***The Sacrifice of Substance - PH94-02  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

Today we're looking at segment number 15 in the general topic of financing the Lord's work. The more general area has been the priesthood and sacrifices which include the area of financing God's work. The Bible very clearly records the progress of God's dealings with humanity over the centuries. Just a cursory reading of the Bible will make it very clear to anybody that the Bible moves through various periods of history, and that there are certain periods where God tells people to do certain things. Subsequently, down the line, you'll discover that God is telling them to do things differently. As a matter of fact, what He had previously told people to do would not fit into an era subsequent to an era farther down the line.

These varying relationships of God with humanity are divided into periods of time actually that we refer to by the word "dispensations." The Bible actually calls them dispensations. These dispensations are different arrangements that God has for dealing with humanity at different periods of history.

The dispensation that the Jews had was a way of life which was distinct from all other years of time previous to that and subsequent to that. We call it the era of the law. The dispensation of the law included a priesthood. It was a very restricted priesthood. Only certain people from the specialized family of Aaron could be priests. All the other Jews had to look to this Aaronic order of priesthood for their line of communication and contact with God. This priesthood had a system of animal sacrifices, and in our examination of this Aaronic priesthood, we found that it never came up with a final solution for sin. It was all symbolic. It was all pictorial. It never solved the sin problem.

Today, we live in a different dispensation. This is a different order of things. This is the dispensation of the church. It's in force, and it has a totally different way of life from that which was given to the Jewish people. The need for personal absolute righteousness is given to all those who will accept it. This has always been God's way. Whether you're in the dispensation of the Jews or the dispensation of the church, everybody needs absolute righteousness to meet God's someday. God gives it to us. There's no other way to receive it. We can't produce it within ourselves. It has to come from outside.

So all the Old Testament system of sacrifices portrayed how God was going to bring us what we had to have from outside of ourselves: absolute righteousness. We live in an era where all that has been fulfilled. God's plan of grace made all this possible – the giving of absolute righteousness to saints of all ages and all dispensations. This was made operational at the death of Jesus Christ on the cross when He died for the sins of the world.

**Christian Priesthood**

The dispensation of the church also has a priesthood, and it also has a system of sacrifices. The priesthood of the church age is after the order of a gentile priest of the Old Testament – the order of Melchizedek. This priesthood is made up entirely of people who belong to royalty. It is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the King of Kings and the High Priest of the Melchizedek priesthood. You and I, as believers in Christ, are royalty – part of this priesthood.

Each priest represents only himself to God, and it is a very private matter, but it is a very responsible duty to perform. We have seen that this Christian priesthood has certain basic functions. Briefly, first is maintaining temporal fellowship with the Father. Maintaining temporal fellowship is not always necessarily done in a very formalized way. Somebody last week came up to me and said, "You know, I was riding along in my car this week, and I just discovered, all of a sudden, I was thinking about the things of the Lord. And suddenly a thought struck me, 'You know, I'm in fellowship. I'm in temporal fellowship.'" He said, "I wasn't a little while before, and I hadn't really done anything formal."

You will find that that conviction will come upon you: "I am in fellowship with God. I'm in temporal fellowship." You will discover it doesn't always come because you say, "Now, let's see. I'm now going to prepare to get into temporal fellowship. I am examining my life. Here is a sin. Yes, that was willful. I did this. Alright, now I'm going to go and make my confession, and I'm in temporal fellowship."

The truth of the matter is that the way maintaining temporal fellowship works in a really functioning priest is at the moment it happens, without you even thinking a second thought, you automatically condemn that in your own heart. You automatically admit to God that that was wrong. The moment you steal something, you say, "That was wrong," and you confess it without any formal presentation of the fact to God. So remember that when you get in the swing (in the habit) of maintaining temporal fellowship as a priest, it will be done almost without your being aware of the fact that you're doing it. And that's as it should be. Every time you cross the will of God, the Spirit of God should be able to throw the signal on the screen to you, and you should immediately react to it without having to give second thought to it.

The second function of the priesthood is learning and sharing Bible doctrine, which goes from salvation to the things of eternity.

The third function is the practice of prayer, and prayer really works. All you have to do is put it to practice, and keep a list for yourself of what you've asked, and what you've received, and you will see how prayer really works.

