

**Pastor Paul Bawden
Sunday, April 3, 2011
Communion Sunday
"Do I Really Trust God?"
Philippians 4:10-23**

Charles Blondin lived from 1824-1897 and was a famous French tight-rope walker and acrobat. His greatest fame came in 1859 when he accomplished one of his greatest feats for the first time walking a 1100 foot tight-rope suspended 160 feet above the waters of Niagra Falls. Blondin went on to walk across the falls several times each with a different theatrical flare, like blindfolded, in a sack, on stilts, carrying a man (his manager, Harry Colcord) on his back, sitting down midway while he cooked and ate an omelet and standing on a chair with only one chair leg on the rope.

On one such high-wire walk Blondin crossed over the falls pushing a wheelbarrow. When he reached the other side he asked the spectators if they believed he could do it again. Everyone cheered. Blondin then asked if they believed he could again cross the tight-rope with someone in the wheelbarrow. Everyone cheered believing that he could do it and wanting to see this incredible stunt. Blondin then asked for a volunteer to ride in the wheelbarrow. No one stepped forward.

It was one thing to believe Blondin could do what they had all seen him do, and another to put your life in his hands letting him push you across the falls on the high wire.

If you trust the biblical God, then you would get into God's wheelbarrow. Yes, since it's God's wheelbarrow, we need to get into the wheelbarrow with HIM.

So what does it mean to get in the wheelbarrow with the biblical God?

That's what this last section of the letter of Philippians is all about. Note, then, what it means to get into the wheelbarrow with the biblical God.

I. It means trusting God in the good times and not so good times (Philippians 4:10-13).

1. Paul's circumstances.

As Paul was in Roman prison (A.D. 61) he penned, "For I have learned to be content in whatever state or circumstance I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

In each of his circumstances, Paul was in the will of God. Even though he didn't have much at certain times in his life, that didn't mean that he was out of the will of God.

Lack is not necessarily a sign of God's disfavor, nor is having plenty a sign of God's approval.

2. Paul's secret.

How could Paul have such contentment regardless of what he was experiencing in the world as he served the Lord?

The word "contentment" means not being tied to external circumstances.

To whom was Paul tied or in whom was He trusting?

Philippians 4:13, one of the famous verses in the Bible gives us the answer.

"I can do (continually have the power) all things through Him (Christ) who continually strengthens me."

In the midst of the ups and downs of life in his physical/material life, Paul continually relied on the indwelling Christ for His strength.

That's why Paul, whether challenged, spiritually, physically, materially, or psychologically in his ministry, never let what he was experiencing be his focus.

II Corinthians 4:8-9 is one of my favorite passages of Scripture.

Paul wrote, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

I like Barclay's rendition of these verses:

"We are sore pressed at every point but not hemmed in."

That is there are all kinds of pressure on us, but we are never in so tight a corner that there is no way out..

"We are persecuted by men but never abandoned by God."

In the most difficult times, the believer's fellowship with God can be the sweetest."

"We are at our wits end but never at our hope's end."

There are times when the Christian does not know what is to be done, but even at such a time as that he never doubts that it is going somewhere.

"We are knocked down but not knocked out."

The supreme characteristic of the follower of Christ is that he does not fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is not that he is never beaten, but he is never ultimately defeated. He may lose a battle, but he knows in the end he can never lose the campaign.

In the midst of plenty and of lack. In the midst of extreme challenges in his spiritual life and in his ministry. Paul was in the wheelbarrow with Jesus Christ His Savior, Friend and Hope, and He stayed in the wheelbarrow with Christ. Christ was His LIFE.

What did Paul say in Philippians 1:21? "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

Being in the wheelbarrow with God means secondly,

II. It means a willingness to share what God provides to further God's kingdom and to help others in need. (Philippians 4:14-18).

The believer blessed by God shares his resources with those in the Lord's work and those who have various needs.

Why? The believer in the wheelbarrow with God, knows using the resources God has given Him to further God's kingdom, His church, is laying up treasures in heaven, and completing the ministry of Christ by touching those in need.

That's why Christ taught us to not lay up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break through and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-20).

But it is not just investing in God's church with a proportion of the monies God provides each of us, but also touching others in need.

I John 3:17 says that, "whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in Him."

