**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***Biblical Worldview***

**Philippians 4:15-23**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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Last week, we received Paul’s message to the Philippian congregation to “rejoice” in all things. By saying “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (verse 13), Paul is motivating them and us today. We, like the Philippians, have our own set of challenges we face on a day-to-day basis. In America, I see that we are mildly challenged by the secular culture, in comparison to the Philippian church, to remain quiet about God, Jesus Christ and the Resurrection. But we, too, in our struggles to witness our faith, will hold onto. . . “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”.

In verses 15-19, Paul identifies with his friends in Philippi when they worked together to spread the Gospel of God. Paul applauds their support of his missionary work.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**Paul’s Far-Reaching Relationships**

From verse 15-23, we see that Paul draws his letter to a close. What can we learn from these last words about the historical setting and the relationships Paul has? He mentions Epaphroditus who we noted earlier in the sermon series as a leading candidate who could have hand-delivered the letter Paul wrote. The fact that Paul is writing this letter in addition to the other three letters (Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) during his Roman house arrest setting demonstrates that Paul’s relationships span not only 20 plus years in ministry but span the vast geography of the Roman empire. From Jerusalem through Asia to Italy, Paul represents a Holy Spirit driven mission.

Remember that Paul was waiting for a trial before Caesar. Paul’s house arrest status placed him in the city of Rome. Therefore, it is reasonable to have the mention of servants in Caesar’s household to be known by Paul. These servants converted to be a Believer in Christ. Like many heads of state, the reference to a “house” would be a reference to a large structure or multiple structures with many servants. In comparison, if someone today said they were working at the White House in Washington, we would know that they were talking about a very large organization with numerous employees. This is a miracle. . . to know that from Paul’s days as a Jewish Pharisee he would come to be a prisoner in Rome witnessing to the people who worked in the emperor’s house. By Paul being in Rome and witnessing the Gospel, he was fulfilling the Lord’s commission (Acts 23:11).

**Let’s Talk About a Biblical Worldview**

Webster’s Dictionary: Worldview - a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint

In summation of Paul’s letters, he writes with a Biblical Worldview. This is a major consideration in witnessing God and His Word in our culture today. Let us identify words that signify a Biblical Worldview in verses 15-23.

**Verse 15 Worldview:** We see Paul uses the word “gospel:

Greek **εὐαγγέλιον** *euaggelion* **Meaning:** good news / Strong’s 2098.

If you were to engage someone today and say that you had some “**good news**” for them, they might anticipate you were about to tell them they won the lottery or are about to receive an inheritance. If you use the word *Gospel*, that would most likely tip them off that you were going to engage in a religious conversation with them. The fact that a person uses the word *Gospel* most likely indicates they have some sense of the Christian story. We know that Paul defines the Gospel in a short statement in 1 Corinthians 15:1-6ff, which we reviewed several times.

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved. . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred. . .

Majority of scholars see this simple *Gospel* declaration to be well-known and often a repeated witness about Christ, being summed up that it originated close to the Resurrection. This is a biblical worldview revealing God’s intended plan for humanity, in that we need to be saved from our depravity, and God took the steps in the Incarnation to become not only one of us but the Messiah, in order to go to the Cross and pay the atoning price for the sins of the world. This worldview includes receiving and standing in the gospel in order to have access to Christ’s substitutionary atonement.

**Verse 18 Worldview:** a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

The worldview here is that there is God who receives sacrifices that are well pleasing to Him. But from where does this thought process come? Why is there a God? Why do we have to please Him? What is this sacrifice thing?

Why is there a God begs the question “From where did life come?” I mean . . .the whole Bible speaks to this question. Simply stated. . . life is too complex and organized to be random and meaningless. And love is too powerful to have originated from a random meaningless process. Life is too magnificent not to have been purposed and directed.

We can see there is a lot happening with verse 18. This verse reflects from Paul’s Hebrew roots when participants made physical animal sacrifices to God. . . according to a religious calendar prescribed by God (Example: Numbers 28, 29). This prescription from God was due to a need to keep a rebellious people’s attention on God detailed in the Law of Moses written about 1400 years before the Incarnation of God as Jesus the Christ. Remember, during the Exodus when Aaron made the golden calf idol (Exodus 32) because the Hebrew people became impatient during Moses’ absence while he was receiving God’s commands on the Holy Mountain? Their rebellion created a need for God to give specific instructions to keep their focus on Him. You know. . . like a 3rd grade teacher needs to give specific instructions in order to keep children’s attention focused on education.

Obviously, animal sacrifice created an aroma that levitated to the skies. However, these animal sacrifices were misunderstood by the Hebrews. Before Paul met Christ, on the road to Damascus, he too misunderstood animal sacrifice for the payment of sin.

**Where in the Bible can we have this Jewish misunderstanding explained to us?**

In the New Testament Book of Hebrews, the first two sentences make the transition within God to “His Son” but both titles identify the same agent that Created the world. This is important to establish because the Book of Hebrews clarifies God’s intent when He gave the Law to Moses.