The fourth function is offering spiritual sacrifices. These are the expressions of Christian service. The first of these spiritual sacrifices of the Christian priests is the sacrifice of self: bringing your body as the vehicle of all Christian service. The second sacrifice is the sacrifice of praise – verbal expressions of gratitude for God's plan of grace in action in your life. The third sacrifice we looked at was sacrifice of good works, which is the divine good production of the Holy Spirit through the use of our spiritual gifts in the Lord's service.

**The Sacrifice of Substance**

We now come to the fourth spiritual sacrifice of the Christian priesthood, and that is the sacrifice of substance. Please turn to Hebrews 13:16. We read about that sacrifice at that point where the writer of Hebrews says, "But to do good and to share (there is the word), forget not, with such sacrifices, God is well-pleased." We have already seen this sacrifice in Philippians 4:18, where Paul very definitely spoke of the fact that the Philippian Christians sent him an offering to help finance his ministry, and he viewed this (as all Christian giving is) as a spiritual sacrifice. He pointed out to them that it was a sacrifice which was an odor of sweet smell, a fragrant aroma sacrifice, as those Old Testament sacrifices were, and one which was acceptable, therefore, and well-pleasing to God.

So their giving was indeed a sacrifice. Here in Hebrews 13:16, the word "to share" is the Greek word "koinonia." "Koinonia" means "to give a share to." It means simply to give a share of something that you have to some other source or to some other person. This refers to the act of giving material help to some cause. You are taking your money and giving material help to a number of causes. It could be to a local church. It could be to a fellow believer in need. It could be to a Christian agency. It could be any number of things that are associated with the Lord's work, and with your Christian relationships to others.

In Romans 12:13, we have this sacrifice referred to in this way: "Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality." Some Christians within the sphere of your association need your ministry with your money. They come upon hard times. They have difficulties financially. They need you to be aware of the fact that you need to make a sacrifice of your substance to the Lord by helping out some other believer.

There is also the fact of hospitality. This doesn't simply mean throwing a party. I know some of you are good at that, and some of you would very much like to welcome that as a sacrifice of substance. You're good at throwing parties, and you like to make that sacrifice almost anytime. But this is more than throwing a party. That, of course, has a value, and there certainly is a great deal of credit that the Lord does give when you set up occasion for Christian people to gather together in social fellowship.

**Supporting Communicators of Doctrine**

However, this has to do primarily here with the situation that particularly was current in New Testament times of traveling teachers of the Word of God, who needed somebody to give them a bed to sleep in, and some meals, as they were passing through a town, or as they were in a place while they were ministering. People who ministered in the Word of God needed this kind of hospitality. Every time a Christian assisted somebody who was communicating the Word of God, he was making a sacrifice of substance to the Lord, and was storing treasures in heaven thereby. The word "koinonia" is one of the finest New Testament words for fellowship. It is used here in terms of sharing. That's the idea of "koinonia." It is the fellowship of sharing. And here, it was sharing of material things.

Paul refers to this again in Galatians 6:6, where he says, "Let him that is taught in the word share with him that teaches in all good things." Here again, it is specifically applicable to the communicators of the Word of God. These people were preoccupied, and their time was invested not in earning a livelihood through other sources, which then would restrict them from areas of ministry and of preparation for a ministry, and who are not in a position to be making investments, and keeping track of investments, and so on. These communicators of the Word of God were to be taken care of by the people to whom doctrine had been communicated. This was because if people were responsive to the Word of God, and if they were responding to the communications of doctrine, one of the things that happens in a person's life is that God's love for you is able to be expressed in material provision.

The closer you come toward spiritual maturity in the super grace life, the more God can pour out the grace of material blessings upon you. A lot of people never get very far in having God's material blessings poured out upon them because they're always shriveled-up peanuts when it comes to spiritual maturity. So they're losers. They're always losing. Sometimes they can make vast sums of money and do nothing but lose. Moving toward spiritual maturity can only come in response to doctrine. Therefore, the teacher of the Word of God performs a very vital service to the body of Christ by instructing in the Word of God in providing the material needs, which not only believers need and have to enjoy, but which is needed by the work of God to be able to propagate divine viewpoint.

