

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 19th November 2023 10 am

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 1086 Light of the world you came down

Scripture Psalm 148 (page 633)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk Fire exit in different languages, Ezra Q

Chorus MP 545 Open our eyes Lord

MP 6 Ah Lord God

Notices Members meeting, Minibus clean, LCM Tony Crusaders,
Thomas Brooks

Wycliffe Missionary Focus

Prayer and share time.

Reading Matthew 25:31-46 (page 995)

Phil 4:10-20 (page 1181)

Hymn MP 889 More about Jesus would I know

Sermon: Concerned? How much?

Hymn 501 O Jesus I have promised (3:41)

Closing Prayer - Hebrews 13 Doxology

[Sermon Index Database](#)

Prayer and Exordium

- There is Age Concern, there is Pain Concern, there is a company called Concern Wadebridge for over 50s, there's an organisation called Concern Worldwide.
- 'Concern' is an oft used word - There are plenty of government agencies who would like to hear from you if you are concerned about a child or family. Note: that is concerned 'about' rather than concerned 'for' !

I wonder what changed when you became a Christian? I trust there was much. One area is that of 'concern' x2 – we all have concern - but for me a concern for self – has now become a concern for others. And so I trust for you too.

When a life is lived under the Lordship of Christ then his promises to love and care for you are wonderfully enacted. The Lord is your good shepherd, and a good shepherd cares for his sheep, Jesus is concerned for each one, for me, so that now I am freed to have concern for others.

If 'concern' is something we all have, the question is who is it for?

That is what we are going to be considering this morning. Paul writes to Christians in Philippi 10 **I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern - for me x2. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.**

This concern is 'from - to – for', from the Lord – to His people – For the Lord - and His Glory. from - to – for. They are our three headings this morning.

While our passage starts at v10. Paul quickly digresses and speaks about his contentment in whatever the Lord brings to him. v11-13

Having learned to become content with less, when we go without – as we should be it would be easy for Paul to give the impression that he didn't need help.

That is why Paul looks back and says in v14 **Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles**. - he didn't want it to appear a snub to their concern for him.

⇒ In other words when someone sees you in need and sent a gift what you don't say is, "no problem I was fine without it"!

So firstly where is Concern 'from' ?

In v10 we see 'Concern' mentioned twice, The Christians at Philippi had a concern for Paul - something he **greatly rejoiced in**.

But he says: **I rejoice greatly in the Lord** x2- he is not thanking the Lord for the goodness of human nature! No, he recognizes the grace given to them from **the**

Lord. He knows that love for others, that heartfelt concern for another, is the fruit of the Lord's grace in a person's life.

Christ pours his love into the hearts of His people – so that like a **fountain filling a trough** it may then be poured out to others. I do not naturally have love in my heart – only what Christ has put in. That is why love is the mark of faith for it is a sign of the indwelling Spirit of God, the God who is love. That is how we can tell who is in the Kingdom of God and who isn't.

The man without the Spirit of Jesus is still living to please his own nature, the one we all have in Adam. And this is a nature deeply hostile to God and hostile to our fellow man. It is only God's common grace that enables the worldly man or woman to live their life with some order and kindness towards each other. Yet beneath all that lurks Cain's "**Am I my brother's keeper**" - a chilling phrase that has reverberated down through the centuries – and is ingrained in us all.

Love, Grace and deepfelt concern for others is the fruit of the Spirit of God.

⇒ **And as the fruit of His Spirit within a believer - it is from the Lord, x2**

And it's to - or towards the Lord's people

The church at Philippi were particularly affected when they heard that Paul had been thrown into prison. It raised all sorts of questions for them, some of which Paul addresses earlier in the letter.

The church had followed Paul's progress and seeing his needs and the troubles the Lord had led him through – had given them a genuine concern for him.

1. A concern is not just being aware of a need
2. A concern is not just taking an interest in it
3. A concern is a heart desiring to act, to intervene, to help that person.

