

Place: Lurgan Baptist 22:1:2017

## THE MARVELLOUS MY'S OF THE BIBLE

Reading: Philippians 4:10-23

### 3. MY GOD

Harry Ironside went to preach for two weeks in Fresno, California. As was often his custom, he did not ask for any financial guarantees but simply went on faith that God would supply. For some reason things didn't work out and in the middle of his meetings, he ran out of money. Hungry and broke, he was forced to leave his hotel room and put his bag in a drugstore until he found a place to stay. By his own testimony, he thought about the words of Philippians 4:19 and got angry with the Lord. " *You promised to supply my needs. Why don't you do it ?*" That night as he rested under a tree in front of the courthouse, the Lord spoke to him about areas in his life that had become sloppy. He confessed his sins and asked God for the strength to make a new start.

The very next day things began to turn around. People came to the meetings, friends invited him for meals, and he never again lacked a place to stay. When the meetings were finished, he went to the post office and was surprised to find a letter from his father. In the P.S. his father said that he had been meditating on this verse " *But my God shall supply all your needs ...*," He added these words, " *The Lord has promised to give me whatever I need, and if I ever need a starving, I'm sure He'll give that to me*

*too.*" The Lord spoke to Harry Ironside and said, " *That was for you.*" In that moment he realized that his greatest need had been to go without food and a place to stay so that he would turn his heart back to the Lord. Is that not the true meaning of this statement ? This is not a blank cheque that guarantees an easy road or an answer to all our prayers. This is not given carte blanche to all who just prays it in the prayer meeting. It was not given to encourage slothfulness or laziness, why the man who wrote it under the inspiration of the Spirit of God made tents to support himself. ( 1 Thes 2:9 ) So don't ever think, " *well this is an easy way to live,*" for remember that Paul was writing to the Philippian church to convey his heartfelt thanks for the generous gift brought to him by the hands of Epaphroditus.

Paul was grateful for the Philippians and their partnership with the gospel. For approximately ten years the Philippian believers had been Paul's partners in the gospel. Now Paul was in Rome, his friends were far away in Philippi but their spiritual fellowship was real and satisfying. These Philippian believers had stood by Paul and supported him and followed him with their prayers. They had become his partners in the gospel. They had done for Paul what Jonathan had done for David, " *strengthened his hand in God.*" ( 1 Sam 23:16 ) They had let him know, " *we are with you Paul, all the way. You can count on us.*" Now that is the context of this promise, indeed the first thing we need to see here is, what I am calling,

**(1) A PRINCIPLE WE NEED TO EXPRESS**

And the principle is this. ***If we give faithfully to the work of the Lord He will supply our needs.*** You know, in the Bible there are unconditional promises and conditional promises, and this promise here is a conditional promise. You see, you cannot divorce ( 4:19 ) from what goes before. Indeed did you notice that the verses are linked with the word “ *but,*” a conjunction that ties them together ? It is to people who have given faithfully and generously that Paul says “ But my God shall supply all your need.” Paul says as it were “ *You have supplied my need, God shall supply yours. You have supplied one of my needs, God will supply all yours. You have supplied me out of your poverty, ( 2 Cor 8:2 ) God shall supply you according to His riches. You have sent your gift to me by Epaphroditus, a true servant of Jesus Christ, God shall all your need by Christ Jesus Himself.*” So if we meet the condition, give faithfully, God will fulfill His part, supply all our need. So how are we to give ? Well, how did these Christians at Philippi give ? Well, they gave to the work of the Lord,

**(a) INITIALLY:**

Do you see how Paul puts it in ( 4:15 ) ? He’s talking about when he first preached the gospel in Philippi ten years before. Then when he departed from the region of Macedonia they shared with him in the matter of giving and receiving. You see, from the moment of their conversion they had given. Steven Cole says, “ *Paul must have taught the Philippians early on the importance of faithful giving to support those in Christian ministry, because soon after he left town, they sent gifts after him.*

*They would have been just a few months old in the Lord, but they were already practicing faithful giving.*” Can I ask, as a Christian do you give ? Have you been giving from the moment of your conversion ? You see, there is probably no more accurate gauge of your spiritual life than your giving to the Lord’s work. ( Matt 6:21 ) Do you give only grudgingly ? Are you hit and miss about your giving ? Are you stingy and tight with your giving ? Maybe you’re saying, “ *preacher you shouldn’t be talking about money, or giving.*” Well, the Bible speaks very plainly about money because our hearts and our wallets are tightly bound together and God is after our hearts. ( Matt 6:21 )

**The Lord Jesus talked often about money, 16 of His 38 parables deal with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, one out of ten verses ( 288 in all ) deal directly with money. The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions ( Howard L. Dayton, Jr., *Leadership*, Spring, 1981, p. 62 )**

