

Philippians 9

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 January 2016

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] gracious and loving as we come to this concluding part of the letter to the Philippians we find Paul now rejoicing in the love and the care that the Philippians have had for him we mentioned at the outset how when we began to look at this letter this being now the ninth study in this letter we've taken roughly two sabbaths per chapter and of course the introduction at the beginning we said how this was his favourite church because they undoubtedly loved him most or at the very least they were those who showed their love in action most and we see that particularly here how he says verse 15 ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel when I departed from Macedonia no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only but even in Thessalonica he sent once and again unto my necessity they have shown their love in practical ways again and again not just having given once and say well that's us done our bit now we can focus on ourselves but they kept on giving as though they themselves were bound up with Paul and his ministry as though there were an interconnectedness as between the shoulder and the fingers at the end of the hand that what helps the one helps the other what feeds the one feeds the other and as they sought to be fed and to grow themselves they sought to continue to communicate that feeding and that blessing onward to Paul wherever he was they sent messengers halfway across the Roman Empire to bring him their gifts of blessing and support they have sent this latest time with Epaphroditus from Philippi in northern Greece to Rome in Italy and they continued to support and to help him and to show their love to him therefore he says

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly remember what we said about this phrase in the Lord we found it there at verse 1 in chapter 4 we found it again in verse 2 and again at verse 4 everything has to be in the Lord whether it's rejoicing in the Lord in his victory standing fast in the Lord those who are in disagreement like Euodius and Syntyche being of the same mind in the Lord it doesn't come by nature it doesn't come by our ordinary behaviour or thoughts it is only in Christ that we are thus united enabled to stand fast and enabled to know the victory that he has won so when he rejoices he rejoices in the Lord greatly that now at the last most recently your care of me hath flourished again again when he were also careful but he lacked opportunity he is not saying well you know it's about time shouldn't you have been giving to me long before this but rather he acknowledges accepts that they have always been careful for him they've always had a lot for him but there hasn't been opportunity remember you couldn't just hit a button and transfer the money by computer or by internet from one bank to another across the world you couldn't wire money in those days you had to physically put your bags of money into the hands and into the carrier bags of whatever messengers were going and they had to walk or ride or sail the entire distance that was to be travelled with that money with those goods some of it would inevitably be eaten up along the way as they had to provide for their own needs but they would safeguard the money that was coming for Paul to supply his needs coming from Philippi you were careful but you lacked opportunity but he doesn't want them to think you know oh I've been waiting here for come on why is it taking you so long not that I speak in respect of wants for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content now the word that is translated content is a particular Greek word which was the sort of mantra or the motto of a group called the Stoics and the Stoics we come across them in Acts 17 at verse 18 where Paul is in Athens and we read about the Stoics and the Epicureans these particular pagan philosophies and they were interested in what Paul had to say about the gospel just out of curiosity as much as anything else but remember what Paul said in verse 8 finally brethren whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things are good report if there be any virtue and if there be any praise think on these things and what we said the last Lord's Day was that if there are things even in you know secular concerns or in other religions which though their doctrines be false there are things that we can take from them that might be good and we mentioned the example of how

Muslims pray five times a day if we pray to the true God five times a day that wouldn't be a bad thing we said about how the Hindus and Buddhists if their monks are holding out their begging bowls and you're sitting by the side of the road and people put goods or food or money into them they don't thank the people that do it because in their mind and their doctrine they are doing the person a favour by giving them opportunity to give to them because that's building up their karma or whatever it is they believe in now of course it's not good to believe in the doctrines they believe but it is good to recognise that in giving to the poor giving to others giving to those in need it's not so much us doing them a benefit but we are benefiting ourselves by doing good in the name of Jesus it is rather as Paul says you know that he desires he rejoices that fruit may abound verse 17 to your account and perhaps in using this term which we've got translated as content but it's a particular