The word is concern' here is 5426 'phroneo' and translated 'Care' in the AV which means to think or have regard or be mindful of another. It means to feel and direct one's mind, to seek or strive to help another.

We can see more than once in this passage it is called a **gift** x2, to meet a need.

⇒ **How like God that is - who in seeing our need made a gift, the gift of His Son, the truly great gift - to meet our truly great need.**

GOSPEL here. God's concern – our concern.

The Christians in Philippi put their faith into practice. It showed in their concern to look after Paul who had brought the gospel to them. They not only

looked after Paul when he was with them – but continued to do so when he departed - they sent aid after him on his journeyings.

Paul commends them saying **15 in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;**

He travelled from town to town, in the next town we are told **16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.**

⇒ **But then, somehow the help stopped, that was it.**

The same thing had happened in the church in Corinth to whom Paul says: **Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, x2!!**

- **Nor must we - like HS2 start something and not finish it, or do so years later.**

At Corinth they had started to give – but Paul had to tell them to get on and finish it saying: **finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.**" 2 Co 9:4-5

..... so that your eager willingness to do it - may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable 2Co 8:10-14

So Corinthians you talked about it, get on with it, get it off the drawing board and do it - **6 So bring .. to completion this act of grace on your part."**

Paul said to the church the Lord has blessed you with so much **7.. see that you also excel in this grace of giving.** Is that what is missing here? the grace of giving? That's a challenge to me. Is it also to you? Are we not as a church able to give more than we do??

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

He's our example, the Lord gave up everything he didn't linger, or ponder, or give up, or go back - but gave himself completely - and finished the work.

How often is there an immediate interest, we have an immediate concern - but then it is never followed through?

- **At the end of a missionary meeting there's interest – but look at the unused boxes - Missionary interest soon fades**

That is one of the reasons why we have a Missionary Secretary.

- We say to BCM trainees that there should be people in their home churches to constantly highlight their cause – for interest and concern so easily wanes.

Children are taught, or used to be taught to persevere, to finish what they start. Beware of a good desire that doesn't translate into action.

Paul certainly had seen the Lord's people desert him in his time of need – **At my first defence, no-one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength,** 1 Tim 4:16,17

David says in Ps 142 **Look to my right and see; no-one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no-one cares for my life.** Ps142:4

⇒ I wonder how many Christians around the world feel that – right now

Indeed, you have been concerned, Paul says, their concern had been there - it had been genuine, they had helped - but they didn't keep it up, it fizzled out. People do not survive on the good intentions of others, people are not saved on the good intentions of others. Don't let a desire to act fizzle away.

Why was there '**no opportunity**' to show it. Why was it 'unseasonable' as it could also mean? They wanted to help but there wasn't a chance to do so.

Sure, there were obstacles, The money had to be raised and maybe the initial concern wore off, it would take time, Maybe it was **the church members meeting** there were those in who opposed it. Also taking money from Philippi to Rome was no easy task. Who would go? - you don't travel alone especially with money. And in all this the desire, the concern can grow cold.

Or was it the general selfishness pervading in the church? **For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.** Php 2:21

So the church in Philippi had stalled, maybe procrastinated and delayed, it had taken a while to bring their mind round to it again - until now - remember v10 **at last you have renewed your concern for me.**

Prisons in those days were not as they are now. You had to rely on your family bringing in food and other needs or else you went without or were on starvation rations.

This concern for Paul had prompted the Christians in Philippi to send **Epaphroditus** with a gift to help him.

Php 2:25 **But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.**

Your 'messenger' is shorthand for saying he is the minister of the church, the angel of the church according to the end of Rev 1

And at Rome he had become quite ill, and almost died, but the Lord was merciful to him 2:27

⇒ **Paul is helped – he recognizes the concern that they had for him. Saying: 4:18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.**

So how does that apply to us at KNBC?

