

# A Fragrant Offering

43 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 18 March 2018

**Text:** Philippians 4:10-20

**Theme:** Authentic giving is worship, a fragrant offering to God. It pleases the Father and causes his Kingdom to advance.

**Intro:** We are now near the end of Paul's letter to the Philippians. And here we see how it was possible for Paul to write and send his letter: he was given an abundant offering. Writing a letter in the first century was a costly thing, not just spiritually, but materially. You needed the supplies, labour and delivery service: the pen, the ink, the papyrus, amanuensis and the messenger<sup>1</sup>. The giving of the Philippians made it possible not only to write this letter, but also it seems, the letters to Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. Writing and sending messages wasn't as easy as it is today—this was a different time and place. Even today, getting out the message of the good news is costly. In light of these things, we will look at the importance of the ministry of giving and receiving.

## 1) Ministry is partnership—it's sharing—and every believer is called to it (Phil. 4:15).

- Ministry involves both **giving** and **receiving**.
- Ministry is **never forced**, it must be **freely given**. Yet, **nothing is possible alone**. The people of God are to continually reflect the ministry of giving and receiving.
- The Philippians gave Paul money. As a result, they **received a letter of eternal value**.
  - It's value was **more** than the offering they could have given. They gave, but they **received much more**.
- When you get to heaven, thank the Philippians. You wouldn't be learning what you are learning today without their obedience.
  - If it wasn't for the **Philippians** you may not have the letters to **Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon** as well.
- **Ministry** is all about **giving**. The word literally means 'service.'
- And yet, ministry is never a **one way street**. When you **give**, you **receive**.
  - You may receive something different than expected, but you will receive something eternally valuable from God.

## 2) Giving that God delights in comes from a heart of care and devotion, a heart of love (Phil. 4:10).

- *phroneo* - "to think, have a mindset, be minded. The activity represented by this word involves the **will, affections and conscience**." In Philippians 4:10 it specifically means **devotion and care**, being **thoughtful**.
- We need to **care** for our **shepherds, our pastors and leaders**.
  - Real pastors usually **don't ask** for things—they never want to be a **burden** on anyone. So, it's important to be **mindful** of them and look for ways you can care for them (2 Cor. 11:7-11).
- One of the main issues in **Australia** is that **large numbers of pastors are quitting** the ministry.
  - *Do you think that if they were valued, loved, cared for and honoured both spiritually and materially that they would quit?*
  - And here is the thing, if we don't **honour** our leaders, then the Kingdom can not **advance**, neither can you.
    - But if we do honour our leaders, the Kingdom will advance (1 Tim. 5:17).

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul used an amanuensis for his letters, most likely for all his letters. An amanuensis is a trained writer who takes dictation from the author. See Rom. 16:2, 1 Cor. 16:21, Col. 4:18, Philemon 19, 2 Thes. 3:17, Gal. 6:11. Also, with regards to a messenger, realise that it takes about forty days to go from Rome to Philippi.

- **Jesus and his disciples** were provided for through people, especially **women**, who **provided** for their **needs** (Luke 8:1-3).
- It's important that we have a **biblical mindset** toward giving.
  - Usually, our giving is affected by fear, anxiety, emotions and selfishness.
- When you **care** for a **leader**, you **care** for everyone they **lead**.
  - You are actually **giving to yourself**. It's like paying a **water, food** or **electricity bill**.
    - The water of God's Word, the food of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit is **flowing to you**.
- **Most churches** Paul ministered to **did not give** to him. The **Philippians** were **rare**, but they were also the **example** all of the churches should follow.

### 3) Your harvest—and more importantly the Kingdom harvest—increases when you give (Phil. 4:17).

- **'profit' = harvest, fruitfulness**
- **Giving** is like **sowing**—whatever you **sow**, you will **reap**.
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; \*2 Corinthians 9:6-15
  - The **right order** of giving
  - The **provision** from giving
- “And my God will **supply** all your needs according to **His riches** in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).
  - Giving **unlocks** God's **storehouses**, the miraculous and rich provision of God's grace toward you.
    - Malachi 3:8-12
  - God **provides** in **abundance**. Think about the **extras**—the **extra full baskets**—after the multiplication of the fishes and the loaves.
    - The miracle of **multiplication: Mark 8:19-20**
    - “Give and it shall be given back to you. Good measure, pressed down and overflowing will come into your lap” (Luke 6:38).

### 4) Giving is all about worship—it's a fragrant offering to God (Phil. 4:18).

- Paul relates giving to the Old Testament practice of **sacrificial offerings**.
  - These offerings were **slain** and **consumed by fire** on the **altar**.
    - The **aroma** is described in Leviticus as a **sweet-smelling aroma** to God. In other words, it pleased God. It was beautiful and fragrant.
    - **Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17 (NIV)**
- Many of the Old Testament offerings were both **consumed by fire** and **eaten by the priests and their families**.
  - These offerings were the **priests' income** for their **service**.
    - As Jesus said, “a worker is worthy of his wages” (Matt. 10:10).
- Here is what giving is all about: it's all about **worship, pleasing God**.
  - You have a **whole different heart and attitude** in regards to giving if you give as **worship** to the Lord.
  - Yes, it's a **sacrifice**. Yes, temporarily you have less. But it **pleases God** and **attracts** his presence to your life.
    - **David** said he would not give to the Lord anything that did not **cost** him (2 Sam. 24:24-25).

**Conclusion:** Each of us has the ministry of giving. When you give you share in the ministry, causing the Kingdom to advance. But even more importantly, genuine giving is worship to God, a sweet smelling sacrifice.