

Lessons in Giving

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[0:00] Philippians chapter 4 and we'll read verses 10 through 20. Philippians chapter 4 and we'll read verses 10 through 20.

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Philippians chapter 4 and we'll read verses 10 through 20. Amen. What to do with your money matters to God. Philippians chapter 5 and we'll read verses 10 through 20. And it's striking how many verses there are in the Bible about money.

In my premarital counseling course that I take premaritals through, we're struck. How many verses in the Bible are on finances?

God cares about money enough to tell us how to get it, how to spend it, how to save it, how to give it. And it's interesting out of all those categories, the preponderance of verses have to do with how to give it.

[2:12] According to the Lord Jesus, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Young people, do you believe what the Lord Jesus says is true?

Do you agree with Him that it's more blessed, it's more happy, you are in a more enviable state to be giving on the giving end than to be on the receiving end?

Adults, does your checkbook give proof that you too agree with Jesus' words? It is more blessed to give than to receive.

What the Apostle Paul has to say to us in our text today should bring both our hearts and our pocketbooks into greater agreement with Jesus concerning the blessedness of giving.

For you who are visiting with us, we're working our way through this little epistle of Paul to the Philippians. He's in prison and he's writing to this ten-year-old church that he founded in Philippi.

[3:14] And now he's writing a thank you note as we come to the end of his letter. A thank you note for the gift that they sent to him by Epaphroditus.

And it's in the midst of this thank you note that Paul gives us some important instruction concerning giving. And specifically, our giving to promote the gospel of Christ.

You can't read this letter without realizing that Paul's passion was the advancement of the gospel.

We saw that at the very outset. That's why he's rejoicing even though he's in prison.

He says, because what's happened to me here has really served to advance the gospel both inside and outside the prison. Inside, I'm able to bring the gospel for the first time to soldiers that otherwise wouldn't have heard it as they're chained to me day and night.

Outside, many of the brethren in the Lord have become more bold in their witness because of me being in prison. And so I rejoice. The gospel is being advanced.

[4:22] That was his passion. It was also the passion of the whole Philippian church. As is seen by their giving to promote the gospel of Christ. This church had a ten year history of giving to the Apostle Paul.

That went right back to their beginning days. When they first heard and believed the gospel. You can read about it in Acts 16. And so in chapter 1, Paul starts by saying that whenever he thinks about them, he gives thanks to God with joy.

Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Chapter 1 and verse 5. And that brings us to our first lesson in giving.

And it's this. By our financial support, we enter into partnership with gospel workers. A partnership is a form of business arrangement where two or more people join together in a business.

Brooke, let's assume that you and I agree to start a partnership selling lemonade. I have some money and you have some time. And so I give \$15 to buy lemons, sugar, and cups.

[5:38] And you agree to give five hours to making and selling the lemonade on the 4th of July at the parade. Since it's an equal partnership, we both will share equally in the rewards.

Is it a deal? If we make \$100, you get \$50 and I get \$50.

It's a partnership. And though you're doing the work, I share in the profits. Because I partnered with you by the money that I gave you. Well, it was in the same way that the Philippian church partnered with the Apostle Paul.

In the work of the gospel. He's doing the preaching and they're supporting him financially in it. They were in this grand gospel enterprise together.

Now we see this word for partnership coming up twice in our text. It's not only in chapter 1 and verse 5. It's twice here at the end of the letter as well. Verse 14, chapter 4.

[6:45] Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. To participate. To fellowship. It's the same word. The koinonia word. It was good of you to partner with me in my troubles.

Because in a partnership, not only the profits of the business are shared by both parties. All the problems of the business are also shared by both parties. That means if it rains on the parade, that we both suffer loss.

So when Paul is in prison and going through troubles, they shared. They had a part in his troubles. And they showed that by their financial gifts.

Paul wasn't alone in prison. They were in this thing together. And he was encouraged. When he saw their gift, he realized afresh. Yes, they've partnered with me.

They're one with me in this. Chapter 4 and verse 15. We see the word again. 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.

