

## Introduction

Two weeks ago, we were at dinner on the Westerdam ship, and the ship's Activities Director made an announcement. He thanked us for choosing Holland America and he wanted us to have an opportunity to thank the cooks, waiters, and staff that had served us all week. They all came out and walked in file around the dining room. The thought that ran through my head was it was too soon to make this announcement. It was too soon to be over. The time had gone quickly, and we had thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

This morning we will be wrapping up our current message series. This is our last week in this voyage through the book of Philippians. It seems like it has been fast. I have really enjoyed doing the study. I hope that it has been as rich for you as it has for me.

In chapter four, Paul changes gears pretty quickly. Verses one through nine were about the peace of God. The Philippians needed the peace of God. There were attacks on the gospel. He addressed the doctrinal concerns about circumcision and righteousness by faith. These attacks had upset the faith of some. They needed the peace of God.

The Philippians were going in different directions. They needed unity in the church. He made an appeal to them to be of one mind and to strive together for the faith of the gospel. The lack of unity caused an unsettled feeling in their hearts.

The Philippians had strife. Some of the leaders in the church were not getting along. I think Paul's message about having the attitude of Christ is one of the most powerful passages about relationships in the New Testament. Selfishness ruins relationships. Strong relationships can develop when we look out for one another's interests and do nothing from selfishness. Strong relationships can develop when we serve one another, and humble ourselves before God and one another. Strong relationships can develop when we are open and transparent with one another. Paul has addressed all these things and the church needed to practice the things that Paul had taught and role-modeled for them.

The Philippians needed to have the right attitude. Sixteen times he uses the word rejoice in this book. He wanted the Philippians to learn to rejoice at all times. Even though he was in prison, he was rejoicing. He rejoiced over the gospel being preached to the whole Praetorian Guard. He rejoiced that he was going to be released soon.

In today's text, Paul also rejoices. He rejoices for three different reasons. He rejoices over the Philippians' gift to him. He rejoices because their gift showed concern for him. He rejoices that their gift was going to profit their account. Finally, he rejoiced because their gift was a pleasing sacrifice to God. Finally, he gives them a great promise – that God would supply all their needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

What are three reasons that Paul rejoices over the Philippians gift

1. He rejoices because it showed their concern for him.
2. He rejoices because it will profit their account.
3. He rejoices because it was a pleasing sacrifice to God.

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

(Phil 4:10-19) But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. {11} Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. {12} I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. {13} I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. {14} Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. {15} You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; {16} for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. {17} Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. {18} But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. {19} And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

### 1. Paul rejoices because it showed their concern for him.

Paul begins by saying that he rejoiced in the Lord greatly that they had at last revived their concern for him. This indicates that he had been patiently waiting for a while. He had probably been praying for this, and it has finally happened.

(Phil 4:10) But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

Paul said that they had revived their concern for him. The word **revive means to bring to life again**. There had been no life, activity, or signs of concern for Paul for quite a while. We do not know what all prompted the reviving of their concern, but Paul is rejoicing over it. The Philippians had supported his ministry right from the start. In verse fifteen, he reminds them of how they had supported him when he left Macedonia, and when he was in Thessalonica. They had been very supportive of his apostolic ministry. And then, for some reason, they had stopped supporting him. Now, they have sent an offering by the hands of Epaphroditus, and Paul rejoices over it.

Earlier in Philippians, Paul had told them to keep living by the same standard to which they had attained. My first question to us this morning is, "Are there things in our life that we use to do, but have slacked off in, and that need to be revived?"

(Phil 3:16) however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

How are your quiet times and devotions with the Lord? Are you spending time every morning reading the Scriptures and praying? Do you need to revive your passion for the Lord? In Revelations 2:4-5, the Lord tells the Ephesian church that they have left their first love. He tells them to repent and do the deeds they did at first. He is asking them to revive their love and passion for the Lord. When you are in love with someone, you spend time with them. You communicate with them. How is your relationship with the Lord? Is it passionate and fervent? Has it become luke warm? Does it need reviving this morning?

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

(Rev 2:4-5) But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. {5} Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

How is our relationship with your spouse? Do you need to renew your concern for your spouse? Does your relationship need to be revived? How are you going to revive it? How are you going to show your spouse that you mean business? Could it be that a gift to your spouse would cause him or her to rejoice greatly that you have at last revived your concern for them?

