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My God Will Supply All Your Needs

Philippians 4:19

Prayer: *Father, I thank you for your goodness, I thank you for this body, I thank you for the gift of your Son, the gift of your word. Lord, this morning we're going to be looking at one of the books of that gift and I just thank you for it. I also want to pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would guide, come alongside us, help us as we journey on. And again we just pray that you would make this of permanent value. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well you know, preaching a sermon is a lot like preparing a meal. You know, you kind of search out the ingredients, you put it all together, you pour over it and you try to get it to a place where you can actually be proud to serve it and then 45 minutes later it's all over, and about 15 minutes after that it's pretty much completely forgotten. I mean that's not a reflection on you, it's just, it's the nature of the beast. People have asked me a day or two after I preached a sermon, "What did you preach about on Sunday?" and I'm like, "I have no idea." So if I can't retain it,

I understand why you might not be able to.

So we are finishing up the book of Philippians today, so I thought we would take a high altitude flight through all of the fifteen sermons that I preached on it just to kind of recapture what God was revealing to us through it. So I start at the very beginning. This is way back in November at the very beginning of November with the first sermon that was entitled "Paul's Joy." I said back then, I said if you were pressed to sum up in a single word what the prevailing attitude of these days is, I can imagine you would hear words such as "distressing," "fearful," "depressing," maybe even "terrifying." One of the words that you're least likely to hear anyone claim for their own attitude through these days is the word "joyful." It's probably the one response that most of us most desperately need. Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians in part to encourage the church at Philippi but also to express his joy even though the letter was written from a Roman jail cell. Paul said in *Philippians 1:3*: *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.* Paul was so thoroughly convinced of the joy that awaited him that he was able to count everything in his life, the good, the bad and the ugly as basically gravy. *Philippians 3:8* he says: *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing*

worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. See Christ was where Paul's joy came from. And it came because Paul always had one eye on the world and one eye on the kingdom and it was that kind of vision that all of us need. And without a split screen vision of the world and the kingdom, we are locked into this world and oftentimes we're just terrified that it's not going to turn out like we think it should. Our present day terror, I pointed out back then, was this upcoming election. I said somehow I think we think that God is up in heaven right now biting his nails, and he's not. This is all part of the seen world that is temporary, that is passing. And we recognize that God is one hundred percent in charge of whoever comes to power, then we can, like Paul, rejoice. We rejoice with a joy that no one and nothing can take away from us whether we're sitting in the driver's seat politically or whether we're beaten, bloodied, and sitting, singing in the stocks in a prison cell because we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Part two was entitled "Let Love, Knowledge and Wisdom Guide Your Vote." This was a message delivered the week of the presidential election, just prior to it. I spoke about the Philippian church, it was firing on all cylinders as a church and they actively

defended the gospel to outsiders while confirming it to those who were within the church. Not only did they labor inwardly but they also demonstrated the love of Christ outwardly by ministering to Paul while he's sitting there in a prison cell. *Philippians 1:8* says: *For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.* So what's Paul's number one desire in praying for the Philippians? He says: *That your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent.* Paul wants a love that's full of knowledge, discernment and excellence, one that is pure and blameless, filled with the fruit of righteousness that can only come from Jesus Christ. So I used Paul's logic to plead that your vote should reflect that knowledge and discernment, noting that Mr. Biden's views on sexuality, on gender, on abortion, that they were all antithetical to the gospel. And as we have thus far seen, he has thus far proven himself to be far worse than we can ever imagine when it came to those areas. I also said that if he does get elected, we are not going to panic, we are going to put on our big boy pants and once again rely and trust in God's sovereignty and that's just what we are doing.

