

## Philippians 4:10—20

August 19, 2018

Today we are going to explore the connection between generosity and faithfulness. More to the point we are going to ask the question—How does our generosity impact our faithful witness to this community?

Our goal is to be a church that BOTH makes and matures followers of Jesus Christ. We want to be a faithful witness for Jesus throughout our community. We want to be a faithful witness—

- To spread the good news of Jesus Christ to as many as we can.
- To serve our community with good works in the name of Jesus Christ.
- To give ourselves to our community so they may see the love of Jesus Christ in our lives.
- To welcome any and all people the way that Jesus Christ would.
- To continue to build a community of people who care for the most vulnerable.
- To stand for what is right regardless of its popularity.

And to be a church that is a faithful witness—we must individually and all together understand how to think about and use our money.

Each year we pause for at least two weeks and ask the Bible to address on the topic of money. Today we will explore the connection between our money and our faithful witness.

Here is the main idea: In order to be a faithful witness we must use money and trust God and NOT trust money and use God.

PROP: We must trust God and use money.

Don't get me wrong, how we think about and spend our money is not the only factor in being a faithful witness but it is a crucial factor.

So, today we are going to overhear a conversation already started by Paul and the church in Philippi in Philippians 4. And along the way we are going to mark two ways—we can trust God and use money.

“I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a

fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." Phil. 4:10-20

## PRAY

Five years ago May I left my family, my home and my country, climbed into a plane only to enter another and then another before I exited a very different place. I had only been travelled some 2,600 miles but I felt like I arrived to a different world.

I had come to the Island Nation of Haiti. Every one of my five senses screamed, "You are far, far, far from home."

Our group was not left flailing alone in this far off place—Christians missionaries to Haiti were to guide us. In order to understand where I was and what was happening around me—I proceeded to ask dozens of questions. Here are some that I asked in my one week trip to the island nation.

- Are there any traffic laws here?
- Where do people get their water?
- Why are their goats tied up on the side of the road?
- How many people can understand English?
- Are there a lot of churches here?
- What are the churches like here?
- Are we going to be able to meet a Witch Doctor?
- Are we going to be able to worship with believers here?

All of those questions and many more led to fascinating and enlightening conversations but there was one answer I received that nearly struck me dumb.

I asked,

“What is the biggest challenge for Christians here in Haiti?”

The missionary I was with didn't hesitate for a moment he said, “That's easy, voodoo.”

I didn't know what to make of that comment, but I thought that he was saying that churches and believers were harassed and disturbed by witch doctors. Because at this point all I knew about voodoo was what I learned watching Scooby Doo as a kid.

So, I imagined a witch doctor menacing Christians with spells, hexes and voodoo dolls.

But that is not what he meant.

He said, “The issue isn't that Christians are attacked by witch doctors using voodoo but that Christians are tempted to use voodoo for security and protection. Christians are tempted to go to the witch doctors.”

As an American pastor—I had no category for this. I had tried to help many people over the years but never once did I have to hold someone accountable not to visit the local witch doctor.

The missionary went on, “People here pray to God when their kids get sick, when they need money, when they want a good harvest, when they want protection but also they go to the witch doctors to cover their bases.

My eyes got wide. But then he said something I will never forget—

“They are no different than us Americans. The people here might be tempted to trust in the security voodoo provides. We do exactly the same thing except instead of using voodoo we use money.”

Zing.  
So true.

One of the reasons we revisit the topic of money each year around this time is because of where we live and who we are. We live in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. And more than any other time in history we are a people tempted to trust in the protection and security money offers.

The Bible speaks specifically to the temptation of trusting in money and we all need regular reminders that trusting in money is a dead-end road that goes nowhere. Even mature Christians are tempted to trust money and use God.

We all need regular reminders—because of who we are and where we live—to Trust god and use money.

Please don't think I'm saying money is bad. It is most assuredly not. Money is a good gift from God. Having

more money than average can be a wonderful thing. Money is not bad, but not understanding what money is—is dangerous to your soul.