How is your relationship with your children? I was thinking about this last week and I have not spent much individual time with Joanna. We use to play Rummy and other card games. We had not done anything together in quite a while. I made a point the other day to ask her to play cards with me when I got home from work. We had a great time playing together. I did something to begin reviving that relationship. Are there relationships in your life that you need to revive?

What about your spiritual gifts? Are you actively serving in the church? Are you using your primary spiritual gift? In 1 Timothy 4:14-15, Paul tells Timothy not to neglect the spiritual gift within him. This gift had been bestowed on him through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. The presbytery is the Pastoral Team. Presbuteros is the word for elder in the Greek and the Presbytery is the plural of elder. This is the group of elders in the church. They had laid hands on Timothy and bestowed on them a spiritual gift. Apparently, Paul was concerned that the gift was not being used. It needed reviving.

(1 Tim 4:14-15) Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. {15} Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he reminds him in the very first chapter to kindle afresh the gift of God which was in him through the laying on of his hands. Apparently, Paul was concerned that Timothy was not doing enough to revive the use of the gift. He tells him to kindle afresh that gift.

(2 Tim 1:6) For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

What about you? Are you using your gift? What do you need to do to rekindle and revive it? Let me encourage each of you to look for opportunities to use and develop your spiritual gifts.

Some of you may have been very actively involved in a local church at one time. However, things have happened. You are attending but have not made a commitment to the local church? Does your passion for the local church need to be revived? We are having an Orientation Meeting on August 4 after the Fellowship Luncheon. You can find out more about EMV and how to become a member. That would be a good first step in reviving your heart for the local church.

As most of you can tell, I am passionate about the local church. In Scripture, almost all the references to church refer to the local church. There are a few Scriptures that talk about the church at large, but most Scriptures deal with the local church. I love the local church. Like Paul, I would rejoice when some of you revive your concern for the local church.

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

How about your giving. Paul rejoices over the gift that the Philippians have sent to him. Some of you use to honor the Lord with tithes, but things have happened and you are no longer honoring the Lord with your tithe. A tithe is 10% of your income. In Malachi, the Lord speaks about this very issue. He says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." He goes on to tell them to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. Some were not bringing the full ten percent. God promises to rebuke the devourer, and to pour out blessings on those that tithe. It is interesting that the people most in need rarely tithe. Those that give, have money to give. It is because it is a spiritual principle. When we honor the Lord with our wealth, He opens up His blessings on us. Does your giving need to be revived?

(Mal 3:8-12) "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. {9} "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! {10} "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. {11} "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. {12} "All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.

Notice what Paul says next. He lets them know that he is not selfishly rejoicing about their gift.

(Phil 4:11-13) Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. {12} I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. {13} I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

He tells them that he does not speak from want. The word want means need. In our culture, we use the word want for desire, but that is not the correct definition. Paul says that he does not speak from having a need. He has learned the secret to being content in whatever circumstances he is in. He knows how to get along with humble means and how to live in prosperity. He has learned the secret of being filled and going hungry. We will talk about this in just a minute.

Like Paul, I would rejoice over your revived concern about tithing. Like Paul, there is nothing selfish about it. Karen and I have never received money for utilities, rent, repairs, honorariums, or salary. We give honorariums to guest speakers, but we have never accepted them. I have a good job that pays me a good salary. The money that comes in through offerings are used to sow into the kingdom. We have been giving 25% into missions. We give to local missions. We support foreign missions. We support widows and those who are needy. We also use the money to provide a place for us to meet and worship in. Your giving goes to further the work of the kingdom, and I would rejoice because the kingdom of God is being furthered by your giving.

Paul said that he had learned the secret of contentment. He knew the secret of going hungry and being full, of living with humble means and living in prosperity. I would like to talk a few minutes about contentment. The writer of Hebrews tells us the secret to contentment. He said to "make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have." **The secret to contentment is having the right focus.**

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

(Heb 13:5) Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

There are several different keys that will help us learn to be content. **The first key is that our focus must be on the kingdom of God**, not on the things of the earth. That is why the Lord said to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you. Seeking first the kingdom of God means that we are seeking the rule and reign of Christ in every area of our live. Earlier this year we did a three-week series on Matthew 6:33. We saw that when we seek first the kingdom of God, all these other things will be added to us. The key to the promise of provision is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

(Matt 6:33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

**A second key is we must trust in Christ for all of our needs**. Paul said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." What a great promise. We quote and use this in many areas of our life. Paul used it in the context of knowing how to live with very little and also with an abundance. He could live in contentment in any situation that He faced, because God's grace and strength was sufficient.

