

My God shall supply all your need

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[0 : 00] Philippians chapter 4 Philippians chapter 4 and verse 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Notice what we call personal pronouns here. In fact, possessive personal pronouns. My God, your needs, his riches.

My God, your needs, his riches. Christianity is a very personal religion in that it involves a personal knowledge of a personal God.

Now in this, perhaps the most personal and intensely personal of Paul's letters, it's no surprise that Paul speaks in such intensively personal terms.

He knew and loved those people in Philippi. We noticed at the beginning of our study of this letter that he thanked God for every time he remembered them. He thanked God for their fellowship, for their sharing, their partnership in the gospel from the first day until then.

[1 : 29] And it's no surprise that he speaks to them in this very personal way. My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Now the context of this verse is, of course, Paul's thanking the Philippians for their support, for the fact that they actually sent money.

And they had been doing this again and again for a long time. In fact, at one particular stage, he says, in the early days of their acquaintance with the gospel, they were the only church who sent him monetary support.

And he knows very well that those Christians in Philippi are not a particularly rich community. He knows that it was sacrificial giving. And so he is prompted to give this wonderful promise.

Remember, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This wasn't just his own personal opinion. This was an authoritative word from God. My God will meet all your needs.

[2 : 37] You see, the Philippians might have been thinking, well, we're sending money again and again to Paul. How are we going to meet our needs? How are we going to pay our bills? For all the expenses we have to face up to in our personal lives and in our congregation.

But Paul wants to assure them and to encourage them. My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. This then would be their reward for their giving, for their generosity.

No doubt they gave without any thought of a reward. They gave because they loved Paul, because they loved God. They wanted to support Paul in his ministry of spreading the gospel. And probably without any thought of any reward, they gave.

But Paul assures them that what they have done will not go unrewarded. Because God sees and knows. In fact, he goes as far as to say in the previous verse, verse 18.

They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Now, isn't that wonderful? Those Philippians gathering their few resources together, sending all that they could afford for the support of Paul.

[3 : 48] And possibly they thought it wasn't very much. Perhaps they were even ashamed to send so little. And yet, Paul is so thankful. And he not only encourages them and assures them, but he actually gives them this assurance that what they had given was the equivalent to a sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Not, of course, that it was the kind of sacrifice that would lead to forgiveness of sins. Rather, it was in the form of a thanksgiving offering. It was in the form of a praise offering. And Paul said, they are like a fragrant offering, acceptable to God, pleasing to God.

Because of that, God will meet all your needs. Now, we, of course, are often tempted to wonder what will happen in the future. There are stages in our lives we are faced with that question.

Perhaps we are faced with financial problems. Perhaps we are faced with other kinds of problems. And certainly, as a congregation at the present, you are faced with a vacancy, a time of uncertainty, a time without a settled ministry.

And you are wondering, well, how will our needs be met? I would like to bring this message to you this evening, on the basis of this promise of God given through Paul the Apostle.

[5 : 04] My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Notice, first of all, in this text, Paul's personal experience.

He doesn't just say, God will meet all your needs. But, my God will meet all your needs. My God. Now, how could Paul be so possessive of God?

My God. Now, of course, he didn't mean that he is only Paul's God. He didn't mean that he was Paul's own personal God in the sense that Paul had made him, made this God in his own image. Of course not. Paul knew God to be far greater than that. He was the God who had made the universe. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, Paul had experienced this God in his own life.

And so he was able to say, he is my God. Way back in the Old Testament, God had promised to Abraham that he and his descendants would be his people.

[6 : 07] I will be your God, and you will be my people. You see, God does this possessive attitude toward his own people. I will be your God, you can call me.

Your God, you can say, my God, our God. And you will be my people. That's the kind of knowledge that God wants us to have of him. A personal knowledge, a personal experience.

And this is what Paul had. He was able to say, my God, because I have experienced him in my life. Now, there are many ways, of course, in which Paul experienced God.

He experienced him, as we were thinking this morning, on the Damascus Road, when he met the risen Christ. When Paul, the self-righteous, proud Pharisee, was humbled and thrown to the ground and made to see that he had nothing of himself to bring to God.

Helpless, he had to cling to the cross of Christ. But what Paul is particularly highlighting here in his knowledge of God, his experience of God, is God's supply of his need.