Greek word that the Stoics were fond of and he's sort of self-contained in that sense but Paul is using it in a different way perhaps he is taking that something of which the Stoics had and Christianising it and making the best of it now the Stoics as we mentioned were a particular grouping who believed that the highest possible state of man was to be so self-contained and self-sufficient I don't mean in economic terms I mean mentally and within oneself as to have need of nothing and nobody doesn't mean that they wouldn't perhaps have families and houses and food and so on but you know they would perhaps take what their bodies needed but of themselves they didn't stand in need of anybody and their ideal was that they should train themselves with this self-discipline that if they say won a million pounds or something wouldn't put them up or down that if one of their loved ones died wouldn't put them up or down if something terrible happened to them they were still indifferent now this has come into our own language in terms of that if somebody has borne something stoically then we think of it in terms of how brave they have been they haven't dissolved in floods of tears they've been sort of firm and strong in it and they've borne it very courageously with no apparent show of the emotion getting the better of them and that's what we mean when we say stoically but it's kind of a kind of watered down version of what they actually believed what they were seeking was complete emotional coldness complete emotional deconstruction such that a man should be ideally so self-contained he is not touched by anything that happens around him that they thought of was the ultimate ideal so that the world with all its problems and sins and failures and good things and bad things could not affect you one way or the other you were so self-contained you recognised this to be all that happened to be as they would see it the will of the gods and you were completely at peace with that now one of their particular mottos was that if you want to make a man happy do not add to his possessions but take away from his desires now it's possible that Paul is sort of tuning into this that the Philippians would have been well familiar with this particular grouping of people the Stoics and he's sort of taking that that Greek word which has been translated by our translators as the word content and I think they are right to use not self-sufficient or self-contained but the word that is translated now as content it doesn't just mean the Stoic then it is so much fuller and so much more blessed a word content because there is a distinction there's a difference between what the

Stoics thought and what Paul now is teaching here the translators are right to make it something different it is not self-sufficient that Paul is trying to teach but rather it is that which is God sufficient rather than self-sufficient he wrote to Timothy remember 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 6 godliness with contentment is great gain if your relationship with the Lord is blossoming is flourishing and you are content with whatever he gives that's great gain that's a great thing but it's not just I am indifferent whatever happens to me if God sends punishment I am indifferent if he sends blessing I am indifferent we are not self-sufficient we are God sufficient that is what Paul is trying to teach here and this is a very different thing from what the Stoics taught their rejection of all emotion or any kind of dependence rather we read as he wrote to the Corinthians 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 5 not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God our sufficiency is of God you see for the Stoics emotionless indifference was a human achievement the ultimate human achievement but emotional indifference or emotionless indifference was a human achievement for Paul contentment a different thing was a divine gift the difference between emotionless indifference and contentment is the difference between human achievement which they discipline themselves to tune out all emotion or all thought or feeling and the divine gift that rather takes human emotion and feeling and pleasure and pain and suffering and all the effects of the world and sanctifies it you see if you go down the stoic road or the road of oh I'm so self-contained nothing affects me one way or the other you effectively dehumanize yourself there is no virtue in turning a man into a block of stone so that he feels nothing so if his wife or children were to die under horrible circumstances he's just he's completely indifferent and it doesn't touch him one way or the other if that happened to the Christian then of course he will be broken hearted he will be gutted and he will be in absolute misery but he will have a God to whom he can take that pain and offer up those tears and that heartbreak and all his suffering and make it a sacrifice upon the altar of his

[12 : 02] God who has himself sacrificed everything for him so you see with Paul with this God sufficiency one doesn't become dehumanized one becomes more fully humanized Christ being the ultimate human being perfect God perfect man the ultimate human being as man was intended to be and all those who follow Christ who are in Christ become more and more like him again the Corinthians when Paul writes to the Corinthians I can't find the exact verse here when I've got it but it says we beholding as in a glass the things of the Lord are changed from glory into glory becoming more like him so we become more like the Lord it's here in chapter 3 of 2 Corinthians we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the

Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord he makes us more like him not dehumanized but more fully humanized not eliminating emotion and thought and feeling but taking it and gathering it up and sanctifying it giving it to the Lord we all know that you can't pretend that suffering and hardship and pain doesn't happen in this fallen world of course it does but what the Lord does is he gives it a purpose he gives it a meaning a reason if not an explanation here and now then certainly an explanation here after all will be made clear but he goes on to say verse 12 I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound as the Stoics would everywhere and in all things I am instructed and the word we've got instructed there it really means initiated it's in the sense of having learned the art almost like having been an apprentice but now fully qualified but again despite the outward similarities it's completely unlike the pagan