Such also means using the spiritual gifts and talents God has given the believer in serving Him in the local church and seeking to reach out to others who need to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

One can't be a spectator in God's kingdom to be blessed. For it is more blessed to give than to receive – not just of one's resources to further God's church, but also to throw one's self into serving the Lord with the spiritual gift or gifts that God has given him.

Being in the wheelbarrow with God means something else.

III. It means trusting God to supply one's needs (Philippians 4:19).

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

God's riches in Christ are certainly unlimited.

The believer in Christ walking by faith continues to trust the Lord to supply his needs materially and in other ways as well. The follower of Christ understands that God is not just the source of his salvation blessings, but also the source of his material blessings as well. That doesn't mean that a person doesn't work expecting God to supply without any effort. But it means serving in concert with Christ, using His strength to fulfill the tasks and employment that the Lord provides. Sometimes, that means waiting on the Lord for His supply.

A man had sold his business and went into vocational work, and things got rather rough financially. There were four kids in the family. On night at family worship, Timmy, the youngest boy, said, "Daddy do you think Jesus would mind if I asked HIM for a shirt?"

"Well, no, of course not. Let's write that down in our request book, Mother."

So mother wrote down the request, "shirt for Timmy," and she added, "size seven."

Every day they prayed for a shirt for Timmy. One Saturday, after several weeks had passed by, the mother received a phone call from a clothier in downtown Dallas, a Christian businessman. "I've just finished my July clearance sale and knowing that you have 4 boys it occurred to me that you might use something we have left. Could you use some shirts?"

The mother asked, "What size?"

"Size seven," came the reply.

"How many do you have?" the mother asked hesitantly.

He said, "Twelve."

The parents didn't stuff the shirts in a dresser drawer. That night, as expected, Timmy said, "Don't forget, Mommy, let's pray for the shirt."

His mother told him, "We don't have to pray for the shirt, Timmy."

"How come?"

"The Lord has answered your prayer."

"He has."

"Right."

So as previously arranged, brother Tommy goes out and gets one shirt, and puts it down on the table. Little Timmy's eyes are like saucers. Tommy goes out and gets another shirt. Out and back, out and back until he piles 12 shirts on the table. And Timmy may be thinking that God is in the shirt business.

What a lesson to this little fellow that God can supply one's needs.

Another example is in a different setting.

The account has been told of a man who went to America some years ago with the captain of a steamer, who was a very devoted Christian. When off the coast of Newfoundland he said to me, "The last time I crossed here, five weeks ago, something happened which revolutionized the whole of my Christian life.

We had George Mueller of Bristol on board. I had been on the bridge twenty-four hours and never left it. George Mueller came to me, and said, "Captain I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec Saturday afternoon." "It is impossible," I said. "Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years. Let us go down into the chart-room and pray."

I looked at that man of God, and thought to myself, what lunatic asylum can that man have come from?

I never heard of such a thing as this. "Mr. Mueller," I said, "do you know how dense this fog is?" "No," he replied, "my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life."

He knelt down and prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he had finished I was going to pray; but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to pray. "First, you do not believe He will answer; and second I believe He has, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it."

I looked at him, and he said, "Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door, and you will find the fog gone." I got up, and the fog was indeed gone. On Saturday afternoon, George Mueller was in Quebec for his engagement.

Being in the wheelbarrow with God means something else.

IV. It means enjoying the fellowship of other believers in Christ (Philippians 4:21-22).

These are amazing verses. Certainly Paul remembers the wonderful fellowship he had with the Philippians believers, as they had come to know Christ personally and had grown in the Lord while he ministered there some 10 years earlier. At the same time, God had used Paul to be a witness to some in the Roman guard who had come to know Christ as personal Savior.

Those believers in Philippi and the believers in Rome were all one in Christ. They had the same relationship in Christ – being in one body, having the same Spirit, the same hope, the same Lord, same faith, same baptism, and same God and Father.

The relationships with other believers in Christ is an eternal relationship. We know we will be together some day in heaven with our Lord and others who have gone on before.

Someone was telling us this week that he become friends of some people who were apart of his ministry, some had come to know Christ through his ministry. They had not seen each other for a number of years, and then they were able to get together and renew acquaintances. He said they were just able to pick up where they had left off.

The body of Christ is only the Lord's design. How sweet it is to feel at home with other believers in Christ. To enjoy the fellowship with each other because the same Holy Spirit resides in each one.

