

A Happy Heart: God's Promise Through Paul

God's Promise:

"God will meet all your needs." (Philippians 4:19)

My Promise:

I will trust God to meet my needs.

OPENING

We are running out of everything, it seems, and so we worry. But worry doesn't work. Fret won't fill a bird's belly with food or a flower's petal with color. Birds and flowers seem to get along just fine, and they don't take anti-acids. What's more, you can dedicate a decade of anxious thoughts to the brevity of life and not extend it by one minute. Worry accomplishes nothing. Jesus doesn't condemn legitimate concern for responsibility, but rather the continuous mindset that dismisses God's presence. Destructive anxiety subtracts God from the future, faces uncertainties with no faith, and tallies up the challenges of the day without entering God into the equation. Worry is the dark room where negatives become glossy prints. So become a worry slapper. Treat frets like mosquitoes. Be decisive with anxiety. The moment a concern surfaces, deal with it. Don't dwell on it. Head worries off before they get the best of you. Bible Reading:

Philippians 4:10-20

IT IS NOT THE HELP THAT SOMEONE GIVES US BUT RATHER THE TRUST WE HAVE IN GOD – Philippians 4:10-11

When Paul writes to the Philippians, his life was not the most pleasing. In reality, he was about to lose his life. Still, his trust in Christ had not changed. Verse 10 tells us that the church of Philippi had sent him some help. We do not know exactly what it was. It might have been some food, or new clothes, or better blankets or a coat. Paul appreciated the gesture but quickly reminds them in whom they should trust.

All of us will have people who “remember” us and people who will “take care of us.” (Verse 10) However, it would be good to remember that nothing compares to the trust that we have in God.

Paul’s gratefulness is based on the person of Christ. In verse 11, he makes it clear that if there was something that he had learned it was to be “content.” What about us? Do we know how to be content? This declaration is very similar to what he said to Timothy when he said, *“We have brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing. Therefore, if we have clothing and food, we should be content with that.”* 1 Timothy 6:6-7. Paul practiced what he preached.

WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE – Philippians 4:12-13

There are passages in the Bible that are quoted by almost every Christian. Philippians 4:13 is one of them. Many quote it with a certain air of triumph. They are almost saying, “If I am in Christ, nothing can happen to me because God is going to help me. However, the context of the passage is the shade of the bars of a jail cell. Paul was declaring that his experience in Christ had taken him through diverse seasons. He knew how to live being “satisfied.” He also knew how to live going through “times of scarcity.”

He knew how to live because he had been “taught.” The trust he had in Christ had taught him to totally depend on God. That dependency had created in him a satisfied heart. Are you satisfied no matter what your circumstances? Many are not.

We must be able to live saying that I can do “all” things in Christ. The trusting Christian will live this truth no matter the moment he is going through. Do you remember Romans 8? (Who can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?) The God who supplies all our needs, is the God who helps us know how to live in this reality.

REMEMBERING A CERTAIN DEPENDENCY IN GOD - Philippians 4:14-16

Paul's journey with the Philippians was the true Christian brotherhood. Many of us would do well in remembering how God has been with us in special relationships. "However, you did well in participating with me in my tribulation." (Verse 14) Paul saw how God, through them, had been faithful.

Paul also mentions that not everyone is generous. Many say that they will help but very few do so. This is also evidence of a God who supplies. "...no church participated with me in giving and receiving, but only you." (Verse 15) We are grateful for those who have helped us, but we should know that with or without them, God takes care of us. It is a good thing to remember that it is better to keep trusting in God. God will use someone and that someone is only an instrument of God. "...time after time you sent to supply my needs." (Verse 16)

WE ARE NOT LOOKING FOR A HAND OUT, WE ARE LOOKING FOR FRUIT – Philippians 4:17-18

The Philippians had finally found the way to help Paul when he was in prison. It was not that they had not wanted to, it was simply that they had not been able to. Even at that moment, Paul uses the opportunity to remind them that it all centers around their relationship with Christ.

Since their dependency and trust was totally upon God, now Paul affirms that he does not want them to feel sorry for him. "It is not that I am looking for a hand out..." (Verse 17) This attitude is very healthy. This attitude is going to help us keep our lives from being dependent on others. What we should look for in others is the same fruit that lives in us. Trust in God.

When someone gives us something, we describe that gift as "a pleasant aroma, acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God?" (Verse 18) It is very probable that the answer is no. The last thing we expect is to connect it directly with God, and even less in the context of sacrifice. However, for that person who has put all of his trust in God, he knows that everything that we receive is proportionally connected with our trust in God. Since we trust in God, then, that gift is for God, not for us. We enjoy it, but the owner is God. That is trusting totally in God! Nothing is sour. Everything belongs to God and we benefit from it because God is who has returned it to us to be able to supply our needs. God is good!

TRUST BRINGS WORSHIP – Philippians 4:19-20

It is not strange that some of the messages of the Bible are about trust and worship. There is no better way to show our trust in God than in showing an exclamation of worship.

In Paul's case, the Philippians supplied his needs when he was imprisoned. Now, Paul reminds them that nothing gets by God. When we are generous, giving, and compassionate, He will take care of us. That is the law of God. God supplies the needs of those who trust Him. If there would be anyone who would participate with Him in this, then God Himself will be in charge of "supplying all of your needs..."(Verse 19) More than a desire, Paul is testifying. He is saying to them, "I know a God who supplies all of my needs. Therefore, He will supply yours as well." How would you like to worship Him together?

Paul concludes this section by doing what someone who trusts God with everything would do. "To God our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Verse 19). This declaration has an eternal tone to it. Possibly, in the mind of Paul there was fact that his earthly life was about to end, but that his relationship with God of "eternity" would remain intact. In God, Paul was going to prove that trusting in Him has greater and more beautiful rewards than those that we enjoy here and now. That reward is eternal and without end. That is trust!