

## Read Philippians 4 10-20

## Generosity and Contentment

The bible gives us lots of teaching on how wealth can deceive...

### OT teaching

Those who possess wealth believe they are self sufficient, they have no need for God... in fact they are gods.

-Give me only my daily bread otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say who is the Lord (Prov: 30 8-9)

-God promises destruction for the King of Tyre since his wealth had caused him to swell with pride and claim he is as wise as God (Ezek 28)

-The lord reminds Israel that when he fed them in the wilderness, they became proud and forgot him.

### Jesus teaching

-Pronounces a woe on the rich and a blessing on the poor., and claims that the wealthy can only enter the kingdom of God with great difficulty (Matt 19).

-Money can take the place of God in one's life. "No servant can serve two masters, either he will hate one and love the other or he will be devoted to one but despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Luke 16

For the unbelieving world money takes on a divine status. It is the god of this age, a god for which people make sacrifices... their health, their children even their own lives.

### Paul's attitude to money

Paul receives it with great joy. The money doesn't alleviate the discomfort of prison- he is content in every circumstance. Physical comfort isn't the sign of success- a good house, a nice car, a great job isn't the pinnacle of the Christian life. Paul's resource for coping isn't inside himself but resides instead in the lord, through whom he can face all things (v 13)- his life depends wholly on God.

### Philippians personal growth

The giving isn't necessarily for Paul's advantage but for the Philippians advantage. Our financial support of the churches mission is at least as important for our own spiritual development as for any good it might do towards those whom we give. God's purposes do not depend on human help. Their generosity was a concrete demonstration that God was completing a good work that he had started in them when they believed the gospel. The Philippians- by their very act of giving have refused to let their wealth control them and instead have taken control of it. By giving; they have taken away its power and refused to allow it sacred status.

### An act of worship

Paul then moves to language of the OT around sacrifices of Gods people (fragrant, acceptable, pleasing)... in Israel's history these sacrifices were often corrupted through people's idolatrous practices or social injustices. Isaiah looks forward to a time when Gods people will once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord (Is 56:7 & 60: 7). Maybe Paul sees the generosity of the Philippians as a partial fulfilment of that.

1. How wealthy are we?
2. How much of a master is wealth in your life?
3. Have you ever lost money or something of value? How did it make you feel?
4. How easy do you find it to be generous?
5. How does the gift day on Sunday make you feel?
6. Pray for Sunday together.
7. Plan for Sunday together... what to wear, what to bring?