

Philippians 10-09-24b

Let's pick up our study in Philippians chapter 4. We have covered verses 10 through 12 and we have seen that there's a wonderful attitude that Paul has expressed here that basically results in balance. You can be blessed and prosperous without forgetting the healthy kind of needs. We have hymns that express this, I need thee every hour, O precious Lord.

And we would never want to become so full of blessing or feel like we have arrived to the point that we didn't feel that sense of need. And it's pretty self-explanatory once you see it in the passage, and I'm not going to try to over think or over express it. It's very eloquently put here by the Apostle himself.

In each thing and in everything. So this is a comprehensive approach. There's no part of life where this cannot be applied.

And it's a wonderful truth to think about and to try to find where maybe we're not doing that. Where we have let one side or the other pull us away from the center. And the Christian life is a life of balance.

The Bible itself is balanced. I've said many times that any truth, any teaching that you find that that seems to go in one direction, you will find other truths that pull you back and keep you from taking that to an extreme. All things are lawful.

Anything goes. But all things are not edifying. And so even though we have liberty, we also have responsibility.

And even though I have freedom, I will not exercise my freedom if it causes a brother to stumble. So there's freedom, yes. But it is limited by that which does not cause others problems.

Especially, you know, in understanding or in the spiritual realm. So this is one of those expressions of biblical truth that helps us remember what a great life of balance is given to us in Christ. So we keep going here.

And in the next verse, he says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. This is a life verse for some people and is often repeated and put on refrigerator magnets. And the problem is the word Christ is not in the verse.

At least it wasn't there originally. It got added in later. And even in early manuscripts, people felt like the verse needed help because it just said, I can do all things through the one.

They said, well, the one? Who's the one? Well, let's just put Christ in there so that there is no doubt. And so they, like a Codex Aleph in the original, Christ is not there. The first corrector that came through, Christ is not there.

The second corrector that came through penciled in Christ into this verse. Same way with many other manuscripts, it's in the majority text. That's why you have it in the Western Byzantine text form.

That's why you have it in the King James. And it's antecedents and derivatives, but it's not original. What Paul actually said, and this is a place where the Nestle-Allen text tradition of the Greek here is correct.

He says, *Panta iskuo en toi en du manunti me*. And what he's basically saying here is he has put a word up in front of the sentence and made it very emphatic. Greek is pretty flexible.

You can kind of mix and match. And so when you move things around in the sentence, it is for expression. And often when you put something at the front of the sentence, it's for emphasis.

The first word in this sentence, in this verse, is *Panta*. Paul is using a lot of words here that are comprehensive. You saw in the previous one where he said *en panti kai en pasen*.

And *panti* was singular, *pasen* was plural. Here we have *Panta*. And this is the plural.

All things. And then we have *iskuo*. I-S-C-H-U-O.

Iskuros is the noun that means strength or ability. You know, there's different words for power or strength. There's *dunamis*.

And lots of them. Well, here we have *iskuo*. And *iskuo* means strength in the sense of ability.

I am strong enough to do a thing. I am strong enough to lift this slab of marble. I am not strong enough to lift this slab of marble.

I need help. It is strength in the sense of strong enough. And by strong enough you have ability.

So it comes to mean ability. And this is why it is translated here. I can do.

But a better translation would mean I am strong enough or I am able. So we have *Panta iskuo*. And it's, you can't get this directly in English very easily without adding some words that kind of aren't really in the Greek because *Panta* is an accusative.

This is sort of your objective case. You know how in English you have the nominative case. That's your subject.

You have the objective case. That is your direct object. So I do something.

That's nominative. Me is objective. You know, she hit me.

Me. I'm the object of being hit. And that's, well, accusative in Greek is the object case.

It's the one that receives things. So Panta is in the accusative. So this is going to receive the action of the verb in this particular construction.

Iskuo. I am strong. I am able.

I am strong enough to be able. All things. No preposition.

No infinitive. Just when it comes to all things. I am strong enough.

I am able. I am capable. All things.

I am able. And all things has been shoved up to the very front of the sentence. Everything.

I am strong enough for everything. Would be a nice colloquial translation. Or if you wanted to express it negatively to try to get the accusative up to the front of your thought.

There is nothing for which I'm not strong enough. Panta. Panta.

