

Dec 9, 2018

**My God Shall Supply All Your Needs...
and He just might do it thru me!**

Review: the theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians = JOY!

4) Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice

No matter what our temporal circumstances, in Christ we have Joy – and we can experience this Joy by His Spirit in us, but it will require a change of perspective and expectation on our part!

Review of Chapter Themes for 1-3:

1:21) “For to me, to live IS Christ, and to die is gain”

2:5) “You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had...he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

2:13) For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”

3:3) For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort...

3:9) (to) become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness thru obeying the law; rather, I become righteous thru faith in Christ.” (Worth memorizing?)

Chapter 4 = 3 theme verses tied to one critical issue: Stewardship of material resources needed to live earthly lives!

- 6) – **“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.”** Petitions mixed with Gratitude! What Papa wouldn't like to hear requests from grateful children; and which requests wouldn't be impacted by children with grateful hearts?
- 13) – **“For I can do everything thru Christ, who gives me strength.”** I can succeed under every condition because of the strength of Jesus in me! Paul has learned the secret of being content with much or little in the ever-changing circumstances of life! That secret is trusting God with what you have as well as what you think you need!
- 20) – **“And my God shall supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ**

Jesus.” God does so because He promised to, & because they had trusted Him to direct their stewardship, which is evident in their collection for Paul! (*God provides for our needs out of His riches not as a reward if/when we are faithful, but as a natural by-product of His salvation*)

And all this talk about strength and supply for those who are in Christ Jesus by faith is in the context of living on earth where cars need repairs, roofs leak, accidents are unavoidable, hospital ER visits happen, and insurance premiums must be paid!

READ: Philippians 4:10-17 (NLT)

17) ***I'm not trying to coax another gift from you; instead, I want you to receive God's blessing for your liberal kindnesses!*** And God's blessing in your generous response to His compassion to share with me is...His promise to amply supply all your needs out of His warehouse that is Christ Jesus!

Main Issue: *When we live as good stewards – God's children handling His money according to His character & will, we follow Him into the greatest freedom of all: freedom from selfish materialism into generous liberty in meeting the needs of others. Wild generosity is one of Papa's chief traits; & as we experience this generosity ourselves, we become vessels of blessings – like fire-hydrants!* **Matthew 6:33**

***ILLUS. Kyle Idleman's quote**

Christians own nothing in this world (*not even our the bank accounts & credit card on which our names appear!*); God owns it all! Good Stewardship requires knowing Him better & consulting Him more in order to grow in our ability to distribute His finances His way among His people & those in need. The first century church shared all things in common; & though they were the poorest of the poor, yet all their needs were met! **Stewardship means meeting other's needs in the Master's name!**

Materialism/consumerism is the opposite of stewardship: it aims to meet our wants without regard for the desires of the Owner and at the expense of the unmet needs around us. Materialism is selfishness to the detriment of the Master, others & us!

According to Malachi 3, good stewardship begins with

the giving of tithes/offerings & allows the unimpeded blessings of God – both in providing AND protecting our resources. Anything less is simply disobedience, distrust, & disbelief!

ILLUS. A distraught man furiously rode his horse up to John Wesley, shouting, "Mr. Wesley, Mr. Wesley, something terrible has happened. Your house has burned to the ground!" Weighing the news for the moment, Wesley calmly replied, "No. The Lord's house burned to the ground. That means one less responsibility for me."

INVITATION:

- 1) Are you Stewarding God's resources to His glory?
- 2) What next step must you take in obedience to Him?
- 3) Are you allowing God to supply your needs out of His glorious riches?

PHILIPPIANS 4:5, 10-17 (NLT)

4) Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice

Restated theme of Paul's letter to the Philippians!

10) *How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. **11)** Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. **12)** I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. **13)** For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. **14)** Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. **15)** As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. **16)** Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. **17)** I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.*

Gods at War, Kyle Idleman:

"God has given us the use of his resources for a short time here on earth, and we have much to be grateful for. Go through your day sometime just recognizing that everything is God's. Get out of God's bed and walk into God's bathroom, and turn on God's shower, and then put on God's clothes. Eat God's cereal and drink God's coffee. Get in God's car and head to God's work. When we start to see all of our resources as God's, it helps us develop an attitude of gratitude that leads to a heart of worship." Without this mindset, we develop a worship of self rather than God.

MEDITATION: Malachi 3:8-12 (NLT)

8) *"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. **9)** You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. **10)** Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! **11)** Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **12)** "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.*

Today, stewardship of God's resources is our subject. So, let's start with a few definitions for terms used by Malachi:

-Tithe = one tenth of income (*including produce for bartering*)

-Offering = any amount above/beyond the tithe of 1/10th

-Storehouse = OT Temple; NT Church=not building, but Body
for the funding of God's ministries

Tithes/Offerings are not about supplying God's needs: **He does not have any!** Rather, tithes/offerings are about acknowledging God as our Blessor & Benefactor. Malachi identifies two arenas of blessing promised by God for those who freely acknowledge Him in tithes/offerings: **1) Provision** – 10) *"I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in!"* and **2) Protection** – 11) *"Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease...and defect"*

Stewardship is *trusting God for all you need while dispersing His resources according to His will to meet the needs of others.* For 21st Century Christians, I believe this might be our **Final Frontier in obedience!** **Remember: words, not actions, prove what you believe** – and so developed the saying, *"Put your money where your mouth is!"*

The first, best tenth belongs to God as our Provider & Protector: do not keep it for yourself, do not rob God & thereby limit His blessings in your life! Acknowledge Him in tithes & offerings and so prove to be good, God-honoring stewards!

Sermon in a Sentence: ***My God Shall Supply All Your Needs... and He might just do it thru me!***