Part three was entitled "God Wastes Nothing." And again Paul was sitting in a prison cell in Rome and he's joyfully considering his brothers and sisters in the church at Philippi, and he commends them for the work that he sees God doing in their lives. He says: *I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* And then Paul brings up a principle. The principle is this, he says, life for us will consist of difficult times when we're challenged and we're challenged by circumstances that tell us that God doesn't really love us and he doesn't really care about us. Each and every time we're challenged like this we're faced with what the scripture describes a binary choice. There's only two directions that you can go. There's a grace direction and there is a bitterness direction. *Hebrews 12:15 says: Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and by it, defiling many.* So Paul's sitting in a jail cell is clearly and obviously opting for grace instead of bitterness and it makes all the difference in his life. You see Paul was able to maintain that split screen vision of life as he lived it and his two screens consisted of the life that he was living here on earth and the life that he saw awaiting him in eternity. And that life in eternity was so real, it was so present that it allowed him to look straight through circumstances that were absolutely awful to see a future so bright that nothing could

dim it.

Part four took place the Sunday after the election. I entitled that message "Choosing Joy," and you might remember I spoke about a man who goes by the name of Tim Challies. He's the pastor of a church in Canada that goes by the name of Grace Fellowship. He's author, a prolific blogger and the blog that he wrote for Wednesday which was the morning after the election was entitled "*My Son, My Dear Son Has Gone to be With the Lord.*" It was dated November 4th, 2020 and he wrote: "In all the years I've been writing I have never had to type words more difficult, more devastating than these: Yesterday the Lord called my son to himself -- my dear son, my sweet son, my kind son, my godly son, my only son. Nick was playing a game with his sister and fiancée and many other students when he suddenly collapsed, never regaining consciousness. Students, paramedics, and doctors battled valiantly, but could not save him. He's with the Lord he loved, the Lord he longed to serve. We have no answers to the what or why questions. Yesterday Aileen and I cried and cried until we could cry no more, until there were no tears left to cry. Then, later in the evening, we looked each other in the eye and said, 'We can do this.' We don't want to do this, but we can do this -- this sorrow, this grief, this devastation -- because we know we don't have to do it in our own strength. We can do it like Christians, like a son and

daughter of the Father who knows what it is to lose a Son." I said it's funny how the reality of life and death can so quickly reset and re calibrate the political and social angst that all of us were feeling. And I read Tim Challies' words and I saw displayed what it means to fight to choose joy in the very worst of circumstance. We looked at Paul's description of the joy that he's experiencing sitting in a Roman prison cell and he, too, like Tim is focused right from the beginning in choosing, in choosing to carve joy out of circumstances that seem anything but joyful.

In part five we encountered the servant mind of Jesus. Paul starts off chapter two by telling us how incredibly important it is to be of one mind and to have unity of spirit but then he goes on to tell us exactly what the key to finding that is all about. He says this in verse 3, he says: *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*

Well, Paul is basically giving us instructions on how to serve by eliminating selfish ambition and conceit, and according to Jesus it's actually quite simple, I mean, *Mark 10* says: *And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.*

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Servants recognize their own insignificance. They are after all just what the word implies, servants. Paul says act as if others are more significant than you. It's not easy but it's not so hard if you develop the right mindset, and developing the right mindset is a function of looking at the big picture and the big picture is described by Paul in the verses that follow. This is what he says. He says: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* So the secret of learning to be a servant is really the secret of emptying yourself of yourself. Jesus is our prime example. Paul says: *Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* And what Paul desperately wants is an expression of single-minded love like the Philippians have but again, it's not love unbounded, unchained; it's Christ's servant love, and that's a love bound by discernment and wisdom and like-mindedness.