Stoics because as we read here he says I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me again the glory is the Lord's the focus is upon Christ going back again to 2 Corinthians we read in chapter 6 at verse 10 here as sorrowful yet always rejoicing as poor yet making many rich as having nothing and yet possessing all things this is what it is to know Christ that yes you can take or leave the blessing or the poverty the riches or the neediness whatever it is but it is all to Christ's glory that we are filled with him and this is what Paul is holding on to this is what he is teaching sorrowful yet always rejoicing poor yet making many rich having nothing yet possessing all things and as he says here verse 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me this is the thing now if we were to turn back to the Ephesians we find that he writes a similar thing to them there in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 16 we read that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man that which is inside that which is in the heart and the soul to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man now what that means is that regardless of what is happening without the strength that you have within is not because of any outward circumstances it is not that you are dead cold and indifferent it is rather that you have this strength this power this warmth and this ability within which God supplies despite all the evidence from the outside there is no evidence from the outside to make you feel this way to give you this strength it is in the inner man that the Lord gives this by the power of his spirit that he may grant to you

Ephesians 3 16 according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man now this is completely the opposite to what happened to the pagans the Canaanites when Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan where we read when the spies visit Rahab the harlot in Jericho and we read in chapter 2 verse 9 of Joshua she said unto the man I know that the Lord hath given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you now there was no reason why those in Jericho should be so terrified yes they crossed the Jordan miraculously yes the two kings of the Amorites in the other side of Jordan had been defeated in battle but you know the blitz creed throughout Canaan of killing all the all the different kings of 31 kings and destroying all their cities one after the other hadn't happened yet there was no outward evidence to make the inhabitants of Jericho think well James our walls haven't got a chance against these guys we are too weak and they are so powerful it was purely that the Lord by his power caused their spirit to faint within them to become terrified of his people and of his spirit that was with them and of all that was coming against them

I know that the Lord hath given you the land that your terror is fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you despite the outward evidence that would never cause this conclusion the Canaanites and those in Jericho were terrified now that's the opposite now of what the Lord gives that despite all the evidence against us all the hostility all the difficulty all the problems in this fallen world that he gives us that strength that spirit and the inner man that power which only he can give I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me and the word that we have there strengtheneth again we lose a wee bit in translation but in the original it is the present and continuous tense it's not just well he's doing it today well who knows what might happen tomorrow no he's doing it today and he keeps on doing it it is present and continuous he strengthens me he keeps on strengthening me he will keep on strengthening me present and continuous through Christ which strengtheneth me notwithstanding verse 14 you have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction he doesn't want them to think that this is what Paul does as we look at his letters he goes off on a wee tangent and then he comes back again to it and he's been busy waxing lyrical about how oh you know

