

-) Romans 12:1-2
- ii. Our text today displays the kind of sacrifice called for in Psalm 51:16-17.
-) The offering which the Philippians sent grew out of a broken, or humble, and contrite spirit. It grew out of thinking more highly of others than themselves.
- iii. Paul seems to think that the Philippians giving was of greater benefit to them than even to him. Not that he did not have a need; he did. But they too had a need, and through their giving, both needs were being met.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What do you think of the idea that giving profanes money (Ellul)? What does that mean? How might it help us to recognize this?
- Are you content in your current circumstances? Why or why not?
- If you answered, “No” to the previous question, what would make you content?
- Are you motivated to give only by a perceived need in another? ... some great need in the church? Or do you also give because of a great need in yourself? What kind of need might giving meet?
- When you set aside your giving for the Kingdom, is it one of the first things you do with your money or one of the last? Why?
- How does your use of money reflect on your level of contentment? On your level of trust in God?
- How does the Lord is inviting us through giving to enter into a life that will require God to come through or else?
- How does the Philippians support of Paul turn out to conform them into the image of Christ?

Slaves of Christ – Part 11

Giving as Sharing in the Life of Christ

Jerry Cisar — December 9, 2018

Text: Philippians 4:10-20

Introduction

Jacques Ellul: “There is one act par excellence which profanes money ... an act for which money is not made. This act is giving. ... giving attacks something sacred.”

- A. Money is transactional—a means of exchange. Something occurs between two parties with each exchange.
- i. Matt. 6:21
- ii. When we have the right perspective on money, giving can be the best transaction we could ever possibly make.
- B. Giving is a means of sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

I. The Alignment of Hearts (10-13)

- A. Paul’s non-thank-you.
- B. The Heart of the Philippians (10)
- i. Paul uses the same word that he has hung this whole letter on (ref. Phi. 2:5).
- ii. Phi. 1:7

C. Paul's Heart

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from the Tegel prison in 1943: "I think we're going to have an exceptionally good Christmas. The very fact that every outward circumstance precludes our making provision for it will show whether we can be content with what is truly essential. I used to be very fond of thinking up and buying presents, but now that we have nothing to give, the gift God gave us in the birth of Christ will seem all the more glorious...."

- i. Paul's contentment is real. It is not stoic contentment rooted in detachment from this world. It is contentment rooted in his ability to see his life through the lens of the Christ-story; that he is being joined with Christ in his suffering and therefore he will experience the grace of God that will bring life to him.
- ii. Paul declares that he can do all this (be content in the midst of want) *in* the One who strengthens him.

D. Paul's heart and the Philippians heart, disposition, were united in their pursuit of the mind of Christ.

II. The Exchange Between Paul and the Philippians (14-16)

- A. There is an exchange that takes place when we give.
- B. Their giving was a sharing in Paul's sufferings, and therefore Christ's sufferings.
 - i. When we sacrificially give for the sake of the gospel it creates a transforming exchange, in which both parties enter into a sharing, a fellowship, a communion in Christ.
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 8:2-4

Henri Nouwen: "Community is the fruit of our capacity to make the interests of others more important than our own."

Nouwen: "Somehow we've come to believe that good leadership requires a safe distance from those we are called to lead."

III. The Transfer of Obligation to God (17-20)

- A. When we are giving from a right heart, the exchange is not only between the two human parties, there is a third party: God!
 - i. God gets involved in this exchange and becomes the One responsible for anything due!
 -) Proverbs 19:17
 -) Matthew 6:19-20
 -) Matthew 19:27-29
 -) Hebrew 6:10
 -) Galatians 6:8-10
 - ii. Philippians 2:12-13
- B. Paul talks about giving in sacrificial terms (18c).
 - i. This is priestly language of sacrifice.
 -) 1 Peter 2:5
 -) Hebrews 13:16