Why did they support Paul? The church at Philippi had been started by the Lord through Paul's visit there, the answering of that Macedonian call to 'come over and help us'. That help was the gospel. You can read about it in Acts 16. The Lord had opened Lydia's heart and the church had been formed. Paul then travelled down through Macedonian and into Greece ending up at Corinth.

- **So who founded the church here? The church here was started by Canon Street Memorial Church who sent members from the City Centre all the way out to the country town of Kings Norton to start a work here. The date 1822. Those who brought the gospel here and started this church are long gone. Should we be supporting our 'mother' church CSMC? – they supported us until we were established in 1847 as an independent Church. That's normal practice.**

However, the principle - or should I say the command - is given in 1 Co 9:14 **the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."** In other words, as Paul goes on to explain we should support those who bring the gospel to us, to you, to me. Whom we do support? Should we support the CSMC or now the Baptist Union?

- **Ken and Marcia Brown coming to Birmingham and my wrong understanding about who should be supporting who.**

Who did the Lord use to bring the gospel to you? Do they need your help? Have you a concern for them? Are they in need? Have you checked? How terrible it would be that they made you rich by bringing to you the words of everlasting life and are now floundering in poverty!!

⇒ **A love for the Lord, must be seen in our love for each other.**

1 **And now, brothers,** (Paul is speaking to the church at Corinth) **we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.** Paul saying you see them over there – pointing to the generosity of the church at Philippi (That is Macedonia) to spur on the church in Corinth. The Lord notices

▪ **Monyhull, Grace Church, Cotteridge, Crossway,**

And no it wasn't easier for them as we might immediately think - **Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.** 2 Cor 8: 2,3

I didn't have to push them Paul says **Entirely on their own,** x2 Let us like them have enough backbone to take the initiative, and pursue it, without giving up.

In fact there's more: **they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.** 2 Co 8:4-5

⇒ They saw it as a service to the Lord, the outworking of their love for Him.

To the Lord's people – And for the Lord's Glory

⇒ Everything that is from the Lord - is therefore for the Lord. **And His Glory**

17 **Not that I am looking for a gift** Paul's motive is not to have more help, He is saying "I welcome your kindness, not because it adds to my comfort and enjoyment, but because it adds to your account."

▪ **How is your bank account? Have you checked your balance? It is good? No I don't mean you account here on the high street but in heaven, how is that looking? That balance should be good!**

17 **but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.**

If you had more money - would you give more money? The Lord promises that if you start emptying your account for others - He will set up a standing order to cover it. The Lord will not only match it – He'll add some more so you can give more...

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. Pour out all you can – for you will have jars that can never empty. If you sow the seed you will have a basket of seed that can never run out. **You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,** 2 Co 9:10-11

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 **Each man should give what he has decided in his**

4a

heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.** 2 Co 9:6-9
Or as we read in v19 **my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Yes He is rich, very rich!**

It is our Worship

18 **They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.**

Your giving to others because of your love for Christ is not merely a gift for the benefit of man, it is a sacred service of worship to God.

Christ has made the great sacrifice, we do not, cannot, bring that sacrifice - but we bring a sacrifice of praise - and the sacrifice of my life, my energy, my talents, my time and my money. We are told: **Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."** Heb 13:16

⇒ **Your giving is as your worship – so - your worship is as your giving**

That is why giving is part of the Lord's Day worship. Here is what we are to do: **On the first day of every week, (that is today) each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.** 1Co 16:2 and this they did! – Those of us with standing orders need to think about this.

Our worship is to use what he gives us – all of what he gives us - for him.

⇒ **Your giving is as your worship – But also their receiving is their worship**

Do you realise that your gift is not only part of your worship - but also of their worship? Paul says: **your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.** 2 Co 9:10-11

How is your concern for your brothers and sisters?

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

They will praise the Lord for you – and pray for you! - **And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.**

They will say "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Co 9:12-15

20 **To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."**

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4b