Part six was entitled "Work Out What God Has Worked In." Paul is now shifting from Christ's exaltation through servanthood to the profoundly practical, to working out your own salvation. And that

means exactly what it seems to mean. It means putting genuine effort into your life as a kingdom citizen. Paul's use of the word "therefore" is truly to say that since Jesus gave us such an incredible example of servanthood, and since God is determined to reward such behavior, therefore work out your own salvation. Paul's suggesting that one of the most basic motives there is for assuming the role of a servant is a motivation that occurs over and over in scripture and it's one that you just might have a quarrel with. And Paul says if you're truly wise, if you are truly looking out for your own self interest, you're going to pursue servanthood. You're going to pursue it simply because you're wise enough to recognize the inherent reward it will provide. And to the extent that you truly buy what Paul is selling will be the extent that you're willing to accept the humiliation of servanthood. And the reason why is because it brings an astounding dividend. I mean I want to say this carefully without being misunderstood but what God is saying here is that even a base motive, a selfish, if you will, motive can be a good thing when it is applied rightly to the kingdom. You see, if I'm truly wise then I am pursuing my own exaltation. How? By recognizing that right here and right now, I can achieve future exaltation by pursuing its exact opposite in the present just by doing exactly what Christ did. It's adopting the heart of a servant, postponing my reward until a future time when I recognize that -- quote -- *"whoever exalts himself will be humbled,*

and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Part seven was "Do All Things Without Grumbling." This is what Paul says. He says: *Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.* You see, God knows that we have in all of us in tendency to grumble, this tendency to dispute and they're really two different sides of the same coin. Grumble actually means kind of to murmur to yourself sort of under your breath. It's that kind of low murmuring that you do when you're just not happy with your circumstances. Grumble is how you feel towards God when you believe that he hasn't treated you well. Disputing is taking up an argument with or about God, like he doesn't care for us or he doesn't know what he's doing. And God is so familiar with that fallen part of our character that he has an entire Psalm devoted to addressing that attitude that leads to grumbling and disputing. It's *Psalm 73*. The psalmist says there, he says: *But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* If anyone had an invitation to grumble like the psalmist, it was clearly Paul. Paul's sitting in a jail cell, you know his Philippian brothers and sisters are experiencing persecution, there's others who are using his imprisonment to

advance their own careers. It's a perfect setting for grumbling and disputing to reassert itself. But Psalm 73 is God's answer. A few years back I spoke about this Psalm saying the answer to grumbling and disputing is found in considering, that is considering God. The psalmist himself in *Psalm 73* says: *When I tried to understand all this, it seemed hopeless until I entered God's sanctuary. Then I understood their destiny.* And -- quote -- "entering God's sanctuary" -- unquote -- happens when I take the time to work through my feelings about God's love, God's concern, God's fairness, when I see bad things happening to good people and good things happening to bad people. The psalmist went on to say: *When I became embittered and my innermost being was wounded, I was stupid and didn't understand; I was an unthinking animal toward You. Yet I am always with You; You hold my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will take me up in glory.*

Well number eight continued that thought in Paul's "Imperatives and Indicatives." Now Paul starts out the scripture with an imperative statement which says -- which we've already heard -- *do all things without grumbling or disputing.* Now I pointed out that there are indicative sentences and there are imperative sentences.

Indicative sentences merely point things out, I mean that they indicate. That's why they're indicative. Imperatives are commands; they tell you something you must do. Until you

understand the difference between the indicatives and the imperatives of the gospel, you're going to have a hard time understanding just what Paul is getting at here. You see if you think you are under orders from Paul, you will not grumble, you will not dispute, you're not thinking like a true believer in Christ thinks. In fact you're thinking more about religion than you are about relation. You see if you think only in terms of imperatives, that is in terms of commands, then you'll see your Christian life as just a series of rules and regulations that you are commanded to follow. But if, however, you think in terms of indicatives, then you're operating on the very same level that Christ operates on. You see, when Jesus says: *"My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me,"* he's not issuing a command, he's not issuing an imperative, he's stating an indicative. He's indicating what sheep do. That's an incredibly important distinction to understand because that's exactly what Paul is doing in our passage this morning. He starts out stating an imperative and then he redefines the statement with a series of indicatives. Listen to what he says. He says: *Do all things without grumbling or disputing -- okay, there's the imperative -- that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.* That's the indicative. Both Jesus and Paul are describing the type of person that's come

through the process of having literally a spiritual heart transplant. We talk about it all the time. It's in *Ezekiel 36*. It says -- this is God speaking, he says: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.* See, when you're born again, God gives you a brand new heart and puts a new spirit in you that now chooses to do the very things that God commands, and so imperatives become indicatives.

