

The Sending Church, Part 3: **“Gospel Friends on Gospel Mission” | Philippians 4:14-20** Rev. Andrew Jun

[SERMON MANUSCRIPT]

Introduction

Hello to church family and hello to those friends joining us today! Our theme for this year's Missions Month is *The Sending Church* because we will be sending our first-ever team of long-term Gospel workers to a specific unengaged, unreached people group and we want to prepare as an entire church how to support them, pray for them, care for them, and partner with them. We are sending them, not alone, but together with our two HMCC churches standing behind them in these ways.

We will be commissioning them on June 27, so please mark your calendars! It will not only be a historical milestone for our church, but this will be the official last Sunday that they will be a part of our local churches- they will be a “disciple-making movement hub” sent out by HMCC of Tangerang and HMCC of Jakarta. So, remember June 27 for our commissioning service!

So far in this year's Missions Month, we've learned how *the sending church are witnesses of Christ* and how *the sending church prays for Gospel work*. Today we will be learning how *the sending church are Gospel friends on Gospel mission* together, from Philippians 4:14-20.

Scripture Reading

In many ways, Paul's letter to the Philippians was like a newsletter from a Gospel worker (which was Paul) and a supporting church (which was the church in Philippi). As he concluded this letter, he shared in the section just before (4:10-13) how he was thankful for the Philippian church's gift of support. He emphasized that he was content in whatever situations he faced, as his King and Savior Jesus trained and strengthened him to be content in him alone. Paul continued in this train of thought in our Scripture for today.

Philippians 4:14-20 (ESV):

14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

This is God's Word.

Proposition

So here is the main message for today's sermon, this is the “one thing” from Philippians 4:14-20:

***Treasure being Gospel friends on
Gospel mission- with God and each other.***

Organizational Statement

In this text of Scripture, Paul mentions two specific ways that we can ***treasure being Gospel friends on Gospel mission- with God and each other***: first, we can treasure our partnership in God's mission and second, we can treasure how God our Father cares for us. In each of these main parts I'll share a couple timeless truths as well.

1. Treasure our partnership in God's mission (14-17).
2. Treasure how God our Father cares for us (18-20).

Prayer

Let's pray briefly before we dive into the preaching of God's Word.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word, that reveals who you are and what your heart is for your people. We acknowledge the challenges of watching sermons online via video, but we pray that regardless of the medium, your Word would do a transformative work in us. We submit our hearts and minds before you now, asking that you speak personally and prophetically into us at this time. Enable us, by your grace, to be a faithful sending church. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Transition: All right, HMCC, let's look at the first way we ***treasure being Gospel friends on Gospel mission- with God and each other***, focusing on verses 14-17, which is to...

Sermon Outline

I. Treasure our partnership in God's mission (14-17).

A. In these verses, Paul expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the care of the Philippian church.

1. Truth #1: The Gospel makes people into friends and partners with God and each other (14).

Philippians 4:14 (ESV): 14 *Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.*

- a) Paul shared his thoughts of thankfulness for the gift the Philippians had sent in verse 14: *Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble*. The "yet" is a pivot point connecting what he had previously said. In verses 10-13, Paul stated that he learned to be content in the Lord in any situation he faced. He made it clear that he was not dependent on people, but instead he was dependent on God, who provided *through* people. He experienced this in the difficult situation of being under house arrest in Rome, being unsure whether he would live or die in the near future.
- b) Imagine being in Paul's shoes- facing uncertainty and death- and just being thankful that there was this entire church standing behind him and sharing in his troubles. Paul *genuinely* appreciated their care and concern for him. In fact, to go a bit deeper, this word "shared" is a very special word, specifically in the book of Philippians. He used this word in New Testament Greek, *koinonia*, which means participation, communion, partnership, or fellowship. Look at how this word was used in other parts of the letter (*koinonia* underlined in the verses):
 - o "Koinonia" = participation, communion, partnership, fellowship
 - o Philippians 3:10 (ESV): 10 *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...*

- o Philippians 1:3, 5 (ESV): *3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you...5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*

Paul had this *koinonia* with Christ and also had *koinonia* with the church in Philippi because of Christ. In fact, they were friends in Christ and on mission together in Christ- they were “Gospel friends on Gospel mission.”

