

Need Meeters: Philippians 4
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Philippians 4 and I want to link this message with the other messages from Philippians 1. I'm not gonna be dragging anybody across the stage in a chain this week. I figured it's a bad pattern. But I do want to go to this great passage of scripture that was originally like the P.S. that Paul put in his letter to the Philippian church. He just kind of tagged it on at the end to thank them for the gift that they sent to help him with his legal defense. From a prison cell he writes and he's like full of joy which is counterintuitive that you'd be in jail and have joy or lose your job and still trust God and call Him your provider or be single but still know that you're not alone or maybe be wrong but know that God is even using that to ultimately bless your life and to use you. All of this is taught in the book of Philippians but I find myself coming back to this section which is like a P.S. Not only a postscript, to use an old letter writing term, but also it's a perspective shift.

So we're gonna see the power of a perspective shift today. Philippians 4:10-19. "I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last, you renewed your concern for me". I was laughing when I read that. He's like thanks I got your gift. It's about time. I didn't think that was very good thank you note etiquette. I got the gift. Finally! But then he clarifies. "Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances". Just touch the person next to you and say I'm good I promise. "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content..". I wasn't born this way. I was born screaming my head off. I was selfish when I was two but I'm maturing and I have learned to be content. I've learned that you can complain but it won't do any good and people won't like you.

So I'm learning, amen, to be content whatever the circumstances. 'Cause I know what it is to be in need. I know what it is to have plenty. I've "...learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength". I call that the international bench press verse. Where you see these posters in every Christian school weight room all over the world. But it's got a little deeper meaning than that. It's about the sufficiency of God's Spirit in every situation. I just feel good today. I feel relaxed and happy about this message. Verse 14. "Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, 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..".

You were there for me. You were there for me and I won't forget it. "...for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need". It's kinda confusing 'cause he keeps going back and forth like I don't need anything yet thank you for meeting my needs. But I don't need anything. I'm like well Paul if you don't need it can we have it back 'cause we need it. Look, "Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs..". I wonder if Paul was just saying this to the church at Phillipi or will he say it to Elevation Balyntyne today too. And

Elevation Toronto. In fact, I wonder would you say this to the person next to you. My God will meet all your needs.

This part is important. "...according to the riches of his glory in Christ". 'Cause I don't have what you need. I can't always be what you need 'cause I got my own needs. That's why I'm tired all the time is because people want me to meet their needs and I've got so many of my own. If you only knew how much I've needed you would leave me alone. How many want to say this to your kids every once and a while. Not me. I love my kids. They're delightful. But I think that's the most misunderstood verse in the whole book of Phillipians and I want to spend some time with it today. "My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus". See if we can get a fresh hearing for this verse in Paul's presence.

I want to speak to you today about need meters. Some things you learn about your spouse very quickly after marriage. Some things you know going in. Some things you find out progressively. I will never forget on our honeymoon I learned a lot about Holly on our honeymoon. Yeah. But in church, the thing that I learned about her that I wanted to tell you about today is we have very opposite vacation personalities. When she gets relaxed she gets quiet and boring. When I get relaxed I get playful, some would say silly, some would say obnoxious, but I say playful. The reason I knew this was gonna be interesting in our relationship is 'cause I thought she was mad. I thought she didn't like the cruise ship. I was like I know I couldn't afford the balcony room but at least it's a Princess Cruise. I was proud of it. Proud of the Princess Cruise. But she was happy.

She said something to me I just remembered it when I was preparing this message. When I saw jumping up and down on the bed in that little room that they give you on the cruise ship. Jumping up and down on the bed maybe wanting to arm wrestle and making animal noises. She looked at me and I've heard her say this to our kids but this was the first time I heard her say it. She said do you need attention? You know what I wanna say publicly, Holly, yes! Yes, I need your attention, your affection, your tender mercies. I need it all! All of it! Anything. I need it all. I don't know what I need. That's one thing I know at age 38 that I didn't know earlier on. I don't even know what I need. I don't. She wants to be a doctor. So she's like well where does it hurt? And I don't know. It just hurts. She'll ask me this. What kind of headache? The kind that hurts. She wants to know what do you need? What do you need?