Money is a great tool but a rotten savior.

And in this passage we will find two reasons to trust God and NOT money.

***Reason #1: God can strengthen you, money cannot—  
(Phil. 4:10-13)***

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi stands as a long extended thank you letter for financial support that they sent to him. But in the same breathe he wants them to understand that while he is grateful he would be content in the Lord whether they sent money or not.

Look at verse 11,

***<sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need."***

Essentially he is saying, thank you for the money you sent but your generosity—as much as I appreciate it—does not change my contentment. I am happy and content no matter whether I have enough or not.

You need to understand that at the time of this writing Paul was languishing in a Roman prison. The

Roman prison system is very different than the American system.

The biggest difference is that the Roman prisoners had to pay for their own food. If a prisoner had no money, they went hungry. And because prisoners could not go out and get a job they relied on outside support—outside financial support to eat.

Without money to buy food—Paul does not eat. That is his reality as he writes these words.

If Paul did not get this Philippian support he would most assuredly go hungry. And yet he says—

“Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.<sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”

Real hunger sounds like a pressing need, but Paul is saying—I know how to be content and money has nothing to do with it. He says—I will share the secret to my contentment.

Vs. 13,

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

At graduation, Philippians 4:13—*I can do all things through him who strengthens me*—was nominated the

“Most likely to be quoted out of context.” I know I have done in on many different occasions.

Usually, we hear, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” And think that the idea is that there is nothing beyond our capabilities. With Jesus we can do anything.

That is not quite the idea.

In the context of this letter Paul is saying, “I can do all things (pertaining to contentment) through him who gives me strength (to endure anything).”

He says—Thanks for your money, but it can’t buy my happiness. My happiness comes from his strength no matter what I’m going through.

Verse 13, turns our thinking about money on its head.

How easy it is to trust money and use God. How many times have I thought when I got a little extra cash—

- I will be okay.
- I’m going to make it.
- Now I don’t have to worry.

No.

Paul is happy to use the money they sent to buy food—but he relies only on God to give him strength to endure.



Paul makes clear his happiness is not tied to money but to God and the strength he gives. Money comes and goes—God’s care and provision never does. That is why when we have that straight we—

“I can do all things (pertaining to contentment) through him who gives me strength (to endure anything).”

May none of us be lured into the trap of thinking—that contentment and strength can be purchased. Not true.

Let’s take another step together—what happens when the whole of us understand that happiness comes from God and not our bank accounts? What happens?

We will be freed all the more to be even more of a faithful presence in our community.

Do you see the connection?

We are free to be generous because we are only giving away a bit of money—not a source of strength.

We can be free to be generous because we are only giving away a bit of money—not the source of our happiness.

When all of us understand this we are going to be able to use money to further ministry here to that more people might grasp the idea that only God gives real happiness.

We can be generous knowing that less money does not equal less happiness.

When we understand this connection between how to use and money and trust God—we can be generous in a number of ways unafraid.

Money does not hold the key to our strength and happiness. God does. That is the first reason to trust God and use money and NOT use God and trust money.

Not only does God strengthen where money cannot, also—

***Reason #2: God supplies what money cannot—(Phil. 4:14—20)***

Look at verse 19,

***“<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”***

God—not money—supplies for every need of yours. Every single one. If the word ‘every’ was not here in verse 19, I would not say it.

I’m much more comfortable with ‘most’ or ‘almost always’ or ‘pretty much every time,’ But we read that God will supply every need of ours.

Now—that is a mouthful—God will supply your every need that you will ever have. It is good to save for unforeseen expenses—for a rainy day—if you will. It is really good.

But it is deadly to trust in money to supply what only God can give. That is why we trust God and use money not the reverse. Money can buy a thing or two but it cannot provide for all your needs.

Verse 19 gives us at least three reasons to trust in God and not money to supply what you need—

**“<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

1. God—himself supplies for all your needs.

Paul says, ‘my God will supply,’ he knows personally, intimately how his God has supplied all of his needs as long as he has known him. And it is as if he is saying to the Philippians and all of us—

‘my God’ who is your God too—can and will supply for your needs directly from his hand. He loves you so much that he doesn’t hire it out, he himself supplies for you personally.

