 4) AND more than anything, it showed their ongoing love for Christ through a sacrificial gift pleasing to God

#### IV. Paul's Primary Desire: Eternal Rewards for the Philippians

***vs. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.***

##### A. Paul's Deep Desire

1. There's something that Paul deeply wants here
  - a. Greek word implies a strong desire, something Paul is seeking with all his might
  - b. there's something he yearns for, something he wants, something he covets, something he CRAVES
2. Amazingly, he's already shown that what he deeply desires is NOTHING for himself... rather it's something for them
3. All his needs are met (vs. 18 "I am amply supplied... I have everything I could want")
4. His desire is for something else... something for THEM

#### B. Paul's Accounting Language

1. The word "account" is logos, the Greek word for an official ledger
2. Same in earlier verse

***vs. 15 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***

"The matter of giving and receiving" = literally the ledger, the accounting of giving and receiving

i.e. Giving to God's servant, receiving blessings from God Himself

3. Sense of a careful accounting by God of what was given to His work by faith
4. Verse 17

**[NASB] *Philippians 4:17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.***

**[RSV] *Philippians 4:17 Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit.***

- a. "fruit" = return on investment... improvement of something little into something greater
- b. you sow a hard, small, unattractive brown seed; you get a return of a tree full of beautiful pears, golden with a tinge of red when ripe
- c. "increases" = multiplication... not just one pear, but scores of them, coming from one seed sown in faith

- d. THIS IS WHAT PAUL SEEKS... something that may increase in the account of the Philippians... a massive return on their investment

What is Paul talking about?

C. God's Eternal Ledger Book

1. The God of history

- a. everything done in God's world is significant
- b. God knows that huge tapestries are composed of tiny threads
- c. God is especially attuned to seeds planted by faith

2. God's immaculately careful record-keeping

***Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.***

NOTE: the word "account" here is the same as in vs. 15 and 17 of our text... the account book of God

***Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***

***Romans 14:12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.***

3. Judgment day

***Daniel 7:9-10 "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.***

***Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.***

4. We are merely stewards in God's universe... everything we have is His

- a. the essence of stewardship is that we MANAGE something that belongs to someone else
- b. the faithful steward seeks to use his position and skill to benefit his master's account

**Matthew 25:14-30** *"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.*

*16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

*19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

*24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

This parable shows the essential aspects of stewardship

- 1) The property belongs to the master, as does the return on the investment
- 2) The master expects the stewards to be wise and active with his money... he wants GROWTH, FRUIT, INTEREST
  - The two good stewards both doubled the master's original investment
  - The master said he expected the same from the faithless servant

**vs. 27** *Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

- 3) The do-nothing steward receives the harshest possible penalty for his failure to increase his master's wealth
- 4) The faithful stewards are rewarded in proportion to their faithfulness



5. On that day we will give an account of everything we have done with God's things

- stewards of God's earth... what did we do with it?
- stewards of people and relationships ... what fruit came from them?
- stewards of God's time... minutes, hours, days, years; how did we improve the time?
- stewards of God's possessions, of God's money... how did we use it for God's kingdom?
- stewards of God's spiritual gifts... how did we use them to build up Christ's body
- stewards of God's gospel message... whom did we lead into the Kingdom?

#### D. Storing Up Treasure in Heaven

1. God notices everything we do as stewards... nothing is missed, nothing escapes His attention
2. Even the slightest act of faith and of sacrificial service to advance the Kingdom or to encourage the brothers and sisters in Christ He will never forget

***Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."***

3. He feels so strongly about this matter of rewards that he actually inspired the writer to Hebrews to imply it would be UNJUST for God not to reward us

***Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.***

4. Yet we know very well that all we ever truly deserve is HELL, and that eternal life is sufficient for us... that He would give specific and additional rewards is LAVISH GRACE beyond measure
5. Therefore, Christ commands us to STORE UP LOTS AND LOTS OF TREASURE IN A HEAVENLY BANK ACCOUNT

***Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."***

Do not miss the significance of this!!! Christ is actively commanding us to store up treasure in heaven by doing good deeds

Now we know very well that we are justified by faith apart from works

***Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.***

***Romans 4:1-5 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.***

Our works can NEVER be considered as the basis for some WAGE from God by which we earn our salvation

This is abundantly clear in so many places, it hardly needs extended teaching on this point

YET, God clearly desires us to learn to use our earthly resources with an eternal mindset

Our eternal rewards are based on our faithful use of our money and time and talents and opportunities now

E. What Is the Reward?

***Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'***

1. Praise from God specifically tied to the deeds
2. Increased responsibilities in the New Heaven and New Earth

***Luke 19:15-19 [The Parable of the Minas]***

[Note: a mina is worth about three month's wages]

***Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. 16 "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' 17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' 18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' 19 "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'***

3. Shared happiness of the master

***Come and share your master's happiness!'***

## V. What Paul Promises: God's Constant Supply

[NASB] *Philippians 4:19* **And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

A. Enemy of Faith-filled Giving: Anxiety over the future

1. "If I give this away, how will my own needs be met?"
2. What about paying the rent? How about medical insurance or prescriptions?