The frustrating thing about it is somebody can really love you and want to meet your needs but two things. One. If you don't even know what you really need how in the world would they know what you need and meet your needs that you don't even really know? I can see we've got some work to do today. Because some of us want to act like we have no needs. I almost thought that's where Paul was going. I don't need it but thanks. But I mean I don't need it! Some people you can't even compliment 'em real good. It's terrible to try to compliment certain people. They'll make you feel so awkward especially in church. Good sermon. It was God! Wow. It wasn't that good Pastor. It was just OK.

When we come to Christ there's often unrealistic expectation that He's going to take away our needs and He doesn't. In fact, if you are a Christian you still have the same needs now that you did before you met Jesus. The same needs but they are now met in a different way. In other

words, you still have the same need for approval. But now instead of trying to get it from another human who doesn't even fully like themselves, you are getting it from the all-sufficient, all-knowing, all-seeing, ever-present, ever-living God who gives you breath and who intricately knit you together in your mother's womb. So it's not that I don't have needs. It's not that I don't have wants. The Lord is my Shepard. I shall not want. That doesn't mean I never want anything, never need anything. It doesn't mean my appetite went away. It just means I go to a different buffet now. Amen. That means I eat off a different menu now.

Sometimes we are so focused on people's behaviors that we can't discern the needs that drive the behaviors. A lot of Christian teaching and preaching is focused on condemning behaviors without understanding the need. There is no need that you are currently meeting in your life that is an evil need or a bad need. Many of us who have various addictions need to hear this exact point and maybe you can even leave after I say this 'cause this may be the whole reason God brought you here. You're not meeting the wrong need. You're just meeting it with the wrong means. This applies to overspending, overeating, overtalking, overbragging, and yes I hear you Facebook — oversharing. It applies to every sexual addiction.

There's a certain shame that comes with sexual addiction but there shouldn't be because all the addiction is a valid need trying to express itself. It's a need for connection which is very good and very God. It is not good for man to be alone. But loneliness if left untreated becomes lust. That's all lust is the need for connection being met through something that has no ability to satisfy the need that it is trying to meet. So it becomes more and more and more and more and more. Paul says my God shall supply all your needs or meet all of your needs not according to your resources but according to His. I'm glad about it. I'm glad that the only one who has what I need happens to be the only one who knows what I need.

How many are glad about that? Let's give God five seconds of praise for knowing what we need and for being what we need. The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid? Listen, Blakeney, when the wicked even mine enemies came upon me even they stumbled and fell. He prepares a table for me in the presence of my enemy. No, He doesn't take the need away. He becomes what I need. He meets my need. Some of us are waiting for God to remove the need. But if He removed the need He would remove the means by which He meets the need to remind you that He is what I need. He not only gives it, He is it.

Let's back up a little bit and let's talk about your need meter. Spell it different. If we spelled it like this: Not that meet-ers but the other one. Need meter. Like how needy are you? Like what's your meter read? If we could read the meter on your need today if it was right there on your forehead when you came in the house of God what would we see if we could read your meter? What if we could read your joy meter today? Not your happy meter. Happy meter might be just caffeine. Starbucks can make you happy. Yet there's this joy, this contentment, it's described in the scripture. Don't let people's smile confuse you. Because some people's bone structure is just arranged in their face. They look like they're smiling, OK? Some people just have, you know, Resting Blessed Face. They just look happy but it's covering up a lot of stuff. Don't worry about that. I'm saying like the thing that we can't see if we could see it.

If you had a peace meter on your forehead today and we could see your peace meter would it be like... or would it be like the gas gauge of a 16-year-old who fills up \$5 at a time? You know filling up \$5 at a time, a click at a time, a like at a time, a comment at a time. Because here's what I've learned about this. When joy is low usually it's because entitlement is high. That's why the most joyful book in the Bible according to many was written in a prison cell because Paul has come to the point where he says I don't need it. I don't need it. He really means it. It's not like the one preacher who got up "I don't preach for the praise of men! Amen? Amen? Amen"!? He's really found a place of freedom from what he thinks he deserves. Once he's set free from he thinks he deserves and what he expected it to be... Oh that's good. That's good. God just gave me that for this particular worship experience. I didn't say it any other time. Once he's set free from what he expected he can receive what he needs.