So it is very pointed in the Word of God that the sacrifice of substance is to be exercised in one direction relative to those who are communicating the word. This is the word that connotes fellowship of one believer with another via this sacrifice of giving. You have this in 3 John 5-8, where John puts it this way: "Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do to the brethren, and to strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church, whom you bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, you shall do well, because for His Name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth."

We have that idea of fellowship again. What John is saying here to the believers is that you did the right thing by helping the people who were coming through, who were communicators of the Word of God as the Lord brought them into your presence to minister to your congregation, and, to minister to the believers in your area. You helped provide hospitality. You helped provide finances for their work and for their needs. He said, "You did the right thing," because these people, if they are functioning as true communicators of the Word of God, will not want anything from unbelievers. They will not take anything from the gentiles. That's the idea here. The gentiles means the unbelievers.

They weren't looking to the world to supply them. They weren't asking for favors of the world, but they were looking to God. And God provides through people. God does not send money floating down from heaven. He sends it through people via this particular sacrifice of substance. If Christians do not make that sacrifice to communicators of the Word of God, the people who are missionaries and who are in the ministry (in the pastorate, and things of that sort), then it will not get there. If people do not make this contribution to the local church ministry, the work of the local church ministry will not be financed. It's the sacrifice of substance that does it. The Word of God constantly commands that in the highest terms. This is one way that you stole fistfuls of treasures in heaven. Such sharing of material possessions is, here in Hebrews 13:16, called a sacrifice to God.

This sacrifice of one's substance again is one which is not to be neglected. The word is very clear here because it says. "Forget not." That is just as it was before relative to praise. The "not" is the Greek word "me," and it goes along with "to forget." It's in the imperative. That means it's a command. Again, when it's with the present tense, that indicates that the people that he's writing to were guilty of neglecting. These people were guilty of neglecting the sacrifice of substance. They were neglecting the sacrifice of praise. That was dangerous to them. That was the first step toward becoming an ingrate and losing your blessing. They were being negligent toward the sacrifice of substance.

That was very dangerous because that causes a person to become a miser. He becomes shriveled up in his soul. Grasping your money and not sharing it properly with God and His work is devastating to a person's spiritual life. Therefore he was telling them not only to be careful not to neglect the doctrine of sacrifice of substance, but he was also reminding them that they were already in the process of doing it. So they were on very dangerous ground. The Christian priest, in other words, is commanded to offer this spiritual sacrifice.

This is giving of the type that all Christians are expected to do. Do not confuse the sacrifice of substance with the spiritual gift of giving. The spiritual gift of giving is one thing, and the sacrifice of substance is another thing. Only certain believers have been given the capacity to give in a unique and distinctive way, but every believer is expected to bring a sacrifice of substance. It may be a very small thing, as the widow did, with her couple of pennies, but everybody makes the sacrifice of substance. It is not the exclusive province of those with the gift of giving.

Philippians 4:18, therefore, is referring specifically to this sacrifice of substance. Let's read it again. Paul says, "But I have all, and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you (the money), an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." You should be able to understand that verse much better, having had all the background on priesthood and sacrifices and how they relate to the church age.

What we are talking about here is perhaps best exemplified in 2 Corinthians 8:1-4. Paul says, "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." What he is saying here is that the Christians in Macedonia had come upon hard times, and remember that the church of Philippi was part of this group. They were very happy in the Lord, but they had come upon a period of deep poverty. They had come upon hard times financially. Yet, out of that poverty came a rich and liberal offering which was sent to the Jerusalem saints who were suffering famine.

Verse 3: "For to their power I bear witness. Yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves, beseeching us with much entreaty that we should receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and then unto us by the will of God." So what we have here is these people actually saying, "Paul, please take this money. You're going back to Jerusalem. We know the conditions that are taking place there. We know about the period of famine with the saints in Jerusalem. They are our fellow Christians. We've never seen them. We don't know their names. We've never met them. We probably won't see them this side of heaven, but they're starving, and they are believers."

Christians deserve our first concern in material care above anybody in the world. Before you give any money to a community chest or to any other organization that our society sets up to operate within this post-God era that we function in in this country and all over the world, it is the Christian who first gets your money, and who has the right to first have the substance that you have to invest in the Lord's work.

