

PHILIPPIANS: OVERCOMING BROKEN DREAMS GOD'S WAY
"Part X: Gaining God's Peace With ALL Our Living Conditions"
(Philippians 4:10-23)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There are any number of reasons why anyone in our congregation might be concerned about his material needs:

(a) The dollar-cost of gasoline in Connecticut is now over the two-dollar-per-gallon amount at some stations. That is the highest it has been in history, and Connecticut currently has one of the highest gasoline prices in the United States!

(b) Interest rates for home mortgages are up over 1 % points from just this time last year.

(c) There is a drought in the Midwest. We are getting the rain, but the Corn Belt wilts under a drought. As a result, not only will grain cost more, but since cattle are fed grain, ranchers out West are unloading their cattle now since they cannot afford the drought's escalating price of grain. That means higher meat and higher dairy costs in the store late this year.

(d) Additionally, there are any number of personal issues added to this brew -- things like college tuition costs for students and their parents, the rising prices of tires or a badly needed paint or roofing or siding job or window replacement job on the house -- that can make someone tempted to fret!

Well, HOW do we address the WORRY we are tempted so often to feel regarding our MATERIAL possession needs?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Though I had once dreamed of being wealthy enough never to have any financial worries, things have not worked out that way. I worry a lot as I always seem to be short on funds. What is God's plan regarding these matters so that I can please God in them?"

- I. **Paul wrote of his JOY at being supplied material gifts from the Philippian believers, Philippians 4:10.**
- II. **Yet, lest his readers think Paul's JOY came from HAVING such possessions, he revealed an ARRESTING attitude God had taught him on CONTENTMENT regarding possessions, Phil. 4:11-14.**
 - A. Upon stating his joy at their gift, Paul qualified his remark, showing his joy was **not** caused by his needs **actually being MET**, Phil. 4:11.
 - B. This was a **remarkable** statement to the Philippians in view of their historical, cultural tendency to put a premium on owning big estates:
 1. As we previously noted, Philippi was established as a consolation gift from Rome's emperor to his loyal soldiers who had lost their personal estates in a civil war over class and wealth, cf. Edward M. Burns, Western Civ., p. 218ff; Bible Know. Com., N.T., p. 647.
 2. For people who had known the pain of **losing** their estates in a war, Paul's comments on **depreciating** such ownership is **striking!**
 - C. Rather, Paul reported God had taught him to be **content** in **every** material status he faced in all places throughout his life, Phil. 4:12.
 - D. He had learned to achieve this contentment by trusting Christ to equip him to handle **every** financial state he experienced, Philippians 4:13.
 - E. Thus, Paul's joy at the gift of his readers was set by how **upright** it had been for **them** to show their **LOVE** by it, Phil. 4:14; 1 Jn. 3:17-18.
- III. **But, going further, Paul revealed how one's tendency to lust for possessions could be CHANGED in a spirit of LIBERALITY:**
 - A. Paul recalled how the Philippians had faithfully addressed his material needs with their gifts since their conversion to Christ, Phil. 4:15-17.
 - B. Since God was satisfied with the **uprightness** of these gifts (4:18), **He** would **reimburse** the givers [as Rome's emperor had done to them for their loyalty to his cause in the civil war, Phil. 4:19 and "I,B" above].
 - C. We glean more insight on this issue from Paul's word in 2 Cor. 9:6ff:
 1. A believer reaps a return from God in relation to his liberality, 9:6.
 2. However, to qualify for this reimbursement, the gift must arise from the giver's being **righteously motivated**, 2 Corinthians 9:7:
 - a. One who gives this way must give of his own initiative, 9:6-7a.
 - b. The amount must not be set by some legalistic pressure he himself applies, nor by what some **outside** party puts on him, but by what he **himself uprightly DESIRES**: (a) The KJV's "(not) grudgingly" ["(not) reluctantly" NIV] in 2 Cor. 9:7 is from the Greek Testament's *lupays*, meaning personal sorrow or pain, Theol. Dict. of the N.T., vol. IV, p. 320; UBS Grk. N.T., p. 638. (b) On the other hand, the KJV's "(or of) necessity" [(or under) compulsion" NIV] in 9:7 is from the Greek Testament's *anagkays*, meaning a compulsion from outside the giver by other circumstances or other people, Ibid., T.D.N.T., vol. I, p. 344-347; Loc. cit., UBS Greek N. T.

