

## Philippians 4:10-19 Sunday 6th July 2025: Notes

*Notes made during preparation for talk given at Main Street Community Church, Frodsham, UK.  
This document contains a lot more than was actually given, much of which might be helpful.*

The actual talk given on 6 July 2025 is available, with visuals, on Youtube at:

["https://youtu.be/ULt0ZJvNmOE?si=0A-Z1LHmL1jw\\_hKA"](https://youtu.be/ULt0ZJvNmOE?si=0A-Z1LHmL1jw_hKA)

# Read Phil. 4:11-12.

# How I read the Bible: I look underneath the words to sense the 'heart' of the writer.

# So I ask, "What does Paul value about the Philippians' gift?"

# And I find: Not so much the material value but that it shows their love and their dedication to God. I think this can inform us what a 'Christian' or Biblical view of money and economics might be.

# As some of you know, who are on the prayer chain, a colleague and I went to the Heterodox Economics conference a couple of weeks ago and presented a paper there on Good and Harm in economics. A group of us are generating a foundation for rethinking economics, informed closely by Biblical principles. So I might go through a little of this later.

### --- God is Faithful

# I also find verse 19:

"But my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" [NIV].

This tells us something of Paul's trust in God. It also tells us something about economics: our attitude and motivation in economic activity, which I will return to later.

# I also find verse 4:

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

Rejoice when? When things are going swimmingly and well? Yes. But also when things are not. When things are dreich, are bitter, are worrisome, are miserable, are mourning. Not to suppress those things. We do need to mourn. But not worry, nor let bitterness seep into our soul making us angry. Why? Because God is faithful.

# Matthew 6:32-33

"For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow ..."

# George Muller found this throughout his life as he ran an orphanage in Bristol, under God's leadership. He trusted God to supply all his needs and know what those needs are. The famous incident, which I think I have read here before, was at breakfast one day, with 300 young mouths to feed and no food at all in the place. They sat down to breakfast and gave thanks as usual. And then a knock on the door. A baker had felt in the middle of the night God telling him to bake bread for the orphanage. Another knock at the door. A milkman's cart had broken down just outside so would they like that milk he had, which he could not now deliver.

# The Psalmist, 37:25, says

"I was young and now am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread."

God is faithful.

# But what are needs? Of course the bare necessities like food and shelter.

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” I Timothy 6:8

# God might not give us ease, but he supplies all our needs.

# However, Phil 4:19: “But my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” [NIV] The Greek word for meet all your needs is “<b>fully satisfy</b>”.

# God “fully satisfies” not just those bare necessities, but lots more. In Muller’s case, and that of the orphans, what else was supplied by the incident?

Joy, thanks, increase in trust and faith. The most valuable things in life. Possibly also aesthetics of great-tasting fresh bread.

# God also supplies our needs of justice, love, enjoyment, friendships and solitariness, communication, the thrill of achieving things, clarity of thought, and much more. Not maybe prominent every time, but throughout our days and lives, these ‘needs’ are fully satisfied if we let ourselves trust God.

# Such that, when we look back, we would have had it any other way.

# When I am depressed I find myself thinking “It’s my fault” or even at the back of my mind “Has God let me down?” I check my expectations and aspirations or hopes - maybe it is that those were wrong. Did I let my wishes become wants and wants become needs that I have a right to? Is that why I feel angry about my situation?

# God satisfies every aspect of my life, though not always in the way I wish or expect. But looking back I see “I would not have had it any other way.”

### --- Economics

# Now let me explain a bit about our work in economics, because I will ask you for your support and prayers.

# But I will also indicate how I try to live accordingly. Maybe some of you will find it useful too.

# We are trying to see what the Bible as a whole tells us about God’s desire and intention for economics and how we engage in economic activity. I want to get the picture the Scripture as a whole gives us, not just that of one or two verses - its attitude and beliefs.

# Whereas many Christians argue about whether socialist or capitalist economics are more ‘christian’, we go much deeper than either. We are constructing a foundation for rethinking economics. It has five pillars.

# I am talking about economics in practice day by day, and also about economics theory as it is taught and researched at university. And at all levels of economic activity: individuals, companies, governments.

# The Bible can give us wisdom about all these.

### --- Five Pillars upon which Economics is Built

“You cannot serve God and Mammon”

I won’t tell you a lot. But I believe the Bible indicates five major things.

### --- Summary

1. What is economics for? Meaning, mandate?

» The world: Always-increasing prosperity for us; economic growth

» The Bible: To enable humanity to bring Good frugally

2. What is value?
  - » The world: Price
  - » The Bible: Many kinds, some unpricable. Unpaid work is of value. The Poor Widow
3. How do we understand economic activity?
  - » The world: Self-interested Rational Economic Actor; competition
  - » The Bible: Multiple aspects, including honesty. Heart as attitude and mindset.
4. Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity?
  - » The world: Lump all together, as GDP
  - » The Bible: Go for Good, Hinder Harm, Curb Useless
5. Money etc.
  - » The world: Money is mine, mine, to get as much as I can
  - » The Bible: Money flows so people can bring Good. Does not matter whether in my pocket, my neighbour's or the governments'.

