

A Church on Mission
Giving as though on Mission
Philippians 4:10-19

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Introduction to Text: At various times this year, I have done some major teaching on our core values as a church. I have suggested that we adopt these four core values as a church.

1. We much preach the same Gospel.
2. We much declare this message to the next generation.
3. We must preach this same Gospel to all the nations.
4. Whatever we accomplish must be all for God's glory.

In this current series, we are focused on the third core value. A singular word for this core value is the word "missions." We started our review of mission last week with a message on our belief in missions. Today, I want to talk about our giving with a message titled "Giving as though on Mission."

Paul, the first Christian missionary, needed financial support for himself as well as for those to whom he ministered. That's why we can turn to his letter to the Philippians today for some Biblical principles on giving—giving as though we are on vision.

Text: ¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last you have renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me, but lacked the opportunity [to show it]. ¹¹ I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret [of being content]—whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Still, you did well by sharing with me in my hardship.

¹⁵ And you, Philippians, know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent [gifts] for my need several times. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that is increasing to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, a welcome sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Introduction: There is a great old story that goes something like this: The preacher was really getting the congregation moving. Near the end of his sermon he said this church has really got to walk to which someone in the back yelled, "let her walk preacher." The preacher then said if this church is going to go it's got to get up and run to which someone again yelled with gusto, "let her run preacher." Feeling the surge of the church, the preacher then said with even louder gusto, "if this church is going to go it's got to really fly" and once again with ever greater gusto, someone yelled, "let her fly preacher, let her fly." The preacher then seized the moment and stated with even greater gusto, "if this church is really going to fly it's going to need money" to which someone in the back yelled, "let her walk preacher, let her walk."

This is a passage about giving to missions. Paul is thanking the church for the renewal of their concern toward his ministry. Here is described a church giving to another location for the purposes of the advancement of the Gospel—that is missions giving.

Re-capturing the Vision for Giving (Philippians 4:10)

We are not exactly sure why the Philippians lacked opportunity to give. Possibly, this is just a reflection on Paul's imprisonment. Regardless, what is important in this passage is that they have renewed their concern and as a result renewed their giving.

Many are saying today that my generation needs to be reminded of the vision in order to give. They need to see what they are giving to. They are not motivated to give to a non-specific goal. Perhaps, the suggestion of this passage supports that modern mindset. That is, a renewal of giving is prompted by a renewal of vision.

If you want to talk about a vision for giving through our local church, I believe we have a very compelling vision. There is no way to highlight all of what our offering dollars do, but I want to remind you of several very compelling parts of our giving vision.

Basically, you can categorize our budget into three parts.

1. Personnel
2. Fixed Operational Costs
3. Ministry and Missions

About Personnel, I realize that there is not a great deal of excitement that is generated by providing the salaries of our paid staff. However, I want you to think about these men and women as the personal providers of pastoral care, of Christian education, of vision casting for the particular ministries of our church.

About the fixed operational costs, again there is not a lot of excitement. But, I challenge you not to just think about the building, but what happens in these buildings. Take for example this week's calendar.

- Every weekday, FBCS is in session. Some 235 children. That's 235 children with 2 parents and perhaps 4 grandparents—all being impacted by the Gospel.
- On Tuesday and Thursday—Mother's Day Out
- On Tuesday evening about 50 folks gathered for our weekly visitation ministry
- On Wednesday—Prayer and Bible Study, Ga's and RA's, DivorceCare and GriefShare, Choir and orchestra rehearsed, the opportunity for a meal together, the youth group met, Celebrate Recovery met, the Spanish Church met
- On Thursday—at two different times groups met for Bible Study
- Saturday—a place for a baby shower, a basketball camp for our school; Chinese speakers met for fellowship and ministry
- And today—over 1,000 people will meet with a small group in Sunday School, people will gather for worship, other groups will meet for Bible Study
- In these buildings, there is equipment that produced a television cast of our service that aired in every state in America, a video devotion was developed for every day of the week

- We could go on and on—these are not just buildings—but world-wide mission centers.

That brings us to the third and last category—ministry and missions. Here is the most exciting category. This is what we want more dollars to do. Please understand though that because of the fixed aspect of the first two categories, this is the part of the pie that often gets squeezed when we do not give to our level of expectation and potential.

We are blessed to be part of a cooperation of churches that meets probably every passion that you might have as a Christian.

- Christian Higher Education—Seminaries and LA College
- Missions—5,000 plus in over 100 countries
- Saving babies from abortion—The Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home is doing more ministry than ever to provide places of adoptive and foster care
- Having a voice in the moral and political aspects of our society—We have the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission

We are not perfect as a denomination by any stretch, but we are part of the greatest denomination in the world. We ought to be careful to not say this with arrogance, but we can say this with pride.

This is the vision that you give to.

So, don’t get frustrated in giving to people and buildings. Re-capture the vision of giving for the advancement of the kingdom.

Realizing the Truth about Giving (Philippians 4:11-14)

This is an interesting part of this text. You can almost see Paul saying, “God really doesn’t need your money.” Paul is saying, “God supplied my needs in those times when you did not contribute.” However, and don’t miss this: “You have done well in giving.”

The truth about our giving is that God is not dependent on our giving. The advancement of the kingdom is not dependent upon your giving. However, you do well when you participate. Now, here is the question: What do you want to be known for? Do you want to be known for being a giver? Do you want to be known for being an obedient giver that was part of the force that helped progress the Gospel to the ends of the earth? Or do you want to be known as someone who sat idle while others participated in what you could have been a part of?

Receiving the Blessing of Giving (Philippians 4:15-17)

Then, we see the side benefit of our gifts.

Not the reason we give, but certainly a result!

We don’t really need any more blessing as a motivation to give. Paul captured this well in Romans 11:35-36, “Or who has ever first given to Him, and has to be repaid? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Considering this, it ought to be easy to give obediently and cheerfully!

Reminding ourselves of the Promise of Giving (Philippians 4:18-20)

He will supply all of our needs!

Actually, there might be as many as 3 distinct promises.

- Our needs will be met.
- God will provide.
- God gets the glory.

David Livingstone, a missionary in the 1800's, said, "I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it, I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."