- c) Context: Can we pause at the amazing grace of God, that we can be friends and partners with God and each other? Jesus said in John 15:15 that he didn't think of his disciples as “servants” but as “friends”- friends with whom he shared his Father's sovereign will. God's will included that Jesus would lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)- this is the greatest kind of love- so that their sins could be forgiven and they could be reconciled with their Heavenly Father! These twelve disciples- so very different and often at odds with each other- were friends of God and thus bonded together by Christ- so they were friends and partners *together* as well! Through Jesus, we as his disciples, can also join in on God's plan to save the world, making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). When we follow Jesus by faith, obeying his teaching and following his ways, we enjoy this *koinonia* with God that Paul described here. And as disciples joined together as a church, we have this friendship and partnership in something so much bigger and greater than anything we can imagine! I thank God for this great privilege I have with our churches in Indonesia! So truth #1 is the Gospel makes people into friends and partners with God and each other. Let's build on that more with...

2. Truth #2: Gospel friendships forge deep partnerships in God's mission (15-17).

Philippians 4:15-17 (ESV): *15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.*

- a) Now in verses 15-16, Paul recounted their history together, how this *koinonia* developed: *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.* What he's talking about is what was described in Acts 16. The Spirit led Paul into Macedonia, first into the city of Philippi. There, the Lord dramatically saved a merchant named Lydia, a slave girl, and a jailkeeper and his family. Each of these people had been transformed by the Gospel- in very different ways (Lydia was saved in a synagogue service, the slave girl was delivered from an evil spirit, and the jailkeeper escaped from an earthquake) and had very different backgrounds (Lydia was rich, upper-class; the slave girl was poor, lower-class; the jailkeeper was a professional soldier in the Roman army). But they were “Gospel friends” that formed this church for whom Paul felt such fondness. Their Gospel friendship led them to work together as Gospel partners too, to their own city and to more unreached people and places- with friend and partners like Paul.
- b) *Show pauls-second-missionary-journey.jpg*. In Acts 17, Paul launched from Philippi to other cities in the region of Macedonia and Achaia, modern-day Eastern Europe. He went to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. You can see the region and cities I'm talking about underlined in pink. These were what Paul called the “beginning days of the Gospel,” the early stages of the last stage of God's story of redemption, his plans to get the news of his salvation to all the nations.
- c) Paul words here in v. 15 were that they had a *partnership* (there's that word *koinonia* again!) with him *in giving and receiving*. Let me explain: Philippians were early adopters in grasping this vision and seeing their role as “a sending church” of God's missionaries to other unreached people and places. They sent their financial support for Paul in prison (back then prisoners had to provide for their own daily necessities); they sent

Epaphroditus with their financial gift, to encourage Paul; and they presumably sent their prayers of intercession for his ministry as well. They had been transformed by the Gospel that Paul preached to them; they became Gospel friends and partners together as a church, along with forging this Gospel friendship and partnership with Paul, whom they supported; and Paul was able to do more Gospel work, bring the good news of Jesus Christ to other unreached people and places that could transform others too. This is *koinonia*, Gospel friendships forging deep Gospel partnerships.

