

Philippians 4 – “My God Will Meet All Your Needs” 12/6/17

At the end of **Philippians 4**, Paul tells the church at Philippi how grateful he is because they have continued to support him throughout his ministry with the things he has needed to carry the gospel to the world. He says this in **verses 14-19**:

“Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

There are many evangelists who site verse 19 and others in the scripture as the basis of what is commonly called the “prosperity gospel.” This prosperity gospel says that God wants you to be rich and healthy, and the way to receive wealth is to plant a “seed” offering. The more you give to support the ministry (and the minister, I might add), the more you’ll get. They cite Jesus’ words in **Matthew 19** as well. Here Jesus has just spoken to the “rich young ruler” and told him to ***“sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”*** The young man had too much in the way of worldly riches in order to do that. ***“Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven”*** was Jesus’ statement to his apostles. They were confused. As Jews, they had been taught that the rich were obviously favored by God. If the rich cannot enter the kingdom of God, they who can be saved? **Matthew 19:29** states: ***“everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”*** According to the prosperity gospel, if you give, then you’ll get 100 times as much as you give. Here are Jesus’ words again, this time in **Luke 6:38**: ***“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.”*** Those who plant a seed offering will become unbelievably wealthy, or so the prosperity gospel states.

There are more passages that are misused to spread this false doctrine. Jesus is not talking about giving money and reaping money. He is, in my opinion, speaking of reaping a harvest of SPIRITUAL blessings. If you give to the poor, you will be looked on favorably by God and be blessed with greater grace and faith and the urge to do more. If you share the spiritual blessings you have received in Christ Jesus, you will receive more of God’s spiritual “wealth.”

Isn’t that precisely what Paul is saying in **Philippians 4:17** when he says he is glad to have received their support because it is ***“credited to your account”***? Isn’t that what he means when he tells them in **verse 19** that ***“God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus”***? I’m pretty sure Jesus meant the same thing

when he said in **Matthew 6** not to accumulate wealth, but to ***“store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** (Matthew 6:20-21)

Only one more scripture to make my point, because I could go on and on, but space doesn't permit. James said in **James 1:17** that ***“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...”*** Physical blessings are not ***“good and perfect.”*** Only spiritual blessings given to us by the grace of God are. Let us sow ***“to please the Spirit”*** as Paul tells the Galatians in **Galatians 6:8**, because ***“from the Spirit”*** we ***“will reap eternal life.”***