

Enjoy Sufficiency in All Things because of Christ Glorious Riches 《 Php 4:14-23》

Prelude: In the entire book of Philippians, we see how God manifested His abounding glory in Paul's life and situations. Firstly, God satisfied Paul's deepest spiritual need, enabled his soul to have complete rest in Christ and have transcending faith in trying situations. In fact, the power of gospel is a carnal man, upon understanding the truth of God, able to experience the practical, unexpected peace and faith in various challenges! Not only are we envious of it, we should also pursue this spiritual experience. Although it's God's grace to have such life, it is also given to all who can understand this spiritual blessing. There're people who listen to the gospel their whole lifetime just to solve the problems of the flesh, and the testimonies they boast about always remain at the carnal level; there're some who are comforted by the truth of God, but they cannot walk towards the path of glorifying God and benefiting men; there're some who are hungry and thirst for God, but they cannot turn this hunger into spiritual strength, ie experience the almighty God in their limitations and powerlessness; look upon Lord, rely on Lord and surrender to Lord in their spirit, completing the perfect will of God abundantly. Can our spirit enjoy such revival? Is today's church bringing the believers to such spiritual arena? This is something we ought to meditate on. Besides, in the pursuit of our spiritual revival we cannot overlook the help and blessings God has given us in flesh. In fact, God builds His glory in our souls (enable us to receive and understand His grace); in our flesh, God is also revealing His glory. <3 Jn 1:2> I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. <Mt 6:33> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Although we cannot say the prosperity of our flesh is the evidence of the prosperity of our spirit, when our spirits prosper (satisfied by the presence of God), we will surely enjoy sufficiency in all our needs. God's promise is real - first experienced in the spirit, and then manifested in flesh. Therefore, on the foundation of this promise that we believe, we need to remove all anxiety, fear, lack, and comparative mindsets. Also, because we have believed in this promise, we can praise the glory of God in all things and enjoy God's provision. Therefore, in emphasizing revival of the spirit, we cannot unconsciously add burden that is not from God onto the believers. God is leading the believers' lives very holistically; even in trying situation He is also showing His help practically; in insufficiencies He also provides practically. We only need to learn from Paul, always praising and confirming the grace of God in the spirit, only then can we see Jehovah Jireh in all things.

1. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus <4:19>

1) Confirm: God's glorious riches uphold me in His grace, not only can I stand firm in various adversities, I see greater grace in it

* In the entire book, Paul was not boasting about his faith, he only showed his genuine self when God's grace had come upon him, causing him to see the unrelenting help of God in all things. Today, many believers only seek for more grace, but they have never understood how to receive grace. In fact, through Jesus Christ, the grace of God has come upon us who believe in Him, abundantly. Therefore, it's not for us to seek for more grace of God, instead, when a person sees that he has nothing to begin with, only then can he praise God for what He has given him. But we're often concerned about our merits, our intelligence, success and good works, as such, the heart of grace is weakened, thus we are unable to see the Holy Spirit that is at work in our hearts. Therefore the Lord said: For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses (because they see grace) their life for me will find it <Mt 16:25>. Therefore, grace receiver starts from recognizing he is a complete sinner (see that he is completely nothing and powerless), and all he has today comes from the Lord. Not only that, when we can see the grace of the Giver, only then can we see grace added upon grace in all things.

2) Confirm: God's glorious riches enable me to live out Christ in various situations, and be the witness of Gospel

* In all of Paul's appeals, he not only defended for himself, he even saw that as opportunity to share the gospel; when he was facing trials, not only did he tell all saints about his situation, he also used that to illustrate the work of God, strengthening and encouraging Lord's churches through it. Try asking where else can we see greater miracle or greater glorious riches of God? When we are conscious that heaven is not a place that we may go in future, but a present glory that comes unto us, we will use all our lives, hearts and minds to share the heavenly gospel in season and out of season. Perhaps some may say: God's glorious riches enables him to have sufficiency in his emotions and flesh, but to Paul, the glorious riches of God enable him to restore the reason to evangelize in all good and bad circumstances. Because of this, we know that God's glorious riches does not only solve satisfiability problem, it also solves the directionality problem. When a person can live for gospel, he will use all he has for the kingdom, and that is the greatest blessing.

3) Confirm: God's glorious riches satisfy the needs of our flesh, it also liberates us from the trials we face

* Firstly, we need to understand that God does not add unnecessary burden on His children, neither will He restrain timely help from His children. Paul's sufferings were greatly related to how he received revelation from God, and were important testimonies to all saints. Despite this, God will not let His servant be ashamed or downcasted. In Paul's journey of serving, it had been difficult but God gave him timely grace. He provided the physical strength (health), wealth (finance), help of man (co-workers) His servant needed, abundantly. Although we cannot say that people who love the Lord will not be tested in this area, we can firmly say: if we genuinely love Lord, we will surely see God's grace in our flesh is enough. Try asking, how many times have we worried about things and thus unable to enjoy God's current provision, and how many times the things we've been so worried about did not happen. In fact, Lord knows our needs and has provided for us abundantly, He does this so as to manifest His goodness and righteousness. Only when we believe in His promise can we manifest His glory in the richness of our flesh. In the characters of faith mentioned in <Heb 11>, their glories are not on their external abundance, rather, in the great richness they genuinely long for the eternal home, and they relied on Lord's grace.