Sometimes what blocks us from receiving what we need is what we expected we would get. When it doesn't show up like we expected we can't receive what we need. Can I move a little deeper into this teaching? You good? OK. Find Acts 16 if you can find it in your Bible or if you wanna look it up on your phone. I always have a backup plan on the screen for you. Just in case it was hectic getting out of the house. It'll come up on the screen. But we're flowing with last week's message and we're linking that message of how sometimes God uses a no in our life. I know yes sounds better but sometimes the no is more important. Sometimes what God doesn't give you and what God won't allow is just as important as what He has given you and what He does give you permission to do. That was a really, really interesting message. Even I could feel it as I was preaching it. This resistance to receive God's no with this same faith that you praise Him for His yes. When we get too married to our plans we can miss God's purpose.

So God does something unusual in Acts 16 as Paul is taking the gospel out and you have to understand that Paul isn't writing the principles in Phillipians in a vacuum. He's writing them in the context of historical relationship with people in the church and he loved 'em. He's writing saying thanks. Got the gift. Gonna use it. Don't need it. What I'm excited about is how God is going to use your gift to bless you. That's what He's saying. It goes all the way back to how He met them to begin with. How many would say that some people in your life right now don't understand you properly because they don't know your background? They expect you to be further along in certain areas but you're like if you only knew how good I'm doing to even be as far along as I am. I mean I still cuss but I used to beat people. Why I think we really do. Phillipians 4:19.

A disservice is because we strip it of its context so I want to take you through something. Hopefully, it won't be boring. But one thing I love about you is you let me lay a foundation when I teach. I don't feel the pressure to perform antics to keep you engaged. I thought we needed to look at this real quick to understand the stuff we shout over. My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches! And I'm sad but that verse sounds great so I'm gonna shout over top of my sadness. It's because we don't understand the means. We don't understand the means. So, let's go back several years earlier. Paul is trying to get somewhere, verse 7, when they came to the border of Mysia. He's got Timothy with him. They tried to enter Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. Wouldn't allow them to what? Wouldn't allow them to preach

about Jesus. Jesus stopped his own PR campaign.

That's very, very, very unusual. Very difficult for me to get my mind around until I get to the next verses. Sometimes you do not understand at all what God is doing in the moment. Graham is so funny. We were coming to church today and a lot of our staff kids went to camp last week. And Graham got to play Joseph in a skit in a small group at camp. So he had the story of the Old Testament Joseph on his mind and they sent me a video of him down on the ground when Potiphar's wife is accusing Joseph. Potiphar's wife is called Hotiphar. She was accusing him of trying to make advances and Graham was on the ground saying no I didn't do it.

But Graham asked me something. He said. Do you think when the Bible says God was with Joseph you think Joseph felt that way at the time? I don't know. It doesn't say how he felt. It states the fact after the fact. But you can't really know what God is doing until He's done it. You don't really know what you need until you get what you want and find out it isn't even what you thought it was. So Paul wants to go to Asia. Blocked. Paul wants to go to Mysia. Blocked. He does something that you gotta learn to do when you don't know what to do. Instead of going home, he goes into the place of active waiting. It means God I'm not just waiting for you to do something I'm waiting on you. Like we used to not call them servers. It was waiters. I'm waiting on you. God, what would you like me to do in this season?

So I'm praying for a new job but I'm being nice at this one. Y'all don't wanna help me preach. I'm praying for my kids' behavior to improve but I'm not gonna exemplify the exact behavior that I'm trying to correct by going off on them and demonstrating anger while I'm trying to correct anger. I'm actively waiting. This place is called Troas. Bible says that since they couldn't get into Mysia they went down to Troas. This is a place of transition. It's a port city. Asia-minor one side. Europe on the other. Where are we going? What's God doing? I don't know but I'm not going home. I don't know but I'm not giving up. I don't know but I'm not losing sight. I don't know but I'm not gonna go into despair. I don't know. I don't know. I mean, I thought it was God and I thought it was this and I moved to Charlotte or I moved to Raleigh or I moved to Winston and I had this idea and I had this plan. But God's purpose is greater than my plan.

So I am in the place, I'm positioned, to hear God's voice. God speaks to Paul in that place. I believe He's gonna speak to somebody here today too. During the night, verse 9, not in the daytime when everything is pretty and you can see what you're doing. During the night — This is a theme in scripture. Some of the greatest stuff God will show you will be when you can't see with your eyes, and when you can't feel with your emotions, and you can't understand with your mind. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia, this big region in Europe, with people who were not yet reached by the gospel. There were a lot of Jewish people in Macedonia but not many believers yet and certainly no church.