[7:53] There it is again. Fellowship. Participated. Partnered with me in this matter of giving and receiving. Except you only. You were the only ones that partnered with me.

Paul had come and preached the gospel there in Philippi. And many had believed. And then he was moving on to take the gospel to Corinth in Athens and beyond.

And this group of believers wanted to have a part. Wanted to have a share in Paul's gospel endeavors. So they did. Even when no other churches cashed in on the deal.

They said, we're in. And they supported him to take the gospel further. And it wasn't a one time gift. But ongoing support. Verse 16. For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

So by their gifts, they had a share in his work. And so they would have a share in the prophets, the rewards.

[8:56] Now that's illustrated in the Old Testament. You remember when David was going to war. This was before he was crowned king. Six hundred men with him. And as he was going out to battle one day, two hundred grew so tired that they couldn't go on.

So he said, okay, you stay by the stuff. And the rest of us are going on to battle. And the four hundred went on. The Lord gave a great victory. Much plunder taken. And as they came back. And they came upon the two hundred.

Some of the four hundred. Some wicked ones in the bunch said, they shouldn't get any of the plunder. Because they didn't go into the battle. Remember that story?

And David rebuked them. And he said that the share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle.

All will share alike. And David made this a lasting ordinance for Israel from that day to this. We're partnering together. We're in this together. We share alike.

[9:58] And David's greater son, the Lord Jesus, made a similar ordinance in his kingdom. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward.

Matthew 10.40 If you receive, take into your home, house and feed and help him. Because he's a prophet, a spokesman for God.

Then you will receive a prophet's reward. You see, you're in this together. You bought shares in his work. You'll share with him in his rewards. Partnerships.

Do we realize then the tremendous opportunities before us to partner in kingdom ventures? That by our financial gifts to gospel workers, we can have partnerships with them right here and around the world.

If I told you there was a guaranteed investment in which you could double your money in five years, you'd be lining up afterwards to give me your money. But I'm here to tell you of a greater deal than that.

[11:12] A great gospel enterprise that's making many rich for eternity. That's delivering them from eternal torments and hell and bringing them into the glorious relationship with God that will go on forever and ever in heaven.

From poverty of sin to robes of Christ's righteousness. And you can hold shares in this kingdom business. That's what happens each week as you drop your offering into the box at the back. You're partnering with gospel workers. Maybe you haven't thought of it that way before. Paul says, start thinking of it that way. That's what giving is. It's partnering with gospel workers. Some of you are part owners in this work of the gospel here in Bremen.

We hope in the near future to be baptizing new converts. You had a part in that. You had a part in that. You will receive part of that reward.

[12:17] You become part owners in the work of the gospel in Nairobi, Kenya, Manila, Philippines, Grenoble, France, Brazil, and Ireland. You've partnered with gospel laborers in the grandest business of all.

Bringing glory to God through the salvation of sinners through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is more blessed to give than to receive, isn't it?

So by our financial support, we enter into partnership with gospel workers. The second lesson is that God is the source of generous sacrificial giving. God is the source.

The Philippians had been concerned about the apostle, but they had lacked opportunity to show it. We don't know why, but there was no opportunity for them to give a gift. Even though they were concerned and wanted to help.

But when the opportunity came, they seized it and they sent a gift to Paul in prison. And verse 10 gives us Paul's response. I rejoice greatly in the Lord.

[13:23] That at last you've renewed your concern and so on. I rejoice greatly in the Lord. Now we can understand why when receiving a gift, Paul might rejoice. And why he might rejoice greatly.

But why does he rejoice in the Lord? What's the connection? Because it is the Lord who put such generosity into the hearts of the Philippians to send him the gift. And that's why he rejoices in the Lord greatly.

Paul knows human nature. He knows that human nature is stingy, selfish, greedy. Whether in a Jerusalem Jew or a Philippian Gentile.

Every dollar of true generosity. Every cent of sacrificial giving is the fruit of the Lord's transforming work. It's the Lord who makes selfish people into sacrificial givers.

