

**Intro** Talking about money in church can be challenging. Every Sunday we take time to collect money from you the gathered worshippers. Sometimes it seems like we intentionally hurry through it with a reference to the ushers and a 'here comes the offering' prayer as if we are intimidated by the fact that we are about to focus on money in church. The church and money have a history. There are stories, assumptions, misunderstandings and some wrong thinking when the two subjects of money and church or religion are combined. Talking about money can tend to make you nervous, especially in church. Our prayer this morning is that God would teach us by his Spirit from his Word to genuinely, deeply, meaningfully and regularly enjoy the offering.

The Apostle Paul in 4:10-20 of his letter to the Philippian church thanks them for their financial support of him and his ministry. In this note of recognition and thanks, along with other NT references, we clearly see that Paul talked and taught about money from a background of tension and misunderstanding. He used this existing tension to both recognize the Philippians generosity and to teach the truth of the ministry of giving for the follower of Christ.

**Read/comment** Phil. 4:10-20

Note in verses 10, 11 and 17 how the Apostle seems to feel like he has to explain himself so he is not misunderstood. These verses record the receiver of the gifts recognizing the donations while teaching the donors about giving from God's perspective. The tension that sometimes exists in talking about or teaching about money in church can be seen or described in these ways:

- The awkwardness of a spiritual leader, supported by the offerings, expressing appreciation while having responsibility to teach truth about money and giving.
- Maintaining proper focus or perspective while being accused or misunderstood regarding giving and money. 2Cor. 12:11-21 *'I was crafty you say, and got the better of you by deceit.'*v.16  
1Thess 2:9; 2Thess.3:7-10
- The desire of the spiritual leader to separate ministry motive and money. 1Cor. 9:1-18  
*'What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge.'*
- The need for clear consistent warnings and example concerning greed in its many manifestations knowing that greed is a problem for both church members and leaders.  
Lk. 12:15; 1Peter 5:2 – *'not greedy for money but eager to serve.'*

We address the subject of the offering and money this morning because God addresses it in his word. Our 'thank you note' passage begins with rejoicing and ends with a benediction of praise. God's grace in our lives in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is such that our thinking about money and giving should be transformed along with the rest of our ways of thinking. As we listen to God this morning through his word, let's determine to not settle for anything less than great joy in the Lord whenever we have opportunity to give generously to support the advance of the gospel. Our goal in Christ is more than just giving, it is actually to enjoy the offering.

Over the two Sundays that we spend in these 11 verses we will learn from the Philippian's example, Paul's example and Paul's teaching that are four reasons why you and I should enjoy the offering. Giving with joy and cheerfulness to advance the gospel is built on these four truths. You can move, grow from being a non giver, cautious giver, cheerless giver, obligated giver, expect a blessing giver, or a buying God's blessing giver by hearing and obeying God's words in this study. The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:

1. You communicate your contentment in Christ.
2. You renew your partnership in the Gospel.
3. You make your investment in the Kingdom.
4. You express your worship to God.

As time allows, we will learn and apply two truths today and two more next Sunday.

**The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:**

**1. You communicate your contentment in Christ.**

**11-13**

Note Paul's concern to communicate clearly his own personal perspective of contentment while expressing his joy at the kindness of the Philippian church members toward him. It is important to understand the nuance of his right thinking on this point. He wanted it made clear what the motive and object of his gratitude was. He was not thankful simply because he had his needs met. He issues a disclaimer that joy does not come simply from a need being met. As important as the donation from his partners is, the source of joy in Paul's life came from a preexisting condition called contentment. The joy proceeded out of a satisfied heart that was not dependent on external circumstances and this satisfaction in Christ was shared by both Paul and his donor base!

Joy is found in contentment. Contentment can be better understood by answering these simple questions:

a. What is contentment?

The text presents two dimensions of understanding contentment . . .

- Your satisfaction being detached from/independent of external circumstances. 11-12
- Your satisfaction being attached to and dependent on Jesus Christ. 13, 19

Cmp. 2Cor. 9:8

1Tim. 6:6ff

b. How do you become content?

11-12

A learning process that again has two dimensions . . .

- You learn from experience that satisfaction is not connected with money/things.