Now I understand why God told Paul no. Because God knew the real need. The plans of a man are in his heart but his steps are ordered by the Lord. God has a purpose and you have a plan and sometimes He has to do away with one to get to the other. I'm preaching right to your heart today, trying to get you to see this vision that Paul saw. It was a man of Macedonia. A what of Macedonia? "A man of Macedonia standing and begging him,

"Come over to Macedonia and help us". Paul was looking for an opportunity, God showed him a need. Could it be possible that you've been asking God for an opportunity, and God is showing it to you in the form of your greatest need? Would you be willing to receive that maybe the way God is speaking to you in this season is not by what you feel, and not by what you think, and not even by what you want when you try to figure out your life, and how others should act, and how it needs to be? Have you got to the place, like Paul, where you say, I don't know what I really need, I need you to lead me, God?

Somebody say, "Lead me, Lord". I don't want to lean on my own understanding. I need God to lead me. I don't need to lean on what I think I need, because I'll think I need one thing when I really need another. That's how I gained weight when we got married. I thought I needed an Oreo, and I really needed exercise. Sometimes we think we need food, we really need a nap. Sometimes we think we need another person. What we really need to do is pray and ask God to get our minds right. Sometimes we think we need people to treat us different, when what we really need is to see people, not as trees for us to pick the fruit from, but for soil for us to sow in. And God speaks to Paul and says, "You want an opportunity? Here it is". And it's in the form of a need.

God is trying to lead you through your need, and my God will meet all your needs. How? With a need. God is God. He meets needs with needs. He's better than Christian Mingle. God is a matchmaker. He's better than Farmers Only, and Christian Farmers Only, and God is in the business of meeting needs with needs. Has your joy been low lately? Has your focus been off? Is your meter reading need, need, need, need, need, need, need, need, need, need? And maybe God is gonna show you a need that you can meet, so that you can see what you had all along that you have not been using. The plot thickens now. Paul's like, God, give me an opportunity. God, give me wisdom. God give me, God give me... You know the prayers we pray.

God, gimme, God, gimme,
God, gimme, gimme, gimme,
gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, God.
Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme.
God, gimme, gimme, gimme,
Give me grace, give me mercy,
gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme.
Give me chill bumps, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme.
I don't like this song.
God, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme,
gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme...

And Paul, there's no evidence that he's praying that, but I'm just, I'm imposing what I would be doing on Paul. I'd praying, God, gimme, gimme, gimme. Give me direction. Gimme, gimme. And God gives him a need of a man standing and begging him, "Come over and help us". Paul needs help. So, God helped Paul, and the way God helps Paul is by showing him someone who needs help. Y'all are quiet. Y'all want me to get back to, "And my God will meet all your needs"? Paul wasn't saying that about himself. Paul was in prison, thinking about somebody else's needs,

because he knew, "If I focus on my needs right now, I'm gonna be depressed, because I am going to shrink my spirit to the size of my situation.

So God, instead of focusing on what I need, what I think, what I want, what I don't, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. I'm changing my prayer. Show me, show me. Show me what You're doing in the world. Show me what You put in my kids. Show me what You're calling me to be in this season that I'm in. Show me who I can bless. Show me who I can encourage. Show me 10 people I can text and tell 'em, 'You got this.' 'Cause I'm waitin' on somebody to tell me, 'You got this', but maybe the way I'm gonna get it, is to give it". "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over". If you want joy, rejoice. If you want purpose, give praise. Give it, if you want it. And I don't mean to holler at you, sit down. I was caught up in the moment.

Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. And the man came in the dream, and then it makes an interesting turn. How many of you love the little details that we slow down and point out in the Bible? When you read this thing slow and stop skimming, you'll be amazed at how it'll come alive. You can't read this like BuzzFeed. The Bible is not BuzzFeed. When you treat it like that, you miss the blessing of it. Slow down and watch what's happening here. Watch what's happening here. Verse 7, "When they came to the border of Mysia..". that's where they wanted to go. Look at Verse 10. "After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready". Why did he shift from "they" to "we"? This is when Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, got on board with the mission, when Paul saw the vision. And what got me was it took faith for Paul to go out on a mission after seeing a vision. How much more faith did it take for the people who didn't even see the vision Paul saw to go with him?