[7 : 11] That is why he was able to assure the Philippians that God would meet their needs. Why? Because Paul had experienced it in his own life. Look at verse 11. I'm not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am found.

He had contentment. And that's a great gift. That was his knowledge of God. He was content, whatever the outward circumstances, because he knew his God. He was the one constant in Paul's life.

And whether Paul was being shipwrecked or a night and a day in the open sea, whether he was being flogged by the Jews or by the Romans, he was content. Why? Because he knew he was doing God's will.

He was trusting in God. He was relying on God, the God who gave him strength. And so he had contentment. He knew what it was to be in need. He knew what it was to have plenty. And when he had plenty, he didn't become proud, self-sufficient, complacent, and lazy.

No. And when he was in need, he didn't grumble or complain. He was content because he knew his God. I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether welfare or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

[8 : 28] That was his secret. He had contentment in his God. Why? Because God gave him the capability to be so. Verse 13.

I can do everything. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, through him who gives me strength. This was how Paul was able to give this assurance to the Philippians.

My God, because I know him, he gives me contentment whatever the outward circumstances, whatever way I'm feeling on a particular day, whatever the pressure is upon me, and Paul had plenty of pressure and stress upon him.

At one stage he said, the care of all the churches is upon me. If some weak believer falls into sin, he said, it hurts me. Yet he could say, I am content in whatever circumstances, because I can do all things through him who gives me strength.

Contentment and capability came from his knowledge, his experience of God. And so he was able to assure those Philippians, my God, whom I know, has supplied all my needs and he will supply yours.

[9 : 37] Can you give that kind of assurance to other people, if you are a believer? Have you experienced God as the God who is with you in every situation? However difficult it may be, however challenging, however despairing sometimes that situation may be.

I'm not minimizing that kind of situation. Some of us perhaps have gone through darker times than others, but God is able to help us in every situation. Paul knew that in his own experience.

And then towards the end of his life, in probably what was his last letter, 2 Timothy, he could say quite happily, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

Looking back over that long and eventful life, he didn't glory in his own strength, but he knew that it was through his God that he had been able to accomplish what he had been able to accomplish.

And he looked forward to that death, knowing that for him to depart and to be with Christ would be gain indeed for him, would be far better.

My God. Can you say that God is my God, you God? It's one thing to believe in God, that there is a God, but the Bible tells us even the devil believes that, and he trembles.

[10 : 53] Can you say God is my God, the God and Father of my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? See, that was the only way that Paul was able to call God my God.

No doubt before his Damascus Road experience, he thought God was his God, but then suddenly he realized that all his effort, all the life he'd been spending as a Pharisee, as a self-righteous Pharisee, was of no avail.

It's only when he came to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in his death for him on Calvary, that he was able to say, God is my God, he has forgiven my sin, I am a new creature in him, a man in Christ.

So then, personal experience, my God. Secondly, we have here a personal concern, your needs. My God will meet all your needs. Isn't that wonderful? Paul was a busy man, he had the care of all the churches upon him, and no doubt he was sometimes wondering where his next meal would be coming from, and yet he is concerned for the needs of others.

[11 : 58] My God will meet all your needs. Paul knew that those Philippians had needs, and he cared. He prayed for them that God would meet all those needs.

Now, do we have that kind of concern for other people's needs? Oh yes, we're so worried about our own needs, but are we worried about others' needs? That is what concerned Paul at this time.

My God, he could have said, we'll meet my needs, but no, he says, my God will meet your needs. What are some of the needs that people have, that both we have and others have?

Well, first of all, there are just the ordinary physical and material needs of everyday living. And yet we know that much as these things are important in our own lives, yet we know that for many, these things are even more important.

The poor, the weak, the disabled, those who are the outcasts of society, perhaps. Do we think of those people's needs? Now, it's one thing to be concerned about their needs, and perhaps pray that God will meet their needs, but it's quite another thing to realize that it is often through us that God will meet those people's needs, whatever they may be.

[13 : 15] If we are really concerned about the need of the poor and of the dispossessed, then we should be asking God to show us ways that we can meet that need. Often we find that when we pray to God for him to do something, the answer comes back, you go and do it, and he will give us the grace, the strength, the capability to do that.