Here, Paul says, "These people were great. They were on hard times. They sent a generous gift. It saved a lot of lives of fellow believers in Jerusalem." The thing that Paul liked about this most of all was verse 5. He said, "I liked their money and I appreciated their gift. But the thing I liked most of all was that they gave themselves. First, they made the sacrifice of self. Then it was quite easy to make the sacrifice of their substance." That's how it should be.

The sacrifice of substance of the Christian priest, again I remind you, is not just human good charity of the old sin nature. This is a divine plane of activity. This is not just do-goodism that we are promoting. This is giving and doing divine good in the finest tradition of the Christian faith.

Now, if you'll turn back to Philippians, having encouraged these people and commended them in verse 18 for the sacrifice of their substance and for having made this particular spiritual sacrifice, the apostle Paul adds that famous verse 19. He wants to tell these people something. The Bible always tries to convey the fact that if you will do what God instructs you to do, and if you'll follow the principles that the Word of God lays out, there is great personal benefit for you. And verse 19 is the apostle Paul's way of turning around and saying, "Now, here's what's in it for you. I am telling you to do these things not just because this is a nice thing to do; it's kind; and, not just because it's right. I'm really telling you to do this because of what this is going to do for you, and because of the benefits that will accrue to you.

If you don't understand that, then you'll be just foolish enough to ignore the principles of the Word of God. You'll think yourself superior to them. You'll actually argue against them. You'll be standing up, willing to violate a principle that the Bible says, "This is the way it should be," and it makes it very clear that this is the way it should be. When you violate the Scriptures, you may not realize it when you do it, but you yourself are the greatest loser. But if you will obey what God says, then you will be the great beneficiary. It is important that you recognize that there is something in it for you when you obey the principles of the Word of God.

There is something in it for a society when it obeys the capital punishment rule. There is something in it for a society when it obeys divine institution number four that says that the government must never engage in welfare. That is a sin. It is contrary to the Word of God. It violates the role of government as God has established it. He made the rules. He put it together. And any society which violates it, does it to its own destruction and its own hurt. So always remember that about these spiritual sacrifices. Don't just say, "Oh, that's really nice. That's wonderful the way the Christian life has that. It really fits nicely. It just really fits with the Old Testament. It's really interesting how that all fits together." You better recognize, first of all, that you have a very vital personal interest for all eternity in these matters, if you are positive to them. And the devil is just waiting to stand around to shoot you down if you're not positive to them.

**God Will Supply our Needs**

So in Philippians 4:19, Paul says, "Here's a thing I want to add. While I'm encouraging you to give your money to God's work in these various ways, I also want you to remember: But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Let's take a look at that. The word "but" is this Greek word "de." This indicates an addition to verse 18. The addition is, "Here's what's in it for you." As God has supplied the money that Paul needs, so He will do for the Philippian Christians. We might better translate this simply by the word "and."

However, please do not misunderstand him. Paul is not suggesting here that God is going to compensate the Philippians for what they gave to Paul. Every now and then there is some loose-mouthed preacher that stands up and says, "For every dollar that you give to the Lord's work, the Lord is going to give it back to you." Then when they get to be a really big-time preacher with really big-time audiences, they say, "For every dollar that you give to the Lord's work, God is going to give you two back." Now, that sounds good. There are a lot of people dumb enough to believe it, and give on that basis, and they lose their reward. If you give your money on the wrong basis, you will get exactly nothing back at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul is not trying to say here, "If you folks gave your money, I want to tell you that God is going to give it all back to you." What Paul is saying is, "While you have taken care of me with this offering under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit within you, I want to remind you that God is also going to take care of you in one way or another. Don't ever forget that if you have taken care of me, you are also under His care. You are also His child, and He takes care of you.

If you remember what we just read back here in 2 Corinthians about the Macedonian Christians, that was a significant point. Some of those people may have had some question whether they should be trying to help with this offering for the saints in Jerusalem when they themselves were so broke. This is a very significant principle that Paul is saying: "You make the sacrifice of substance because it is the thing that you should be doing. It is the thing that God calls upon you to do. But also, remember that while that may strap you, and may even reduce your funds, that you are never to forget that the thing that is in it for you is that God's always going to take care of you, just like He's always going to take care of me. This time He took care of me with your offering. He will take care of you in some other way. He will make the provision. So he's not suggesting that God is going to compensate, but merely that God takes care of His whole family.