Sometimes it's hard to follow something that you can't see for yourself. And Luke's like, "Paul said he saw a man in Macedonia, so we packed up and went. We didn't debate". How many of you would've at least asked God for one confirmation before you got back out on the sea? "Paul, you had a dream..". And, I think there's a blessing in immediate obedience when we set straight out and just give. I don't understand people who, I'll meet them and they'll go, "I've been coming to the church four years". "Do you serve"? "No". "You in a group"? "No". "You invite your friends"? "No". I don't usually ask them if they give, that's a little too personal. You know, that's a weird thing to ask, isn't it? But then they'll say, "Let me know if you ever need anything".

And I'm like, "Do you come? Do you see the people that God is bringing each week? Do you see how some of them come in with a look in their eyes, like they might not make it? Do you see how God is unifying this church from so many different backgrounds, not just skin color, but even belief system, ideology? And how God is centering us on Christ in a culture that has never been more divided? Do you not see the need? The harvest is here and the laborers are few. What do you mean, if I need anything? It's right in front of you. Let's go. Let's do this. Let's build a church". Have you brought a friend with you in the last couple months? Invited somebody to come with you, to share it with you? God's not gonna meet your needs independent of you. He's gonna meet your needs through your willingness to meet someone else's.

I want to spend the rest of my life preaching like this, to help us see that "My God will meet

all your needs according to His glorious riches". Paul said that after he thanked the Philippians for meeting his needs. He said, "Now that you've met somebody else's needs, God is gonna meet yours". And I just couldn't get over it, how they had the faith to go out to Macedonia. There's like 300, 000 people in Macedonia, and Paul saw one man in a vision. He's like, let's go. Let's go find that man that I saw in my vision. How tall was he? I don't know. What was his eye color? I don't know. God'll show us when we get there. So, they go. So, they go. And Verse 11 describes it. "From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went to Neapolis". Side note: God doesn't take you there all at once. It's little stops along the way. Is this it? Is this it? Is this it? Is this it? Is this it?

How many can testify God doesn't just take you there all at once, and He doesn't meet every need all at once, because then He knows you'd start thinking you didn't need Him. So what He does is He leads you step by step, little bit of light. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet". Watch me walk. "And a light unto my path". Next step, next step, next step, next step. I'm gonna bend down and buckle my shoe back, 'cause that's gonna annoy me and it's probably been driving somebody crazy on the front row. It's just the little things, and God speaks through the little things and He meets big needs, watch this, through small acts of obedience. We went here, we went there. What you lookin' for, Paul? I saw a man in Macedonia and I'm lookin' for him. And they end up, watch this. "From there," Verse 12, "we traveled to Philippi".

Philippians, that's the city, that's the place, that's where the first church in Europe, or the western world, was started. This is how it started, this right here, through someone you've never even heard of. I know you've heard of Paul. I'm really not here to preach about Paul today. I'm gonna show you somebody who doesn't get listed: Samson. All he ever did is get a haircut, and we preach about him all the time. No, I want to introduce you to a woman. Let's hear it from the women. This is like the ultimate women's Bible... Holly, write a Bible study about this. Because the Bible says that they traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony where a lot of the Roman generals would go to retire. About 20,000 to 30,000 people lived in this one city, and then there's four districts of Macedonia, so Paul's really looking for a needle in the haystack.

And there's not a lot of Christians. If there are any believers here, they're hiding, and there's not that many Jews, either. I'll show you how I know that in a moment. But he gets there, and God uses a need to lead him there. Lead me, Lord. How did God lead? With a need. How is God gonna lead you into what He has next for your life? With a need. How is God going to choose who He uses for the people who are broken? He can't meet a need through someone who doesn't have a need, and He will often use you to alleviate the same pain that you yourself are experiencing, 'cause God leads with need. God is leading me. What do you mean when you say that? You mean you feel good about it? Jesus didn't get to the cross feeling good about it. In fact, He prayed, "Father, if it's possible, take this cup from me".

I don't want to do it. I don't feel like doing it, but lead me, Lord. If this is what they need to be redeemed, then let's do it. If You need me in Philippi, I wanted to go to Mysia, I wanted to go to Asia, I wanted to be married, I didn't want to be in this situation, I don't even like this right now. But God, lead me. Show me the need, and lead me through the valley of the shadow of death. God being my leader doesn't mean I won't go through anything. It means

He won't leave me alone, and there's a reason I'm going through what I'm going through. God knows what I need. And so he says, we ended up in Philippi, "the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days". And he doesn't talk about what they did over those couple days, and I wonder, you know, what do you do when you get to Philippi? It's 20,000, 30, 000 people in the town and you saw one man in a vision. Do you walk around looking for him? Like, hey, I saw a man. Are you him? What do you do?

