LSB Philippians 4:10 - 22 The Christians Spiritual Bank Account

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived thinking about me; indeed, you were thinking about me before, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak from want, for I 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 abundance; in any and all things 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 fellowship with me in my affliction. 15 And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church fellowshipped 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 the fruit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I have been filled, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will fulfill all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers 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.

Mixed within these final words and thoughts of Paul as he bids farewell to the Philippians in this letter are two oft quoted promises that every christian has heard again and again, and we do well to memorize both.

So let's quickly pick the low hanging fruit and then we'll go back and consider how giving and receiving glorifies God and benefits all believers.

Here are the two verses that get high graded out and used alone without context. And indeed, we can do that because these truths are true in any

context, we don't need to know Paul's situation to believe God will supply exactly as Paul says here.

Verse 13 is one you need to write down on the fly leaf of your Bible so you don't even have to turn there to be encouraged in every situation and at all times;

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

It's just an axiomatic truth. And the inversion of this truth is also important. *13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.* What can I do of lasting eternal value that glorifies God, without Christ actually accomplishing it through my partnering agency? Nothing. Nothing.

So we can say; *13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.* And I can do nothing of eternal and spiritual value without Him who strenghtens me.

I never get to take credit. And indeed if I am quickened to life in Christ and my sins are removed because of His substitutionary death in my place, for me, nor do I want to take credit for what He graciously accomplishes using me.

But anything Christ desires to do through me and in me is possible. Impossible for me without His agency, but within His will and pleasure, anything He desires that I should do, will be made possible.

The second low hanging fruit verse that we want to highgrade while we're all still awake is like the first one;

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

That sounds like a blank cheque, and it is, but there are some qualifiers that most who high grade it out of it's context never mention. Here is the

assumed position in which this blank cheque can be cashed.

We are stewards. Slaves who have a stewardship. Our Master is wildly rich. There are no limits to His wealth. He is away on an extended trip and has put us in charge of His interests. His kingdom. And we have this blank cheque to pay for anything we need in order to care for His holdings, His interests, His kingdom.

It's not a blank cheque of His money to spend on yourself. Sometimes I think we quote these promises in rather the same fashion as Janis Joplin. *Oh Lord, won't you buy me, a Mercedes Benz…*

In the extended section we'll look at together this morning, Paul does a little dance, around money. Money is always a sensitive topic, both then and now. Here's the abbreviated version of the dance. Here's Paul's message.

I'm glad you folks sent me the money, not that I want your money, God would have met my needs, either way, whatever He decided was sufficient for me would have been completely satisfactory, whether abundance or sparing, I'd be fine either way, but I'm glad it was you folks who took care of me and accomplished His supply for my need, because that way, ultimately, you'll be repaid in blessings. So it's not the money that made me happy, it was the blessings I know you'll receive from God that make me happy.

When you folks here offered me this privilege to fill this pulpit and be your pastor in the limited capacities that I could offer, which we all understood were somewhat lacking, I would have happily worked for free at this. Probably what it's worth.

But I was doubly blessed when you offered to pay me at a level which is often beyond what you receive in tithes, because I understand what Paul says right here. God reponds to your generosity to me, with blessings you never even thought of.

Covid closed a lot of places down. We're doing OK. God has blessed us with ownership of the property, and we don't owe a thing, and there always seems to be just enough. It's this same principle Paul lays out right here.

We can learn a lot about staying within the umbrella of God's blessing by considering all that Paul says about giving and receiving right here. There are principles here for us to live by and operate by.

One little disclaimer. Probably not necessary but we'll mention it. We never broach the subject of giving unless it happens to be the topic of our verse by verse book studies for the verses we're in. That's the case this morning.

We did talk amongst the board here about adding some manner of giving to our web pages but the cost per year seemed about equal to what we might expect to receive so nothing further was done. We may want to visit that again in the future. For now a plate in the back seems adequate for our size. Simple is often best.

OK, then, let's look at Paul's words to the Phillipian christians. And these folks had a special love connection to Paul. They were the first and perhaps the only christians, and it sounds like it was under some duress to convince Paul to allow it, they were the only church he allowed to help subsidize his ministry.

To the church at Corinth Paul states the case that was his normal operating procedure.

7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed the gospel of God to you without charge? 8 I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brothers came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept and will keep myself from being a burden to you.