Everything. I am able. Entoy en dunamunti me.

En dunamunti me. And this en is your preposition. E-N.

And remember, ace means into or unto. You know, ace, er, come I. I go into. En is the preposition that expresses the same functions that you find in the dative locative or instrumental.

It can be in, by, or with. Depending on context, en can be translated in, by, or with. Or, and by is by means of.

And I would suggest here when he says I am strong enough for everything by means of the empowering one of me. And once again, me, at the end of the sentence, is accusative. And so you have this participle, present active participle, and the participle verbalizes, it takes a verb and makes it a noun.

So there is someone who is dunamis. That's another word for power. That's your dynamite word.

That's your potential. You know, dynamite is sitting there, and it's not till you set it off with a blasting cap or a fuse or whatever that you get the force out of it. But dunamis is power.

It may or may not be in current exercise, but it is available. It's available power. Iscuo, iscuras, is strength that is currently doing work.

It's I am able and I'm kind of in the midst of doing it. And you remember in Ephesians, you've got like all five of them just stacked all up together. But here, I am able to do what needs doing, which is everything, by means of the one dynamiting me, the one empowering me.

And because this is a participle, it is the empowering one in me. Me is the object of the

empowering one. The empowering one is acting on behalf of me.

That's why me is in the accusative. So it's awkward. You always have to make some compromises when you render Greek like this into English.

But it's worth looking at in Greek, because you've only got six words here. *Panta iscuo entoi endunamunti me*. Everything is accomplishable by me.

Everything is doable for me, by means of the one enabling me. Now, why doesn't Paul say Christ here? Why didn't he put it in? He has already talked about the Lord Jesus in chapter three. It's one of the great descriptive praise passages of the Lord Jesus that you find in the book of Revelation.

You find in the Bible, in chapter three. But here, Paul is talking about himself. This is the close of the letter.

He has saved himself. He talked about himself a little bit at the beginning, as an example. He's talking about himself at the end, again, with relation to the Philippians.

And he's describing himself. He says, you know, I really appreciate your gift. And I appreciate it, not because I'm just sitting here waiting for more gifts, but because it meets a need.

But I'm good to go in whatever. I have learned the secret of remembering to be abased even as I abound. I have learned the secret of abounding even when I am abased.

I have learned the secret of feeling full even when I'm hungry. I have learned the secret of maintaining my hunger even when I'm full. Everything, all of this is doable for me because of the One who enables me.

And it's actually almost more effective by not naming Christ. Because He is that presence that embodies the secret. You can't embody this any better than the Lord Jesus Christ who was deity incarnate.

Who was the Son of God tired out and sleeping in the back of the boat. He never forgot who He was or why He was here. But He knew how to be humbled even while He was the Son of God.

And He knew how to keep His head even when they were throwing blankets and saying, Hosanna, Son of David, let's make the kingdom now. Make more bread. He was offered all the kingdoms of the world and He stayed focused.

He stayed in the center. The Lord Jesus is the One who reveals this secret to us. It's one thing to know that it's possible.

It's one thing to hear Paul talk about it and say that he has learned this secret, mastered this mystery. But for us, to do the same requires that same strengthening. You can't just decide to do

it.

This is not a Tony Robbins moment. This is not an Oprah book selection where if you just read it or get it or hear it, it's not like Dr. Phil can explain it and say, okay, now I can go do this. Paul says, I do all of this stuff by means of He who is enabling me.

And I shouldn't have to tell you who He is. And if you already know, you have this same opportunity, this same initiation into the mystery. So that's verse 13.

And then he concludes here by coming back to kind of his initial point, he has sort of digressed a bit, if you will, because he's talking about the expression of their care in the form of this gift, for which he's very grateful. But he wants to qualify that gratitude and make sure they understand that he's okay. Now he's going to come back to the gift.

Nevertheless, you have done well that you shared in my distress. And I want to point out here that this word for sharing doesn't really mean what share means in English. This is *sugcoinonesantes*, *suncoinonia*.

Sun means with, *coinonia* is fellowship. You have fellowshiped with me. It doesn't mean share in the sense of put a shoulder under the load.

It doesn't mean share in the sense of you have shared your worldly goods with me. It means you are a partner with me. Fellowship, it really catches it in English.