One time, me and Buck went on a mission trip, and Buck's on staff now. He's been on staff, God, I guess about, coming up on eight years on staff, but we've been friends since college. We were on this mission trip and Buck's a funny guy, but he doesn't like to show it a lot. He reminded me of this guy that we went on a mission trip with. This dude was country. Oh, no, I don't mean like Moncks Corner country. This dude was from Louisiana, and he was big country. And he would walk up and talk to anybody, and he had these little country sayings that I still don't know what they mean. We'd be getting ready in the morning and it'd be like, you ready? And he'd say, "If you're waitin' on me, you're backin' up". And the first part was understanding what he actually said. Like, please say that again. And then he'd say what he said. "If you're waitin' on me, you're backin' up".

And I still wouldn't know what it meant, even though I understood what he said. But, I had this flashback preparing this message. We were at a gas station, and there was another guy named Clint that was on the team, and he was from Australia, but he wasn't with us at the time. They were somewhere else. And a van full of people rolled up, and this guy, I'm gonna call him Bob in case he watches. He's a pastor now. And, Bob just walked up and talked to anybody and they didn't understand a word he was saying, but he just walked up and talked to anybody. And he's walking up to 'em. "Where are y'all from"? And they said, "Australia, mate". And he liked that. To him that was exotic, you know, a van full of foreigners. I just got back from Australia, so that's the best accent I can do. If you want to do an Australian accent, just leave off random syllables all the time. They just leave crap off all the time and shorten everything.

"Australia, mate". He said, "Australia? Hey, Australia? Y'all know a guy named Clint from Australia"? And the poor guy driving the van goes, "Australia's a pretty big place, mate". Like, there's more than one Clint. So, Macedonia's a big place, you know? Paul sees this vision, but he's not exactly sure. You ever notice how many times you're not exactly sure? Like, you've sensed God is leading you to do something, but it's a needle, ooh, a need, a needle in a haystack. So I'm here, but I don't know what I'm looking for. I'm raising these kids, but I don't know if I'm doing it right. I'm trying to discipline them and be their friend, and sometimes I don't know which one to be at which time, and I want them to love me, but I need them to fear me, so I don't know which one to be right now. And, I'm trying to be patient but I'm also trying to be proactive, I don't know what's waiting on God and pushing ahead, 'cause I hear both. I hear stay in the boat, and I don't know what to do with the boat, and I don't even have a boat, and I don't even like the water.

So, you gotta look for a synagogue, right? That's where Paul would always start his preaching. And to have a synagogue, you need ten men at least, but there's not ten Jewish men to form a synagogue in Philippi. That's how desperate the city is for what Paul had, and that's why God had to tell him no about Mysia and no about Asia, because there was a

more desperate need somewhere else. I wonder if God told you no for a reason. I wonder if God left you there for a reason. Paul's looking. You seen Clint? Clint? It's a big place, mate. I saw a man in a vision. And they go out one Sabbath, and watch this. Since they knew that there wasn't a synagogue, Verse 13, "On the Sabbath we stayed outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer".

You'll find what you're looking for, by the way. If you look for a place God is working, you will find it in every situation. Ask Lanny if God will show up in a hospital room. Ask him if God will show up in a desperate situation. Oh, yeah, God'll show up at a custody hearing. Oh, yeah, God'll show up in a bankruptcy. God will show up in a divorce. God will show up in a broken heart. God will show up in a season of despondency. God will show up in a crisis. God will show up in national turmoil. God is here, I'm just looking for Him. So Paul says I didn't find what I expected, and I didn't get what I wanted, but my God will meet all my needs.

Now, here's what God knew. I've been waiting all week to show you this, so please be merciful if I'm too excited and you don't like my level of energy, 'cause I've had all week to get ready for this! There was a woman — let's hear it for the women one more time. Who was what the Old Testament called a God-fearer. Now, a God-fearer is a Gentile who believes in the Jewish God. So, she's ready to receive the message about Jesus Christ, the Messiah, but she needs somebody to explain it to her! Well, good news! There's somebody in Philippi who needs somebody to preach to! So, somebody who needed the message, got together with somebody who needed a congregation! God is a need meeter! God is a matchmaker! God knows how to put you where you need to be to release what He gave you to carry! Don't leave yet, I'm not done! And some of you needed this word today, and that's why you almost didn't get to church. That's why you were almost... well, no, I could catch it online. No, you needed this word, so you got in your car, and you got to this church, because you have a need. Well, God gave me the word and He gave you the need. And I declare that my God shall supply all your needs. Tearin' up my stuff.