And that's why Paul says, I rejoice greatly in the Lord. Remember Zacchaeus? That money-grubbing chief tax collector? He didn't just take what was his. He took what was yours and made it his.

[14:32] And Jesus has an appointment with him and sees him up in the tree and says, Zacchaeus, come down. I must come to your house today. Because Jericho must see what happens to greedy men that are saved by the free grace of Jesus.

And so he goes home with Zacchaeus. And Zacchaeus stands up and says, look, Lord, here and now, I give half my goods to the poor. If I've cheated anyone out of anything, I'll pay them back four times.

Who but the Lord can do that? There's Lydia. She was one of the first converts in Philippi, wasn't she? As Paul preached down by the riverside in Acts 16.

And we read that when the Lord opened her heart, she accepted the things that Paul had said about Christ. She believed. And when the Lord had opened her heart, she immediately opened her home, didn't she?

Come home with me, she says to the gospel workers. And she feeds them and she cares for them. She's just a baby Christian. But having received freely, she freely gives.

[15:43] It was the same with the Philippian jailer. Remember him? He's in that Philippian congregation too that's reading this letter. And he was charged with the prisoners there in Philippi.

Remember the earthquake about midnight? He's ready to kill himself and Paul says, wait, we're all here. Here's the gospel preached from Paul and Silas.

And he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved. And all of his family heard and believed and was saved. And at once he washed their wounds. He brought them into his house and he set a meal before them.

A meal that he had paid for with his hard working hands. His own money. And he feeds these strangers.

He's so glad to be a Christian. He's so happy. His sins are forgiven. He now knows God. He knows why he's here. He knows where he's going when he dies.

[16:42] The Lord opened his heart and he opens his home. That was the way it was with the whole Philippian church. When did they come into partnership with Paul in this matter of giving and receiving?

Well, he says in verse 15, it was in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel. They were just a bunch of baby Christians. They just barely believed. So young in the faith and yet so generous.

That when the man who had brought them the gospel of free grace was leaving to take it on to others. They couldn't help but say we want to pardon this. Count us in. Freely they had received. Freely they gave. It's the Lord who's done this in their hearts. And Paul knows it. No good in the creature but what comes from the bottomless sea of God's own goodness.

And so Paul follows the money trail, if you will, back to the original source. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. And he gave some of what is his to these Philippians.

[17:44] But they were selfish, greedy, grasping people. But the Lord opened their hearts and made them giving, generous, sacrificial. And that's why Paul says, I rejoice greatly in the Lord when I receive this gift from you.

God is the source. God is the source of generous, sacrificial giving. And that has at least a couple applications.

When receiving gifts and in giving thanks, our thanks ought not to stop with the human donors. But we, in our thanksgiving, need to give thanks to the Lord who caused the ones who gave to us to be generous and to give to us.

And then, on the other end, when giving, and giving generously and sacrificially, there's no room left for pride, is there? No room left for pride.

We simply give what God has first given us. And we only give it because God has set us free from our own selfishness. So we rejoice in the Lord, not in ourselves.

[18:54] It is more blessed to give than to receive. Now, many commentators have read this last portion before Paul signs off of this letter.

And they've noticed how Paul is walking a fine line with finances here. As he's talking about finances, he says something here and then he counterbalances it here. And then he says something here and back and forth he goes.

He first tells them his great joy in receiving their gift. But he doesn't want them to think that his contentment depended upon their gift. And so he tells them that, well, I've learned to be content. It wasn't that your gift is necessary for my contentment. I've learned to be content with nothing, in poverty. But then he didn't want them to think that he didn't appreciate their gift.

So he comes back and tells them again in verse 14, Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Well done. You've done well to share with me.

[19:52] And so he praises them as he acknowledges their gift. But then he goes on to acknowledge that this was not the first gift that they've sent either. That he still remembers their former gifts.