Number nine was "The Battle Against the Judaizers." There Paul the passionate one that deeply loves the church of Philippi now becoming Paul the angry one assessing the dangers that the Philippian church was facing. Paul says: *Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.* See Paul had two sets of enemies that he had to deal with when it came to the Jews. *Baker's New Testament Commentary* points out he wasn't fighting the Jews, he was actually fighting the judaizers. The Jews were those who were committed to following Paul from town to town distorting and discrediting the gospel that he was pronouncing. They hated everything about Christianity. They

claimed that Paul was an apostate who was foisting a false religion. These were the outsiders who were attacking Christianity. But the judaizers, they were another story completely. They were not outsiders; they were insiders. These were Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, that he went to the cross, that he paid the price of our sin at the cross and that by faith in him you could be saved, but only if. That two-letter word "if" made the judaizers one of Paul's bitterest enemies. See, they believed in a gospel plus, that is the gospel plus my own personal efforts. Paul's response was *Philippians 3:7*. He said: *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.* I've spoken at length about the Greek word here that's translated as rubbish, the Greek word is "skubalon" which literally means "dung." Paul is being quite explicit here and he doesn't mind being actually offensive, and what Paul is trying to say here is that his very best efforts at moral purity and righteousness which are a heck of a lot better than most when it comes to exemplary moral behavior, he says when even they are held up to God's own standard

of perfection even they look, for all practical purposes, like dung. This final blow to the judaizers from Paul says that he counts all of his goodness as dung so that he might gain Christ because in Christ alone he finds a righteousness that doesn't come from keeping the law but rather comes from faith.

Number ten brought us to "The Fellowship of Christ's Sufferings." We spoke of Paul's great desire. This is the desire that motivated his life and it was that he would know Christ. We spoke of three different pathways of knowing Christ. There's an historical pathway, there's a doctrinal pathway and then there's a doctrine of intimacy with Christ. And we pointed out the doorway to intimacy with Christ is a doorway marked "suffering." And we asked the question are we ready to suffer the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that we may gain Christ, and is suffering a price I am willing to pay.

That led to number eleven which was "Preparing Your Church for Suffering." We spoke of how real that doorway marked suffering is going to become in the lives of believers. We saw that there's lots of similarities between what happened years ago in the Soviet Union and what is happening in our country right here, right now today. You see the Soviet Union promulgated the lie that there was no God and that it was in fact God and every citizen had to live

with that lie in order to simply function. And we looked at Rod Dreher's book *Live Not By Lies* and how he connects the dots between the hard totalitarianism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc which again used fear as its primary driving force to make its citizens live with these lies and now the soft totalitarianism that has arisen in our country that uses as its primary driving force in the goal of making us live by its lies are aversion to suffering. It's our addiction to pleasure and convenience that now tempts to force us to live with a different set of lies, but lies they are nonetheless. And there are now officially three lies that all of us in this culture now live with every single day. There's the lie that life in the womb is no longer sacred, there's the lie that gender is now fluid, and there's the lie that homosexuality is now a perfectly acceptable alternative life-style. Those are lies and yet every one of us know if you step out, you say, "By the way, that's a lie," there's going to be hell to pay. We pointed out the importance of church as community that will have each other's back when we pay the price for refusing to believe those lies and the new lies that are surely to come next.