Someone who is a Director in Christian Mission recently give me this statistic which shocked me. He said “ *Christians only start giving when they reach the age of forty five.*” I urge you young couples, begin your marriage by honouring God with your substance and He will honour you. (a)

**(b) PERCEPTIVELY:**

For their giving was to advance the work of the gospel. Is

this not where our giving should be focused ? ( 4:15 ) Paul was preaching the gospel but what an example he was in terms of hard work and freedom from greed. ( Acts 20:33-35 1 Thess 2:5 2 Thes 3:7-9 ) There are those who claim to be serving the Lord, but they are bone lazy, and they are very greedy, that's why we need to give perceptively for the Scriptures warn about us men who are in the ministry for money. ( 1 Tim 6:5 Titus 1:11 2 Pet 2:3 ) Steven Cole tells the story of the famous British preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, once received a request from a wealthy man to come to their town and help them raise funds for a new church building. He told Spurgeon he could stay in his country home there. Spurgeon wrote back and told him to sell the home and give the money to the project. Give to those who emphasize ministry, not money. Paul's focus was on preaching the gospel, not on his need for money.

**(c) SPIRITUALLY:**

Paul is thinking of the spiritual implications of their gift when he says, ( 4:17 ) or “ *I desire the interest that is accruing to your credit.*” Paul looked upon this gift as an investment that would pay them rich spiritual dividends. For a church that is practical in its outlook will be prosperous in its living. Paul says, “ *He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*” ( 2 Cor 9:6 ) Through this gift they were laying up treasure in heaven. My .... faithful giving is investing in eternity. The Lord Jesus called it “ *laying up treasures in heaven.*” ( Matt 6:19 ) Those of you who are into investing your money in stocks and funds know how risky it can be. Do

you want a safe investment ? Do you want an investment that will give you the highest possible return ? How about investing in the work of the Lord ? How about using your Master's money to make friends for eternity to see people come to Christ ? Then when you step into heaven, folk will welcome you, for you invested in souls for all eternity. ( Lk 16:9 ) Now are you beginning to see how these Philippian believers gave to the work of the Lord ?

**(d) ACCEPTABLY:**

For Paul says, the things they sent were “ *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God*” ( 4:18 ) J. B. Philips, renders it like this, “ *Now I have everything I want .... in fact I am rich .... such generosity is like a lovely fragrance, a sacrifice that pleases the very heart of God.*” Such terms describe Old Testament offerings ( Gen 8:21 Lev 1:9 4:31 ) but also they are used to describe Christ's offering of Himself for our sins. ( Eph 5:2 ) The point is, you are not giving to the pastor or the church, you aren't giving to the missionary or mission society, you are giving to the Lord Himself. Is that your perspective in giving ? Is it motivated by worship ? If it is, then we won't want it advertised. (a) (b) (c) (d)

**(e) GENEROUSLY:**

For Paul says, “ *I have all and abound, I am full.*” ( 4:18 ) Now this church was poor and yet they gave generously. ( 2 Cor 8:2 ) My .... what about your stewardship ? What about your giving ? Do you give ? Do you give perceptively or ignorantly ? Do you give spiritually or carnally ? Do you give acceptably or

unacceptably ? Do you give generously or niggardly ? You see, if you are lagging in your giving you are lacking in grace. The story is told of a farmer renowned for his generous giving. His friends could never understand how he gave so much and remained so prosperous. One day one of his friends asked, “ *we cannot understand how you give far more than any of the rest of us and yet you always seem to have plenty to give.*” “ *It’s easy to explain said the farmer, I keep shovelling into God’s bin, and God keeps shovelling back into mine and God has the bigger shovel.*” (1) If we give faithfully to the work of the Lord He will supply our needs.

## (2) A PERSON WE NEED TO EXALT

Did you see how Paul put’s it ? “ *My God .....*,” Isn’t that lovely ? Sidlow Baxter says “ *How becomingly it flows from the pen of the grand apostle ! and how well it befits the lips of Christ’s own, whom God has redeemed to be a peculiar treasure to Himself.*” “ *My God,*” sometimes men take this expression on their lips as a blasphemous oath, but the believer can take these words on his lips and find much sweetness in them, for to him, “ *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus,*” is “ *my God,*” in the most blessed sense of the word. Now these words speaks of,

### (a) **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP:**

“ *My God .....*,” Paul said that the Lord is “ *my God.*” You see, when Paul received the Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus he was brought immediately into a personal relationship with God. My .... you may know about God,

but do you know God ? Giving to the Lord’s work is not for anyone who does not know Him through the cross. But if you know Him as “ *my God,*” then like Paul you know as the provider of all your needs. Do you know the Hebrew name for God as the provider of His people ? It’s ***Jehovah Jireh.*** Do you recall when it appeared ? It appears in ( Gen Ch 22 ) when Abraham in obedience to God, took Isaac his son to Mount Moriah to offer him for a burnt offering. Can you see Abraham as he smothers that only son with all his heart with kisses ? He says, “ *Son I don’t understand it, but I’m putting you on the altar. You are the dearest thing I have in life. I’m putting it all on the altar.*” Abraham takes the knife. He is going to slit the throat of his own boy so that blood will pour. He is going to set fire to the wood so that his boy would be totally consumed.