This is the principle we have stated, for example, in Matthew 6:25. Jesus tried to teach His own disciples this fact – that God is going to take care of you relative to your necessities. He's not going to let you starve. He's not going to let you suffer privation. He may let you do it for a while, while He's teaching you something. But while He has use for your life, He's going to keep blood flowing through your veins and breath in your body, and He's going to keep you functioning.

Matthew 6:25: "Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink now, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sew not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Which of you, by being anxious, can add one cubit unto your stature? And why are you anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies are the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet, I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you? Oh, you of little faith. Therefore, be not anxious saying, 'What shall we eat?' Or what shall we drink?' Or 'with what should we be clothed?' For after all these things do the gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be therefore not anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself, sufficient unto the day as its own evil."

Live one day at a time. That's the biblical principle. You may trust God to supply you one day at a time. We may add to this 2 Corinthians 9:8, which says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

So here is the principle. Paul is saying, "And." The Greek word "de" here introduces this additional concept of how God takes care of us. Then he uses this affectionate term that he used earlier in Philippians: "And my God." This is an expression of affection. It is like a wife who is introducing her husband, and will use that affectionate expression, and say, "This is my Jim." Or a husband introduces his wife and says, "This is my Sally." It's an obvious affectionate connotation. Paul uses it in that way. A Christian's financial provision and security comes from the God that he loves. It always comes from "my God." Never forget who it is that prospers you financially, Christian. It is not the deals you make, and it is not the hard work that you put in. It is "your God," to whom you should be affectionately related, that makes it all possible for you. He's the one that brings it to you.

So always look to Him for your needs. Don't be looking to some other source. Don't be counting on some other capacity that you have. Don't be counting upon your preparations and your cleverness. Never forget that it is the God who loves you, and who we in turn should indeed be in love with, that is the source of these blessings.

The very words, "My God" introduce a confession by Paul which is the introduction of the spiritual sacrifice of praise that we've already studied. "My God shall supply." The word "supply" is this Greek word "pleroo." This means to supply fully. The idea is, "My God is going to supply your need to the full." It's an expression of God's grace to meet our total financial deficiency, whatever it is. It's in the future tense, which means it's in the days ahead – all the days of our life. It's active. It's God himself who does the supplying. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact. Paul is doing a little playing with this word between verse 18 and verse 19. This word is used in both verses. In verse 18, he says, "But I have all and abound, and I am full." In verse 18, he recognizes that because of their sacrifice of substance to him, he's prosperous now. He's got plenty. He is full. God has made him full.

Then in verse 19, he uses the identical word and says, "And I want to remind you that, as God has made me feel (has covered all that I need), so he's going to do for you." He uses the identical word, with deliberate choice, to connect the two. This kind of fullness of God's provision, which is a grace provision, is used by the spiritually mature Christian to be able to offer the sacrifice of substance willingly and readily, and with joy. If God supplies you to the full so that you really have the essentials of life and you're not under privation, and you do not make the sacrifice of substance in a commensurate degree, you are building calluses upon your soul. You're getting hard in your mind; in your emotions; and, in your will toward God. Then is it any wonder that you keep making moves in life that are not satisfying to you; that are dissipating your life; that are bringing sorrow into your life; and, that are making you a failure in one area or another? If you do not give under such provision, you harden yourself toward God.

"My God shall supply to the full all of your need." That means that He will provide all the needs. It doesn't mean all of your wishes, but all of your needs. Nothing will be left out. "Need" is the Greek word "chreia." The word "chreia" in the Greek here refers to the necessities of life. These are the things that you really do need. He will include the necessity lacking to the Philippians as they have provided it for Paul's ministry. It's the grace benefit that God has given. When you give this sacrifice of substance, both the donor and the recipient are blessed.

By the way, this is a promise to a believer who's in temporal fellowship. If you're out of temporal fellowship, don't expect God to take care of all of your needs. But for the believer in temporal fellowship, this is the promise that He will do it.

