

Philippians 4:10-20

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I. Outline

- A. Paul and the Philippians - General partnership and lessons (10-14)
 - 1. The Philippians' concern for Paul revived (10)
 - 2. Paul's learning and understanding (11)
 - i. Paul's learning to be content (11)
 - ii. Paul's learning the secret in everything to be satisfied (12)
 - 3. Paul's method – in the one who strengthens (13)
 - 4. Paul and Philippian partnership in Paul's distress (14)
- B. Paul and the Philippians - Specific partnership and results (15-19)
 - 1. Philippians' unique sharing (15)
 - 2. Philippians' multiple sharing (16)
 - 3. Paul's desire – fruit not gifts (17)
 - 4. Paul's current status – paid in full (18)
 - 5. The Lord's response – fully satisfy the Philippians (19)
- C. Doxology: τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα:(20)

II. Exegetical Issues

A. Boundaries, Placement, Function of the Passage in its Context

1. This passage is introduced with a change to the first person where Paul states, “I rejoice” (Ἐχάρην). There is also a consecutive structural signal (δε) that indicates continuation with the preceding section. In addition, Paul starts to address the Philippians directly again in the second person plural (ἀνεθαλετε). The ending of this passage is clearly marked by a doxology (τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα) that follows a series of Paul/Philippian partnership descriptions.
2. This passage is a continuation of the conclusion of the letter that begins with the structural signal that marks the conclusion two verses before the beginning of this passage. Paul addresses the Philippians with a “finally brothers” (το λοιπον, ἀδελφοι). Paul immediately follows this transition marker with two commands and one promise. Paul uses the conclusion to finish his theme of the partnership between him and Philippians. The placement of this section provides Paul the opportunity to tie together the early days of the gospel what Paul sees as his final days of life in the gospel.
3. Philippians 4:10-20 functions both as an example of Christian living, as portrayed by the lessons that Paul has learned, and as final update on his partnership with the Philippians. Paul, once again, provides a description of himself as a model for the Philippians to follow. This description differs from others in that he focuses on his learning and coming to understand principles of humility. In addition, Paul describes his partnership with the Philippians in terms of physical as well as spiritual exchanges. For example, he notes that he received the Philippians' gift from Epaphroditus while also promising that God will fill all their needs according to the riches in glory in Christ Jesus (4:18-19). Furthermore, this passage serves as pattern for partnering relationships

between leaders and churches. Overall, this passage concludes the letter and ties together the themes of partnership, unity, humility, obedience and joy.

B. Textual Problems

1. 4:13: Some mss include the addition of *χριστω* after *με* (ℵ² D² (F G) Ψ 075. 1881 *ms*; Hier). The full reading is *πάντα ἰσχυὼ ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι με χριστῷ*. The NA²⁷ text does not include *χριστω* (ℵ^{*} A B D¹ I 33. 629. 1739 *pc lat co*; Cl). The addition appears to be included as a further description for “in the one who strengthens”. The author’s intent seems to refer to Christ in this sentence. Therefore, the addition appears to be a deliberate variation for clarification in order to improve the text and make it more understandable. How does the reference to Christ impact the meaning of this verse? How would the readers view the addition of the reference to Christ? Is there a strong enough implied meaning to warrant this addition? What other verses include the same implied meaning and how do the manuscripts differ for these verses?

2. 4:16: The phrase *εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι* has a variety of substitutions. The preposition *εἰς* is not found in multiple witnesses (P⁴⁶ A 81. 104. 326. 1175. 1241^s. 2464 *pc*). The substitution of *τὴν χρεῖαν μου* is found in others (D^{*} 075 (a g^{v.1}). Others include *εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μου* (D¹ L P 323. 614. 629. 630. *pc g^{txt}*; Ambst). The original text *εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι* is found in the following sources (ℵ B F G Ψ 33. 1739. 1881 *ms lat*). The preposition *εἰς* seems to have been removed accidentally after *δῖς* or deliberately in order to make a direct object of the verb *ἐπεμψάτε* (Metzger, 617). The genitive *μου* is a scribal replacement for the less usual and far better supported dative *μοι*. In addition, the readings of the Coptic and of it^s appear to be over-translations of the Greek (Metzger, 617). Finally, the reading *in unum mihi* (vg^{ms}) may be confused reference of Luke 10:42 (Metzger, 617). How do these different combinations impact the meaning of the text? Does the use of the dative (to/for me) instead of the genitive impact the meaning of the exchange between the Paul and Philippians?

