



+ **YOU**

Winter 2024

Owning a Faith that Matters

Sermon Title: Trusting Completely

To be used with Session 4: “Praying Faith”

Scripture: Philippians 4:10-20

Connection with Bible Study: To complement the Bible Study “Praying Faith,” this sermon points to the total trust that the Apostle Paul had in God’s provision for his daily needs. In the sermon passage, Paul revealed his attitude toward God’s provision and how God uses others to supply needs for others.

Introduction

The belief among churchgoers that God’s desire for them is to be prosperous is gaining a stronger footing in today’s world. In a recent study done by Lifeway Research, 76% of those attending church believe that God wants them to prosper financially. Many Christians believe in prosperity gospel. Accompanying that belief is the thought that believers are to do something for God in exchange for His material blessing on our lives.¹

Such belief does not square with the plain teaching of the Bible. To believe that God wants all His children to be healthy and wealthy flies in the face of biblical teaching. We are looking in this sermon series at the faith journey of the Apostle Paul. Over and over Paul spoke of the hardships he went through: times of danger, injury, hunger, impoverishment, and more. In fact, Paul prayed for God to remove what he called “a thorn in the flesh” and God declined to do so. His life certainly is not a testimony to God wanting him to be healthy and wealthy!

In today’s sermon, we encounter a favorite Bible verse that speaks of the fact that God will supply all our needs through His riches in glory in Jesus Christ. Regardless of the situation we find ours in, we must realize that God does not promise prosperity in the worldly sense. Instead, He promise provision for our daily need.

God’s Provision Begins with My Attitude (Phil. 4:10-13)

Experiencing God’s daily provision for our lives begins with a proper attitude. Paul identified that attitude with the word “content.” “I am content in all circumstances.” Contentment is the attitude of trusting that what I have is what God wants me to have and if He wants me to have more, He will provide that. To crave more is to say that I don’t trust God to provide for me.

Paul described his contentment with God’s provision by describing times of lack and times of plenty in his life. He said he had learned the secret of living with contentment. That secret was an unshakable faith in the fact that through Christ Paul could do everything. Regardless of what he might face, Paul knew that in Christ he had more than adequacy in everything. He understood that, far from God wanting Paul to be prosperous, God wanted Paul to be content with whatever

God placed in his hands. God could give him much, or God could give him little; none of that could shake Paul faith and contentment in Jesus Christ.

God's Provision Includes God's People (Phil. 4:14-17)

Surprisingly, the Apostle Paul also included the Christians in Philippi as part of God's provision for his needs. He commended them for sending help to him on more than one occasion. This sets forth such an important truth. Often God uses other people to be the channel for His provisions to us. In fact, this is one of the key aspects of giving tithes and offerings to the Lord. Our gifts make their way to meet the needs of others: locally, nationally, and globally.

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul talked about giving to others and he made this vital statement: God gives to us out of His riches so that we in turn can give to others. Through all our giving, God is thus glorified (2 Cor. 9:10-13). Our God is a giving God and He desires that we be givers as well. He will use each of us to help provide for the needs of others.

God's Provision Arises from His Riches in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:18-20)

Again, Paul thanked the Philippian Christians for their gifts to him and spoke of our giving as a sweet-smelling sacrifice that brings pleasure to God. Philippians 4:19 gives us the assurance that God will provide for our every need. Take note that it doesn't say He will provide for our wants; rather He will supply us with what we need. Big difference! Wants often rise out of greed and envy. God is not in the business of supplying those. Instead, he gives us what we need for everyday living as His children.

Confidently Paul declares that "My God"—the same God who met all of Paul's needs—would supply all of the needs of His children, material and spiritual, out of His riches. Our needs will be met through Christ Jesus as we live in union and fellowship with Him. Over and over in the New Testament we read that everything that God does for us is through our connection to Jesus Christ. We put all our trust and hope in Him, leaning heavily on Him to take care of our every need. God doesn't desire that you become independently wealthy; instead, He desires that you become "dependently" provided for through your faith in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

May I encourage you to take your belief system from God's Word and realize that God has never promised us prosperity and perfect health. Think about the fact that the Jerusalem church was in such impoverished straits that Paul raised an offering for them twice (Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 9:1). In addition, 100 percent of the people who Jesus healed during his earthly ministry later contracted some other disease or injury and died. God has not promised prosperity or health. Instead, He has promised His presence and His provision. Our challenge is to rest and rely in trust on Him to provide everything we need. He can absolutely be counted on to provide.

Dr. Sam Crouch is retired after 52 years in ministry. Sam was educated at Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife live in Tucson, Arizona where Sam enjoys writing, reading, yardwork, and cats. His latest book is [Clearing the Fog: Gaining an Understanding and Appreciation of the Old Testament](#).

¹ “Prosperity Gospel Beliefs on the Rise Among Churchgoers,” Lifeway Research August 22, 2023. <https://research.lifeway.com/2023/08/22/prosperity-gospel-beliefs-on-the-rise-among-churchgoers/?ecid=1155980192&bid=-1792474969>