You know, what is fellowship? It can include sharing material goods. It can include putting a helping hand under the load. But fellowship just encompasses all of those things at once.

People like to say, you know, you were there for me. Well, what are they talking about? They're talking about fellowship. Whether you were near or whether you were far, you were involved.

You were enmeshed. You were engaged. You were aware and cared.

And when there was an opportunity to do something, you did it. But you were a fellow. You were a partner in my circumstance, my trial, whatever it might be.

That's the word here. It is good. It is *kalos*, K-A-L-O-S.

It is *kalos* that you did this, *poieo*, to make or to do. You're doing this aorist *poieo* thing that you did was good. Having been, this is an aorist active participle.

What do you know about the aorist participle? All of you know this. Tell me what it is. The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb.

What is the action of the main verb? You did this thing. You sent this gift. Having already been co-fellowshippers of mine in affliction, having been soon *koinonia* people of me in philipsis, in

affliction.

It doesn't necessarily mean his affliction. It means we are our fellowship, we together, you and me, we know about affliction. And you have been co-partners of me in affliction.

He doesn't say my affliction. He says you are my soon koinonia. You are my co-partners in affliction.

Do the Philippians experience affliction? Yes. Does Paul experience affliction? Yes. He enters into and shares with and prays about and empathizes with their affliction and they do the same.

It's a fellowship, bearing one another's burdens, entering into one another's sorrows, rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep, co-fellowshippers in whatever it may be. So he says you've done well, having been. That sense of fellowship preceded the gift.

The gift was not grudging, was not out of necessity. Somebody didn't go around and say alright, here's my fireman's hat, now you know that Paul is in prison, come on, ante up. They did this because they were already in fellowship with him and they know what affliction is like.

Paul came to them in their affliction. You look at the Philippian jailer, you want to talk about a guy that knew affliction, he was ready to end his life. Paul understood that, Paul said look, and the Philippian jailer entered into his affliction and said, can you imagine how the jailer felt once he was saved and he realized this great gift of salvation and how compassionate and gracious and caring Paul was, that after they had beat them senseless and locked them up in a dark, dank, feces-infested prison cell, Paul cared enough about him to not leave when divine intervention had thrown open a door and broken all the chains.

The man was just overwhelmed and he couldn't do enough to ease their suffering and to salve their wounds and bind them up. There was this great co-fellowship. Well the Philippians and Paul have felt that way about each other ever since and Paul says, I know about this and I know that you cared for me whether or not you have had opportunity.

That all preceded this gift and I know what kind of heart this gift comes out of. That's the idea. When you look at some of the mechanisms by which churches achieve amounts of giving today, it is so far removed from this concept that it bears no resemblance.

You might as well be NPR, your local public television station, give and we'll send you a mug. Give because you like the programs. Give because the Britcoms are your favorite kind of programs.

There's no divine dynamic in that. I mean, give to them if you want, but I'm not knocking public television per se, although I could. But if churches engage in the same kind of fundraising tactics, the same kind of machinations to motivate giving instead of giving that comes from something

already having been present in the heart, that's your aorist participle.

So this brings us to verse 15, nevertheless, it was good what you have done. Having been for so long a time, you know, co-participants and fellowshippers in suffering. My co-participants were suffering.

Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving, but you only. And this is another recognition that they have had this figured out for a long time. They're not the richest church.

They're not the most prosperous. They're not the largest. You know, Philippi, you think about other congregations that were far larger, you think about the hundreds and hundreds that they had in Antioch, you think about the hundreds and hundreds that they had eventually in Rome, and some of these other, Philippi wasn't a particularly large church, but it's kind of like they say, you know, it isn't the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.

And it isn't the size of a group that matters. It's the size of the spiritual engagement in the people in that group. And as the old song says, little is much when God is in it.

So that is what he alludes to here. And this is, by the way, kind of an interesting and rare thing. It's not often in the course of a letter that Paul will reiterate the name of the group.

This is why there is some uncertainty about Ephesians, because Paul writes to the saints and faithful, and then it says en epheso, but a lot of manuscripts don't have en epheso. And so who was it really to? And this was a letter that may have actually gone to several different churches, and at some subsequent point, the Ephesians had a copy of it, and some guy, this is to us. Well, it was, I think it's the Laodicean letter, actually.

