

Sunday Sermon

3/3/24

Series: Made for More

Passage: Phil 4:14-20

Title: "Partnering in Missions Work"

Good morning church! Please turn in your bibles this morning to Phil 4:14-20. Today, we will be finishing our series "Made for More." It has been beneficial for me in framing what the church should be all about. I trust it has been challenging for you as well.

Because here's the truth: We, as God's people, are a people who have been Made for More. God's intention for his church is that we would have a purpose and passion that extends beyond ourselves and is targeted at a world that he loves.

**So far, some targets we've hit along the way show us that God desires his people to be:**

- 1) A people who engage cross-culturally. Unashamed to bring near to us, and to God, those not like us.**
- 2) A people who live missionally in this world. God sends out his people as salt and light in this world – to be an example of his love. Are we living intentionally in the places where God has planted us?**
- 3) Last week, we talked about God's church being a people that passionately set an example for others to follow. This is the concept of developing spiritual leaders and using our giftings to bless one another and encourage one another toward the Lord. At the core of spiritual leadership is the imitation of an example. *"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."***

This week we will be exploring the target that a people "made for more" are **a people who are partners in the global advancement of the gospel – we might say "Sending out missionaries and participating in missions work."**

So as we begin, let's anchor this concept this morning in God's Word, because at the end of the day it really doesn't matter what I think; it matters what God thinks and reveals to us in his Word. So let's read together this morning **Phil 4:14-20. {pray}**

A college professor was going over the syllabus with his class and said to them: "Do all the assigned reading and the papers and the final project well, and you will pass the class." Well there was a student in the class who was off in left field for a bit not really paying attention, so he missed the first part and all he hears the professor says is "You will pass the class." He thinks to himself, "Great! Easy A." So for the rest of the class he phones it in, assuming that he will pass without doing the work. So when he discovers at the end of the class that the professor had, in fact, failed him, he gets mad at the professor. All because he took out of context what the professor said. That is not unlike what often can happen with scripture. God makes some amazing statements and amazing promises in his Word. And when we read one, we love to latch onto it. The problem is that, in doing that, we often

can take verses out of context, we begin to hold GOD to promises he never made, and because of that we may be surprised when the promise seems to fail.

Phil 4 is that kind of chapter. It is packed with these amazing statements and promises: “Rejoice in the Lord always” – I can do that?, “Do not be anxious about anything” – I can get to that point?, “The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” – It will?, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – I can? Amazing statements.

Phil. 4:19 is also one of these verses. It is often memorized and quoted. **“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”** What a great promise! Like, sign me up! But we often misunderstand and misapply this truth – it is truth - because we separate it from its context.

This is not a prosperity gospel verse – that when we come to Jesus, life becomes grand, that we just get in our innertube and start floating around the lazy river and, as we are floating there, God will bring us steak and daiquiris and money. He’ll give us little umbrellas to shield our perfectly vulnerable skin from the sun.

Listen: this verse is not about our ease. What is the context of this verse? Missions. Paul is talking about his experience with God’s people, who were giving generously to and participating in the work of advancing the gospel of Christ.

Last week, we talked about the people of God being one Body with many parts and many giftings. But when it comes to missions, as God’s people we need to be careful about how we use that metaphor. Because I’ve noticed the tendency to use that image of the body as an excuse to avoid missions. We say, “I’m not a mouth or a hand or a foot that can be used to go places and do things or speak truth. I am really more of an elbow. I’m more useful for hitting people in the sternum to let them know I mean business. I’m really more of the stomach because the church potlucks are really where my passions lie.”

But listen: the metaphor of the Body in scripture is not really about WHAT part of the body we are. It’s about BEING a part of the body and invested in the work of the WHOLE, on a functioning team, as part of a network.

Two weeks ago, we talked about how God calls all of his people to be salt and light in this world. The truth is: we are ALL meant to be missional, or on mission in some capacity. And yet, in that, there are some who are a part of the body, who have been called to a special calling. Who have been called by God to go. Sometimes to leave everything and go. And in that, we, the rest of the body, are called to love them. And that means coming alongside them, and supporting that work – financially, physically, emotionally. The church is called to be faithful. We are called to be generous - as God is.