God is not so high and lofty that he is disconnected from what you need. He cares about you and you can trust in this God. He supplies all our needs.

Do you see how much better it is to trust God and not money? Money cannot provide for all our needs. We can buy a thing or two but if money is our god we will always be without God.

We are free to be generous knowing we will be fully supplied by God himself. Not only will God himself supply your needs, but also:

2. God knows what you really need.

**“<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

God is eager to supply all of your needs and he knows better than you what your needs really are. He is able to count out our every need and supply for each of them today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year—as long as you live.

Do you see how much better it is to trust God over and against money?

You can't ask money to give you what you really need. You can only buy a thing or two you can't ask money to buy what you really need.

Only God can do that.

We are free to be generous knowing we will be fully supplied by God himself AND we know that he knows what we really need.

3. God has an endless supply of provision for us.

**“<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

He supplies for us by the inexhaustible riches of the glory of Christ. So, there is always more from where

that came from. All things are subject to Jesus Christ. He is the one who died and rose to defeat death. He is the one to whom the angels sing.

God draws on an account that we Christians know all about. The glory of Jesus Christ.

In other words, we who have put our sins upon him, can surely trust ourselves and our money to the riches of the glory of Jesus Christ.

Let's think for a moment of the provision that is ours in Jesus Christ—

We can trust God because we know Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who is our provision—our hope. In other words we can trust God instead of money because we know Jesus.

- Jesus died to provide us forgiveness for our sins—money can only buy some things.
- Jesus rose from the dead to kill the power of death—money can only buy some things.
- Jesus ascended to the father promising one day to take us to the father—money can only buy some things.
- Jesus is at the greatest place of honor in the universe praying for you by name—money can only buy some things.
- Jesus is your strength and your shield your ever present help in trouble—money can only buy some things.
- We will one day see Jesus and be like him—money can only buy some things.

Do you see why trusting God is so much better than trusting in money? What did money really ever give you?

How much better it is to trust God and use money!

God strengthens you money cannot.  
God supplies what money cannot.

When we trust God and use money we are going to be unafraid of radical generosity. We can know that when we give generously we will not go without what is most important.

We will not lack for the strength to be happy.

Nor will we lack for any need.

That is why it is so much better to trust God and use money instead of trusting money and using God.

When we trust money—and use God we are forever asking for more because we never have enough.

When we trust God and use money we will have our every need supplied and always have enough.

It is so much better to trust a loving God and use money. Instead of trusting money and using God.

When we trust God and use money—we will be a faithful presence in our community.

Last year we were able to raise money to build 1280 North—and we are just a few weeks in. That place is

going to be a place that we are working to impact the community.

Not just because we offer great coffee but also we offer a comfortable place you can invite your unsaved friends, coworkers, relatives to come.

They may not understand all that is going on in here—but they will understand that area.

There are innumerable other ways we are looking to be a faithful presence here in the community and beyond—

- VBS
- AWANA
- Evangelistic SG—in your home.
- Hope for Addiction
- Student Ministries
- Rancho 3M

There are many other ways we are working to be a faithful presence—even now.

Imagine the difference we can make here if we trust God and use money?

What if you feel a pang in your insides because you find that you are apt to trust money?

A few recommendations—

1. Ask forgiveness.

The Lord is faithful and willing to forgive your every sin. Just ask.

2. Ask the Lord to help you think differently about money.

That is going to be hard, but ask the Lord the help you change your pattern of thinking about money.

3. Begin being generous.

Start small. Give each week. Bless someone you know who is in need. Give to someone anonymously.

4. Remember Jesus is better than money.

That sounds a bit simplistic and maybe stupid—but it is more foolish to trust money and not Jesus.

PRAY

Benediction—

**“To our God and Father be glory forever and ever.  
Amen.”**