2. Through the matter of giving and receiving, Paul blessed the Philippians. This is also what we, today's believers, need to receive

1) Paul blessed the Philippians in the matter of giving and receiving, that they may receive grace upon grace 《4:15-16》

* When Paul left Macedonia in the early attempts of evangelism, Philippi church was involved in the matter of giving and receiving with Paul. The "matter of giving and receiving" mentioned here refers to "Balance payment" in the original text, revealing that Philippi church offered financial help through an account, and Paul earned a living through that financial source. In the spiritual context, it implies that the Philippi church had received the spiritual benefits from Paul, therefore they gave financial support to Paul to supplement the needs of evangelism. In summary, this is a beautiful thing and a mutual love between a shepherd and his sheep. Although love is not materialistic, the provision is the reflection of love. The reason God has given us this physical body and physical needs is to manifest love through the supply of these needs. Regardless of churches or between shepherd and sheep, we ought to show love and wisdom in this area. Therefore, the one who offers do it with a heart of thanksgiving, the one receiving should all the more receive a heart of sacrifice for the sheep.

2) Paul wished for the Philippians to participate in kingdom matters not only through offering, but to grow in the Lord in all their beings and hearts, bearing various spiritual fruits 《4:17》

* Although Paul was very comforted by the love of the Philippi church, it all the more spurred him to intercede for their blessedness, ie he wished that they could co-work with him not only in their offerings, but he prayed that their lives and living can manifest the beauty of Christ all the more that they evangelized and received inheritance in the various fields Lord placed them in. Therefore, when we offered ourselves for Lord's kingdom, we should not deal with it like an offering or supporting the ministry only, instead, we should pay (offer) ourselves to Lord and give birth to greater hunger and thirst for God, have greater desire to participate in the matters of kingdom.

3) Through Philippians' participation in the kingdom matters, ie through offering, Paul confirmed that Lord was pleased at them and their contributions 《4:18-19》

* Through how Philippians willingly and practically participated in the matters of the kingdom (sharing the gospel and evangelism), Paul had a few assured confirmations about them in his spirit: ① Their lives were pleasing to God and would be heavily used <God was pleased at their offering, meaning God was pleased at their lives>; ② They would surely see God's revelation in their prayers < in the offering of sacrifice of the old testament, when God was pleased at the offering of His people, He would reveal to them>; ③ The heart of taking physical things lightly and loving the servant of God proved them to be spiritually rich, therefore they would surely see God's provision in their physical needs. Actually, the grace God gives to such believers is like that Zarephath widow (because she fed God's servant, her flour did not use up and the oil did not run dry), all the needs will surely be satisfied.

3. In great suffering, the love between believers advances the gospel works all the more

1) In Paul's greetings, we see the love of Lord Christ which transcends culture, ethnicity, status, and background 《4:21-22》

① Firstly, in Paul's greeting, we see the interactions of saints bring such warm and power of comfort. The situation of such greeting paints a picture of all saints in the same boat marching toward the same destination. There're all sorts of things in this thrilling voyage, but it already has the best captain (our Lord Jesus) and the crew are all united in obeying this captain, therefore giving each other strength through this one-heartedness and mutual love for one another. Especially in the face of storms, the crew entrusts to the captain in maneuvering the ship, and supports each other through encouragement and love.

② Besides, during Paul's imprisonment in Rome, the gospel was also miraculously spread through him and his coworkers. When he was in the prison, gospel was spread to the household of Caesar, and there were some who came to believe in the Lord. They could be royal family or their servants or slaves, or imperial armies. Such people actually became Christians through Paul being chained. To the people who had been earnest in Paul's evangelical work through intercession and practical help, such news gave them great joy and they received crown together with Paul.

2) The conclusion of book of Philippians: in Lord's grace, let's manifest the glorious living testimonies in all relative situations

① To God's people who are greatly loved, no one suffering is devoid of the Emmanuel answer. This answer comes from God's promise, and it came to Paul through the illumination of Holy Spirit. Today, it is also on the people who has established covenant with God, whose lifetime purpose is on living out Christ. Despite imperfect, we only have to press on and strain on toward the goal, our spiritual experiences will surely increase with time

② Lord Jesus had already shown His divinity and humanity. Therefore, in our spiritual pursuit, we do not only know of God's perfect will in knowledge, we should live out that perfect will in our humanity so that the people of the world can see the Lord living in flesh through us. In the book of Philippians, the longing Paul had toward the saints, his concerns for his co-worker

who was heavily-ill, the exhortations and encouragement he had to co-workers who had divisions, the gratitude and intercessions he had toward the co-workers who supported him – all these showed the fatherly heart of Paul. Such love is the supporting strength of all saints, and it is also the example we should we learn.

③ Lastly, when we have fulfilled all, we can only entrust it to Lord completely. We only seek to receive rewards from Lord and look upon the eternal home. True believers have greater anticipation in great sufferings.