[19 : 22] I didn't really need it because I was fine and I've learned how to be content so you know I'm not really bothered there is a danger if that's the line you take and you don't sort of fill it out and balance it with something else but they'll think well okay if he's not needing it we don't need to bother you know that's how he feels you know we sound like Paphroditus happily across the Roman Empire and this is what he says well I didn't really need it because I've learned how to be content I don't bother I'm fine I can do everything through Christ who strengthened me so what he writes now from verse 14 onwards is by way of gracious encouragement to them notwithstanding despite all the fact that I don't need and I'm not up nor down whatever my situation is but you have well done that you did communicate with my affliction he doesn't deny that he is in affliction he doesn't deny that he is suffering in this confinement you know being kept even in your own hired house chained to a guard with quite a lot of freedom as a Roman citizen it is hugely confining for somebody who was constantly on the road constantly preaching the gospel constantly going to different places and yes stirring up opposition and then getting attacked and then moving on to the next one and always planting a wee seed of believers wherever he went this was hugely confining it is affliction he is not diminishing he is not diminishing the gift that they have sent but rather when it says communicate it means like we are shares together in the affliction that I am suffering because you are remembering me and doubtless praying for me because you are giving me this gift you are taking from yourselves in order to give to me so that what could have been used in Philippi amongst yourselves is now being used with me in my confinement in Rome you are effectively sharers together in my affliction communicate with my affliction you know like the tips of the fingers compared with the shoulder the same body is sharing in the same either blessing or suffering and he reminds them again you Philippians know yourselves that in the beginning of the gospel now he doesn't mean when Jesus was preaching in Palestine or when the spirit fell on the disciples at Pentecost the beginning of the gospel for the Philippians means when the gospel first came to Philippi it is talking about the likes of Acts 16 when Paul comes there and when you know you have got the girl who is possessed of the demons and Paul and Silas cast out the demon and they get thrown into jail and whip and then the jailer gets converted and so on this is the beginning of the gospel for them in Philippi in the beginning of the gospel when I departed from Macedonia after he left no church communicated with me shared with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only now you see they didn't wait for others to say now what's the normal way of doing things here well okay now we're Christians what do they do in Jerusalem what do they do in Antioch how should we help is it just once a year or when you come or next time you come by we look after you then but you know what should we do they didn't wait to see well what do they do elsewhere you know what's the normal practice this was the person this was the person who had brought them the saving knowledge of Christ their lives were transformed by it they wanted to keep that relationship with him they wanted to keep the shoulder in touch with the tips of the finger they wanted the body to maintain that unity they kept in touch they kept giving they kept sharing as though he were still living with them in Philippi they kept supplying his needs you didn't wait to be asked you didn't wait to see what other churches did no church communicated

with me as giving and receiving but ye only now this verse tells us just how unique the Philippians were because if you remember his relationship with a far more turbulent church in Corinth he says to them in chapter 11 2 Corinthians verses 8 and 9 it says have I committed an offence in abasing myself you might be exalted because I preached you the gospel of God freely I robbed other churches in other words I took I took help from them taking wages of them to do you service and when I was present with you in Corinth and wanted was in need I was chargeable to no man in Corinth for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia as supply and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you and so will I keep myself now Macedonia is a big place a large province in northern Greece so there could have been any number of churches in Macedonia and brethren in Macedonia who kept this drip feed supply of support to Paul but now we know from this fourth chapter in Philippians itself that this support this help wasn't coming from lots of different churches in Macedonia to Corinth it was only coming from one it was coming from Philippi you Philippians know that in the beginning when I departed from Macedonia no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only now the other churches yes they took collections for the poor in Judea and in Jerusalem and they transported it there and they passed it on and Paul was one of those that took it to Jerusalem that's how he got arrested in the first place but concerning his needs and his wants only Philippi for even in Thessalonica he sent once and again unto my necessity now what's significant about Thessalonica what's significant there is that it's the next place he goes after Philippi and it's not that far away it's only you know

I can't remember the exact number of miles maybe 30 or 40 miles away or whatever it's not that far and it's very soon after he leaves Macedonia they don't say oh well he's got a wee while yet before he starts to run out of food or necessities we don't have to send anything to him yet maybe when he goes a bit further afield but no even when I was in the next major city you started sending to me down so soon after I left you sent right away you started as you meant to go on you sent once and again to my necessity they didn't wait to see what others were doing and this is a lesson that we can and should take from the Philippians that whether we're talking about their generosity or something else that is right for a Christian to do if it is right then it is right no matter who's doing it it is right no matter how many others may or may not be doing it sometimes if a crisis occurs Christians like everybody else can become a bit paralysed and they sort of look around and say well what's everybody else doing what are they doing what are bigger churches than us doing so we better sort of maybe take advice and see what's right before we decide when what is right is staring you in the face what is right you know is the truth of what you should do but it takes a bit of courage to be the ones to step out first but they didn't wait for others they knew what was right and they acted on it they got on with it and if nobody else did it so be it if something is right to do then it won't be made you know better to your account by having waited for the rest of the crowd if it is wrong to do then there will be no safety in the crowd just because everybody else did it and you followed a multitude to do evil so if something is right in the sight of the Lord you don't have to wait for other people you go ahead and you do what you know to be right and if it is right in the sight of the Lord and if nobody else does it how much more blessed will you look for being the one that did how much more precious will that be in the sight of the Lord for being the one or one of the few that did what the Lord would require of you this is what