Here is a man who has put his all on the altar for God. Suddenly he hears a voice “ *And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said Abraham, Abraham and he said here am I. And he said lay not thine hand upon the lad neither do thou anything unto him for now I know that thou fearest God seeing thou hast not withheld thy son thine only son from me.*”

( Gen 22:11-12 ) Now think about this. While Abraham and Isaac were coming up one side of the mountain, a ram, a lamb was coming up the other side of the mountain. God had already gone before and made a way. Just what Abraham needed. Just where Abraham needed it. Just when Abraham needed it. God supplied the right provision for our God is Jehovah Jireh ( Gen 22:14 ) which means “ *the Lord will see to it,*” that is “ *the Lord*

*will provide.*” Do you know what provision is ? It’s to see ahead of time. Its to see ahead of time **P R O V I S I O N**, you see. When Abraham started up one side of the mountain a ram started up the other. Abraham couldn’t see the ram but God saw the ram. God saw the need and God provided. Do you know something ? Our God is still Jehovah Jireh and the place of God’s appointment is the place of God’s provision. Are you where God wants you to be ? Then you can be assured that God will meet your need. For these words speak of personal relationship.

**(b) TOTAL RELIABILITY:**

For Paul is commending to these believers the God whom He has tried and proved down through the years and found to be faithful. “ *My God shall supply .....*,” for “ *my God,*” is totally reliable. My .... for God to be unfaithful would be contrary to His nature and character which would be impossible. Time and again the Scriptures remind us of the faithfulness of God. Do you recall the words of Moses to the nation of Israel ? “ *Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.*”

( Deut 7:9 ) Do you remember what Paul says to young Timothy ? “ *God abideth faithful.*” ( 2 Tim 2:13 Ps 89:8 36:5 ) My .... God never forgets, fails, or falters. He is the God who is reliable and dependable, therefore we can exclaim, “ *His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness.*” ( Lam 3:22 ) Oh, how refreshing it is to lift our eyes about earth’s scene of faithlessness and see One who is faithful in all things and

at all times. Years ago in a little village in Scotland, there lived a dear old Christian lady commonly known as “ *Dear old Nancy.*” She had been bed-ridden for years but she was full of the joy of the Lord. She was always singing and speaking about “ *the promises.*” For hours at a time she would revel in looking them up in the pages of God’s Word and ponder their meaning. The minister of the local Kirk went in to see her and often felt that he received more than he gave. One day he thought he would tease Nancy a little. He said, “ *Look here Nancy, every time I come to see you, its just the same, you’re always talking about the promises. Did it ever occur to you that some of the promises might not be true ?*”

For a moment poor old Nancy was thunderstruck. Such a blasphemous suggestion never entered her mind. In tones of awesome seriousness she responded, “ *What ! These promises not true ? Never ! Why if these promises are not true, poor old Nancy loses her soul and God loses His character.*” My .... the very character of God is bound up with His promises. “ *My God shall ,*” (a) (b)

**(c) SUPERNATURAL RESOURCES:**

“ *my God shall supply .....*,” The psalmist prayed “ *O Lord how manifold are thy works in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches.*”

( Ps 104:24 ) And it is on this earth that God has put us. ( Ps 24:1 ) I mean how vast is the wealth of God ? How rich is the Provider ? Well, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is “ *my God.*” The God who raised up Moses is “ *my God.*” The God who led Joshua around the walls of

Jericho is “ *my God.*” The God who enabled David to defeat Goliath is “ *my God.*” The God of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all of the prophets is “ *my God.*” The God of the Virgin Birth is “ *my God.*” The God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead is “ *my God.*” The God of the apostles is “ *my God.*” In short, when Paul says “ *my God,*” he wants us to remember that the same God who worked all the mighty miracles in the Bible is the same God who makes this amazing promise.