But nowhere else in the letter does he say, and you Ephesians, be sure and do this, or and you Thessalonians do this, or you, you wonderful people in Colossae do this. This is relatively rare, where he says, you Philippians, there is no doubt that this is the letter to the Philippians, it's just replete with references. You Philippians know that in the beginning of the gospel, and no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving, but you only.

Because even in Thessalonica, now remember, there's a church in Thessalonica, Thessalonians are thought to be one of the more mature groups, and they've got a bunch of folks there, but even when he was there in Thessalonica, you sent aid once and again. They knew that he was in a place where there was a group of believers, and they were still sending aid. They didn't wait to hear if there was a need or not, they figured, we can, we want to, let's do it.

And it says once and again, and this is hapoxkaides, if you dismember something, you chop it into at least two pieces. You make one thing into two things by dismembering, dis, di, diploid, and

we have lots of words that begin with DI, and that means two of a thing. This comes from the Greek, hapox, of course, like hapoxlegomena, so this is hapoxkaides, once and twice, once and again, in my need, you sent.

You heard of a need and you sent. And there are some people that just seem to really have a gift for this. They just seem to have a sixth sense about somebody being in need.

They're sensitive to the leading of the spirit or whatever, and they're instinctively, when the chips are down, they just mysteriously seem to be there with the right stuff. And it's just the balm of Gilead in that particular situation. You think, wow, that was timely, it was just right, it wasn't too much.

It wasn't too little, and there are people in God's kingdom that just, that's their gift, to be there just right. And the Philippian church filled this need for Paul, and other churches were not sharing. And sometimes this is a slow to develop knowledge, a slow to develop skill.

There were other churches to whom Paul had ministered, but you remember in Corinthians and other places, he writes and he says, you know what, I didn't call upon you for any support, nor did I receive any. You know, Paul's out there mending tents and making his own way. And nobody in the church said, hey, wait a minute, why is the apostle out here working to make enough money to eat his chow, why don't we do a thing? You know, it's difficult for us to grow out of our subjectivity sometimes.

And there is a huge problem today with subjectivity. Ken and I were talking about that this morning, about why are social networks so overwhelmingly popular? Why has Facebook just exploded, it's become, you know, we used to talk about the World Wide Web, but now half of what goes on on the web seems to be on Facebook. Every business has a Facebook page.

Every ministry has a Facebook page. Everybody who's anybody that has anything to say is tweeting on Twitter. And twits are subscribing to the tweets so that the twittering can be tweeted to their twittification.

And it's social networking. Well, why did that grow and become so enormous that nobody who has anything to say cannot ignore getting on to that particular communication channel and broadcasting their stuff? Why is that? What is the whole thing of social networking? By the way, you know, if you've got a Facebook page, God bless you, I'm not picking on anybody. I'm talking about the phenomenon, not anybody's individual participation.

But it encourages and promotes subjectivity, Twitter especially. That thing started out as individuals. I am Melanie, and I've got my friends Buffy and Sadie and Jody, and I want them to know what I'm doing.

I'm down here at Dillard's, and I just saw a dress on sale, and so I want to text them, but I've got

to text Sadie, and then I've got to text Buffy, and then I've got to text Jody, and it's just very inconvenient, and I wish I had a place where I could just text once and it would go to all of them. Well, here comes Twitter. You send one text, everybody you want on your list gets it.

Oh, this is great. So everybody starts telling everybody every single thing they're doing. I'll be right back.

I'm going to the head. I'm driving down the road. I'm stopping in at Burger King to get a burger.

I mean, seriously, I have read these tweets, and it's just moronically ridiculous. People who love a celebrity, here's Britney, well, you know, I'm going to the studio to cut a demo today, and people are just, you know, salivating, oh, you know, what is it? And then they start tweeting and Twittering back to each other, and there's sub-tweets and diminutive chirps and things underneath the tweeting and Twittering. Well, on Facebook, here's my picture, and didn't I look cute at the party last night with a lampshade on my head and, you know, partially clad, and well, somebody in your circle of friends has got their own circle of friends, and they say, you'll never guess what one of my friends did last night.