- d) Going back to our text, Paul made his intentions clear in verse 17: *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit*. He reassured the Philippian church that he wasn't seeking any gift from them, but only really wanted to see the fruit of the Gospel in their lives, as he said before, their *progress and joy in their faith* (1:26). You see, just as Paul pursued God and his will for his life, he wanted them to live up to the potential and purpose that God had for them, as well as invest themselves into the things that were truly valuable in God's Kingdom, things like bringing the Gospel to unreached people and places and supporting the start of new churches among those people and in those places. All of this would be the fruit of good work that would be for their eternal benefit before God.
- e) Context: When I think about the start of our churches in Tangerang back around 2009-10 and in Jakarta back around 2015-16, I can't help but praise God for doing this in our lives. The Gospel had done a transforming work in our hearts in a small university town in the state of Michigan in the US; we became friends through the Gospel and that led to becoming partners in the Gospel to continue God's mission. So that church *sent* some of us to Indonesia- supporting us with their prayers, finances, and care as Gospel friends on Gospel mission- to start a new church with that same vision. Over the years, the Gospel did that same transforming work in our hearts in Tangerang and we all became friends through the Gospel and that led to becoming partners in the Gospel to continue God's mission. I love my spiritual family that is HMCC of Tangerang! When I see you all, I am reminded again and again of God's grace at work in our lives. Then, that church *sent* some of us to Jakarta- to also start a new church with that same vision. We have all witnessed the transforming work of the Gospel in this church as well, and we also became friends through the Gospel that led to becoming partners in the Gospel to continue God's mission! I love my spiritual family that is HMCC of Jakarta! When I see you all as well, I am reminded over and over of God's grace at work in our lives!
- f) Context: My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, what I want to exhort you all in is to also live up to the purpose that God has for you by investing yourselves in the Gospel work of his Kingdom! We don't have to go anywhere to take steps in this: First, in being the healthy, biblical church that God has called us to be! This means being committed to discipling each other to follow Jesus- loving him, obeying him by faith, becoming like him in his character and values. Don't quit doing this in our LIFE groups and as a whole church! Then, living for God's purposes includes loving your neighbors in this city. There are still loads of unchurched people that you live and work around, who need to see and hear about who Jesus really is. Also keep thinking about the ways you can serve the groups of "unwanted" people in Jabodetabek- the at-risk, abused, forgotten, marginalized, or ignored- being much-needed advocates for causes of justice and mercy. And now, our churches will be sending out this team of Gospel workers- what we're calling the disciple-making movement hub- to ripple further out to bring the Gospel to an unreached people group. We want to send them out well!
- g) Context: May the Holy Spirit make our hearts big for God's mission in our city, throughout Indonesia, and all around the world- to work with others to bring the Gospel to unreached people and places that still remain here and abroad! This is how Pastor Eric, Pastor John, and I dream together- I treasure our friendship in the Gospel (Lord knows that only he could bring us together like this), serving the King together

for ten-plus years! HMCC, let's dream together like this- for our city, Indonesia, and beyond- for our own progress and joy in our faith! As I stated in truth #2: Remember that Gospel friendships forge deep partnerships in God's mission!

Transition: So we've seen from verses 14-17 that we can treasure our partnership in God's mission. Now the second way *we treasure being Gospel friends on Gospel mission, with God and each other*, focusing on verses 18-20, is this...

II. Treasure how God our Father cares for us (18-20).

A. In these verses, Paul explained how God was responsible for taking care of all of his people.

1. Truth #3: Gospel friends and partners give from the overflow of God's grace in their lives.

Philippians 4:18 (ESV): *18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.*

- a) He wrote this specifically in verse 18: *I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.* Paul was in poverty before (when he was awaiting their gift) and was in abundance now (at the moment having received their gift). From 2:25-30, we know that Epaphroditus had been sent by the Philippian church to bring their gift to Paul and to also care for Paul personally. This took care of Paul so much that he told them that he was now *well supplied*- literally this meant "filled to the full." I haven't eaten at an all-you-can-eat buffet ever since the pandemic started, but the way I feel "filled to the full" when I eat at a place like Shaburi or Kintan Buffet is probably like how Paul felt, having received so much from the service of his friends and partners from Philippi. Compared to what he had "given" to the Philippians, Paul said that he *received full payment, and more.* Let's think about this a bit.
- b) What Paul was saying here initially sounds like a common way of thinking in Greek and Roman culture called "reciprocation." Reciprocation meant that an ideal, acceptable friendship was mutually beneficial; if you received from a friend, then you were obligated as a good friend to give back to that friend sometime later. This is something similar to the expectations of people today as well: "You scratch my back now, and I'll scratch your back sometime later when you need it." The language that Paul was using here hinted at this idea of reciprocation. In verse 17 he wrote how the gift the Philippians had sent to him would *increase their credit* and then in verse 18, Paul wrote that he *received full payment* for his ministry to them.
- c) Context: Let me ask all of you this question: Isn't "reciprocation" as a way to build relationships a little *tidak enak*? Doesn't it leave a bad taste in our mouths? But I would say that if we're honest with ourselves, we actually function this way *naturally* in our relationships with people. Think about it: Don't we try to avoid people at work who ask for help but never offer help in return? Don't we gravitate away from being friends with people who always borrow or ask for stuff from us? Don't we get annoyed by people who never say sorry or think they've done anything wrong? Don't you feel pressured to give a good gift to someone if they got you something really good before? We do this in our approach to God as well, don't we? How many of us have tried to bargain with God: "God, if I fast and pray for the next month, make this happen (promotion, relationship, or something else)."
- d) Context: But the Gospel flips the normal, natural way of "reciprocation" upside down! God gave his Son- his one and only Son- as the sacrifice for our sins, to pay the penalty for them in our place. There is no way we as human beings can "reciprocate" this with God. God transforms our hearts, enabling us to trust and desire to honor him, so that we see in greater clarity that we cannot pay back God at all; instead, we