(Phil 4:13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

In the passage in Matthew 6, Jesus told us not to store up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, He said not to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys. He concludes with a very challenging and revealing statement. He said, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Many years ago I thought that this applied to wealthy people. But, God revealed to me that this applies to poor people as well as wealthy people. Many poor people have their hearts set on money. They have a difficult time giving because they are trusting what they have rather than trusting God. They are anxious about food, clothing, shelter, etc., because they are not trusting God for their provision. All of us are encouraged to store up treasures in heaven.

(Matt 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 neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; {21} for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**A third key to contentment is gratefulness**. We should be grateful to the Lord for all things. When we are blessed, we should give thanks to the Lord, from whom all blessings flow. My manager in Houston has a saying about thankfulness. He says that "some people would complain if you hung them with a new rope." We must learn to give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. In the "Blessed Life," Robert Morris gives some examples of how a grateful attitude differs from a spirit of pride or a spirit of poverty.

#### 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

When you think about a situation in life, pride says, "I deserve more." Poverty says, "I should feel guilty." Gratitude says, "thank you!" Gratitude is an attitude of thankfulness that always acknowledges God's provision."

When someone says, "wow, you have a nice house!" Pride says, "we were going to build a bigger one." Poverty says, "it was a foreclosure." Gratitude says, "thank you. The Lord has blessed us."

When someone says, "that's a nice suit." Pride says, "It's tailor made." Poverty says, "it was half price." Gratitude says, "thank you."

When someone says, "that's a nice car." Pride says, "I've got three of them." Poverty says, "it is a company car." Gratitude says, "thank you."

We must learn to seek first the kingdom of God, not wealth. We must learn to store up treasures in heaven, not here on earth. We must learn to give thanks in everything. It is God's will for our lives. These things will help us develop contentment in our lives.

Before I move to the next point, I want to make a couple more comments about contentment. First, **there is a balance between not focusing on things and possessions and responsibly providing for yourself and your family**. When you are married, you have responsibilities to care for your spouse, and if you have children, to care for your children. Paul addresses this concern in 1 Corinthians 7. He said that the unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, but the married person is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife. Paul is talking about the responsibilities that a husband has. He must take care of his wife. He is promoting undistracted devotion to the Lord in that passage.

(1 Cor 7:32-34) But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; {33} but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, {34} and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

In 1 Timothy, Paul said that those who do not provide for their own widows and their own household are worse than unbelievers. That is a very strong statement. A husband should not be content if he is not working and providing for his wife and family. There is a balance between supporting your family and trying to provide an extravagant lifestyle for your wife and family.

(1 Tim 5:8) But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

There is also a balance between providing for yourself and being content with having nothing. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that he did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it. He worked with his own hands to provide for himself. He did not have an entitlement mindset. He was not expecting others to pay his way. He worked hard day and night so that he would not be a burden to anyone. Again, there is a balance between working and being content with hard times.

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

(2 Thess 3:7-8) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, {8} nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;

### 2. Paul rejoices because it will profit their account.

The second reason that Paul rejoices over the Philippians gift is that it will profit their account. After commending them for sharing in his affliction, he tells them in verse seventeen that he was not seeking their gift, but that which would profit their account.

(Phil 4:17) Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

Earlier in Matthew 6, Jesus taught us not to store up treasures on earth, but to store up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. Paul is telling them that they are storing up treasures in heaven. Their gifts to Paul's ministry not only shows concern for Paul, but it is profiting their heavenly investment account. This is the second reason that Paul is rejoicing over their gift. Again, there is nothing selfishly motivated about his rejoicing.

(Matt 6:19-20) "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 neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

Everything that we do should be done unto the Lord. When we give, it should be unto the Lord. When we serve, it should be unto the Lord. Everything should be done unto the Lord. I like the way that Paul puts it in Colossians. He says, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance." Notice that when we do our work unto the Lord, we will receive a reward from Him.