And he goes right back to their partnership ten years earlier. And they're sending gifts again and again. Giving thanks to them. Acknowledging what they've given to him. But in mentioning this, he doesn't want them to think that, oh, Paul's digging for another gift.

Isn't it about time to give again? That's not his purpose at all. So he says in verse 17, not that I am looking for a gift. Please don't misunderstand me. Talking about finances here.

It's not that I'm looking for a gift, but I'm looking for what may be credited to your account. Paul's not like some televangelist out to drain the sheep of their resources.

While he lives in luxury, though he was accused of this. And that could be why he keeps guarding himself against misunderstanding.

[20:52] But he's rather seeking their good, not his own. That's what he says. I'm not looking for a gift to enrich me, but rather for that which will enrich you. Isn't that something?

He's thinking about them being enriched. He knows the rich blessing that their gift to him would bring back upon their own heads. He knows that he who sows much will reap much.

He knows Proverbs 11:25 that says a generous man will prosper. That he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Right giving enriches the giver as well as the receiver.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. So we see Paul stirring them up to continue generosity.

Because he seeks for them the blessing that will surely follow such giving.

If you give, you will be blessed. And that's what I'm seeking. Not the gift for me, but the blessing for you. Now he talks about all this in accounting terms.

[21:59] He's using the language of the businessman. And he speaks of their gift as an investment which would repay rich dividends. And that's what he's seeking for them.

A return on their investment. That it may be credited to their account. That's what he's seeking.

Because when the Philippians gave, it was not so much given to Paul as it was to the Lord.

And the Lord will not forget what has been given to him. But will put it to their account with accumulating interest. And all thou spendest, Jesus will repay.

God will be no man's debtor. And the interest accumulates in time and eternity. Enrich spiritual blessings as well as physical blessings.

Increased joy, peace, communion with God, contentment. There's no limit to the way that he can bless those who give to him.

[23:06] And then at the last judgment, such generous giving will not go unrecognized or unrewarded. But will be praised and rewarded. Well done.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Now this brings us to the third lesson on giving. And it's this, that we can lay up treasures in heaven by our giving now. Now, we've not forgotten, have we, that there is such a thing as laying up treasures in heaven?

Those are the words of our Savior, after all, in Matthew 6, 19-21. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal.

He's saying, ultimately, there's no safe investment here on earth. Even the FDIC guarantee will fail eventually. You've got to invest in the bank of heaven.

So he says, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. There's only one safe investment opportunity, and it's in the bank of heaven.

[24:16] And you can invest there now. Send your money out of this passing world, into the world to come, where it will come back with eternal interest.

Because your Father sees what you give in secret, and will reward you then openly. This language of laying up treasures in heaven, it's what Jesus is saying.

That's what you're doing when you're giving. You're laying up treasures in heaven. You keep it for yourself. You get to enjoy it for another 10 years, 20 years, 70, 80 years. But you lay up your treasures in heaven, and you enjoy it forever, never, never.

That's Jesus talking. And as Apostle Paul echoes his words in 1 Timothy 6, Command those who are rich in this present world. And folks, don't think of somebody else when it says those who are rich in this present world.

Put yourself against the present world, and you are the one of those who are rich. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

[25:31] Command them to do good. To be rich in good deeds. To be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Do you see what Jesus, what Paul is saying is that we lay up treasures in heaven by giving it away on earth. Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourself, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

You might have thought that when you dropped your money into the offering box, that's the last you're going to see of that money. Well, you thought wrong.

Because that money has been entered and put down to your account and is gaining interest. You will be richly rewarded.

Isn't that grace? Isn't that grace? God gives us all that we give back to Him. We have given Him nothing but what He first gave us. And then He gives us the generosity of heart to give it.
[26:42] Or we never would give what He gave us. And on top of it all, He credits it to our heavenly account for future rewards. It's grace.

Grace. And that's what happens when people are saved by grace alone. They become gracious themselves. Are you laying up treasures in heaven? As you make your money and decide how you're going to spend it and what you're going to do with it, remember, you have the opportunity to lay up treasures in heaven.