3. 4:19: The future verb *πληρώσει* is substituted with *πληρώσαι* (D^{*} F G Ψ 075. 6. 33. 81. 104. 326. 365. 1175. 1241^s 1505. 1739. 1881. *al latt*) in some mss. How does the change from the future verb “(subject) will fill” change the meaning of God’s role in filling the Philippians’ needs?

C. Issues of Interpretation

1. 4:10 *χαίρω*, in different forms, is used multiple times in the epistle (Phil 1:18a, Phil 1:18b, Phil 2:17, Phil 2:28, Phil 3:1, Phil 4:4). The main meanings are to be in a state of happiness and well-being, to rejoice, and to be glad (Bauer, 1074). It is coupled with *ἐν κυρίῳ* in this verse along with Phil 3:1 and Phil 4:4. The theme of unity is present throughout the epistle and the exhortation to rejoice in the Lord plays a prominent role in this unity. Phil 3:1 opens the section that discusses the dogs (*κυνῶς*), evil workers (*τοὺς κακοὺς*) and the mutilation (*τὴν κατατομήν*). Paul exhorts the Philippians to rejoice in light of these infiltrators. Phil 4:4 follows Paul’s urging of Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind (*τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*). Both Phil 3:1 and Phil 4:4 include the imperative (*χαίρετε*). What is the relationship between rejoicing in the Lord and unity? Does taking the focus off of individuals and putting it on the Lord solve issues of disunity? How does Paul’s rejoicing due to the Philippians reviving their concern for him relate to these other calls to rejoice?

2. 4:10 *φρονεῖν* and *ἐφρονεῖτε* refer to thinking of someone in the sense of being concerned about him or her (Bauer, 1065). Paul describes the Philippians’ concern for

him using φρονεω. The notion of having the same mind or thinking the same in two entities is applied to multiple types of relations in the epistle. Paul charges the Philippians to think this in you that which is in Christ Jesus in Phil 2:5 (τουτο φρονειτε εν υμιν ο και εν Χριστω Ιησου). In a similar manner to Phil 4:10, Paul states his concern when he says that it is right for me to think this way about all of you in Phil 1:7 (καθοσ εστιν δικαιον εμοι τουτο φρονειν υπερ παντων). What is the significance of these expressions of concern in light of the epistles themes of unity, humility and partnership? How does the relationship described in Phil 2:5 between a follower of Christ and Christ Jesus shed light on the relationship between Philippians and Paul described in Phil 1:7 and Phil 4:10?

3. 4:15 Paul refers start and subsequent process of the Philippians' faith. The reference in Phil 4:15 points to the beginning of the gospel (εν αρχη του ευαγγελιου). In a similar manner, he describes their partnership in the sharing of the gospel from the first day until now in Phil 1:4 (επι τη κοινωνια υμων εισ το ευαγγελιον απο της πρωτης ημερας αχρι του νυν). What is the importance of this beginning or first day? What role does this play in their partnership (κοινωνια)?

4. 4:15 λογον in this verse describes a settlement of an account (Bauer, 601). The same word is used Phil 4:17. What is the difference between these two accounts? How does the financial account of Phil 4:15 relate to the spiritual account Phil 4:17? What significance does this have in Paul's relationship with the Philippians?

5. 4:17 καρπον means advantage, gain, or profit (Bauer, 510). Paul seeks a gain into the Philippians account (επιζητω τον καρπον) in this verse. In Phil 1:22 he sees remaining one aspect of remaining alive in the flesh as gain from his labor (τουτο μοι καρπος εργου). How does the gain of Phil 4:17 relate to the gain in Phil 1:22? Is Paul insinuating that the growth of the Philippians' account is for future gain from the labor of sharing the gospel? To what else could Paul be referring?