There may be physical, material needs. There may be mental and emotional, think of the lonely, those who are underprivileged in various ways, perhaps those who are of a lesser mental capacity, those who perhaps through depression or through their mind failing, those are the kind of people that we should be thinking about, their needs.

How can we meet those needs? Yes, it's all very well to say piously, well, God will meet their needs. As I say, we must ask God that he will show us the way in which we may help to meet those needs.

There are other needs also, like social needs. We think even of those in our own country who are homeless, or who are unemployed, deprived in various ways, those who are socially deprived.

And of course, there are the many throughout the world who are even much worse off than that.

Those suffering from war, displacement, those who are refugees, those suffering from AIDS and from other dreadful diseases.

[14 : 41] These are some of the needs that we see around us. Oh yes, we've got our needs, but there are those around us who have much worse needs than we have. Can we say, my God will meet all these needs?

Then of course, there are the greatest needs of all, the spiritual needs. What are these needs? Well, first of all, the need to hear the gospel, the gospel of God's love and forgiveness in the Lord Jesus, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Paul knew that those Philippians' need had been met in that sense. They were believers. And so he was able to assure them that God would meet all their needs in Christ.

But as we think of the needy people around us, are we praying that their need, their spiritual need will be met through Christ Jesus? But it's not only those who are unbelievers who have spiritual needs.

We all have spiritual needs, perhaps unmet spiritual needs. Perhaps we have the need for strength, for courage, for perseverance, for fellowship in the gospel.

[15 : 49] Are we looking to see what people's needs are and those round about us? If we're not conscious of the needs, then we won't be praying that God will meet those needs. We won't be looking for ways in which we can be used by him to meet those needs.

Let us become more aware of people's needs. As I say, it's so easy to concentrate on our own needs, to have all our needs met, all our wants, all our desires. Well, God has promised to meet our needs.

He doesn't promise to fulfill every particular desire, because often our desires are selfish, sinful, proud. But if we lay our lives before him and ask him to meet our genuine needs, both physical, mental, social, spiritual, he will meet those needs.

But let us be more aware, more concerned for the needs of others. Paul, the great apostle, was. And so he was able to speak to those Philippians and assure them, my God, whom I know in my own life, who has met all my needs, will meet all your needs.

And I think that definitely there's the hint there that if God meets their needs, then they will continue to go on to meet other people's needs. As they supplied Paul in the past, so they will be able to supply others in the future.

[17 : 08] That is the challenge then of the first two parts of this verse. Do we have this personal experience of God as my God? And do we have this personal concern for other people's needs?

Seeing them as needy people whose needs can be met in Christ. But thirdly, we have here a personal sufficiency.

And this sufficiency is not of Paul, not of the Philippians, but of God himself. My God will meet all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

His riches. These are the resources. The cattle on a thousand hills are his. He owns everything. All we have, all we have, depends on him.

He is the source of every good thing. And so Paul was able to say confidently, My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches. Now there are three aspects to these glorious riches I want to highlight for you now.

[18 : 16] First of all, there are the boundless resources. Literally it is his riches in glory. Now we know there are many rich people in the world.

Many who have in our eyes perhaps endless riches and yet they pale into insignificance with the riches that belong to God. They have his riches in glory. And that word glory speaks of the eternal weight of God.

That he is from everlasting to everlasting. That he is the creator, that he has created all things by the word of his power. That he keeps everything in motion, everything in existence simply by his word.

And yet he, despite all these outward things where we see his power and his glory, he is hidden in light and approachable. There is riches in glory. And that glory is something that is often hid from us.

But the wonderful thing is that the glory has been revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ. That's where we see the glory of God in the world. Yes, we see it partly in the creation, in the wonderful wisdom of God which is apparent there.

[19 : 28] But we see his glory most of all in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. And these riches in glory are boundless, far beyond our imagining.

They are riches in glory, glorious riches as the NIV puts it. and these boundless resources are available to us in an abundant supply.

It is one thing having abundant resources. Now, there are many resources in the earth, on this planet earth, many of which we are just discovering. And no doubt there are many more to be discovered as the ocean depths are explored.

But think of the great reservoir of oil beneath the North Sea which is never thought of until recently. Boundless resources. Only recently the technology has become available to tap those resources. But these resources that are with God in his glory hidden from us are available to us. Because Paul says, my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches.