**God's Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus**

How will he do it? He says, "I'm going to do it according to." "According to" is the Greek word "kata" which is a standard." "Kata" always indicates a standard by which God is acting: "according to this standard." That is the "riches of God." That is the Greek word "ploutos" from which we get our English word "plutocrat" for somebody who's very wealthy. This means "God's abundant wealth." What is that saying to us? God is going to give to us "kata" (according to) His "ploutos" (according to His wealth). This is not "out of" His wealth. It's not this Greek word "ek" which would mean "out." That would be a different story altogether. But this is "according to His wealth," or "according to the standard of His wealth."

So you and I run into somebody. You've got $1 million. I've got $100. There's this poor guy. He's in trouble. He needs a lot of help. So I say, "Why don't we help him?" You say, "OK." I give him $10. You give him $10. It meant a lot to him. How did you give? Did you, as a millionaire, give according to your riches? No. You gave *out of* your wealth. You did not give *according* to your wealth. But the person who gave $10 out of his $100 might have been giving indeed out of his riches, as well as according to his riches. What God says He's going to do for you, on both the material the spiritual level is to give to you *according to* His riches.

What kind of riches does God have? These riches are described as being "in glory." "In" is the Greek word "en" which is location. The word "glory" is the Greek word "doxa," and the meaning here is "the splendor and the majesty of heaven." This is God's wealth in infinite supply, and that is how He is able to give – "His riches in glory." God says He is going to give according to that – not out of that. He's not going to just give you out of the immense wealth that He has. Of course, He controls all the material wealth of the world. He can direct anybody's money anyplace that He chooses at any time, and He does. But He gives according to that wealth that He has. That's how He gives to us – "in glory by Christ Jesus."

The word "by" here means "according to" or "by means of Christ Jesus, His Son." God's wealth for the Christians begins where? At the cross. It continues. Why? Because you are in Christ. Your wealth, according to God's riches, begins at the cross, and then it continues because you are in Christ Jesus as a believer. You are in Him. And because you are in Him, from here on, all the way down through your life, God is prospering and providing (and ready to provide you) materially according to His riches.

God owns the world. He can direct its wealth. He supplies a local church. A local church cannot go broke unless God wants to close down the place. If it is His plan to close it down, He will make it go broke. He will sometimes push a local church to the brink of financial pressure, but He will never let it go under. He will bring the resources at the last moment, in the process of which He's trying to tell people something in that congregation. He's trying to teach them something about trusting God.

It is more important, therefore, to ask God for money needs, which he has already promised to supply as per His infinite wealth, than it is to harass Christians for their money; to use gimmicks to raise funds for the Lord's work; or, to be a wheeler-dealer to raise money for yourself. It is more important that you exercise the priestly function of prayer and tell God what the need is.

The assurance of divine care in material things, however, does not mean that a Christian does not need to work to secure this provision that God has for him. Please be sure you understand that (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, Ephesians 4:28). All of those passages say, "Work. Earn your money." If you don't work, then don't object to not eating. The Bible doesn't say, "Don't work. Go on welfare," just so you'll be sure to eat. The Bible says, "If you don't work, don't eat." The Bible also says, "If you can't work to earn the eating, then those of you who can work are to do so, so that you'll have surplus to help those who genuinely cannot work, and who need your welfare assistance. And that is legitimate.

Please remember that a human being is a bundle of needs from the cradle to the grave. You can go it alone, ignoring the readiness of our heavenly Father to supply you at each stage of the need to take care of each bundle, or you can go from monumental self-importance and self-confidence of how you're going to make it, to the place where you're entirely cynical about how you're going to make it. God is promising that His children will never be insolvent. His children never are in privation. God must decide what our needs and necessities are. We may be clamoring for wants and desires. We frequently do. God doesn't say He'll give those, but he says that you can count on Him for our needs and necessities.

The law that expenditures always rise to the level of income is what you and I are always threatened with. Please remember that law. It's called Parkinson's law. How many times have I heard that old story of somebody who someday was going to really do something for the Lord's work just as soon as his income got up there where he could do it? And as his income grows, his needs rose. Here was his income, but here were his desires plus his needs. That economic principle is that expenditures always rise to extend to income.