#### **Verse 14 - “Yet it was kind of you to *share* my trouble.”**

That word trouble comes from a root word meaning “to be pressed.” Often in Paul’s ministry work he was pressed. Missions work is hard. It’s a high call, but it’s a hard call. People willing to give up their lives, comforts, personal agendas to respond to the Lord’s call to go

to the nations and participate in the work of his kingdom so that the world might know Jesus and hear the gospel of his salvation. And often, these missionaries go into an indifferent or even hostile territory. Many are in danger either from governmental authorities or in the case of some of our human trafficking ministries from straight up dangerous people. Many choose to leave their comforts – nice, heated homes, good paying jobs, churches, friends and family, support networks in service of the Lord. And in most cases, to do that, they are dependent on the Body, the partnership of others, financial and otherwise, who will share in their troubles.

When I first graduated from college, the Lord didn't call me into the church right away. Instead, called me into the mission field to work for CRU on college campuses. Now I didn't quite have to make the sacrifice that some are called to do, but it was still a massive step of faith. I had to raise support. I had to depend on the giving of others for my paycheck. I had to have faith that the Lord would provide. I had to shelve my own agenda for my life. I was called to step into environments which were indifferent or hostile.

And what I found in that place was a Body of Christ full of a generous people. A people who said, "if you're called, we're called." A people who were called by God to *share* (a word meaning "to partake with") my trouble.

Jesus says, "**As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**" – John 13:34. What's one way we do this? Gal 6, "**Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Let us not grow weary of doing good...so then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith**" (2, 9-10).

We are so blessed to be a part of a church that has always valued the work of missions. Nearly 20% of our total giving at this church goes directly to supporting the advancement of the gospel and those doing that work. And that has been the heart of this church for as long as I can remember. And, here's the cool thing, when you and I give, when we designate a portion of our giving to the missions budget, we are sharing in that work.

Now is giving to the church the only way we can share in the work? Of course not! Becky and I give to several people and organizations advancing the gospel which are not connected to our church. Is one better than the other? No. And neither should we feel obligated to share in all of the needs and opportunities around us. But we do invest in some, because we have discerned that God has called us to share generously in the work.

**Verse 15:** "And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into *partnership* with me in *giving* and *receiving*, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but ***I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.***"

Here's the biblical truth here: **When we become partners in the work of the Lord, that partnership is not one way.** As we give something, we also receive something in return, often in the form of God's spiritual blessings.

Anyone who has ever gone on a missions trip knows what I'm talking about. I go giving something, I go to minister somewhere, but the truth is, in my going I actually receive something. I come home a different person than I went. I come home feeling that I have received, in a profound way, much more than I actually gave.

One example of this from my own life was a missions trip that I took to Toronto in my mid 20's. Our goal in going was to minister to the poor and the foreigner by serving in some of the local mission organizations there. My group was assigned to tutoring Somalian children in how to read English. These were immigrant families and refugee families. In other words, not white, middle-class, suburban, American Christians – if you can catch what I'm saying. Talk about somebody not like me.

And we were told by the ministry organization, "You are not there to convert them. That's not your goal. They know you're Christians. They know we're Christians. They know why we were, why we exist, why we do what we do day in and day out. You're there to love them as Christ would love them. You're there to love their kids. You're there to be a blessing and help them succeed and thrive. And while you're there, be in relationship. Talk with them. Hear their stories. Accept the food from their table, because though they have nothing, they will offer it. They have dignity and worth. Respect it. See it. Love them.

And I'm telling you, as I poured out that week, something was being poured in. As I was giving to the Lord, I was receiving abundantly more from the Lord. And I left that week profoundly changed.

Because God is a generous God.

