

Chariots of Fire Part II

37 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians
Church on the Park I Sunday, 26 NOV 2017

Text: Philippians 4:9

Theme: You'll move forward in God by both receiving and giving.

Intro: In Philippians 4:9 Paul talks first about receiving and then about giving. He begins saying, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me"—that's all about receiving. That's what last week's message was about. Our lives are like chariot wheels. At the hub of our wheel is God—our relationship with Jesus. We need to continually be receiving life from God. But also we need spokes—spokes keep the wheel balanced and stable, enabling you to move and fight battles. What are those spokes? It's people and ministries that feed you Jesus. People that strengthen, pray, oversee, know, equip and support you. But today, I want us to move to the second wheel and its all about giving. Paul ends Philippians 4:9 saying, "... practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

1) The Spirit stops flowing when you stop giving (Matt. 10:8).

- Most revivals fade in the transition from **receiving** to **giving**.
 - What happens is this: the people are so accustomed to receiving great power from God, but they don't realize the **power** is for a **purpose**.
 - God **gives** to you so that you **give** to others.
 - Once you stop **giving**, the flow of the Spirit **stops**.
- You will actually receive more as you give. Look at **2 Kings 4:1-7**.
 - As soon as the giving **stopped**—the pouring out of **oil**—the **flow** stopped.
- The key for us is to find **empty vessels**—those whose lives are an **open door** for the Gospel.
 - *Again, who are these empty vessels?*
 - They are not people with empty heads.
 - Instead, they are the best of people, people who are **hungry and thirsty** for God, people who want to **receive** from God.
 - Empty vessels **draw** the **anointing**.
 - Don't waste your time trying to cast **pearls** before **swine**. **Look** for those who are **hungry** for God's Word.
 - God moves on those who **WANT** to **receive**.
- Now, you may not **think** you **have much**, but give what you have received from God, and the Lord will take care of the rest.

2) Who are you a spokesperson to?

- Last week we asked, "*Who are your spokespeople?*"—the first wheel of your chariot.
 - I asked, "Who are the spokes in your life? Who are the spokespeople?" And I gave you an acronym—**SPOKES**—to discern who these people are: They 1) Strengthen you, 2) Pray for you 3) Oversee you, 4) Know you, 5) Equip you and 6) Support you. These are people who feed you Christ—good, solid and balanced people, who have God's heart for you.
- Today I'm asking, "*Who are you a spokesperson to?*"—the second wheel of your chariot.
- Please draw a wheel. This wheel should have a hub and six spokes. (note: the ancient middle eastern chariots had six spokes.)

- We are going to label all the spokes with a word coming from our acronym: **SPOKES**.
- First, The **hub** is essential. It is Jesus and your personal **relationship with God**.
 - If your **hub** is **not strong** you will be not **speaking life, but death** into people.
- *Why is the next wheel important?*
 - And without this second wheel, you will become **self-centered and self-absorbed**, rather than **God-centered and God-directed**.
 - **Harvard's longest running study** shows the key to **happiness** and **health**: "Harvard study, almost 80 years old, has proved that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier" (see endnotes for full article & TED video).
- **1) Strengthen** - *Who are you strengthening?*
 - The reason you have been put into **community** by the Father is so that you both receive **AND GIVE**. It's not all receiving, it's about giving. And I would take it one step further. If you don't give what you have received (remember Anna's message) you will lose it. (Deu. 3:28)
 - Look at what Jesus said to **Peter** (***Luke 22:28-32**; cf. Acts 9:19; 15:32, *16:5, 18:23; 1 Thes. 3:2; Heb. 12:2).
 - Be a strengthener.
- **2) Pray** - *Who are you praying for? Do you ask people how you can pray for them? Who are the ones God has put on your heart to pray for?* (James 5:16; Eph. 6:18-20; Phil 4:4-7).
 - What I noticed is that everybody is frustrated.
 - They are **frustrated** with people, government, traffic, the media, the economy, family, the church, their finances, etc. If you can think of it, people are frustrated by it.
 - This **frustration** is robbing our **peace**.
 - Remember, God has called you to be a change agent and this all begins through prayer.
- **3) Oversee** - *who are you watching out for?*
 - Remember Cain. He said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Hebrews 3:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-7).
- **4) Know** - *Who do you know? Are you hospitable? Who do you take time for?* (1 Peter 4:9; Heb. 13:2; Rom. 12:13, etc.)
- **5) Equip** - *Who are you equipping?* (Heb. 5:12-14 ; Eph. 4:11-16)
- **6) Support** - *Who are you supporting?* Both spiritually and financially (Phil. 4:10-20; Exo. 17:12; 1 Chron. 11:10; Matt. 10:10; Luke 8:3; 2 Cor. 8:4; 3 John 8)

3) Summing up, in order for your chariot to move with God it needs two wheels—one that continually receives and the other that constantly gives (Matt. 28:18-20)

- Let Jesus **craft** both of these wheels into your life.
- "As you go, make disciples..." (Matt. 28:18-20)
 - **poreuomai** - as you **travel** on your **journey**. In the **passive** form in Greek.
 - Here is the whole **key** to this passage: as you are **journeying to the heavenly city**, as you are moving forward in God, as you stick to the path of your pilgrimage like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*.
 - You can't talk unless you walk.
 - This is the **great commission**, the grand mission of the church.
 - However, I think it has been vastly **misinterpreted**. People read it and then think they automatically have the right to make disciples.
 - But we have to remember the context of who Jesus said this to. Jesus said this to his eleven disciples who he spent three years discipling. Moreover, afterward he said, "Before you go, wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit."

- In other words, “Don’t even think of trying to do this in your own flesh—you’ll mess the whole thing up.” Remember what God said to Zechariah, “Not by might, nor by power but by my **Spirit** says the Lord.”
- God longs for us to go and make disciples, but **more than quantity**, he is looking for **quality**. Before we can make disciples we need to be disciples.
 - I feel that in the Australian church 95% are not disciples of Jesus. I hope our church is different.
- The whole lesson of these chariot wheels is that we need to be both good receivers and good givers.
 - If you only receive, the Spirit will dry up in your life. If you only give, you’ll be doing things by your own strength, rather than the Spirit.

Conclusion: *Who are you strengthening, praying for, overseeing, knowing, equipping and supporting?* As you grow, you will find that you will be a spokesperson for more and more people.

END NOTES

Harvard Study

“When scientists began tracking the health of 268 Harvard sophomores in 1938 during the Great Depression, they hoped the longitudinal study would reveal clues to leading healthy and happy lives.

They got more than they wanted.

After following the surviving Crimson men for nearly 80 years as part of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one of the world’s longest studies of adult life, researchers have collected a cornucopia of data on their physical and mental health.

Of the original Harvard cohort recruited as part of the Grant Study, only 19 are still alive, all in their mid-90s. Among the original recruits were eventual President John F. Kennedy and longtime Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee. (Women weren’t in the original study because the College was still all male.)...”

See <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>