[20 : 39] He meets them out of his glorious riches and he meets them according to the measure of that riches. Now you might say, wouldn't it be enough just to meet our needs according to our needs?

Of course, in a certain sense, that is true. God meets our needs according to our particular need at the time. But the wonderful thing is that he meets our needs far beyond our needs or our expectations.

Our expectations are often too small. I said earlier that sometimes our desires are wrong. But if we humbly bow to him and ask for him to meet our real needs, then we have a much more abundant supply than we could have dreamed of.

Remember when Solomon was told by God, ask of me anything and I'll give it to you. And Solomon asked for wisdom. And God said, because you've just asked for wisdom and you haven't asked for riches and glory and honor, I'll give you wisdom but I'll also give you riches and glory and honor. See, that's the way God meets our needs, beyond our expectation, beyond our asking. He will meet our needs according to his glorious riches, according to the measure of those riches, according to the nature of those riches.

[21 : 52] All those needs which we have, we can classify them as I've tried to do, mental and physical and social and spiritual. It doesn't matter to him, he can meet all those needs out of his glorious riches and according to the measure of his riches.

A boundless resource, abundant supply, and they are available to us in Christ Jesus. My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

It is through Christ Jesus that all blessings come to us. it is only as we are in him by faith that we experience those resources made available to us.

Remember when Paul tells us about that thorn in the flesh which he had, we don't know its nature whether it was a physical illness as I think it probably was or some other affliction. He asked the Lord three times that it would be taken from him.

And you know he would have been pleading God you have given us promise what the Lord Jesus said whatever you ask in my name I will do it. Now God remove this thorn from me. What is the answer? There was certainly an answer.

[23 : 01] The answer was my grace is sufficient for you. That is the Lord Jesus speaking to Paul. He said my grace is sufficient for you. And Paul stopped asking for that thorn to be removed because the answer was much more wonderful than he could have imagined.

My grace is sufficient ample abundant for you. The grace to stand up to whatever affliction that was to endure it, to conquer it, yes and to witness to God's saving and keeping power that others would be one for Christ.

Available to us in Christ all those resources to meet out every need. Paul thought that his need was complete deliverance from that affliction whatever it was.

But God knew that his real need was for sustaining grace. And for many years Paul labelled on, perhaps still having that thorn in the flesh and he was able to overcome it and be greatly used in God's service.

Now we began by saying that Christianity is a personal religion and that's very much to the foe here, isn't it? My God will meet your needs according to his glorious riches.

[24 : 16] Now the link between these three, my God, your needs, his riches, the link is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is through him that we come to know God as my God.

It is through him that all our needs are met. It is through him that those glorious riches are made available to us and applied to us. Have you come to know Christ as your personal savior?

He's available, he is inviting you to come to him now. And if you have already done so, then be assured of this, that God, who is my God and your God, will meet your every need, according to his glorious riches, in Christ Jesus.

May each one of us then be in Christ, and may we go on being in Christ, members of him, members one of another. Now although in a few days' time we will be physically separated from you, we will not be separated from the family, from the body of Christ.

We will be able to keep in contact as we pray for one another. Think of how often Paul in his letters says, I'm praying for you, and he gives his examples of the kind of prayers that he prays for them.

[25 : 36] He bore them constantly upon his heart, and thus he was able to write in this personal way to them, my God will meet your needs. Let's continue, as a people and as a pastor now going to be separated from you, continue in this attitude of prayer before God, praying that God would meet each other's needs.

Let's continue to be in Christ, looking to him to supply not only our needs, but the needs of others. Let's pray. O Lord, our gracious God and Father, we give thanks that in the Lord Jesus Christ we are not only new creatures and brought into your family, but we are also made heir to all the glorious riches that are in him.

O Lord, our God, help us then to experience those riches even now, as we desire not only our physical and mental and social needs to be met, but most of all that our spiritual needs will be met for forgiveness, for cleansing, for new life, for strength, for courage, for perseverance, for love, and for commitment to him who died and rose again for us.

O Lord, our God, help us then, we pray, to look to him day by day, that he would supply our needs, and through us, to supply the needs of countless others. In his name we pray. Amen.