It is more blessed to give than to receive. The fourth lesson from this passage of Paul's letter is that our giving is an act of worship that God takes pleasure in.

It's an act of worship that God takes pleasure in. Paul's been telling the Philippians what their gift meant to him. He now shifts gears and says, I want to tell you what your gift means to God.

And this is critical to our view of giving. We must see our giving in relation to God. And when we do, our giving will take on a whole new significance. He sort of writes a receipt out to them just to acknowledge that he's received their gift at the first part of verse 18.

[28:04] I've received full payment and even more. I'm amply supplied now that I've received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. But now he turns their attention Godward and tells them that their gifts had not only made it all the way to Paul in Rome, but that their gifts had made it all the way to heaven.

To God there in heaven. Verse 18b. Your gifts. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Now that language is Old Testament language concerning sacrifices of burnt offerings that were made. There's Noah. He's just off the ark.

He's stepping onto an earth that has just been washed clean of every living human being and animal, but what was kept in the ark. And now he sets up an altar.

And he proceeds to sacrifice some of the clean animals that he had brought along. And the smoke begins to go up.

[29:13] And the Scriptures say, from the perspective of God in heaven, we shift to heaven, and it says, the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma arising from Noah's altar.

You've been outside, and suddenly the wind wafts. Some of your neighbors barbecue over into your yard, and you say, that smells good. That's a sweet-smelling savor.

That's what God did. Ah, sweet-smelling savor. This offering, this burnt offering that was coming up to the Lord.

Well, these Philippians, they packed up their gifts, and they sent them off with Epaphroditus, and off he goes, 800 miles away to Paul in Rome, in prison, and in heaven.

Ah, sweet-smelling fragrance, acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to me, says God. So what was given to meet the needs of Paul, the servant of God, was regarded by God in heaven as an act of worship that he found pleasing to himself.

[30:24] A fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Do not forget to do good, and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased.

Hebrews 13, 6. So when you drop your offering into the box, assuming your motives are right, moved by love, and faith, and desire for the glory of God, and gratitude, not only do you promote the kingdom of Christ, not only do you encourage the gospel workers, who receive your gifts, but God regards it as an act of worship, that he finds pleasing, in his sight.

Do you think of your tithes and offerings, brought weekly, as worship, that God, in heaven, receives, finds pleasure in?

If not, start to think that way, Paul is telling us. Start to think that way. That's how he thinks of our gifts. Because in giving him, something of our income, we're giving him a part of our very selves. What is that money in your pocket, guys? That's a part of you. That's Monday through Friday, five to three.

[31:43] That's a chunk of your life, and in giving it to God, you're giving something of yourself. You're saying, I'm yours, Lord, and I count you as worthy of myself, of who I am, and all that I am.

And he takes great pleasure, in your act of worship, that's counting him worthy. And is that not the greatest reward, of all? Whatever we do, whether giving, working, living, to please God.

Isn't that a wonderful reward? For we make it our goal, to please him. And he tells me, that my gifts, are an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to the Lord.

It is better. It is indeed more blessed, to give than to receive. And lastly, God promises, to meet the needs, of generous givers.

And my God, will meet all your needs, according to his glorious riches, in Christ Jesus. Verse 19.

Now here's a special promise, made to these people, who were giving sacrificially, to the cause of Christ, and his gospel.

[32 : 53] And again, we need to see these verses, in their original context. Remember we said that last week, about that promise, in verse 13. That I can do everything, through him who gives me strength.

And that verse is often applied, to many different things. But in the context, the everything that Paul is able to do, is to abound, or to be in poverty, and still be content. He can do all of that.

He can be in any circumstance, and still be satisfied with Jesus. And I can do that, because of his strength, that he gives me. Well, what about this promise?

Chapter 4, and verse 19. And my God will supply, all your needs, according to his riches, and glorious riches, in Christ Jesus. Well, before we jerk it out, and go and apply it, to every other thing, let's at least, see it first, in its original context.