Jesus in Matthew 10:8 tells his disciples, **"Freely you have received, freely give."**

In Luke 6 Jesus says, **"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."** - Luke 6:38

God's kingdom is an upside down kingdom: the way up is down – on your knees, surrender; the way to be first is by being last – humility, counting other more important than yourself; the way to find life is to lose it – take up the cross, die to yourself, follow Christ; and the world would say (heck, logic would say!) that the more one has and the more one keeps for himself, the richer a person becomes. But God says, it doesn't work that way, **"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."** – Prov. 11:24. It's an upside down kingdom.

Why is this? Verse 18 – Because what we give is ultimately an act of worship to the Lord, **"a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God."**

Beloved, hear me this morning. Stuff and the accumulation of stuff should not grip us. We have been given JESUS. And in that, our wealth is incalculable.

Scripture says that ***“In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing.”*** – Eph. 1:3

Eph. 3:19, ***“In Christ, we are filled with all the fullness of God.”*** (forgiven, free)

And in our passage this morning, that’s how verse 19 fits when it tells us that, as we live generously with a focus on his kingdom, God will take care of us because HE is rich: ***“My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*** It’s about worship.

Do you have Jesus Christ in your life this morning? Have you accepted him, his sacrifice for your sin, his Lordship in your life? Is your life oriented in worship of him?

And because of that, being impacted by the generosity of God. He has made me rich, and, in turn, he calls me to be like him – generous, humble, loving, supporting his work, and sharing in the burdens of others.

One of the values we hold as a church is having a “global mentality.” What that means is that, because we cherish the Gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation, we are compelled by love to take that Gospel to all people everywhere.

Caring for the mission of God requires us to be a generous people, and we cannot be a generous people without being self-sacrificing, to give means to sacrifice. And at the core of our willingness to do that is love. Loving others as Christ has loved us. Because if I love Him, and I love you, I am more willing to pay the price.

Why do missionaries go? Because they love Jesus, and because they love those they are called to.

Why do we send? Because we love Jesus, and because we love people enough to pay the cost of sharing the burdens of those who go.

In closing, let me just land this with a few questions:

- 1) Is your GOD generous/has He been generous to you? (His in Love, faithful, kind, good, provision) I read this gem from Forbes magazine this week. Forbes says that “The average American today is 90 times richer than the average historical human being.” Just financially speaking, God is has been generous to us.
- 2) Where is God calling you to partner with him for the sake of the gospel? It doesn’t have to be much, but if you want to grow, if you want to lay hold of some of the stuff I’ve been talking about this morning, it begins with being generous. Start giving, start investing your time, talents, treasure in the mission of God. If you have been partnering already, ask the Lord, “Would you have me increase my investment? Do you have more for me?”

And it’s not just financially. We have 32 missionaries we partner with here at PCC. Adopt on of them. Send them care packages, write them notes. Love on them and encourage them. Go visit them. See the people they are investing their lives in for the sake of the kingdom. Maybe God is calling you to go. I’d love to encourage you in that call.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7: ***“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”***

Made for **MORE**

## Made for More: Targets for God's Church

- 1) A people who engage cross-culturally.
- 2) A people who live missionally.
- 3) A people who develop spiritual leaders.



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- 4) A people who partner in the global advancement of the gospel.

Made for ***MORE***

***“Rejoice in the Lord always” (4)***

***“Do not be anxious about anything” (6)***

***“The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (7)***

***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (13)***

Made for

**MORE**

***“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”***

- Phil. 4:19

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**“Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.”**

- Phil. 4:14

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***“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” - John 13:34***

***“Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Let us not grow weary of doing good...so then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” - Gal. 6:2,9-10***

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**“And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.”**

- Phil. 4:15-17

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Truth:

*When we become partners in the work of the Lord that partnership is not one way.*

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***“Freely you have received, freely give.”***

- Matt. 10:8

***“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”***

- Luke 6:38

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***“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;  
another withholds what he should give, and only  
suffers want.”***

– Prov. 11:24

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**“I have received full payment, and more, I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.”**

– Phil. 4:18

Made for

**MORE**

***“My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”***

- Phil. 4:19-20

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## Questions:

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- 2 Cor. 9:6-7

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