In number twelve, Paul exposes the enemies of the cross. If you remember, Paul opened up chapter three with a discussion about the legalists. He went after those who preached a gospel plus, the plus being that work that you had to add to the perfect work of

Christ on the cross. Now, at the end of chapter three Paul is going full circle. Instead of attacking the legalists, he's now going to attack the libertines, those who purported to be part of the church who saw living holy lives sanctified and set apart for Christ as strictly optional. I mean in their view Christ had paid the full penalty of their sins on the cross and so what they did with their bodies was up to them. Didn't really matter. They had carte blanche, so they thought, to live lives of outright debauchery. Paul knew that such an attitude was a mark not just of bad theology or mistaken understanding but rather of unbelief. Paul had absolute confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the lives of those who were truly believers. He had seen in his own life how God had turned attitudes and actions that were directly opposed to the gospel right side up and he knew anyone who was truly a child of God who had the spirit of God within them would be hearing and responding to the same message with the same power in their lives through the same Holy Spirit. So he could say: *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.* Paul wants us to hold true to what we have attained because we've seen on both end of the scale folks who had appeared at one time to hold to the truth who now revealed themselves as unbelievers. On the

one hand you have the judaizers who gave up the truth of the gospel alone to a different gospel of legalism, of earning their way into heaven but now he wants to direct his attention toward those who are turning to a different gospel of another sort. But before he takes these libertines on, he directs the Philippian believers to be imitators of himself. He says: *Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.* We wondered why is Paul taking this side road. We wondered doesn't it take a giant ego to tell people that you are so together, that you have so clearly arrived that folks need to imitate you? That's not what Paul's getting at. If you remember, he just finished telling the Philippians the exact opposite. He says he has -- quote -- "not yet arrived." *Philippians 3:12* he says: *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.* What is he talking about? Well Paul, if you've not made this your own or obtained this, then why are we supposed to imitate you? Well it's because Paul understood and lived out the process of sanctification and not the product. And because of that he was in a perfect position to have people imitate him. You see, the end product of sanctification is a product that nobody can ever produce: It is perfection. That's what "arriving at" truly means, that's what -- quote -- "obtaining this" meant. Paul very clearly

says, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect." But just like I said the last time Paul knew exactly what to do with the process. Paul knew just what to do with all of his shortcomings, past, present and future. He took them to the cross. Paul brought all of his past, present and future to the foot of the cross.

Number thirteen was about "Kingdom Citizenship." Paul ended chapter three on a high note having spent most of the chapter focused on the dismal subject of the many enemies of the church at Philippi. And if you recall Paul had been dealing with the enemies of the cross from the legalism of the judaizers to the debauchery of the libertines who wallowed in the sins of the flesh, and Paul had harsh words for both. His denunciation to both of those extremes was rooted in his deep love for the Philippian church, because he loved them so intensely he resented and resisted those who would do this body harm. So having completed his warning to the church Paul then shifts gears pointing out in *Philippians 3:20*: *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.* In chapter four he says since we are kingdom citizens, therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this

way, dear friends! Stand firm, says Paul, not in the way of the judaizers, not in the way of the libertines but in the way of those who know where their citizenship lies.

Paul then has to take care of some local business, namely there's a conflict between two godly women in the Philippian church, Euodia and Syntyche. Paul knows all too well about fallings out with fellow workers. He's had some with Barnabas, he's had one with Mark. In both cases they were able to work through these issues because there was a far greater issue and that was the unity of the body of Christ. And Paul appeals to the very same thing here, he says: *I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.* I asked back then, I said, did you know that there is such a book? And that in it are the names of every single one who is headed to or already in heaven? The book of Revelation speaks over and over again of the critical importance of being in that book. Then God speaks of a heavenly city and he says: *By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day -- and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those*

who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Paul says our citizenship is in heaven and if you're a citizen of the kingdom, you're going to find that your name is written in the lamb's book of life. I said it's by far the most important passport you're ever going to own. And as scripture also points out the opposite effect, it says, if you're outside of the kingdom of God, if you're of the world, you're not going to find your name on that list and the consequences are going to be dire. Again Revelation 20 says: *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.* I pointed out that what really marks out those who are not written in this book is that they genuinely don't care. There is nobody wringing their hands over the fact that I was not in the book. You see, if God hasn't chosen you, such things will have absolutely no meaning to you at all. And if you care about whether or not you're in that book it's only because God's Holy Spirit is prompting you. As I said back then, now is the time to respond to that prompting.