I learned

I know 2x

I have been initiated 12

- You learn to live in the strength and satisfaction Christ provides. 13

Whatever situation in any and every circumstance

Pray for contentment	Prov.30:8-9
Decisively plan for contentment	Col.3:5; 1Tim.6:10-11
Set our hearts on contentment	1Tim. 6:17ff
Guard our hearts for contentment	Luke 12:15ff
Persevere/press on for contentment	Phil. 3:12-16

You give generously, make sacrificial lifestyle decisions and set your budget/plan carefully because of the overwhelming satisfaction found in depending on and being attached to Christ. That's the statement you make every time the plate is passed and you participate.

The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:

1. You communicate your contentment in Christ.

**2. You renew your partnership in the Gospel. 14-16**

Note how the gifts sent to support Paul were viewed by Paul as expressions of or related to their partnership in the gospel. The word fellowship or partnership occurs several times as a major theme of this letter and occurs in our passage in verses 14 & 15. Paul and the Philippians had a special personal relationship in the gospel. This is evident by Paul's endearing and affectionate expressions throughout the epistle. It is also seen in the Philippians long term generous financial support of Paul and his ministry. The advance of the gospel through life on life proclamation of truth was the glue that held this partnership together.

The gift was seen as evidence that the donor had identified with Paul in his ministry and was an ongoing participation in advancing the gospel through his life and work.

Joy is found in advancing the gospel in partnerships. Gospel partnerships have two primary components:

- a. Partnership is built on genuine care and concern. 10, 14, 16
  - Genuine care and concern for a person. For me 10, my trouble 14, my needs 16
  - Genuine care and concern for the gospel. 15 in the beginning of the gospel

- b. Partnership is built on generous commitment. 10, 16, 18
  - Commitment seen in perseverance. More than once 16; no one else 15; hard times 10 – blossomed/opportunity
  - Commitment seen in generosity. 18 I am well supplied

Illus. gospel partnerships just at Kossuth Street . . .

Enjoy the offering because you are renewing and celebrating the advance of the gospel in partnerships!

19 missionaries @ \$125,000 annual      8 ministries/agencies @ \$18,000 annual      21% of budget

Add salaries/benefits/support for staff/pastors . . . 25 families/individuals advancing gospel 60% budget

**The 4 truths that you celebrate with every offering are:**

1. You communicate your contentment in Christ.
2. You renew your partnership in the Gospel.
3. You make your investment in the Kingdom.
4. You express your worship to God.

**Conclusion**      The only power, powerful enough to root out and replace the love of money in your heart is the power of the gospel. The message of God's love in Christ to deliver us from the power and penalty of our sin is a life transforming message. It is the basis for our contentment, partnerships, investments and worship. Turn from your ways, repent and place the control of your life in Jesus today.

The offering will never be fun, always be a drag if Christ and his gospel are secondary issues in your life. Cry out to God for mercy, ask him to reveal to you the hardness of your heart and don't stop seeking, knocking and asking until God answers Psalm 86:11 in your life.

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth;  
Unite my heart to fear your name.

**Study questions**

1. Have everyone in the group share how much they give monthly to KSBC and elsewhere for the advance of the gospel. After you decide to not do that, talk about why you decided to not do that. What are your concerns – what makes talking about money/giving awkward? Comment/give your impressions of the 4 bullet points regarding this in the intro section of the notes.
2. Read Phil. 4:10-20. Have group members share observations, questions or impressions from the reading. If you have time you may want to include reading Luke 12:13-21 or 1Timothy 6:6-19 also.
3. Explain the point of point #1.
4. What is right or wrong with being joyful that your needs were met? Unravel the disclaimer that Paul makes in verses 11 & 17. How does his disclaimer influence your thinking regarding contentment?
5. Share a story or experience of learning contentment from a time of prosperity/abundance in your life. Share a story or experience of being initiated into contentment by a time in need/hunger. How or in what practical ways did you learn to have greater joyful confidence in Christ's strength in these experiences?
6. What should you say, think, sing or sigh about contentment as you plan/make/give your offering to the Lord?
7. Explain the point of point #2.
8. Identify your favorite KSBC missionary and explain the joy you experience through your partnership with them in advancing the gospel.
9. What do you want to do, use or remember from today's study?