Paul showed up and preached the good news for free. He worked at his trade and ultimately allowed some support from "Macedonia" which was Philippi and perhaps Thessalonica, so that he could bring the gospel for free. He absolutely wanted to quelch anyone from saying, "He's in it for the money." "The gospel is a lucrative business for Paul."

Knowing Satan could easily distort truth and lie about christian motives, Paul makes a visible point of working free of charge for the gospel of Christ. He is careful, and especially where money is involved, to remain above reproach.

Within these final verses of this letter to the Philippians, there is a triad of related subjects that are interdependent on each other. Three take aways from Paul's final words. **Giving. Blessing. And contentment**.

In our land, in our culture, there is 24-7 never ending interest and attention paid by virtually everyone, christians, heathens, and everyone in between to the idea of contentment.

It's built into our model of government by our founding fathers that freedom to pursue whatever we deem happiness is, should be helped and protected by our government. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But unspoken by those founding fathers because it was understood and assumed to be unwritten law by every one of them, were the restraints of God's moral law.

So freedom is protected and valued for you to go pursue happiness within the restraints of the moral laws of God which preceed and define the laws of this government.

Well, in my lifetime of 72.976 years we killed God so we could free ourselves from His moral laws and pursue happiness in every possible way that depravity could imagine. (and many we do well not to imagine at all!) Something that never crossed the minds of our nations founders when they wrote the ideal of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

But look around you and answer this question. Has murdering God and divorcing His moral laws produced contentment? Honestly?

Have you turned on your TV lately? A bunch of contented people burning the country down, literally. A nation so content that you dare not drive your car through it's Capitol because car jackers will hold you up and steal your car out from under you, and maybe kill you.

Well, the resounding answer is a definite no. There is almost zero contentment in our land. And for the record, if you compared levels of contentment 90 years ago, in the midst of the great depression, but within a nation that had not yet abandoned God's moral laws, I'm quite sure you would discover that we are far less content in 2025 than we were in 1935

Paul, in these verses, speaks of absolute contentedness in connection with giving to God's kingdom ventures in this world, and the related blessings from God. And the resulting contentment is a contentment completely unrelated to physical conditions. Inner peace. Contentment and wellness from the inside out.

Our world which is on a non stop 24-7 all consuming quest for real contentment, real peace, has zero interest in the actual realization of it, if it involves bowing to the Lordship and ownership of Jesus. Bizarre. If that's the price for contentment, inner peace, thank you very much, I'll keep my misery and anxiety. I love my sin too much.

19 And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light lest his deeds be exposed.

And Jesus actually makes the distinction. In this world, currently under the rule and reign of Satan, there is no peace. It's an impossible quest. Jesus stated this truth. He said, *In this world you have tribulation*. Jn. 16:33b

There is a distinct dichotomy. In Satans cosmos, there is no peace. But in the Kingdom of God, there is perfect peace. Contentment is available, but the price is leaving Satan's world behind and coming under the rule and reign of Jesus. Listen again to the full context of what Jesus said when He made the statement about only having trouble in this current world.

33 I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!" Jn. 16:33

Jesus is an island of peace, an island of contentment, even in the midst of this troubled world where there is no peace. Jesus takes us out of the population of Satan's kingdom and places us within His kingdom, even while we remain in this world. His peace is inside and it supercedes whatever the world throws at us on the outside. Ask Paul;

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived thinking about me; indeed, you were thinking about me before, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak from want, for I 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 abundance; in any and all things 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.

Those words were written by a man from whom the world had removed all possible freedoms, up to and including movement. He is chained to a Roman soldier. He has been incarcerated because of liars who accused him of being a dangerous traitor to Ceasar.

He is waiting for a trial with Ceasar himself who will decide life or death in this current world. Ceasar can decide whether Paul goes free or Paul becomes a few minutes of entertainment in an arena with hungry lions.

You say, and I'm honest enough to agree with you since I've never experienced anything anywhere close to Paul's situation, those conditions would make any kind of contentment untenable. Impossible. And yet Paul claims to have a contentment that is completely divorced from his conditions and situation in this world.

I'm content these days. But if I'm honest, it's a fragile contentment. I've arrived at that golden dream. Retirement. Enough money each month to pay the bills with a little extra for a nice new car and enough even to splurge on a bit of fun occasionally. My health is OK. My family is thriving to a point. And I have enough time and mad money to even pursue foolishness. I'm working on a derelict 1939 Ford coupe. Trying to revive it to be drivable. Life is good. Who wouldn't be content.