(Col 3:23-24) Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, {24} knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

The principle of sowing and reaping is repeatedly taught in Scripture. In Luke, Jesus tells us not to judge, so that we will not be judged. On the other hand, if we judge, we will also be judged. He goes on to tell us not to condemn others so that we will not be condemned. Then, Jesus applies this same principle to our giving. He says, give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." **The principle of sowing and reaping also applies to our giving.** When we give, we give unto the Lord. It is a kingdom principle that it will be given back to us. Even though this is a true principle, our motive to give should not be to receive back. Our motives to give should be pure. But, we will be rewarded. Our account will increase and we will profit from the investments we make into the kingdom.

(Luke 6:37-38) "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. {38} "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

Paul concludes in verse 19 by telling the Philippians that God will supply all their needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. What a great promise to memorize and cling to. This promise is based on a combination of principles. First, when we honor God with our first fruits, He promises to bless us. Second, when we seek first His kingdom, He promises to add all these things to us. Third, it also incorporates the principle of sowing and reaping. When we sow into the kingdom, we shall reap from the kingdom. The Philippians had generously sown into Paul's ministry, and he tells them that God will supply all their needs.

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

(Matt 6:33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Many people like to quote and claim promises, but they fail to meet the conditions of the promises. **Most promises are conditional.** There are some promises that are not conditional. When God promised Noah not to destroy the earth again with water, there are no conditions for you and I to meet. It is His promise to us. However, in Proverbs 3, when He promises to fill our barns with plenty and to fill our vats with new wine, there is a condition. We must honor the Lord from our wealth, and from the first of all our produce. We honor Him with our tithes and offerings.

(Pro 3:9-10) Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; {10}  
So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.

When He promises to add all these things to us, meaning our food, clothing, and shelter, there is a condition. We must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. If we are holding on to money, and seeking money first, we are not meeting the conditions of the promise. God wants us to be channels of His blessings, not storage bins. Freely we must receive, and freely we must give.

I love the promises of God. In 2 Corinthians 1:20 we find God's attitude towards promises. It reads, "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." **God wants to say yes to all of His promises.** He wants us to receive all of His promises. But, we must meet the conditions of those that are conditional.

(2 Cor 1:20) For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

### 3. Paul rejoices because it was a pleasing sacrifice to God.

The third reason that Paul rejoices is over the gift itself. He gives three characteristics of this gift. First, the gift is a fragrant aroma. Second, their gift was an acceptable sacrifice. Third, he says their gift was well-pleasing to God.

(Phil 4:18) But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.



**It was a fragrant aroma.**

The first characteristic of the Philippian's gift was that it was a fragrant aroma. I was reminded about aromas this past couple of weeks. We had four Nigerians in our class. Many of them do not shower daily or use deodorant. They have an aroma about them, and it is not a pleasant aroma. I reflected on aromas. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 that God manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. You and I are to be the fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. We are an aroma from death to death to those who are perishing, and an aroma from life to life to those who are being saved. My question to all of us is, "What kind of aroma are you giving off?" Are we giving off a fleshly aroma? Or, are we giving a pleasant and fragrant aroma to those around us?

(2 Cor 2:14-16) But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. {15} For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; {16} to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

The Bible has much to say about aromas. In fact, there are forty-eight references to aromas in the Scriptures. We find the first occurrence in Genesis 8. Noah had just come out of the ark, and built an altar to the Lord. Then, he took from every clean animal and bird and offered a burnt offering to the Lord. Moses records that the Lord smelled the soothing aroma, and promised to never curse the ground on account of man, and never to destroy every living thing as He had just done.

(Gen 8:20-21) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. {21} The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Noah's sacrifice of the burnt offering was a soothing or fragrant aroma, which pleased the Lord. Most of the aromas in the Old Testament pertained to animal sacrifices. In the New Testament, we find that Christ was a sacrifice and was also a fragrant aroma. In Ephesians 5, we are exhorted to walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Paul goes on to tell husbands to love their wives just as Christ did, laying down His life for the church. Men, we are called to love our wives. Furthermore, just as this was a fragrant aroma to God, our sacrificial love to our wives is a fragrant aroma to God.

