

Philippians

A Life of Purpose and Joy

God's Provision, Our Generosity

Date: Sunday 16th May

Speaker: Andrew McNeil

Key Verses: Philippians 4:10-23

Talk Summary:

At first reading, this passage looks like it's about money and gifts but it's really about the magnificent gift of knowing Jesus. His love, strength and His work in us is the secret of contentment. He is also the source of our provision and he's the source of the impact as we play our part in extending His Kingdom.

Unnatural contentment v10-13. Contentment is about having inner peace, a sense of tranquility, that doesn't rise or fall with every situation that's going on around us. It wasn't in Paul's nature to be content. Paul learned to be content as he found strength in Jesus. We can too. Paul is writing from prison. He has no control over his environment. The contentment here is about peace, even when you can't control what is going on around you. The secret to contentment is found in knowing Christ. "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

Unusual generosity v14-20. They give and God gives. Biblical giving is not a tax. It's an investment with an expectation of a return. We're investing in the Kingdom of God and in our own growth. We invest our lives, time, our gifts, and our money, and God multiplies the impact.

Three qualities for us to copy:

- 1) First v 14. Do you have a "God first" mindset? With your money, time and talents?
- 2) Frequent v 16 Generous giving is a consistent habit.
- 3) Full-on v 18. When we all play our part then needs are fully met.

In this context the Bible speaks of promises. God will meet your needs (v19), more will be credited to your account, a banking term about receiving interest on an investment (v17) and when giving you'll be receiving (v15).

Unstoppable impact v 21. This good news of Jesus has now reached Caesar's household through Paul's partnership with these believers. There is no place or person beyond the reach of Jesus. You might be thinking - I can't do that. I can't reach people for Jesus. Take it off your "I can't do that" list and put it on your "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" list.

We can all start with what we have in our hands. An invitation to coffee, a conversation... the lockdown restrictions are easing now. Let's all invest in a friendship and invite God to be at work.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- What spoke to you most from this concluding passage in Philippians?
- What are some of the things that undermine contentment? What can we do about it?
- Paul learned contentment. When was the last time you learned a new skill? What was it and what is your learning style? How might that give us insights as we allow Jesus to teach us His ways of living?
- Generosity involved giving and receiving. What needs or opportunities are present in our group or community at the moment? How comfortable are we about sharing what's really happening?
- "We are invited to choose to live each day as a sacrament (as a gift), enabling us to see, to hear, to taste, and to touch grace—the goodness of God's presence in our lives" Jean-Pierre de Caussade. What helps us actually do that? How do we practice the presence of God? Share ideas and resources that you actually use.

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invite to?

Extra Resources

- [Live from rest](#) app. It's a free simple app I've found helpful to practice the presence of Jesus every day.
- If you want to be a follower of Jesus who understands and is equipped in your identity, your kingdom authority, and your calling, check out [Encounter School of Mission](#).

Just in case you're interested.... Some great examples of generosity and impact.

- Historic – [John Laing](#) also <https://www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk>
- Julian Richer - [Richer sounds](#). Explicitly Christian motivation for his leadership.
- James Timpson. Here's a [podcast](#). He's from a strong Christian family and his heritage has hugely shaped his leadership values and work culture. (Thanks Adam Pipe for this one)

Other resources you might like.

- Faith driven [entrepreneur](#) - Resources and podcasts.
- [Gospel patrons](#). Historic and current examples of generous living.