I'm so far removed from the kind of contentment that Paul speaks of, that it's almost hypocritical for me to speak of what he describes. Could I be content in a jail cell for preaching the gospel in a church setting when a health department ordered me to not assemble? Like the faithful pastors in Canada did?

I know about that level of contentment but I've never had to prove the concept before in real time. That's why we study Paul's example. We never know what's coming in the future.

Paul is rejoicing because the christians at Philippi had the opportunity, again, to give out of their own desperate poverty in order to subsidize Paul's ministry efforts. It has been about 10 years since the last time that happened. So Paul rejoices. Their giving gives him reason for rejoicing.

But not for any of the usual reasons. The reason Paul rejoices over the gift from the church at Philippi is in verses 17 and 18.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek the fruit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I have been filled, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent,

a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Paul's rejoicing is not based in relief for his needs. It's based in the glory, the acceptable worship, the fragrant aroma that his people, his children in the Lord, have offered to God in so doing.

Paul knows the reciprocal relationship of giving for the glory of God and the resulting blessings and fruitfulness that God gives in return.

Here in Tonopah at TCC we have strived to copy these principles of Paul's laid down here. We have three missionaries that we help. But we consider each of them an investment in God's kingdom.

We aren't giving just so that Larisa can keep tires on the high mileage buses that she drives all over the earth in. Yes, we want to help feed and house Larisa and keep her mobile, but those are all just means to the end we are actually investing in. We want lives to be impacted and changed eternally because of what Larisa does.

We support Larisa so that the number of people in Satan's kindgom will diminish and the numbers of people in God's kingdom who glorify Christ will increase.

That's why Philippi loved and supported Paul. Even in prison, Paul was doing work that would edify the kingdom of God for 2000 years. Talk about an investment in future glory.

In God's kingdom, there is this umbrella effect. They scraped together a few dollars to help Paul's ministry, and within their investment, 2000 years later, we are still the beneficiaries. What an investment. In heaven I'll meet, and thank, these christians that invested in Paul, and I got to be the beneficiary, edified 1973 years later, studying the letter he wrote to them. It's like a big pyramid.

Larisa, partly funded by your dollars, may introduce some child to Christ,

who becomes the next D. L. Moody, or Billy Graham, and we get to be recipients of blessings far beyond what we ever dreamed was possible.

The idea of increase far greater than normal earthly investment yeilds is given by Jesus when He gives the parable of the sower. The good soil produces yeilds far surpassing what farmers in this world know or expect to be possible. 30, 60, and a hundred fold. Farmers never expect to see those kinds of yeilds. But in the spiritual world, it is possible for one life to literally effect thousands. We invest in people who do things with eternal value. We're investing in heaven.

Peter gives us a glimpse perhaps of this huge pyramid we are a tiny part of. In 1 Peter 2:4,5 *And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*.

It's a glimpse of the pyramid. I'm a living stone because of someone a layer above me who prayed and someone who spoke the truth, and some who invested in that speaker, so I could hear him bring me the word of God. And you see that row of stones down there? They're there because I helped with money to sustain these people who spoke the word to them.

These above had a part in my being in the building and those below I had a part in their becoming living stones, and all those below them and on and on. We are living stones in a huge pyramid house with Christ at the top.

And those guys way up near the top, the philippian christians, they supported Paul, who wrote the letter which my guy preached and I heard and believed.

Christian giving connects us all together in the building. That's why Paul got excited and rejoiced in his chains that the saints at Philippi helped him. Giving supports the building of living stones into a spiritual house for a

holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Forever. Dollars spent here and now can glorify God for eternity.

When you folks give, it isn't to keep the lights and heat on and a roof over your heads in this fine old building we've purchased. It's far more than that. We give so that ultimately, through our efforts and those we support's efforts, the kingdom of God is being built. We give, ultimately, to delete lives from Satan's kingdom and add them to God's kingdom for their benefit and His glory. Those are worthy goals that align with what Paul writes.

So where does contentment fit in all of this. Paul writes about being content, and not because of the gift from Philippi. Paul writes that he was already content, even in his need.

In the context of the passage Paul writes here, he rejoices over the gift, but not because it gave him comfort or peace or contentment. He rejoices because God is glorified in the giving of the gift, and the Philippians are blessed in it's giving.

Paul tells us that contentment is not associated with being full or being empty physically. Contentment is something learned over time. The key to Paul's contentment is back in verse 5b and 6, and 7. Contentment is based in the realities of the sovereignty of God who owns you and cares and provides for you.