Look back over the years. In a thousand ways has God not proved Himself to be “ *your God, and my God ?*” When the storm has raged He has flung His mantle around me. When the battle has waxed hot He has shielded me from the fiery darts of the wicked. He has led me and fed me. He has answered my prayers. He has shown me that underneath are the everlasting arms of a love which never lets me go and never gives me up. Full well, has He proved Himself to be “ *my God.*” My .... When you cannot see your way clear “ *My God .....*,” when man does not take note of your needs “ *My God .....*,” when there is no other source of supply, “ *My God .....*,” (1) (2)

### **(3) A PROMISE WE NEED TO EXPLORE**

“ *But my God shall supply all your need .....*,” You see, whatever deficiency these believers may have had as a result of their sacrificial giving Paul now assures them that God would be the rewarder of such giving and that He would supply every need of theirs. Can you see,

#### **(a) THE SCOPE OF THIS PROMISE:**

“ *All your need,*” Not some of your need, not much of your need, not most of your need but all of your need.

“ *You need,*” not “ *your luxury,*” for this is not prosperity theology. “ *Every need of yours,*” What a fast field this covers. Needs of body, of mind, of spirit, for ourselves and for our families, for the present and for the future. Needs as parents, as children, as husbands, as wives, as citizens, as saints. Our needs are as many as our moments. When we can count the sands of the Sahara we may guess the number of our needs. From the cradle to the grave we re simply a bundle of needs. We have Material needs for food and clothing. ( Matt 6:32 ) Physical needs for health and strength. ( Lk 9:11 ) Personal needs for the Word and Prayer. ( Lk 11:1 ) Moral needs for pardon and cleansing ( Jn 13:10 ) Social needs for friends and fellowship ( 1 Cor 12:21 ) Intellectual needs for discernment and wisdom. ( James 1:5 ) Needs known and unknown, now and hereafter crowd in upon us in a thousand different ways. Who is sufficient for them ? God. (a)

#### **(b) THE SUFFICIENCY OF THIS PROMISE:**

Not just out of His wealth but according to His glorious riches. You see, if a multi-millionaire and I were walking down the high street together and we were approached by someone for money. Let’s suppose for a moment that both of us gave that man £50-00 each. Now it could be said that both of us gave him out of our riches and resources but that multi-millionaire did not gave him “ *according to his riches,*” for he could have given him £5000-00 and scarcely missed it. My .... is it possible to reckon the riches of God ? It seems that God has more than one

account. Well, there is (1) *The Riches of His Goodness:* ( Rom 2:4 ) (2) *The Riches of His Wisdom:* ( Rom 11:33 ) (3) *The Riches of His Grace:* ( Eph 1:7 ) (4) *The Riches of His Glory:* ( Eph 1:18 ) and He will meet our need in a manner that befits His wealth. The American pastor Wilbur Chapman had a family tragedy occur that made it necessary for him to travel to the West Coast. A banker who attended his church visited with him just before he left. As they talked, the banker took a piece of paper out of his pocket and slipped it into his pastor's hand. Chapman looked at it and saw that it was a blank check made out to him, signed by the banker. Momentarily stunned, he asked, " *Do you mean you are giving me a signed check to be filled out as I please ?* " " *Yes, exactly,*" said the banker. " *I don't know how much you might need, and I want you to draw any amount that will meet your need.*"

Chapman gratefully took the check, but he didn't need to use it on his trip. Later he commented, " *It gave me a comfortable, happy feeling to know that I had a vast sum at my disposal.*" Do you ever worry that you might be asking too much from the Lord ? It is not possible to do that. We are like children with a plastic bucket trying to drain the Atlantic Ocean. After we have done our best, the ocean is still there, untouched by our efforts. So it is with God. He will supply what we need not according to our resources, but according to His riches. (a) (b)

### ***(c) THE SECURITY OF THIS PROMISE:***

" *By Christ Jesus,*" ( 4:19 ) Or " *in Christ Jesus,*" for He

is the sphere in which the gracious provisions of God operate and are realised. ( 2 Cor 1:20 ) The expression " *in Christ,*" is a favourite with Paul and signifies union with Him by faith. If we are thus " *in Christ,*" this text is ours and while this promise remains we need not fear. For with Christ's signature on the promise it will be honoured on presentation without question. The story is told of a man who came over from New York some years ago. He threw himself down on the lounge in his house and said, " *Well, everything is gone.*" His family said to him, " *what do you mean ?*" " *Oh,*" he replied, " *we have had to suspend payment, our house has gone to pieces .... nothing is left.*" His little child bounded from the other side of the room and said, " *Daddy, you have me left.*" And his wife, who had been very sympathetic and helpful, came up and said, " *Well, my dear, you have me left.*"

And the old grandmother, seated in a corner of the room, put up her spectacles on her wrinkled forehead and said, " *My son, you have all the promises of God left.*" That business burst into tears and said, " *how ungrateful I am. I find that I have a great many things left. God forgive me.*" Oh, doubting, fearing, anxious soul you have all the promises of God left and left to you. I tell you the very character of God is bound up with them. And what is true of them all is true of this one in particular. Look at it once again. " ***But my God shall all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.***"