Let me show you this picture, and somebody in that circle says, you want to see a gal with no shirt and a lampshade on her head, and first thing you know, you're applying for a job at, you know, Merrill Lynch, and they're doing their background check, and so apparently, you wear lampshades and go shirtless at parties, and you don't get the job because of Facebook, but it appeals to subjectivity. We're wrapped up in ourselves, and it's a cultural thing. Now, you can be on any of these and not be subjective.

I'm not making that argument. I am saying that the success of these things is built on our innate fascination with ourselves and anything to do with ourselves and others who get fascinated with ourselves because they are, in some way, subjective. You can keep up with your relatives on Facebook and be completely innocuous, and there's no problem.

I don't mean to go down that road. However, look at the Philippian church. They are supporting Paul in towns where there are local groups of believers who didn't think to support him, who didn't think to help him, who were thoughtless.

That's why he says, even in Thessalonica, we've got first and second Thessalonians, right? Written to mature believers with lots of retired military. Wouldn't they know? Apparently not, because the little group of people in Philippi were supporting Paul while he was in Thessalonica. It's a rebuke of sorts to the Thessalonians, and it's a commendation to these thoughtful, remembering, co-fellowshipping Philippians that they thought enough to not just assume that Paul would be okay because he was around other believers.

They didn't take it for granted. They thought, you know what? We seem to have a little bit extra here, leading of the Holy Spirit. Had somebody that happened to be going that direction, well,

look, go ahead and take a gift to Paul.

He may not need it, but I just kind of think maybe he does, and he did, and nobody else was supporting him, and it was literally a godsend. And to be sensitive, to be outward-looking, is to seize and lay hold of these opportunities. This particular one is immortalized in Scripture for all eternity.

The Philippians were thoughtful enough and loved Paul enough to look out for him at every opportunity. Sometimes God took the opportunities away, but when they had an opportunity, bang on, here comes a gift from the Philippians. You can count on it.

If they have any kind of a chance, they're going to send something. Verse 17, again, Paul says, I want to commend you for that, and you all are so loving and so generous and so thoughtful. But look at verse 17.

He does the same thing he did earlier. Not that I seek the gift. I'm not just shining you on so you'll send me more stuff.

But I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Now, what does he mean by that? We tease each other about, well, I went to lunch with a couple of guys who were fighting over who was going to pay the bill. They each wanted to pay it, and the guy who always pays the bill and will not let anybody else ever pay it had got the bill and he was going to pay it.

Well, this other guy wanted to pay it, and I knew that he was going to be defeated trying to wrestle that bill away from the guy who loves to pay and always pays. But he made a valiant effort, and he said, you know, you really ought to let me pay. You know, you've paid every other time.

Why don't you let me pay this time? No, no, no. Not going to happen. And he said, well, you know, you're depriving me of a blessing because I'm not going to get the chance to buy your meal for you.

And he said, yeah, I know, but that's because I'm going to get blessed. I'm going to get the blessing. And I want the blessing, and you're not going to get the blessing because I'm not going to let you pay.

But, you know, sometimes we say, well, you know, I'll let you go ahead and give to me because I know you'll get a blessing from it. That's not what Paul is saying here. He's not saying, I don't really want the gift, I just want you to give to me so that you will be blessed.

I mean, it sounds kind of phony, and that's really not what he's saying. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. What Paul is saying is, when you provide for me, and I am able to minister, and I am able to teach, and I am able to preach, and your gift is a provision from God that enables me to do my apostolic function, you are a partaker.

He's back to that Sune Koinonia idea. In the same way that you are sharers and participants and partners in philipsis, in suffering, when you send a gift and it enables me and provides for me so that I can do my apostolic function, I know that you are going to share the fruit of that. You become a participant.

And that's what happens. We do what we can to help the ministries that our church is associated with, and when Village Ministries International is able to do something, we have a small share in that, because we empathize with them, and we believe in what they're doing, and we share their ministry philosophy, and we're pulling for them, and we're praying for them, and we're interested in them, and we care how it goes. And to the extent that we can, we send something their way.

And when something good happens over there, and that's how they feel. They say, you know what, the things that we're able to do over here because you've helped us, this fruit is partly yours. God is going to credit this fruit to your account, just like he's crediting to our account, because you are Sune Koinonia.

You're sharing with us in the bad and the good. That's what he's talking about. He doesn't say, well, you're going to get a blessing just because you gave.

