

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 10 Jul 2022

Sermon Title : A Father Who Provides

Speaker : Rev Peter Koh

Text : Philippians 4:19

INTRODUCTION

We learnt about Trusting in the Father (12 Jun), the Heart of the Father (19 Jun) and Our Father's Kingdom Come (26 Jun) in the past 3 sermons. In this final sermon of our 4-part sermon series on 'Our Father', let us find out how our Father God provides for all our needs in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19, a popular verse says of our generous God,

"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

Context of Paul's letter to the Philippians

Apostle Paul was in prison at the time he wrote this 'thank you' letter. He wrote it because a group of Christians had just sent him some help during his imprisonment.

Paul had first met this group of friends earlier in his ministry as a preacher and missionary because God had miraculously called Paul and his co-workers to go to the city of Philippi (which was a chief Roman colony in the region of Macedonia) to preach the gospel to them. The life-transforming power of the gospel Paul preached completely turned the city on its head and caused a significant public disturbance. He got thrown into prison for the unrest that his preaching caused, and it was by a great miracle that he was released. As a result, many Philippians came to faith in Jesus Christ and were transformed by His love.

Paul and his companions then left Macedonia and went on to other towns. The first town he went to was Thessalonica. Again, in this city, his preaching brought about opposition and caused disruptions. The Philippian believers heard about this and sent him some help—probably financial support to help bail him out of trouble with the authorities. Their help apparently had to be sent more than once. They loved Paul and stood with him in the gospel and so they were glad to give of themselves to help him.

When we come to this letter that he wrote to the Philippians, we find that, once again, Paul is in prison. He was not even entirely sure whether he would be released or executed but it was alright with him. He was content to trust God either way. What truly comforted his heart was that the Philippians sent a member of the church,

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Epaphroditus, to once again bring a financial gift to support him. In fact, it appears that the gift they sent him was so sacrificial that they put themselves in a condition of need; a gift Paul deemed as a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

In light of these blessings to Paul from the church, Paul assured them with the promise that God will supply every of their needs, according to His riches in Christ Jesus. This was a blessing of assurance of the providence of God to the church even though it was not a wealthy church. The church provided for Paul out of their material poverty but somehow it was enough for Paul to bail himself out and to meet his personal needs. As they were faithful to Paul's ministry and his needs, Paul declared that God too will likewise honor the church and its members by His faithfulness and love. This firm assurance of Paul to the Philippian church is based on who God is.

1. Personal God – My God

The people in Philippi were worshipping other gods as well and Paul wanted to be clear to them that his God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob besides also being the God of the prophets of Israel.

- He also emphasized the deity of Christ Jesus, the Messiah.
- He reminded the people that his God is the God that he had experienced, the same God that delivered the Israelites from Egypt, and performs miracle upon miracle.

So, to Paul, his God is a personal God with whom he has a personal relationship, and he hopes that the Philippians will also have that same personal relationship with God. By writing to the church about his God, he wanted them to know that God is faithful and can meet their needs.

2. Providential Father – shall meet all your needs

This is a God, who as a Father, will meet all their needs.

- This assurance is also for the future in that “all your needs” – includes what will be needed in the future.
- Note that Paul referred to “needs” rather than “wants”. Needs are that which are essential to life, whereas “wants” are desires which are often not necessarily.

Some of us may think we have a sense of things yesterday, and of things today; but tomorrow is a great ‘unknown’. What will happen to me tomorrow? How wonderful it is that Paul spoke in the future tense; saying, “My God *shall* supply”. Because our God—Paul's God; the God of the Bible—is the One who promises that He *will* supply our every need, we will never need to fear tomorrow.

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3. Plenteous Father – according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus

Paul also reassured them that our Father God has much to give. He gives according to His riches in glory, not out of His riches - which would be His leftover. The riches of God is limitless, so He gives without limit to our needs all the time. This is a staggering measure of giving. Since there is no lack in God's riches in glory, we should anticipate that there would be no lack in God's supply.

- “According to His riches in glory” describes the style in which God fills the empty vessels – the oil keeps flowing until every available vessel is filled.
- “By Christ Jesus” describes how God meets our needs – our empty vessels are filled by Jesus in all His glory.

This promise simply expresses what Jesus said in Luke 6:38 - *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*

Paul wrote to assure the church that just as they provide for him, his God will surely provide bountifully for them. Our needs are not necessarily physical but may also be emotional in the form of love, acceptance, encouragement, a sense of belonging etc.

Mathew 6:25-34

Jesus reassures us of God's faithfulness to meet our needs. We need not worry about what we will eat or wear because it is evident that God the Father provides for all His creation. However, we are to first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added onto us (v.33).

CONCLUSION

Apostle Paul was a focused and zealous missionary for Christ Jesus. His needs as a travelling missionary were varied and plenty and they were met through the Philippian church, a church also in need but faithful to the call for love, service and faith. God's promise to meet all their needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus extends to us today. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and live and love according to His purpose in Christ Jesus and give as He leads us for the work of His Kingdom, and in so doing, God will transform our lives to change the world.

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A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

- 2a. Take some time to memorize Philippians 4:19. With a partner, seek the Lord on how you can each support His Kingdom work as the Philippians did and pray this promise over one another as you commit to follow His leading.
- 2b. How would you describe your relationship with your personal God whom you call "My God", to a pre-believer?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Paul referred to “needs” rather than “wants” in Philippians 4:19. “Needs” are that which are essential to life, whereas “wants” are desires which are often not necessarily.
 - a. Why is it sometimes difficult to differentiate between a ‘need’ that God will provide and a ‘want’ in our lives?
 - b.
 - (i) Share with one another if there is something (physical, emotional or spiritual) you have been asking God to provide but are unsure whether it is a need or a want in your life, home, church or community. Practise discerning together and trust it into God’s providence if it is a need, believing that you will receive.
 - (ii) What are some needs mentioned in 3b(i) that God is calling your small group to meet?

- 4a. Paul assured the Philippian church of God meeting their needs with 3 descriptions of God: Personal, Providential and Plenteous.
 - (i) Which of these 3 are you least able to identify God as? Why?
 - (ii) What is one thing you can do to better relate to God as the description chosen in 4a(i)?

- 4b. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 4a(ii) above in the following week(s), till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

5. Share how God's providence was there to help you fulfil a recent need, giving all glory to Christ Jesus.

OR

Give thanks to God for how your life has been different or changed because someone ministered to you when you were in need of love and care.

6. Take time to pray for each other asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to behold God as Personal, Providential and Plenteous, and remove any unbelief in you. Commit to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness so all things may be added onto you for His Kingdom purpose and glory.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. That's The Power – Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYjppzHLt2s>
2. Great Are You Lord – All Sons & Daughters
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQLMnPYoR9k>
3. Jehovah-Jireh – Don Moen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCsH_TtZReY

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