(Eph 5:1-2) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; {2} and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Our lives are to be a living and holy sacrifice to God. Our ministry to our family is to be a pleasing sacrifice. Our service to the body of Christ is to be a pleasing sacrifice. Our gifts to the Lord are to be a pleasing sacrifice. Our entire lives should be acceptable sacrifices and should give off the fragrant aroma of Christ.

**It was an acceptable sacrifice.**

The second characteristic of their gift was that it was an acceptable sacrifice. Romans 12:1 says that our lives should be living and holy sacrifices. The acceptable sacrifices in the Old Testament were without spot or blemish. If an animal was weak, sickly, or not the best, it was not to be sacrificed. God wants our very best. That is what is an acceptable sacrifice.

In Malachi, God rebukes the nation of Israel for bringing unacceptable sacrifices. He says that a son honors his father and a servant his master. And then He asks the question, "And if I am a master, where is My respect?...O priests who despise My name...You are presenting defiled food upon My altar...But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil?...with such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?"

(Mal 1:6-9) " 'A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?' says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?' {7} "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' {8} "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. {9} "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.

The Lord is telling us that an acceptable sacrifice has to be the very best. It cannot be defiled, blind, sick, lame, or evil. It must be holy and of the highest quality. This is what is an acceptable sacrifice.

When Karen and I lived in Georgia, Karen raised meat goats. We learned a lot about shepherding, and also about sacrifices. When you raise goats, the male goats can reproduce at eight months old. You will normally have a herd sire for all your does. The herd sire is your very best buck. Our buck was named Abraham. He came from a great bloodline. He had national champions in his lineage. In order to prevent young bucks from mating, we neutered them. If there was an exceptional buck that a person would want to sell as a herd sire, you would not neuter him. But, you would have to separate him from the rest of the herd, or put him with some other bucklings.

When it is time to offer a sacrifice, you cannot offer a buck that has been neutered. Only a buck that has not been neutered can be offered. That means that your offering has to be one that you would use as a herd sire, your very best. The temptation would be to sacrifice one that you did not want to use, but God says that dishonors Him. That is not an acceptable sacrifice. God wants the very best that we have.

In Genesis, Cain and Abel gave offerings to the Lord. God did not have regard for Cain's offering, but He did accept Abel's offering. What was special about Abel's offering? Moses records that Abel brought of the firstlings and of their fat portions. In other words, he gave the first fruits, the tithes. He not only gave the firstlings, but he also gave their fat portions. That means he gave the very best of his flocks. The Hebrew word for fat is cheleb, which means fat, best, or finest. Abel gave the very best that He had, and it was an acceptable sacrifice.

## 14 Three Reasons Paul Rejoices About The Philippians' Gift (Philippians 4:10-23)

(Gen 4:3-5) So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. {4} Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; {5} but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

Paul rejoices over the gift that the Philippians had given to him because it was their very best. It was not just any offering; it was the very best. It was the finest offering that they could give. It was their fat portion. The question we must ask is what kind of offerings are we presenting to the Lord? Are we giving leftovers or the firstlings? Are we giving the fat portion or the sick, lame and blind? Would God be pleased with our offerings? Are our offerings acceptable to the Lord?

Here is one final thought about holy sacrifices. In Psalms 51, David repents before the Lord. At the end of the Psalm, he says to God, “for You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

(Psalm 51:16-17) For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. {17} The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

God is telling us that the sacrifice that pleases Him the most is a holy sacrifice. He wants our lives to be a holy sacrifice to Him. A broken and contrite heart is repentant of sin. A broken and contrite heart has been washed by the blood of the lamb and is a holy sacrifice. The ultimate sacrifice that You and I can give to God is a holy life. Our service to God is a living and holy sacrifice which is acceptable to Him.

### **It was well-pleasing to God.**

The third characteristic of their gift was that it was well-pleasing to God. What a great way to end a letter to a church – to tell them that their gift is well-pleasing to the Lord. We all want our lives to be pleasing to the Lord. We want our ministries to be pleasing to the Lord. We want everything in our lives, including our offerings to be pleasing to the Lord. These are the three characteristics of the Philippians' gift that Paul shares to encourage them.