### --- In more detail

#### 1. What is economics for?

# Why did God weave into the fabric of Creation the very possibility of economics, of functioning economically? What is economics for (in God's intention)?

# **The world** presupposes economics is there to provide us with always more prosperity: "Economic growth".

- » Economics has become an idol. Do NOT be deceived by economic growth.
- » Bob Goudzwaard 1984 "Idols of Our Time".

(Growth for impoverished countries, but not for those with ecological footprint greater than 1.0.)

# **The Bible** indicates what the meaning and mandate of economics is, if we look at the whole.

- » It is to enable us - and humankind at all levels - to treat things we use or consume as resource with value and hence frugally, carefully, to generate Good on Earth.
- » Beginning: Genesis 1:26-28, Gen 2:15: tend and care for ("shepherd") the Creation. God's intention and glory is that it is "very good" - works together as it should.
- » Middle: If God prospers you, then you can give or lend to others, not keep it for yourself or spend it on yourselves, except for the minimum. Eph 4:28 on why people should work:
  - » "He who has been stealing must steal no longer but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, *that he may have something to share with those in need.*"
  - » The Wonderful Wife (Proverbs 31). And many more.
- » End: Revelation 21:24-27: the world will be working so well together that its 'glory' will be brought into the Holy City.

#### 2. What is value?

# **The World:** Money; "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing"

# **The Bible:** Other than money

- » The Poor Widow. Mark 12:41-43

“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowds putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on.’”

- » The gift the Philippians sent, its real value was Love and faith. Attitude and dedication.
- » Unpaid household work is of true value. Often better than the paid equivalent (though one can never be certain of that).
- » I try not to **price-compare**, but compare on other criteria
  - **Organic:** worth spending the extra on as a **kind of donation** to those who are trying to look after the natural world and contribute to healthy food, away from junk food.
  - I ask myself, “What else would I do with the money that I save by buying the cheapest?” Or am I doing so because I fear not having enough? Can I trust my heavenly Father to know my needs? - Those here who have not much money. I do not know whether what I say applies to you or not. But maybe try it out and see if it works.
  - The period when we had little money: I challenged to give more than my tithe - and never had money problems since.

### 3. How and why does economic activity occur?

#### # The World:

- » Self-interested rational economic actor
    - competition (CSL Philosophy of Hell)
    - rational: only what can be measured, usually by money, ignoring harm done, or company culture, etc.
- e.g. Horizon Scandal - led by a Christian!!  
 “The chief duty of business is to increase owner value” - No! do Good  
 “To make and keep customers” - No! Rather, to SERVE customers nor to help customers increase Good.

#### # The Bible:

- » Governed by e.g. honesty and generosity. e.g. honest scales.
- » Generosity for the other
  - JD Vance is TOTALLY wrong to say our duty is to ourselves first as extending circles; his idea comes mainly from a single verse which I believe was a reaction, a correction, against a particular distorted practice that had grown up in one church.
- » Importance of attitude and mindset.
- » Trusting God - as Paul did, and George Muller did.

### 4. Good, Harmful and Useless economic activity.

#### # The World: Treats harmful and useless economic activity as Good.

- » Has no critique of ‘demand’ nor ‘supply’.
- » Even though they do a lot of damage.  
What about spending on pleasures?
- » GDP is sum of all money-transactions:
  - whether Good or Harmful or Useless
 Should subtract Harm and ignore Useless.  
 Countries with negative GDP?

# **The Bible:**

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”

“Contentment with godliness is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out of it”

Those are not rules, commands but speak of attitudes we have.

# I try to Go for Good, Hinder the Harmful and Curb the Useless economic activity,

**5. The nature of things (money, firms, etc.)?**

# **The World:** Treats money as ‘mine’

» and that it is something that it is good to get as much of as possible.

# **The Bible:**

» Money is flow.

» I try to treat money not as ‘mine’ but available to me to bring Good.

- “What have you that you did not receive?”

» THEREFORE it does not matter whether mine, somebody else’s or the government’s - just as long as it is use to bring Good.

- “Treat neighbour as self” - Would that money be better in her/his pocket than in mine?

» e.g. Giving to beggars, or to charities.

» Taxes. “An honour” [Rory K.].

- “Pay Caesar what is Caesar’s and God what is God’s” - was not primarily a command for all economic life, but rather was to put money and tax in their proper place, and to challenge the attitude of those who tried to trick Jesus.

- “Let Caesar have his toys; the important thing is God.”

» Jesus’ attitude to money:

“Foxes have holes, birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

The paying of the Temple Tax.

# Firms, companies: never sacrosanct. Yet their survival then their competitive place in the league table is their overriding concern.

» Wrong views of these lead to much harm. e.g. the gambling industry.

**--- Ending**

# **Sandcastles.** Parent builds for child, then child with parent, then parent builds with child, then parent stands aside and watches while child builds and guides. In the same way, our Heavenly Father deals with us, each one. Some He does things for us. Some he helps us. Some he watches over. Different things for different areas of life. Not preaching a dependency culture, but rather one of trust in and working with our Heavenly Father so that He can bring blessing into Creation (including other people) through us. This is a training ground for the next life.

# I wuld value your prayers for this work. Thank you.

Andrew Basden

5 July 2025