Being in God's wheelbarrow with HIM has another meaning for us.

V. It means living in the reality that God's grace is always there for the follower of Christ (Philippians 4:23).

Paul told the Corinthian believers that it was only by the grace of God that he was what he was, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me **(I Corinthians 15:10).**

It's only because of God's grace that one can become a believer in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).

"For by grace are you saved through faith, and not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works, let anyone could boast."

It's only through God's grace that we can grow in God's grace- Peter puts it – continually grow in grace and the knowledge of God (II Peter 3:18). Yes, God's grace is sufficient for every need.

God's grace, is His unmerited favor given to us through faith in Him so that we can live in the sphere of his unmerited favor.

And who is made grace to us? None other than Jesus Christ – For grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

So growing in God's grace, His unmerited favor, is really growing in Christ, using His spiritual mind that He has given us in the new nature we have by believing in Christ.

- That's why Paul told the Philippians living in God's grace to use the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11).
- Living in God's grace the believer has a submissive mind to the Lordship of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11).
- Living in God's grace the believer using the mind of Christ engages in prayer to God (Philippians 1:8-11).
- Living in God's grace the believer stands on the true gospel of Christ and His unchanging Word, maintaining unity with other believers (Philippians 1:27).
- Living in God's grace the believer lives a pure life in the power of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:15).
- Living in God's grace the believer has a heart for touching those in need (Philippians 2:19-30).
- Living in God's grace the believer continues to build on the past and go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit with his eyes on the goal, Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:5-14).
- Living in God's grace the believer keeps short accounts and has a forgiving spirit (Philippians 4:1-3).
- Living in God's grace the believer finds his satisfaction in the Lord, and peace with Him through prayer (Philippians 4:4-9).
- Living in God's grace the believer finds his Savior more than adequate for his every need (Philippians 4:10-13).
- Living in God's grace the believer is always looking for the any time return of His Lord (Philippians 3:20-21).

As Paul began his letter to the Philippians and to us with GRACE (GRACE TO YOU – 1:2), Paul ends his contemporary letter with GRACE.

The believer can never get away from God's grace, and why would he want to in the first place.

But sometimes the believer disobeys the Lord. At that time, God's grace never ceases for the believer. God's grace is always there even when the believer sins. That is what I John 1:9 is all about. Why can God forgive us when we confess our sin to Him? Only because of HIS GRACE.

The Lord never quits loving us when we disobey Him. **His love for us should cause us to run to the Lord, not run away from Lord when we disobey Him. He is always there.**

That's what this table is all about this morning. GOD'S GRACE IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR THE SINNER OUTSIDE OF CHRIST.

GOD'S GRACE IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR THE BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST FOR DAILY FELLOWSHIP, AND WHEN ONE SINS AGAINST THE LORD.

THAT'S WHY IT IS MARVELOUS GRACE, AMAZING GRACE, VARIEGATED GRACE, AND UNLIMITED GRACE.

Finally being in God's wheelbarrow with Him has one more meaning.

VI. It means giving God the glory for His daily grace and supply of all the believer's needs (Philippians 4:20).

"Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (Philippians 4:20).

Paul knows that the biblical God is the source of all he receives whether directly through the gift of the Philippians or indirectly, through other means.

He knows that what is happening in his life is not of him, but it is of God. God uses different people to make this happen. They should receive thanks as Paul is doing here.

But it is God who receives the ultimate honor, and worship – For He is the one who sovereignly makes it happen and is the source of it all.

It is God who is working in us to accomplish His will for our good and His glory. It is not of us, it is of Him although we work in concert with Him by taking Him at His Word and acting upon it.

That's what our year verse is all about.

"For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:14)

As we let God work in us, living by faith in HIM, we enjoy living with Him in His wheelbarrow. Come what may, we can trust Him in the good times and the difficult times. The Lord in His grace is always THERE. **YHWH-Shammah (Adonai-shammah) The LORD is there!!**

As we partake of these elements this morning, may it be a living testimony that we are people of faith. Yes, we have our challenges, and we sometimes let the Lord down through our unbelief and different sins, but God's grace is greater than all of that as we confess our sin. Then He encourages us by the indwelling Holy Spirit to continue living by faith in the Lord in His wheelbarrow for HIS glory!

Let's give HIM praise!!!!