Please remember the old guy who loves 10%. How many of them I have had here at Berean Memorial church. They love to be 10% givers. They loved to do that when they were down at the bottom end of the cornucopia of God's prosperity for them. When they were making a little, they loved to give 10%. Then as God really prospered them, and exercised His grace upon them, man, their income began expanding: 10 times; 20 times; and 50 times over. Here they are up to their ears in shekels. What are they giving? 10%.

I could tell you some interesting stories of the negative volition and the nasty remarks I got when we were in the series on grace giving. I pointed out that some of these people still sitting around here are giving 10% who are up at the open end of the cornucopia, who have infinitely more than their needs and necessities demand, and they're still giving 10%. Why do they like that? You can obviously see that here I'm making $100,000 a year now. I'd love to give 10% there, just like when I made $1,000 a year. If I give according to my riches there, I'm going to give a lot more than 10%. And they claim, "I just need that. I need it." Mostly they mean, "I need that to make more money with."

So that's the law that we Christians have to face: expenditures always rise to meet the level of income. If God doesn't give you what you have asked Him for out of the wealth of His riches in glory, I think you can conclude you don't need it.

I was driving in South Dakota one time, and I kept seeing this name of this store being advertised. This store had all of these things. ... Finally, I came to the last sign that said, "If this store doesn't have it, you don't need it." That's the principle: if God doesn't give it to you, you don't need it. You can count on that. So God's delay is telling you that you don't need it. Or it may be that it's not the right time.

"Riches in glory." Notice what Paul does here, by the way. Here is God's riches in glory, and here is you. You may say, "Well, that makes it pretty safe. I can't get my hands on that. God's going to give it to me, but His wealth is all up there where I can't reach it. You may think that it's beyond you. But then Paul turns around and he adds that last phrase, "By Christ Jesus" – "By means of Christ Jesus." There it is. He brings it right back down to you because you are in Christ. So immediately, He reverses, and all those riches of His glory are just right there for you to reach out and take. I'm telling you that we've got a rich God, and we've got a God who is eager to hand it out to you, and who is determined that He's going to take care of you in just that way. He has formed a bridge from the riches of His glory to where we are.

I would like to close by reading one of the most tremendous examples in our Christian heritage of a man who knew how to count upon the riches of God to supply him with the needs to do the Lord's work. He himself knew how to make the sacrifice of substance, and he himself knew how to see God provide that sacrifice through others. That is George Mueller, the Englishman, who conducted an orphanage for many years. I'm reading out of Dr. Tenney's book on Philippians, page 97:

"An outstanding example of the fulfillment of this principle may be found in George Mueller, the founder and conductor of an orphanage in Bristol, England. On one occasion, the matron of the orphanage came to him and said, 'Mr. Mueller, I do not know what we are going to do tomorrow morning. We have absolutely nothing in the pantry with which to feed all these children. They will go without breakfast tomorrow unless something happens. Can you do anything?'

"George Mueller said to her very quietly, 'I think that my Father is sufficient for them, and I will tell Him about it. Mr. Mueller prayed and quietly committed the need to God in faith. Then he went to bed and slept peacefully. About 4 o'clock in the morning, somebody knocked on the door, and he went to see who it might be. There stood the milk man who said, 'I'm very sorry to disturb you at this hour, but my cart is broken down out here. I have it filled with milk, but I cannot deliver it. I thought that perhaps you might use it for the children. Would you be willing to take it?'

"Mr. Mueller said, 'Thank you. I think we could use it.' The man brought in the milk cans and set them in the entry. Mr. Mueller went back to bed. About 2 hours later, the doorbell rang, and this time the bread man stood there. 'Mr. Mueller,' he said, 'I started out on my route this morning, but I find that I did not sell much bread yesterday. I have a large amount of bread that is one day old, which I cannot sell to my customers. Could you use it?'

"Mr. Mueller accepted it gratefully. When the matron came to see Mr. Mueller in the morning, he said simply, 'Our Father has provided for us. We will have bread and milk for breakfast.' It was not an elaborate meal, but God sent it in answer to prayer. For many years, George Mueller lived by the principle of trusting God, and found in that trust his competence to meet the emergencies of life."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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