6. 4:19 πλουτος means plentiful supply of something, a wealth, abundance (Bauer, 832). How does Paul's assertion that God will fill all of the Philippians' needs according to his riches (κατα το πλουτος) relate to the lessons Paul says he learned in Phil 4:11-13? More specifically, what expectations does Paul have for the Philippians in light of this statement? How does this relate to the partnering relationships that are discussed in this epistle?

D. Use of Other Texts/Traditions

1. The reference to an account as it is used in Phil 4:15 and Phil 4:17 is found in JMaspero, Papyrus grecs d'epoque Byzantine-List 4 (Bauer, 601). This papyrus described the linking of the accounting terms δοσις and ληψις. The same ideas are used in Paul's reference to the crediting to an account in Phil 4:17. δοσις is referenced in Phil 4:15 as a giving (Bauer, 259) as is ληψις as a receiving (Bauer, 593). What significance did the use of these terms for accounts, giving and receiving have on the Philippians' understanding of Paul's illustration?

E. Relation to Other NT Texts

1. Paul writes to the Romans that he wants to come to them so that he may reap some harvest among them (ινα τινα καρπον σχω). The use of καρπον is similar to the references in Phil 1:22 and Phil 4:17. Based on the observations and questions listed above, how is Paul's use of καρπον similar to the Philippians use? What additional

insights could this provide for interpreting what Paul means by a “gain from the labor” and “the advantage”?

2. There are numerous references to the riches of Christ in Ephesians. Phil 1:19 mentions riches (πλουτος) in the context of the Philippians having their needs filled up according to these riches in Christ Jesus. Paul uses the reference to the riches of Christ in Eph 1:18, Eph 3:8, and Eph 3:16. A similar reference is found in Colossians in 1:27 where Paul refers to the riches of the glory of this mystery. What is the significance of this term in relation to bringing the gospel to the Gentiles? What parallels are present in these different epistles? How do these parallels help with the interpretation of how and why Paul asserts that God will fill all of the Philippians’ needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus?

F. Historical Issues

1. Paul refers to Macedonia in Phil 2:15 and Thessalonica in 2:16. Paul does not mention these locations in any other part of epistle. He does, however, describe his history of being in chains and his partnership with the Philippians in the earlier portions of the epistle. Does the lack of references to Macedonia and Thessalonica in the beginning lend credence to the idea that Philippians was a general letter that was pieced together from multiple sources? How would this impact how the text related to readers in their specific social and cultural context?

III. Significance for Theology and Preaching

1. Paul completes the picture of his partnership in the gospel with the Philippians at the end of chapter 4. The partnership includes spiritual, financial and relational aspects. What can we learn about partnerships in the gospel from this epistle and how can we apply these lessons to today’s partnerships? Which areas do we focus on more at the expense of others? What would Paul write to our churches today if he were in partnership with us for the sake of the gospel?

2. Paul states that he seeks a gain that is growing in the Philippians’ account. The gain is not financial in nature. How is this gain seen in the church today? What is lacking in our motivation to receive this gain and to make use of this gain in our sharing of the gospel?

3. What does 4:19-20 provide for the theology of blessing? God is mentioned as fill all the needs of the Philippians according to the riches in glory in Christ Jesus. What roles are mentioned here? Notice how needs are filled according (κατα) to his riches in (εν) glory in (εν) Christ Jesus.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What role does Paul’s description of himself in Phil 4:10-12 play in the overall themes of the epistle? Is this description similar to the description of Christ Jesus in chapter 2 and/or the description of Paul in chapter 3?

2. What is the relationship between the financial account and the spiritual accounts mentioned in this passage? How do these accounts play out in the partnership between Paul and the Philippians in the gospel? What is Paul’s objective in using this illustration?

3. How does rejoicing in the Lord directly lead to unity in the body of Christ? Is this as simple as it looks? Why doesn’t Paul mention the specific Philippian church disputes and related solutions like he does in the letters to the Corinthians?