He said, you share in the fruit that your gift, and your care, and your concern produced. The fruit of ministry, the fruit of getting things done in God's plan. I seek the fruit.

That's why Paul says, I seek the fruit, because he's doing the ministry. I take your gift, and I plow it into ministry. I don't plow it into a better car for myself.

I don't plow it into gold bathtub faucets and a nicer set for my TV show. Your gift goes into ministry. I seek fruit that will redound to your account.

I cannot imagine what goes on in the conscience of alleged Christian ministries that take gifts from ladies who are living on their Social Security checks, and who are scraping by, and who believe that these people are doing God's work, and send them money. These people fly on private jets, and go to elaborate lengths to entertain themselves, and to live high on the hog. They're not seeking the fruit that will abound to their donor's account.

I think that God is going to assign credit to those donors, but not based on what the donee did. The donee is going to get double judgment for not only not plowing that thing into ministry, but for misusing it, misappropriating it. Remember what Jesus said about the servant who decided that his master was delaying his company, began his returning, and began to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink his master's goods? Jesus said, what do you think will happen to that servant when the master returns? Well, that's what's going to happen to some of these ministries.

Paul says, I seek fruit. I'm going to take your gift, and your ministry, and I am going to devote

myself to my apostolic ministry, and you will have credit in your account as a result. And it's a great thing.

We can share in each other's victories, and share in each other's accomplishments in the sphere of God's plan and purpose. Indeed, he says, verse 18, I have all and abound. He says, I really appreciate your gift, but once again, I am rich.

I have everything. I am in a state of abundance. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the thing sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

Now he's talking about their credit just for giving the gift. He talks about what the gift is going to accomplish first, and that they will share in the fruit that he is seeking. But he says, it's already an aroma and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God, even before I use it.

Epaphroditus has arrived. The bag of gold coins is here. I haven't used it yet, but it's already.

The act of giving it has already been a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. It's like a double blessing. They're blessed for giving it, and they're blessed for what it's going to do.

It's a win-win. Then, you have verse 19, so often quoted, well, don't worry if you're short this month. Don't worry if you're behind.

Don't worry if there's not. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Guess what? Like many of the other statements and promises in Scripture, this one has a condition.

It has an environment in which it is true, and there are other environments in which it is not true. Notice he says, and, at the beginning of verse 19. This is actually but, duh, which is translated but or now, but it's more of an adversative conjunction rather than a connective.

He says, I have panta, I have everything, and I perisule, I superabound. I have been filled, pe pleromai. You remember pleroma, to be filled, be filled with the Spirit, plero, well, this is pe pleroma, and when you double the consonant at the beginning, you double, you know, that's the sign of the perfect.

I have been filled, perfect passive indicative. Then you have the aorist participle, having welcomed from Epaphroditus the gift of yours, the thing that you sent. But my God will fill, and here you have plero again, but now it's the future active indicative.

Having welcomed your gift, I have been filled. Now, duh, and there's an adversative idea there, meaning there's a hinge point at the beginning of the verse. Sometimes you use but to indicate a contrast or a negation or a total difference.

Sometimes it's now, but when you have *duh* at the beginning of a Greek sentence, it's a hinge point, and you're going to look at the concept in the preceding context, and then there's going to be something different here. So Paul's talking about himself, he says, your gift came, I have been filled. Now God, my God, *theos mu*, *plerose*, will fill up all your need, according to the riches of his, in glory, in Christ Jesus, *en doxe*, *en Christo Iesu*.

Is it in, by, or with? Is it in glory, by glory, with glory? Is it in Christ, by Christ, or with Christ? Yes. It is all of those things, in glory, in Christ Jesus. You can slice it any way you want, and it's right.

There is, are God's riches in glory? Yes they are, but what is he really talking about here? Let me ask you this, what are God's riches in glory? Streets of gold, gemstones, pearly gates, what would God's riches in glory be? When you look at this verse the way we've always memorized it and quoted it and thought about it, my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory. We think, well God's got a lot of loot up there, and he's going to dispense a little bit of it down here. When has that ever happened? When did a ruby drop out of the sky to meet your need? When did a chunk of gold plop down in the lawn to help you pay your bills at the end of the month? What does it really mean, God will supply your needs according to his riches in glory? According to the standard of his riches? Because he is so rich up there, he will be rich down here? What does it mean, *kata*, according to his riches in glory, in Christ Jesus? What does it mean? Well, interestingly, the word translated riches is singular, *plutos* here, *kata ta platos*, it is the singular neuter accusative.