Philippi did they were amongst the very few as far as churches are concerned Paul said the only one that actually had an ongoing care for him as the one who brought the gospel to them even in Thessalonica he sent once and again to my necessity but just as he corrected himself in verse 14 to say you know he wanted to encourage them and say you know I don't want you to think oh I don't care whether I get or whether I don't care or I'm not bothered I've learned all things to be content so I don't really care whether you give me a gift or not because that would discourage them here again when he's praising them up for having sent them gifts he wants to guard against them thinking get on keep it coming I want more you know I deserve more I brought you the gospel come on keep it coming to me because that's what some of the false apostles that we read about in Corinthians were doing people who were freeloading who were living off the generosity of the churches moving from one church to another and just soaking up whatever came to them he was desperate to avoid that charge and this is why he says again at verse 70 not because

I desire a gift but I desire fruit that may abound to your account now this is an important thing here this is a key thing because what he is saying is that when you are giving in this way you are not making yourselves poorer but rather you are making yourselves richer now just as he would say to the Galatians it's not I live but Christ lives in me when you're giving you're living in Christ you're not going to be the poorer for it although it might feel like it I can remember when I was a wee boy one of the very first times I ever went to the bank by myself and the bank was just literally across the road from where we lived and I had saved up my little pennies and coins and everything people give you money for Christmas or birthdays and I tottered them all and I had got a pound now remember a wee boy a pound was a lot of money it was a lot of money to have in your pocket when you normally went into shopping with 5p or 10p or something that would give you a few sweeties a pound was a lot of money and I had found tucked away in one of my drawers a wee bank account book and I had seen what mum or dad or grandparents had put in for making bank and I thought oh money that's going there so I thought the bank book and I panned it over the cashier and I shoved my pound across underneath the glass and they stamped it and they gave me the book back and I went out and I thought well the total that was there was only going up by one pound it doesn't actually look that much different now does it and now I don't have anything in my pocket and now I haven't got anything in my hand and I don't actually feel that much richer or better at all and yet although I felt as though I actually now had less money the money was actually safer now than it had been where it was in my pocket it was still going into my account it was adding up to my account although I myself was felt poor it was now in the bank on my name in my account and I've done it myself worst time ever and this is a bit of what it's like for the

[31 : 23] Philipppines when they give to Paul it's not that they're doing it in order to get ticks in the box with the Lord but when they are doing what feels like making themselves poorer it is in fact making themselves richer the myth of indifference that you know that nobody notices what we do that nobody sees if we're there is a complete it's a complete falsehood Paul says you know in a bunch of your account when you give to me like that the Lord sees it and the Lord knows others and others also you can't you can't ignore the fact that in Corinthians there there's this note of slight irritation with the Corinthians that you know they're busy trying to get the points across that they think are important and in the meantime Paul saying with that I don't want to get anything from you these guys in Macedonia they supplied all my need and they started grinding their teeth and thinking there's always one of them how they give and they help and they supply it is remembered it is noticed even if others will not notice it the Lord sees and knows everything that you do put down my tears into thy bottle are they not in thy book

Psalm 56 we know it well of course every every gift every expenditure everything by which we seemingly make ourselves poorer we are in fact stacking up credit on our account not that God will open the book and say you've done more good than you did evil so yeah that's you through if we are saved we are saved by Christ and we are saved only by his precious blood but in order to show our love for him we do more and more of what would please him none of it goes unnoticed you know it's not just in these sort of secret things giving to Paul and nobody else would see it across all these miles and these continents every little thing that you do people do actually notice again in my younger days I would go to church every week and so on and maybe if I went for whatever reason to somebody else's church I thought nobody will see nobody will know if I'm in my place or not they won't see and only after I became a minister many years ago they begin to recognise you know you see everyone you always notice who's in their place and who isn't if somebody's not there you notice it if somebody turns up for the first time you see it and they think you know if we sneak in the back pew and we keep our heads down nobody looks that we visited for the first time of course they notice everybody notices everybody sees and certainly everybody involved with the things of the kingdom of Christ takes encouragement from every time somebody is there with them and correspondingly a measure of discouragement every time somebody is not there they notice those who are involved with the liberality of the church notice when people's giving is increasing it's not they think aha more money for us but rather they think this is an indication of greater spiritual motivation with this person it is fruit that may abound to your account if we see somebody being motivated to give to the

