

8. NOTES FOR LEADERS PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20.

Verses 10 – 20 can be headed, “An appreciation of the gift of the Philippians. Commentators notice a certain tension in Paul’s writing here. Various suggestions have been made for this. Probably the most likely suggestion is that Paul is uneasy about talking about his need of finance. While he wants to show appreciation for the help that has been given by the Philippians, he also wants to show that he is independent of the need of financial support. The overall impact of what Paul writes is that the gifts were appreciated. F.W. Beare’s commentary, page 151, “*He came to Rome as a prisoner in the custody of the armed guards at the end of a terrible voyage in which his ship had been driven from her course by gales and finally wrecked on the coast of Malta. He had been a prisoner for more than three years and he was coming into a strange city where he had no personal friends and could not be sure of the kind of reception that awaited him among the Christians... It is not hard to imagine his delight at the coming of Epaphroditus.*”

VERSE 11

Paul’s contentment is not to be mistaken for a form of fatalism which “cuts the nerve of ambition” (p. 175 Martin). Paul concentrates on what is essential and important. Other issues fade into insignificance. “Content” is only found here in the New Testament. It is a stoic word but Paul is not reflecting stoicism, which is a philosophy based on personal effort. Self-sufficiency is reliant on an intimacy with the Living Lord.

VERSE 12

Self sufficiency is also reliant on the example of Christ. See Chapter 2:2-10. Notice in verse 13 he says he can do all things in Christ. See also 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

The word for “partnership” or “fellowship” again occurs within this verse. This time translated as “share” or “help”. The gift is seen as an expression of fellowship.

VERSE 15.

It seems from the following verses that it was only the Philippian Church that assisted Paul in his time of trouble but this needs to be compared with 2 Corinthians 11:8-9 and 2 Cor. 12:13. See also 1 Cor. 9:15-27 and 1 Cor. 11:9. Paul may be referring to the particular imprisonment in Rome.

VERSE 17

This verse is full of commercial terms. “Account, abound, fruit”. This financial terminology continues on in verse 18. ‘I have received’ was a technical expression of a receipt. Notice that the expression of assistance to Paul is not only an indication of fellowship. It is also an offering to God.

VERSE 19

This is a reference to spiritual as well as material needs. These verses with their touch of embarrassment give us what F.W. Beare, page 157, calls a “Gem of literature”. “There are few paragraphs to be found in his epistles which reflect more clearly the essential mobility of his character and the delicacy of his mind together with his capacity both to give and to win affection.