It's written to a people, who had sacrificially, and generously, and generously, given to the Apostle Paul. They have a record for that. They're known for their generosity. Even in tough times, 2 Corinthians 8, speaks of the Macedonian churches, of which Philippi is one.

[34 : 00] That out of their most severe trial, their overflowing joy, and their extreme poverty, welled up in rich generosity. You usually don't get rich generosity, out of trial, and poverty.

But that's what welled up, into rich generosity, in these people. For I testify, that they gave as much, as they were able, and even beyond their ability, entirely, and on their own, they urgently pleaded with us, for the privilege of sharing, in this service to the saints.

It was a different need. It was the saints and Judah. But that's the heart of this church. Give us an opportunity to give. Count us in on this deal.

We want to partner in this as well. And they're eager. And they may have even, impoverished themselves, by giving to the Apostle Paul.

And here comes this glorious promise, to these who had given, so sacrificially, and generously, that God will provide, all that you need, out of His riches, and glory by Christ Jesus.

[35 : 06] Now notice how Paul speaks, of this in his own experience. He says, My God. Paul knows this God. Paul himself, has impoverished himself, in giving to others.

And you know what he found? He found that you can't out-give God. You cannot impoverish yourself, in giving to others, to where, your needs are not met.

My God. I've seen Him do it. My God will supply all your needs. All of them. Financially, spiritually, the inner strength you need, the comfort, the encouragement, power to live to the glory of God, in this circumstance.

My God. He will supply all your needs. Whatever you're lacking, God will supply. If you don't have it, then you don't need it. We might think we need certain things, that God knows we can do without.

Oh, but my God will supply all your needs. All of them. And He'll do it according to His riches in Christ Jesus. There's a bank behind this promise, folks.

[36 : 29] This promise to meet all your needs. There's a bank somewhere. Consider the riches of that bank. It's a person. Jesus Christ is Himself the treasure chest in heaven.

And my God will supply all your needs out of this treasure chest. The glorious riches that are in Christ Jesus. Think of Him. Infinite supply.

The unsearchable riches of Christ. He's full of grace and truth. He has everything that you ever need. What do you need? Can you even imagine for a moment that there is a human need that is not to be met by this treasure chest?

Jesus Christ. The infinite Son of God. And so, the promise that He will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

These benefits, these riches are ours in Christ. They come to us only because of Him. How vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess. In Christ, we possess them.

[37 : 40] And the promise is not just that God will meet all of your needs out of His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. He doesn't just go and make a withdrawal from Christ and give it to you. And so,

meet your need out of His riches in Jesus.

But He meets your needs and promises to meet your needs according to His glorious riches. There's a difference between out of and according to. If a billionaire gives you a gift out of His riches, what do you walk away with?

You might walk away with a pittance. He might have given you two dollars. But He gave it to you out of His riches, didn't He? But if that billionaire gives to you according to His glorious riches, then you walk out with thousands and thousands of dollars.

Because He gave to you according to His riches, in proportion to His riches, in a way befitting someone who owns so much.

And that's what God promises. Not just to give to you your needs out of His treasures in Jesus Christ, but according to the glorious riches in Jesus Christ.

[38:59] Paul is speaking with full experience. He's a rich man. My God has given it to me according to these glorious riches in Christ.

Christ. Now that's the promise. Why do we need a promise? We need a promise to feed our faith. Because giving requires faith. Doesn't it? What hinders us from giving sacrificially and generously like these Philippians? Well, greed and selfishness, yes.

but also unbelief. Unbelief will limit us. We'll be afraid that if I give too much, I won't have enough for me and mine.

And it's that fear that keeps our giving down. But here's a faith boosting promise. You give generously to me and I will meet all your needs according to my riches and glory.

[40:05] In Christ Jesus. That's the promise that Jesus gives in Matthew 6.33. You seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things, your food, your clothing, all these other things will be added to you as well.

You see it? Oh, but if I seek first His kingdom, will I have enough? Yes, Jesus says, I promise you. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you as well.