Lord if somebody in their heart and by their spirit the Lord gives them is tithing then that doesn't come from human nature if they are giving more than they used to that doesn't come from our human nature that comes from the Lord it is fruit that may abound to your account not because I desire a gift Paul says but I desire fruit that may abound to your account I want to see growth in my beloved Philippian church I want to see that you're going on with the Lord these things are motivating you because the spirit and the gospel is motivating you there you are being moved by this but I have all and I have everything I eat I am full having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you an odour of a sweet smell a sacrifice acceptable well pleasing to God now there's nothing smelly about what they gave in terms of the gifts or the money or the clothing or whatever they brought but rather the sense is as we read in

Matthew 25 with the paddle of the sheep and the goats it says the Lord the king says verse 40 the king shall answer and say unto them verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me a sacrifice acceptable well pleasing to God they are giving it to Paul but Paul is saying you're only giving it to me because I am the Lord's servant who brought you the gospel I'm in touch with you and you love me because I brought you because I love you and brought the gospel to you and we all love the Lord Jesus Christ together that's the reason that you're giving it and it's really ultimately a service not to me but to God and as much as you've done it unto one of these the least of my servants says the risen Christ in Matthew 25 you've done it to me you've done it to God a sweet savour acceptable unto God now it's like when in Genesis chapter 8 where Noah offers up the sacrifice of the clean animals after he comes out of the ark so that God smelled a sweet savour now it's not that burning flesh is such a wonderful scent it is rather that what the

Lord in that sense smells what comes up ascending with the smoke of his offering is that this is what Noah has taken from the limited supply available to him he has given to the Lord a thank offering of every clean beast of what is available he is thankful for his deliverance he is maintaining his relationship with the Lord and that is what if you like is sweet smelling in the Lord's nostrils that is what the Lord smells the sweet savour of an offering of thanksgiving of love of relationship to the Lord an odour of a sweet smell a sacrifice acceptable well pleasing to God because for as much as you've done it unto one of these the least of my servants you've done it unto me but my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ

[38 : 05] Jesus far beyond anything that they would think that they were worthy of says whatever you may have given God will make it up to you God is no man's debtor my God shall supply all your need now why does he say my God why does he say our God our Father because they believed in him too it is I would suggest to you in the sense of you have given this to me and I cannot repay you I cannot give back anything to say to you Philippines while you gave me this much here's twice as much back again he can't do that says but my God will do it because he acts on behalf of his servants if something is done for one of his people then he puts that on his account and as much as Paul is the servant of the Lord the Lord takes that as that which he owes and he will pay and the

Philippines would think no no no we haven't done anything and you know it's like going back to that same parable in Matthew 25 we read in verse 37 then shall the righteous answer him saying Lord when saw we thee in hunger and fed thee or thirsty and gave thee drink when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in or naked and clothed thee or when saw we thee sick or in prison and came unto thee he didn't do anything Lord he didn't do much why are you giving us this big deal of blessing and this is why he said the king shall answer and say unto them verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me I says the Lord take I take the debt upon myself I will repay saith the Lord it's not just vengeance that the Lord repays it is blessing the Lord repays if you think about the good Samaritan and the parable Jesus told in Luke's account of the gospel and he says to the innkeeper looky I take this money so far and look after him and care for him and whatever else you may spend