**Hebrews 1**:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Notice in verse 2, the message is the same as the Gospel of John 1:1 in that. . .In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

The biblical worldview here is simple. Jesus Christ is God who created the world and all things in the world. This is a fundamental view of the world that obviously contradicts Darwinian Evolution.

The Jewish concept of oneness is seen in the father-son understanding. Jesus uses their concept to illustrate His deity as the Father in John 14:6-11.

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father '? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

Once God is identified in Hebrews 1, we can move to the clarification verses concerning animal sacrifices.

**Hebrews 10**:1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

**2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

**3** But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. . . .

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins;**

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. (Psalm 110:1)

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Therefore, the one sacrifice acceptable to God was made at the Cross by Christ. So, the humble sacrifice made by God as Jesus Christ transfers to Believers making sacrificial offerings to support Paul’s mission work. Paul uses what was pleasing to God to illustrate to the Philippians that their sacrificial giving to him was pleasing to God also. The humble gift the Philippians gave to Paul is indicative of their humility towards God. Seeking forgiveness of sin or giving a gift starts with humility to God. King David knew this fundamental approach in his relationship with God and his neighbor.

16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (Psalm 51:16-17)

**Verse 19 Worldview:** And my God will supply all your needs

according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

The worldview expressed here is that all things we have originated in God as Christ Jesus avails us access to God’s **riches** that will take care of our needs. This does not mean we will be made materially wealthy by God. . . that you can pray for a new car and one will drop from the sky onto your driveway. What do we take with us when we Believers physically die? Love and the state of forgiveness. Therefore, all of our needs are really simple**. The number one human need is to be loved and receive forgiveness.** These are the **riches** of God that save us and stabilize our lives. The riches of God are seen in John 3:16. . . *for God so loved the world that He gave His unique Son and that whoever believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life.* So, God’s **riches** are given and displayed through Jesus Christ.

**Webster’s Dictionary (online):**

**1 a**: praise, honor, or distinction extended by common consent

**b:** worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving giving glory to God

**2 a:** something that secures praise b**:** a distinguished quality or asset

**3 a:** a state of great gratification or exaltation

**b:** a height of prosperity or achievement ancient Rome in its glory

**Verse 20 Worldview - God our Creator is Eternal**

In verse 20, we see that Paul has an eternal view of God and references God to be Father. Remember that Paul began his relationship with God from birth, growing up in a Jewish home. Paul knew God as Creator and the origin of all things before his Damascus Road conversion when he surrendered to God not only as Creator, who always was, but, in addition, also as Messiah. Paul sums-up his previous words in verse 20 and writes “Amen”. “Amen” here is emphasizing that his words are “true”. So, when we say “Amen” today at the end of a prayer, we should understand we are saying the same thing. . . that is, our prayers are true.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Strong’s 281 ἀμήν amen**  Meaning: truly

**Verse 21, 22 Worldview – Believers are to be set aside as a holy place. Therefore, a saint. . . that is holy, separate from the fallen world.**

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus.

The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you,

especially those of Caesar's household.

Paul is big on greetings. We can see this in all his letters. Just go and read some of the first few verses of his letters. Here, in the close of Philippians, he instructs them to greet every “saint” in Christ Jesus. The word saint (Greek *hagios*) means “holy”; which means to be set aside as sacred. . . as a sacred place. A saint in this context is one who is set apart from the fallen world because they have surrendered to allow the Spirit of Christ indwell their heart and mind (Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9).

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body. **(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)**

Also, in verse 21, 22, we see Paul fully use the name of God as Christ Jesus. Christ is the Greek Word for the Hebrew word Messiah. This is important, because, prior to Paul’s conversion, he would not have made the leap to identify God as the Christ/Messiah. Why is this important in our time?

Many people today will say they believe in God. However, the belief in God’s incarnation to a person known as Jesus, the Christ, is another leap of faith that challenges people who have grown-up in a secular materialistic world that pits science against God. For Paul, the conversion to being a Christian, a member of the “Way”, was in many ways not complicated by a secular upbringing. So, when we read the New Testament, we need to keep in mind that the majority of those that surrendered to God as Christ already considered themselves in relationship with God the Father, their Creator.

**Verse 23 Worldview – Grace and Spirit**

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

I want to be clear that fallen humanity is called by God to surrender to His grace. . . for God’s grace to have an effect on a person’s life. The fact that God offers His grace freely is a first-deliverance of grace. This first- offering of grace is universal and unlimited. The second-deliverance of God’s grace is when fallen people surrender to the offering of grace. This surrender opens the doors to all of God’s gifts including eternal life with Him.

So, with this said. . . May the unmerited favor (grace that you have surrendered to) of God incarnated, as the Messiah named Jesus, coexist inside you. . .with His hand on the override switch of your heart and mind. **And All The Saints Said. . . AMEN.**