receive the overflow of his grace in all its forms in our lives and we *want* to obey him, we *choose* to love our enemies, forgive those who harm us, resist temptation, receive correction and rebuke from others, and so on. This is the ongoing, transforming work of the Gospel in our lives! For our non-Christian friends listening to this sermon today, *this* is the Bible's message: God's salvation- forgiveness of all of our sins and new life in Christ- is a gift of God by his grace alone! We can never, ever reciprocate this back to God, we simply receive it by faith.

- e) So, this Gospel dimension was where Paul was coming from as he wrote verse 18. He said that the Philippians' gift to him was a *fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God*. This is a reference from the Old Testament of *thanksgiving offerings*. The one and only "atonement" sacrifice that pays the price for our sins is Jesus Christ's crucifixion. So the Philippians' ministry to Paul- their financial support and the service of Epaphroditus- was not "reciprocation," but a *thanksgiving offering*, just as Paul's ministry to the Philippians- risking his life to obey the call of Christ to bring the Gospel to them- was a *thanksgiving offering* that was in response to God's grace in his life.
- f) Context: Listen carefully to this because this is how the Gospel affects our relationships: In giving his Son, God gave generously, all out, and extravagantly- in a way that we can never come close to repaying. This is the Gospel! But as we receive this overflowing grace from God, our hearts are transformed and we can also give generously, live all out, and love extravagantly towards others! It's no longer "You scratch my back now, and I'll scratch your back sometime later when you need it." Instead, it is, "I have received grace from God, now I give grace freely and generously to you as needed- no strings attached." Truth #3- Gospel friends and partners give from the overflow of God's grace in their lives (not out of reciprocation)- is a beautiful thing when we see it! Here's the fourth and final truth...

2. Truth #4: Faith in God the Father fuels us to continually pursue his mission (19-20).

Philippians 4:19-20 (ESV): *19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

- a) Finally, Paul went on and wrote this in verses 19-20: *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.* Look at the personal language Paul used here: He was sure that *his* God- with whom he had a real, living, intimate relationship based on God's grace alone- would take care of their needs. Paul talked about God as *their* Father: in Christ together, they shared a Heavenly Father who loved them, who nurtured and cared for them, who disciplined and trained them, and who was deeply committed to them. Verse 19 reinforces this vertical aspect of their relationship with God now, as "Gospel friends on Gospel mission."
- b) When God sent Jesus to walk the earth, to go to the cross, and to resurrect, he took care of our greatest needs: escape from God's wrath, forgiveness of our sins, Christ's perfect righteousness credited to our spiritual accounts before God, new and living hearts to trust and love God, present partial restoration in our earthly lives, and eternal final restoration in paradise for eternity. Paul wrote that our Heavenly Father supplies every need *according to his riches in glory*. God is not stingy or masochistic towards his children! He wants to build in us dependence, undivided devotion, and Christ-like character because he loves us!
- c) Context: Think about what makes us hesitant to give our time, money, or energy to others. Isn't a big reason because we feel like we only have a limited amount of resources and if we give it away, it might run out for us? I'm not saying that we give recklessly- we need wisdom and discernment of course. But I will also say that we often function with an "orphan mindset": we worry about meeting our own needs and we often find ourselves competing against others for what seems to us as limited