### **Conclusion**

Paul concludes by giving God glory, by giving a personal greeting and a greeting from the saints, especially those of Caesar's household, and by blessing them with the grace of God.

(Phil 4:20-23) Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. {21} Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. {22} All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. {23} The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

I have the sense that there is great love and friendship between Paul, Timothy, and the brethren with Paul and the church at Philippi. I also get a sense that there is great love between the church in Rome and the church in Philippi. I also get a sense that this is a friendly church.

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When people visit a church, one of the things that I have heard frequently is that no one greeted me. They call that an unfriendly church. **Greeting lets visitors know they are welcome and that you are loving and friendly.** It is really important for us to make application of this verse. We want to learn to greet people. We want to be a visitor friendly church. We want to make people feel welcome. We want people to know that we are interested in them. It should not be one or two people. We want all the saints at EMV to greet people.

Finally, Paul blesses the Philippians with grace. It was a common blessing. We want to extend grace to one another. We want to bless one another with grace. We want to be a grace-filled church.

This morning we have looked at three reasons why Paul rejoiced at the gift that the Philippians sent to him. Paul did not rejoice for selfish reasons. He made it clear that he could live with or without the gift. Paul had learned the secret of contentment. He rejoiced because it demonstrated their revived concern for him. We want to revive things in our lives that may have slipped. We want to keep living to that same standard that we have already obtained.

Paul also rejoiced because the gift that they had sent would profit their account. He was speaking of their kingdom account. They were investing treasures in heaven which would not rust, where thieves could not steal, and moths could destroy. We want to be a church that is making rich deposits into the kingdom of God.

Paul also rejoiced because of the quality of their gift. It was a gift that was a fragrant aroma. It was an acceptable sacrifice, and finally it was well-pleasing to the Lord.

This morning, if the Lord has been dealing with you about an area, and you would like for someone to pray with you, we will be happy to pray with you. If you have a need for healing, we want to pray for you. We saw at our Men's Bible Study yesterday that if there are those who are sick, they are to call for the elders to pray for them and anoint them with oil. The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick. If you need prayer, let us pray for you.

If God has spoken to you about reviving your concern for the local church, and you would like to join the East Mountain Vineyard, let us know. If the Lord has spoken to you about something this morning, respond to the Lord. You may not need prayer at the front, but you do need to respond to the Lord. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You for changing our lives and molding us into Your image. Thank You for making us a fragrant aroma. Thank You Holy Spirit for Your presence. Thank You for being with us and for us. May our lives be living and holy sacrifices, acceptable and well pleasing to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Introduction** (Phil 4:10-19)

1. Paul rejoices because it showed their \_\_\_\_\_ for him. (Phil 4:10)
  - Revive means to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil 3:16, Rev 2:4-5, 1 Tim 4:14-15, 2 Tim 1:6, Mal 3:8-12)
  - Paul had learned how to be \_\_\_\_\_ in all circumstances. (Phil 4:11-13)
  - The secret to contentment is having the right \_\_\_\_\_. (Heb 13:5)
  - The first key to contentment is to focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (Matt 6:33)
  - The second key is to \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ for all of our needs. (Phil 4:13, Matt 6:19-21)
  - The third key to contentment is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - There is a balance between not focusing on things and responsibly \_\_\_\_\_ for your family. (1 Cor 7:32-34, 1 Tim 5:8, 2 Thess 3:7-8)
2. Paul rejoices because it will profit their \_\_\_\_\_. (Phil 4:17, Matt 6:19-20, Col 3:23-24)
  - The principle of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ also applies to our giving. (Luke 6:37-38, Phil 4:19, Matt 6:33)
  - Most promises are \_\_\_\_\_. (Pro 3:9-10)
  - God wants to say \_\_\_\_\_ to all of His promises. (2 Cor 1:20)
3. Paul rejoices because it was a pleasing \_\_\_\_\_ to God. (Phil 4:18)
  - The Philippians' gift was a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Cor 2:14-16, Gen 8:20-21, Eph 5:1-2)
  - The Philippians' gift was an \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. (Rom 12:1, Mal 1:6-9, Gen 4:3-5, Psa 51:16-17)
  - The Philippians' gift was \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

**Conclusion** (Phil 4:20-23)

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