I only pay you when I come back again now the implication is that the Samaritan was a merchant of some kind going backwards and forwards on this road and stopping at this inn on a regular basis he's one of his regular customers so when he runs a tab or he says here is so much for the float for whatever it is you spend on him if you go over that give him whatever he needs I'll settle it up when I come back he doesn't say beyond that you charge this guy I've done enough for him I put him on my donkey I poured my wine into his wounds I bandaged up all his injuries and so I put him up and say I've given you money now if there's anything else you can charge him for it no he says if there's anything else you put it on my account and I'll pay up when I come back this is the kind of responsibility the Lord takes for his people whatever you may have outlaid for the Lord and his cause or his servants or his missionaries or whatever it is my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ

Jesus far beyond anything that they could ask or think the master is able to do for his servants that which they cannot do for themselves now unto our God and our father be glory forever and ever amen now this final section of saluting the saints in Christ Jesus he's not just saluting the bishops and deacons to whom the letter is originally addressed if we go back to chapter 1 and verse 1 to all who are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons he wants every Christian every believer every saint to be saluted the brethren which are with me greet you now that doesn't mean just personal friends we must include their brethren who are perhaps not personal friends of Paul remember that not everybody who's with him is necessarily as close a friend as they might be chapter 2 verse 20 remember he said of Timothy I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state for all seek their own not the things which are

Jesus Christ in other words Christians then like Christians now some of them weren't as good as they should be some were yes devoid and unfaithful but there was a mix of hot and cold and lukewarm and indifferent and some who should have been better than they were and that was the case then that was the case in the apostolic church but all the saints salute you whatever their spiritual state they're all sending their greetings chiefly they that are of Caesar's household the intriguing little statement here towards the end it doesn't mean Caesar's personal family it rather means some take it to be the sort of civil service those who executed his orders and put into practice every decree that he wrote and wrote down all his laws and wrote down his commands and passed them on to the army or whatever or the merchants elsewhere the kind of civil service those who were whatever Caesar went they would go with them the secretaries and all the servants and everything else some take it also to be particularly the slaves in Caesar's household now remember the gospel was especially attractive to slaves who had nothing and this was an offer of dignity and of fullness and of blessing in Christ chiefly they that are of

[43 : 41] Caesar's household Philippi was a colony it means it was a little piece of Rome transplanted to northern Greece and so by saying Caesar's household he said you know from the very heart of Rome we're also sending greetings to you you've got brothers and sisters here even when I am a prisoner in Caesar's household amongst the servants amongst the civil service amongst the slaves of Caesar's household there's already Christians and they send their love and their greetings to you here we have a little indication again of how this early on although it would be 300 years before the Roman Empire officially declared for Christianity and there would be various times many times of vicious persecution against the Christians yet this early on we have believers placed at the very heart of the Roman Empire and only the Lord knows where his people are placed in the most persecuted and the most harsh regimes in the world whether they're in

North Korea in the concentration camps there whether they're secret believers in Saudi Arabia where people get executed for being Christians whether they're in North Sudan that is trying to eliminate every last trace of the gospel from there and Islamize their country whether it be in Iran or Iraq or under the brutal regime of ISIS wherever it may be the Lord has his people remember what he said to Elijah I have reserved me 7,000 in Israel every knee which has not bowed to Baal every mouth which has not kissed him although Baal worship was the official regime of northern Israel under Ahab and Jezebel and Elijah thought he was the only one left the Lord says I've got 7,000 that you don't know about I have my people everywhere not only was it spreading throughout the empire it had penetrated Caesar's very household all the saints salute you chiefly they that are of

Caesar's household the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all of you you see how this gospel is unstoppable the word of God is not bound now as we saw this morning Babylon is tipping away it is falling it is as it were teetering on the brink of the abyss this world and all the important things or things that seem important are about to slip away and those who are redeemed in white faultless before the Lord they are there as it were in our vision and here upon earth there is the everlasting gospel to proclaim to the nations and it is bearing fruit in Caesar's household it is bearing fruit in the very heart of paganism everywhere across the world the Lord has his people but above all if the philippians have learned anything they have learned that which Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount this is their great blessing and strength

Jesus said lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust are corrupt and where thieves break through and steal but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust are corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal for where your treasure is there will your heart be also if we could sum up philippians in one sentence that would be it where your treasure is there will your heart be also let us hear tell will you