Kata takes the accusative, according to, and you have something in the objective case. According to his wealth, according to his abundance, is it his abundance in glory or his abundance, he will meet your needs, he will fill up all of your needs, according to his abundance with glory in Christ Jesus, it works just as well. The upshot of it is not so much that his wealth and abundance are up in glory somewhere and it's somehow going to leak down here and fix our problems and fill up our needs.

His wealth and abundance is glorious and when he fills up our need, it reflects his glory, it is a part of his glory, it is in the sphere of his glory, it is with glory, he doesn't just meet our needs, he does it gloriously. He fills us according to his abundance and there is glory shining out of it. God is glorified when he meets our needs.

This is essentially what Paul is saying, it's not just according to his big treasure chest in the sky, that's how we tend to think of it, no. My God will fill up all of your need according to his super abundance, according to his greatness in or with or by means of in the sphere of glory, in, by, with, by means of Jesus Christ. Now what does this say? This goes beyond just meeting physical needs, doesn't it? This is not just a promise to make sure you can write all your checks at the end of the month and not bounce them because there are these qualifiers.

First of all, this assurance is given to people who have already been selfless and contributed.

Why would they be short? Why would they have a need? Because they scraped what they had and sent it with Epaphroditus to Paul. And Paul says, God will compensate you, you have sacrificially given, it's a sweet swelling aroma, it's a sacrificial gift, God will fill up any deficit that this gift created.

It's not just any old need that God promises to fill, this is a deficit specifically associated with having sacrificially given to Paul. He says, don't worry if you short-changed yourself, if you put yourself out, think about this, love is sacrificial toward self and beneficial toward others. This promise essentially says when you do that, when you are sacrificial in your willingness and efficacy in helping others, God will fill up any crater that that leaves.

If you expend your strength, God will fill it. If you expend your time, God will give you more. If you expend your money, God will compensate you.

But it's not just money, it's your need. If you wind up being short because you have put yourself out on behalf of someone else as a co-fellowship with them in their joys and their sorrows, their ministries and their needs, if you have done that as under the Lord in Christ Jesus, in the sphere of glory, if you have done this, you're not going to end up short. If it took extra time, don't worry about it, you're not going to miss that time.

If it took extra money, don't worry about it, you're not going to miss the money. If it took extra strength and effort and you think you're going to end up being all fatigued and beat down and you're not going to be able to do your stuff, my God shall fill up that lack. You cannot give in Christ and in glory, in fellowship with someone who is genuinely in God's work.

You can't give to that and end up short. God will fill it. That's the sphere.

It's in glory and it's in Christ Jesus. God will fill that need. To the extent that you gave it because it's in Christ and in God's glory, to that extent God will fill it.

That's the idea. And that is why he can conclude by saying in verse 20, Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. When this is working like it should, it all reflects the glory of God the Father.

Even the Lord Jesus Christ does what he does to the glory of God the Father. Father, glorify your name. Jesus prayed and he says I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

To our God and Father. People get so wrapped up with Jesus, so wrapped up with the Holy Spirit and it's hard to fault somebody. They are members of the Trinity, worthy of praise and appreciation and so many things but ultimately and finally our relationship is with God the Father.

Jesus said I am the way to the Father. No man comes to the Father but by me. I bring many sons to glory.

That's where the Father is. He brings them. He's already with them.

He's bringing them to the Father. We have, if there was a way to say Christian that would be fatherens, that would probably be more accurate because through Christ we are in relationship with the Father. To our God and our Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Well, it's a good place for us to stop for tonight. We'll pick up next time and conclude our study in the book of Philippians by noting the final words of Paul here and a couple of summary thoughts about the letter but we'll close for tonight.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the clear and expressive way that it reveals to us these wonderful truths that so convict and so challenge and so should, so energize us to live the life to which we have been called. We thank you for your provision and your grace toward us and we ask your blessing on us as we go forth that these things will be more than momentary insights but they will enable us and edify us so that we can fulfill your plan for us in every area of our lives.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.