

PHILIPPIANS FOUR, NINETEEN

Intro: In many ways this epistle is very strange. It presents us with a contrast between great joys and great needs. The writer is a prisoner in Rome. He has not been able to work to meet his own needs as in the past. He has been cast upon the Lord in a new way. The Philippian Church, probably one of the poorest, had responded when they knew of Paul's need. Now he is writing this inspired thank-you note.

Note how he speaks of their gift to him--AS A GIFT TO THE LORD.
(Cf. v. 18.)

As we come to v. 19, we note three people and a large group of people are involved in what is being written. They are

- 1) Paul.
- 2) God.
- 3) The Philippian Church.
- 4) Christ Jesus.

What Paul says is not a mere wish; IT IS A PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND A SURE PROMISE. Let us note the details.

I. A GREAT RELATIONSHIP: "But my God."

This is not a common expression in either the NT or the OT, and in the NT it is almost exclusively used by Paul. IT POINTS TO A CLOSE, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAUL AND GOD!

This is the second time we find it in this letter. Cf. 1:3.

It definitely has its roots in the OT. David used it. Prophetically it applies to Christ.

Psa. 22:1a, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
Cf. Matt. 27:46.

Psa. 63:1, where David writes, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirstyland, where no water is, To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

King Darius brought this expression to Daniel's lips:

"And when he came to the den, and he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. And the king spoke and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me . . ."

Our Lord used it, and taught that we have a right to use it.

To Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (John 20:17).

How wonderful for Paul to be able to use it! And how wonderful for us to be able to use it too! "My God"!

II. A GREAT PROMISE: "Shall supply all your need."

Can you think of anything greater?

This is not an excuse for laziness. Paul was not lazy; he was in a position where he could not work. BUT IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT HIS PROMISE IS GIVEN TO A CHURCH, A POOR CHURCH, WHICH HAD GIVEN SACRIFICIALLY TO HELP MEET PAUL'S NEEDS.

"Shall supply" - shall fill up to the top. This is no meager provision.

"All your needs"--without limitation. Not our wants, but our needs! "All" of them! This includes the physical, the material, and the spiritual.

How large a Church the Philippian Church was, we do not know. But Paul promises that God can meet the needs of every single one--regardless of the number. Think of what this means when we apply it to the people of God everywhere they are to be found in every nation on earth! It is unbelievable in its possibilities.

But may I remind you again of the context?

This church had given to Paul what they really could not afford to give. BUT HERE PAUL IS REMINDING THEM THAT WE CAN NEVER GET AHEAD OF GOD WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING. WE GIVE TO MEET MATERIAL OR PHYSICAL NEEDS, AND HE RETURNS THE BLESSING BY MEETING OUR EVERY NEED! This is a condition of divine blessing which we must not overlook.

III. A GREAT SOURCE OF SUPPLY: "According to His riches in glory."

Paul loved to talk about the wealth of God. See it esp. in Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16. Do you know how rich God is?

III. In the early days of Dallas Theological Seminary, the school was facing a great financial need. Dr. Chafer called a day of prayer. During that day I believe it was Dr. Ironside who was called upon to lead in prayer, and he

prayed in part like this:

"Lord, the cattle on a thousand hills are thine. Sell a few, and send us the money."

As I remember the story, a few days afterward a special delivery letter arrived completely taking care of the more than \$15,000 that was needed.

What material needs we have! What physical needs! BUT, MOST OF ALL, WHAT SPIRITUAL NEEDS! The need for wisdom, the need for strength, the need for peace, the need for purity--and on and on!

Spurgeon once said, "We have never seen God in Glory." Therefore, we have no idea of the limitless resources except as we see the evidence with God meeting the needs of His people day after day, year after year, generation after generation.

But this is not all. Before we close we must talk about:

IV. A GREAT PERSON--THE GREATEST OF ALL WHO EVER LIVED ON THE EARTH: "By Christ Jesus."

God never works independently of His Son. Our blessings all come through Him and are impossible without Him.

"Christ Jesus." Have you ever noticed all of the combinations of His Names in the NT? Right here in Philippians we have:

- 1) Jesus Christ (v. 6).
- 2) Christ Jesus (v. 1).
- 3) Lord Jesus Christ (v. 2).
- 4) Christ (v. 10).
- 5) Jesus (2:10).
- 6) Lord (2:11).
- 7) Lord Jesus (2:19).

Why do we have these differences? They are used with care and purpose by the writers of Scripture who were directed in their writing by the Spirit of God.

"Christ" points to our Lord's deity, and when it appears first, that is where the emphasis is. "Jesus" was His human name, and always emphasizes His humanity, His saving work. So in "Christ Jesus" we are thinking of the God Who became man, and who, because of His Deity is able to meet any need we might have.

Concl: Several years ago now Mr. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great English preacher, built an orphanage to help homeless boys and girls. They knew that they were dependent

upon God for the supply of their needs to run the orphanage and wanted to put a verse of Scripture at the entrance to declare their faith in God for His provision. Phil. 4:19 was selected--and it was so the masons cut this verse on both sides of the great archway which marked the entrance to the building. Spurgeon declared at the time that as long as God lives there will be no need to change the verse!

But the times of testing came!

Some miles away in Bristol there was another orphanage--founded by George Muller. Spurgeon found great comfort in the knowledge that his God was also the God of George Muller, and, if God could supply the needs of Muller's orphanage, He could supply the needs of Mr. Spurgeon's orphanage.

And then his mind would go to the Word. He would remember how God met the needs of Abraham, and Elijah, and the prophets, and of the apostles--THE SAME GOD! And this helped to sustain him as He waited for God to provide.

Is it not comforting tonight to go back to Phil. 4:19, to remember that it was written in a Roman prison, and so see the evidence here, not only in the gift which was sent to Paul, but in his joy, his peace, his hope, that it was abundantly true: "But my God shall supply . . ."