Number fourteen, "Think On These Things," Paul addresses the battle for the mind. He says this, he says: *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about*

these things. We spoke of who is the essence of all of these things. Well, it's Christ. Paul tells us to meditate, to let our minds dwell on these things because you cannot enjoy a God who you don't know and you can't know him without literally thinking him into your mind and you can't think of him rightly without thinking through the word of God, and that's how we win this battle for the mind.

I spoke of the computer age that gave us that phrase GIGO, G-I-G-O, garbage in yields garbage out, and again the idea being that computers operate on a strict mathematical logic and whatever you input it with it will eventually output. And if you put garbage into it, eventually it's going to spew out garbage. I said it's pretty obvious that the exact same thing applies to a far more sophisticated computer that sits inside our head right between our ears, that God says to guard especially the input side because the world is especially good at garbage in, garbage out. And God's word, however, is especially good at goodness in, goodness out, and that's why Paul gave us that directive, and that's why our focus needs to be on the one who is goodness personified and that's Christ.

Number fifteen declared "I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me." And again we saw that Paul had experienced both

abundance and scarcity and that Paul said it makes no difference whether it's plenty or hunger, abundance or need, I've learned to be content no matter what. So we ask what is Paul's secret? He said *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*. I said how does Paul draw strength from Christ particularly at times when life is shouting that God doesn't care? How do we translate Paul's statement into a practical reality for how we live our lives, and for that we look to what Peter who says in *1 Peter 1*. He says: *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory*. So again we asked, okay, so how do you love and believe in him? You just grit your teeth, you just will yourself into loving and believing him? How do you do that? Again we said what you do again and again and again is you go to the cross again and again and again. The ultimate answer that Jesus had for all of the times that you might feel he doesn't love me, he's not there for me, he's abandoned me, the ultimate answer for that is the cross. The more time you spend wrapping your head around the notion of God himself taking on flesh, living life perfectly and then being stripped naked and nailed to a cross to the accompaniment of the mocking sneers of all those around him, the more you're going to understand when Paul meant when he said: *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

And finally after almost six months we've come to a grand finale of sorts to a final verse and a final chapter that sums up all that God has done in the Philippian church, from explaining the joy that comes from trusting to how do we express knowledge and wisdom guided by understanding, to understanding the servant mind of Jesus while we work out the blessings of kingdom citizenship that God's Holy Spirit has worked into us. We've been warned about grumbling and disputing, about the legalism of the judaizers and the carnal sins of the enemies of the cross. And that Paul's answer to legalism that thinks he can earn his salvation is to see everything in this life as dung compared to the riches he's been given freely in Christ. We see how Paul wants us to train our minds and dwell on those things that are honorable, just, pure, lovely, commandable, excellent and praiseworthy, imitating him as we assume our role as genuine kingdom citizens written eternally in the lamb's book of life, knowing that by focusing on Christ and his cross we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

As we come to one final conclusion that God has demonstrated throughout the entire book, and that's number sixteen, and it's just one verse: *That my God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* We've seen it in Paul's life, we've seen it in the Philippian church and we thank God for the lessons that he's given us as we try to work those same

lessons out in our lives and our church by his grace. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for this book. I thank you for this gift. I thank you for the many different places that it took us over these last six months. And I just pray, Lord, that you would use this, use these words, use this book, use your Holy Spirit to speak into the lives individually of every one of us uniquely what we need to hear, what we need to learn, what we need to grow on. And I pray this in your Son's name. Amen.