5b The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

We grow in contentment as we grow in our faith and trust in the benevolence and loving care of a gracious sovereign Lord and owner who actually does work all things together for our good.

We don't start out fully comprehending the comprehensiveness of God's love and good will and care for us. God is sovereign Lord over all things. He providentially causes all things to work together for our good.

That's conditional to a point. If we are disobedient and rebellious, He mercifully remains faithful to bring us good, but He may choose, in His providence, to give us painful lessons on our way to obedience.

Over time we begin to see His providential faithfulness always working together for our good, and we learn over time to trust Him more and more. That's why contentment is learned. It takes time to grow up into that trust. God's on my side. If God is for me, who shall I fear. It's why Joseph could say to his brothers, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

Paul says, your gift didn't bring contentment, I already had contentment and peace in the midst of all my challenges and problems. But it's sure nice to pay the bills. And I'm full of joy thinking of how God will repay you with blessings.

This story has an interesting twist. Go back 10 years. The Philippian church begged Paul to let them invest in his work. I'll take you to 1 Corinthians 8 where Paul then uses the example of the Philippians to urge the Corinthians to give liberally out of their poverty.

But Paul has this big plan that maybe was a gospel blimp, we'll have to find out later. Paul wants to raise up a large cash gift from these churches all over the known world where he has planted them, and he'll take that money to Jerusalem.

In Paul's mind, cash from the gentile christians given to the poor and suffering jewish christians in Jerusalem will be a love gift that helps in breaking down the natural barriers of jews and gentiles, which in no small way has carried over into the church. 1 Cor. 8

Now brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great testing by affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the richness of their generosity. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the grace of sharing in the ministry to the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. 6 So we encouraged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. 7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and word and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

So Paul is collecting this money for a gift to take to the jewish christians. But it backfired. Paul goes to Jerusalem, with the gift for the poor jewish christians, and his countrymen, the non christian jews at Jerusalem have a riot against Paul, and the reason he's in prison when he writes this letter stems from that very ordeal.

Do you understand how it takes time for the faith to be built in us that rests in the sovereignty of God's hand in everything, even when it looks like a long range disaster, that it's actually working for good in God's sovereign and providential plans for us.

Paul is content because God has him exactly where God wants him. In prison. Chained to a roman. Writing these letters we call the New Testament.

Between Luke, who was Paul's physician and companion in much of the missionary endeavors, and Paul himself, these two men comprise 51% of our new testament.

It really gives a stark reality to Paul saying, *I 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 abundance; in any and all things 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.

What Paul is really saying here is, if I have Jesus with me, in me, helping me, strengthening me, that's really all I need. Circumstances are secondary, if I have Jesus.

Did you notice though, that the Macedonians, the church at Philippi, gave liberally out of deep poverty. They were poor and dug deep in their faith to supply Paul's needs, making them even poorer.

That's why Paul encourages them that God will meet all of their needs as well as blessing them spiritually.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

We Americans tend to give out of our discretionary money. Our example here are christians who made themselves poor by giving for the advancement of the kingdom. They supplied Paul's need and Paul tells them, God will likewise supply their needs.

Jesus says this in Matt. 6:31 *Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*.

Paul says God will supply all our needs. But in our culture, we've never been needy for basics. Never missed a meal in 73 years. Never didn't have clean clothes to choose from to wear. Never didn't have a roof over me and a shower with hot water and a soft bed to sleep in.

The one thing I did need was a loving friend / wife to accompany me, and

God supplied me wonderfully there.

In our wealthy nation and culture we have to seperate needs from wants. Philippians 4:19 says God will supply what you need. It doesn't say he will lavish you with everything you want. He often does, but it's not in that verse.

OK, final things. One more sentence before the Amen that is the final benediction before a few P.S. 's.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says the same thing. 31 *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*.

It's an axiomatic life rule that we want to be found doing when Jesus arrives in the sky. Where am I at? What am I doing? Right now? Does it glorify God? It's the main thing. Bringing glory to God who created us is the main thing.

It's basically what Jesus commanded of us in the verses I just read; Same over arching idea. *33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*.

We live, every day, working in some capacity for the glory of God in the advancing of His cause, His kingdom, His authority to reign. To God be the glory.

115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

That is the goal of our instruction. Set that as the goal of your life, and all other things will fall in perfect balance, and you will find contentment. Rest for your souls.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers 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.