resources. We think we are on our own, having to fend for ourselves in life. This is a reason why we struggle with anxiety. This is why we treat people badly. This is why we get jealous of others. So often we think or react like “spiritual orphans” in situations instead of seeing ourselves as having a Heavenly Father who gave us his *everything* already which proves he’d provide *anything else* that we need in our lives! A “grace overflowing” mindset, trusting that we have a Father who cares and provides for us, affects our friendships together and partnerships together to serve God’s mission. This mindset produces generous giving of our time, money, attention, care, and prayers as “Gospel friends on Gospel mission” together, because faith in God the Father fuels us to continually pursue his mission.

- d) Context: The last time we were in the U.S. was the summer of 2019 and we did an epic road trip to do something we call partner development. “Partner development” means asking people to become our partners- committing to support our family financially every month and to pray for our family and ministry here regularly. We didn’t feel so comfortable with this in the beginning because it felt like we were “selling” or “soliciting” from our friends and family. But over the 7,727 kilometers and 17 states that we travelled, there was this song that we listened to over and over again, called *Is He Worthy?* Most of us know it, but some of the words go like this:
- o *Do you feel the world is broken? (We do) / Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do) / But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through? (We do) / Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)*
 - o *Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole? / Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll? / The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave / He was David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave / Is He worthy? Is He worthy? / Of all blessing and honor and glory / Is He worthy of this? He is!*
- e) Context: By God’s grace, it slowly sunk into us that we were not “selling” or “soliciting” anything, but *inviting* our friends and family to become partners with us in God’s mission. It was grueling and tiring, but it was awesome to connect with new friends and reconnect with old friends and see how God brought our hearts so close together with so many of them! As we sang this song- probably a hundred times in the car that summer- this conviction grew stronger and stronger. Our Lord and Savior Jesus is worthy of all this! He is! As verse 20 says: *20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen!* My church family, this is what we envision for us as well! May faith in God our Father fuel us to continually pursue his mission together!

Transition: Praise the Lord- we’ve seen from verses 18-20 that we can treasure how God our Father cares for us. What are the next steps we can take as we **treasure being Gospel friends on Gospel mission, with God and each other** now?

Conclusion

III. Life Application

- A. Here are two “life applications” for us in light of what we’ve learned from **Philippians 4:14-20:**
1. First, develop your “Gospel friendship on Gospel mission” with God the Father and the church.
 - a) Like I mentioned before, if you sense Jesus Christ calling you to trust in him as your Savior and King, I invite you to take that step. For you and others already on this journey of following Jesus, take steps to grow in your intimacy with God your Father.

There's nothing that can replace time spent with him, in worship, the Word, and in prayer to simply be refilled with his abundant, overflowing grace.

- b) The need that this pandemic has exposed is our need to be deeply connected to the local church, the spiritual family that we are called to be "Gospel friends on Gospel mission" with together. Double-down in the developments of real, honest, grace-filled friendships (supplied by God's overflowing grace) with each other.
2. Second, envision and execute how you will be on mission in your city and beyond.
 - a) Start by where you are. For example, my wife and I have been walking every day in our neighborhood and we always start our walk with a prayer for our neighbors: for God to work in their hearts and for opportunities for us to build relationships with them. God's been answering those prayers! Ask the Father how he wants you to be participating in his mission...and listen to the Spirit as he speaks to you! Take some of those initial steps as God speaks to you!
 - b) We are sending off this team to start a disciple-making movement hub with the goal of our church to participate tangibly in missions to unreached people groups. In light of God's overflowing grace, what way can you partner with the friends who are going? Will it be from giving your time, energy, money, or prayers? May we send them out with our lavish commitment to pray, financially support, and care for them as Gospel friends on Gospel mission until we see churches planted of this people group starting and growing.
- **Transition:** Well, that's it from me preaching from Philipppians 4:14-20. May we ***treasure being Gospel friends on Gospel mission, with God and each other!*** I'll let you now respond to the Holy Spirit leads you as we regather in our Zoom service together.

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