

Session 15, The Importance of Sending a “THANK YOU

NOTE” to those who support or give to our well-being!

What is meant by our “well-being”?

Webster’s Definition: the state of being happy, healthy, prosperous, or successful.

World’s Definition: Having all the things a person could wish or hope for no matter who it hurts or what consequences it achieves toward the final goal of self-gratification.

God’s Definition: Blessed, satisfied, and successful with life’s challenges under any condition; physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. *Note: Much of what we think will improve our wellbeing is either misguided or just plain wrong. Contrary to what many people believe, wellbeing isn't just about being happy. Nor is it only about being wealthy or successful. And it's certainly not limited to physical health and wellness. In fact, focusing on any of these elements in isolation may drive us to frustration and even a sense of failure. Without God’s touch on our lives, our spiritual bareness will drive all other elements of wellbeing to the “back forty” of our mind and heart.*

Therefore, those that support our well-being are those who contribute to our “whole person” (body, soul, and spirit) for the good of those who are or potential believers in Christ Jesus. We should recognize those who support that “well-being” part of our exterior and inner self. Providing others with a blessing of support in money, prayer, and the honest and sincere caring for the “welfare” of others shows a genuine heart for others “wellbeing.”

“Giving” can be in the form of monetary support, prayer support, or faithful and friendly fellowship.

Paul sent a letter to the Philippian church thanking them for their past and present gift(s).

Philippians 4:15-18, “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”

What does Paul mean at “The beginning of the gospel?”

This refers to Paul's pioneering missionary efforts in Europe, recorded in Acts 16 and following.

- **No church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you (the church at Philippi) only:**
 - ✓ The Philippians were the only ones to support Paul during this particular period. Paul especially remembered how they supported him when he was in Thessalonica. "Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin; but he makes a great deal of it, and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these." (Spurgeon)
 - ✓ "While laboring to plant the church there (Thessalonica), he was supported partly by working with his hands, 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; and partly by the contributions sent him from Philippi. Even the Thessalonians had contributed little to his maintenance: this is not spoken to their credit." (Clarke)

- **Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account:**

- ✓ Paul wasn't so much interested in the **gift** on his own behalf, but in the **fruit that abounds to their account**. Their giving increased the fruit in their **account** before God.
- ✓ "It is not the actual gift put into Paul's hands which has brought him joy, but the giving and the meaning of that giving. It is the truest index to the abiding reality of his work." (Expositors)

This reflects one of the most important principles regarding giving in the Scriptures: that we are never the poorer for having given. God will never be our debtor, and we can never out-give God.

The gift is like a sweet-smelling aroma; certainly an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God:

- **Paul described the gift of the Philippians in terms that remind us of sacrifices in the Old Testament (Genesis 8:21, Exodus 29:18, 29:25, and 29:41).**
 - ✓ Our giving to God's work is similar to Old Testament sacrifices, which also cost the person bringing the sacrifice a lot. Bulls and rams did not come cheaply in that day.
 - ✓ Ephesians 5:2 uses the same terminology in reference to Jesus' sacrifice for us; our sacrifices are likewise pleasing to God as **a sweet-smelling aroma**.
 - ✓ In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul boasted about the Philippians as an example of the right kind of giving. He describes how they gave *willingly*, out of their own *need*, and they gave after *first having given themselves* to the Lord.

Paul declares a Promise to the Philippians regarding their own financial needs, v. 19 *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

- ✓ **The Promise: My God shall supply all your need:** This promise *meant* something to them!
 - We shouldn't think that the Philippians were wealthy benefactors of Paul who could easily spare the money. As Paul described them in 2 Corinthians 8, it is plain that their giving was sacrificial.
 - "He says to them, “You have helped me; but my God shall supply you.”
 - The promise is to supply ***all your need***; but it is ***all your need*** (not a promise to go beyond needs). In this, the promise is both broad and yet restricted.
- ✓ **According to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus:**
 - This is an extraordinary, miraculous *measure* of giving. Therefore, we should anticipate that there would be no lack in God's supply.
 - "The rewarding will not be merely from His wealth, but also in a manner that befits His wealth - on a scale worthy of His wealth." (Martin)
 - This promise simply expresses what Jesus said in Luke 6:38: *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

Conclusion to the letter...A brief doxology.

Philippians 4:20, *"Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."*

"Be glory forever and ever..."This was not a casual or reactive comment made by Paul in the way that we throw off comments like "glory to God" or "praise the Lord" in our Christian culture.

Paul genuinely wanted God to be glorified and was willing to be used in whatever way God saw fit to glorify Himself (Philippians 1:20).

"Amen": This was a word borrowed from Hebrew meaning, "So be it." It is an expression of confident and joyful affirmation.

Mutual greetings expressed.

Philippians 4:21-22, *"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household."*

- ✓ **Greet every saint**: This is an example of the fact that the title **saint** applies to all Christians, not just to an elite few.
 - He does not address specific individuals here.
 - He did not know how much work and self-sacrifice was given by individuals. It goes along with the Scripture, "...don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing."
- ✓ **All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household**:
 - This special greeting is evidence that Paul was still used by God during his Roman imprisonment, when the gospel extended even into the household of Caesar.

"By this he designates the functionaries and servants and slaves of the Emperor's household, with whom Paul, as a prisoner for several years, undoubtedly came in contact on several occasions." (Muller)

Note: Nero was at this time emperor of Rome: He was a cruel, diabolic wretch of a man; a disgrace to the human race.

Yet in Nero's family or close quarter servants/counselors there were Christians. Whether this relates to the members of the imperial family, or to guards, or courtiers, or to servants, we cannot tell.

Final words. *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen,"*
Philippians 4:23.

- **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all:** Paul did not say this to simply fill up space at the end of his letter.
 - To Paul, the Christian life begins and ends with the **grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**. It was only God's grace and mercy that saved Paul.
 - Therefore, it was appropriate that his letters began and ended with **grace** also.
- **Amen:** This was a fitting word of affirmation. Paul knew that what he wrote to the Philippians was worthy to be agreed with, so he added the final word of agreement – "SO BE IT! LET THIS BE COUNTED AS TRUTH."

**“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch
like me....**

I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now, I see.

**T'was Grace that taught...my heart to fear. And Grace, my
fears relieved.**

How precious did that Grace appear...the hour I first believed.

**Through many dangers, toils and snares...we have already
come.**

**T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far...and Grace will lead
us home.**

**The Lord has promised good to me...His word my hope
secures.**

He will my shield and portion be...as long as life endures.

**When we've been here ten thousand years...bright shining as
the sun.**

**We've no less days to sing God's praise...than when we've first
begun.”**

GRACE = God's Redemption At Christ's Expense