Don't let your own needs and fears paralyze your giving and make you stingy. You make me your priority and I'll make your needs my concern. Jesus Christ speaking.

And so this area of giving is a real test not only of our love for God but of our faith in God, isn't it? Can I trust Him enough to meet all my needs if I give generously?

Paul says you can. Jesus says you can. The wise men said in Proverbs 3, Honor the Lord with your wealth with the first fruits of all your crops.

[41:12] Then your barns will be filled to overflowing. Then your vats will brim over with new wine. Do you see the test of faith in that? You honor the Lord with your first fruits.

Ooh. If I give Him off the top, if I give Him the first that I've got, then I've got to trust Him to make the rest to stretch to meet my needs.

Precisely. It will take faith. You're going to need a promise like Philippians 4, 19. And there's many ways that God can make the rest to stretch if we trust Him and give Him the first fruits.

He can sew up the holes in our purses. You know you've got them. That extra trouble here and that extra trouble there. You know He can sew up that hole. The entries out of your purse.

Haggai speaks of that. He's able to do that. Trust Him. Malachi 3, 8. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house.

[42:15] Test me in this. You see, this is a test of faith. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines and your fields and will not cast their fruits. You see, our God, you give generously and I will meet all your needs according to your riches, according to my riches and glory by Christ Jesus.

Well, Paul's little thank you note turns into an instructive thing for us children of God. these lessons on giving. But maybe you're wondering, what does this have to do with the Gospel?

Well, let me just summarize in conclusion. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor so that you through His poverty might be made rich.

That's why you are enriched with the joys of knowing God, knowing Christ, and the promise, the assurance of eternal life.

[43 : 30] You have that because someone was made poor. Because Jesus, who was richer than all, became poor and went to the cross and died under the condemnation of God's law.

by His being impoverished, you have been made rich, forgiven. You have forgiveness of sin. You have the richest blessing in the world. You have forgiveness.

You're right with God. That's worth billions. There won't be anybody selling that benefit at the day of judgment for billions of dollars. You have it because He was made poor.

That you through His poverty might be made rich. You know what happens to people that have been made rich by the poverty of Jesus? They too impoverish themselves and give sacrificially that others might be made rich.

Philippians, well, times are tough. But Paul's going on to take this gospel that saved us for eternity. He's going to Athens, that city of idols.

[44 : 44] Oh, wouldn't it be great to see some idolaters brought into the riches of the gospel? And they gave out of their poverty generously to enrich others.

May the Lord move our hearts to respond to His Word and to glorify Him. Have you been made rich? this Jesus?

This Jesus? He offers you His riches. Just come and declare your bankruptcy that you have no righteousness. That you have nothing to commend yourself to God. Have nothing good to say for yourself.

Come and receive everything from Jesus. Forgiveness of sins. Home in heaven. Such is the gospel. It's a gospel of free grace. And it makes us eternally grateful and generous and compassionate toward others.

Let's sing something of this promise. The Lord will provide. Number 79 in our hymnals. Amen. And we began our worship meditating on Psalm 67.

[45 : 50] May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us. To what end do we want the blessing of God? That your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all peoples.

Have you ever thought the reason that God has enriched you in every way is that you might be generous on every occasion? And that there are people groups lost in the darkness of sin yet to be enriched with the gospel.

And that that could be the very reason God has enriched your life. That you might in turn make His saving knowledge known all around the world.

Let's pray. Lord, we're blessed to have the gospel to have it come to us. Oh, keep us from keeping this treasure to ourselves.

Help us to send it on to the world. Lord, show us if there's a door opening in Spain, if that's where you would have us to send it next, show us.

[46 : 53] Make us men and women of faith. Make us a church of generosity to send the saving gospel around the world. Do it to draw attention to your free grace to show just how great the gospel is.

No matter who people are and what they've done, they may find forgiveness through the work of Christ. Thank you that we have tasted of this free forgiveness.

Many of us here bring others today to flee to this Savior. We ask it for Jesus' sake, for the good of sinners. Amen.