B. Addressed openly here... a direct promise for all NEEDS to be met

1. Greek word: "supply"... actually means to fill up amply, meet completely

**Hudson Taylor: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."**

2. **Napoleon: "An army marches on its stomach"...** in other words, if you don't meet the basic needs of your soldiers, they cannot fight for you
3. BUT focus here is on NEEDS, not luxuries

***1 Timothy 6:8* But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**

Jesus taught the same thing in Matthew 6

***Matthew 6:31-33* So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Food, clothing, shelter... basic needs of life... the luxuries are not promised here!!!

***Philippians 4:19* And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

And notice how LAVISHLY God is able to meet those needs: "According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus!"

Your heavenly Father is incredibly wealthy... Psalm 50:10 says "God owns the cattle on a thousand hills"

Illus.: Shortly after the Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost folded into bankruptcy. All the creditors were ready to foreclose at noon on a given day.

That morning, the founders of the seminary met in the President's office to pray that God would somehow provide. In that meeting was a man named Dr. Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he said in his

refreshingly candid way, "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are thine. Please sell some of them and send the money to us.

Just about that time, a tall Texan wearing cowboy boots an open-collar shirt strolled into the school's business office. "Howdy," he said to a secretary. I've just sold two carloads of cattle over in Fort Worth. I've been trying to make another business deal go through, but it just won't work. I feel God wants me to give this money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check."

The secretary took the check and, knowing of the nature of the business that day, went to the door of the President's office and timidly knocked. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and President of Dallas Theological Seminary, answered the door and took the check from the secretary.

When he looked at the amount, it was for the exact amount of the debt. Then he recognized the name of the cattleman on the check, and turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "Harry, God sold the cattle."

Please remember that God makes it a matter of principle to care for the needs of those who are living openly for Him!!!

### C. Faith-filled Generosity Rewarded by God

***Mark 12:41-44 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything-- all she had to live on."***

The world says this is the most foolish thing this woman could ever have done

Jesus commended her faith, saying she had put in more than anyone specifically because she gave all that she had to live on

***Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."***

Rewarded on earth by spectacular stories of provision in direct answer to prayer

Rewarded in heaven by eternal treasures of God's favor, blessing, and love

## VI. Application: How Are You Investing "Your" Money?

A. What is Being Credited to Your Account?

B. Appalling Statistics on Christian Giving

## The World's Deep Spiritual and Material Poverty

- Of all the people who have ever lived, it is believed that half of them are living today.<sup>2</sup>
- About 1.6 billion people have never heard the life-saving good news in this sentence: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).<sup>3</sup>
- More than 1 billion people live in absolute poverty. This includes 700 million people living in slums, 500 million people on the verge of starvation, 93 million beggars, and 200 million children exploited for labor.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2000, American evangelicals collectively made \$2.66 trillion in income.<sup>23</sup>
- Over the next 50 years, between \$41 trillion and \$136 trillion will pass from older Americans to younger generations, suggesting that roughly \$1 trillion to \$3 trillion in wealth will change hands every year.<sup>10</sup>

## The Church's Squandering of Resources

- The average donation by adults who attend U.S. Protestant churches is about \$17 a week.<sup>11</sup>
- Among church members of 11 primary Protestant denominations (or their historical antecedents) in the United States and Canada, per-member giving as a percentage of income was lower in 2000 than in either 1921 or 1933. In 1921, per-member giving as a percentage of income was 2.9 percent. In 1933, at the depth of the Great Depression, per-member giving grew to 3.3 percent. By 2000, after a half-century of unprecedented prosperity, giving had fallen to 2.6 percent.<sup>12</sup>
- Overall, only 3 to 5 percent of Americans who donate money to a church tithe (give a tenth of) their incomes though many more claim to do so.<sup>13</sup>
- Thirty-three percent of U.S. born-again Christians say it is impossible for them to get ahead in life because of the financial debt they have incurred.<sup>14</sup>
- If members of historically Christian churches in the United States had raised their giving to the Old Testament's minimum standard of giving (10 percent of income) in 2000, an additional \$139 Billion a year would become available.<sup>17</sup>
- Eighty percent of the world's evangelical wealth is in North America—and the total represents way more than enough to fund the fulfillment of the Great Commission

[from [generousgiving.org](http://generousgiving.org)]

### C. Give Generously and Often

Global Priority Mission Fund

Take ALL requests and pray over them

Use the covenant from Randy Alcorn