3. God reimburses him with enough goods (a) first to meet his own living expenses so (b) he can be enabled to give **again**, 2 Cor. 9:8, 10a. (c) When he **gives AGAIN**, the **effects** of the **first** gift **are** hence **multiplied**, so the (d) giving **continually repeats** throughout one's life with **massive compounding** to God's glory, 9:8-10.

IV. **Filled with praise to God for how He advances His glory this way, Paul gave a doxology and closed his letter on an upbeat note, 20-23.**

Application: *To deal with ANXIETY over material possessions, God wants us to (1) come into a relationship with Him by receiving Christ as our personal Savior from sin (Jn. 3:16). (2) Then we can rely upon HIM as our INCOME SECURITY for this life as well as for the eternal one, Philippians 4:13. (3) God then allows us to face both BOUNTY and SCARCITY of material needs in life's events so we can see Him COMPENSATE us in all situations and in all sorts of ways to meet such MATERIAL needs required to keep us doing His will, Phil. 4:11-12. (4) Then, with hearts set FREE from viewing this life's POSSESSIONS as our FULFILLMENT, we can USE what bounty that exceeds meeting our living NEEDS to GIVE to God's interests, Phil. 4:14-18. (5) God will reimburse us for those gifts (Phil. 4:19) so we will (a) have all we need for our OWN living needs (2 Cor. 9:8, 10a) and (b) still have enough left over to give as a WAY of LIFE to meet the needs of others, 2 Cor. 9:9-10. In this way our ANXIETY over having our OWN needs met is turned into a joyous LIBERALITY to the glory of God!*

Lesson: *God desires to WEAN us from making MATERIAL possessions our FULFILLMENT to USE what possessions He DOES supply us as vehicles to meet our own needs and express our LOVE by giving to others. >*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Just 16 months ago, I was "sweating" our family's financial needs: (a) Our daughter, Connie was due for her first of what proved to be **four** surgeries in a **year**, **two** of which were **neuro surgeries**, and (b) I wasn't sure if the insurance would cover the costs as 3 of the surgeries were "cutting edge medicine!" (c) We had an adjustable rate mortgage due to be paid off well after I had retired! (d) Though I had begun investing for retirement, we needed to set aside \$150 per month just to meet just basic goals. (e) We had planned to take out a home equity loan to pay for our medical costs and go just as far with that money as we could. (f) Our car that we needed for travel to Baltimore for treatment was aged and starting to give us trouble! (g) Then, our daughter, Joanne was showing signs of **Connie's** NMH, making me wonder if she'd even finish high school amid escalating medical bills!

Well, while at Baltimore's John's Hopkins Hospital, I came across its large, white statue of Christ in the main building. At the foot of the statue were the words from Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I recognized the Lord's use of that passage to convict me of my unbelief, so, I confessed it and recommitted all these needs to Him.

Since then, God has done absolute wonders for us: (a) The bills for Connie's surgeries have either all been paid or are being processed by the insurance. (b) Upon talking with our banker about a home equity loan, she suggested we refinance our mortgage at what was then a low **fixed** rate to be able to pay our debt off before I retire. (c) With the cash gained at that closing, we invested to reap huge gains that have paid for many needs. (d) A mutual fund used for most of my retirement had the biggest one-year run-up of any fund in the **history** of diversified funds in **America**, and now even after the market correction, I don't have to add a penny more to my IRAs! (e) The monthly \$150 earmarked for retirement investments are now used to meet other needs. (f) We were able to buy a newer car. (g) Joanne's condition not only improved, but she finished high school with an academic award! (h) Finally, we were able to give financial gifts to the Lord exceeding in amount all previous **annual** giving in our **lives**!