And so, it said that, "We expected to find a place of prayer..", but I bet they didn't expect this: "We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there". What did Paul see in his vision? A man from Macedonia. What did he see when he got to his assignment? A woman. God's not gonna do it how you thought He was. It's not gonna feel like you thought it would feel. He's not gonna do it through the people that you wanted Him to do it through, because then you'd worship them, not Him. No synagogue, let's find a place of prayer. That's where they could gather informally, and they would do it by the river. Let's go to the river. Let's go to the place. We didn't find what we wanted, but God's gonna give us what we need. Can I do a Bible study with J.J. real quick? I want you to preach the sequel to this. Next time you're in the pulpit, do it from 1 Kings 17. Do it from the widow of Zarephath. Elijah needs food, she needs food. He sends somebody with a need to somebody with a need.

When he gets there, he says to the widow, meet my need. She said, no, you meet mine. And then Elijah says something that we can learn from: when you meet my need, God will meet your needs. Doesn't that sound like Philipians 4 and my God? I got what you sent. I got what you supplied. And now, my God is gonna meet your needs because you stopped thinking so much about your needs and focused on somebody else's. My God will meet all your needs. And there's one woman, and we need to put her in the list, you know? Good for

Daniel, good for Noah, that old drunk, boat-building drunk. But let's put Lydia in the list, because one of the people listening, there's always somebody listening. You never know who's listening. You see how I'm preaching today, like I'm fighting something, or like, you see? Because I never know who's listening. I never know who's listening.

And this week, somebody very famous was texting me about a message that I preached, and one of my kids was like, how cool is that? I was like, it's really cool. You never know who's listening. But it might not be a celebrity that God wants to speak to the most today. It might be somebody. I'm not gonna ask you to raise your hand, but if I did, 90% of this church has never heard a sermon about Lydia. And yet if it weren't for her, there would have been no church in Philippi. It was just as important who was listening as it was who was preaching. And we've got to do away with the celebrity culture where God only uses people who have a certain number of followers or who have reached an elevated status in the world's eyes. We are not all Paul. I'm not Paul, you're not Paul, but there was a woman named Lydia, and God was showing me this week in my study, you've got a church full of Lydias.

Some men, some women, but they're unlikely people who see themselves as unlikely, but they are the missing link. And when they begin to see themselves as a vessel and not just a receptacle, and when they begin to see themselves as the conduit through which I want to bless the people around them, the earth will not be able to contain the increase of the measure of the glory of the Lord. God is looking for Lydia. God shut down a whole apostolic tour, 'cause He was looking for Lydia. Paul didn't know her name, but he went where he thought he was supposed to go, 'cause sometimes all you can do is obey the best you know how. Let that set you free. Paul didn't even know what he was looking for, but he was doing his best to be obedient. Are you? 'Cause if you will, you'll always find a Lydia. Lydia was a woman, Verse 14, from the city of Thyatira, formerly known as the kingdom of Lydia. So her name probably wasn't Lydia, but that's where she was from, and that's how they often referred to women in those days. "And she was a dealer in purple cloth".

So? Purple's the expensive stuff. If you deal purple cloth, you make bank. And I know it's cringey, what I just said, Elijah. I don't even need to hear about it after the sermon. Lydia didn't need money, she needed a message. Paul had the message, she had the money. And when his need and her need met, the church in the west was born. Because God is a need meeter, but God does not meet needs independently of His people. He uses us. There's a tendency in a church this size to look around and go, I don't think they need me here. So then you get all focused on yourself, you know? How was the sermon today? Ah, a little long. It was all right. What'd he talk about? Some guy named Philip. Think his name...

Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. But there's a perspective shift, there's a P.S., Paul said, "My God will meet all of your needs". He said I didn't even need the money, And so, Paul shows up, Lydia's sitting down. He saw a man in the vision, but he sees a woman by the river. And God shows up how He wants to show up — through disappointment, sometimes through what seems to be a setback, sometimes through unexpected people. A dealer in purple cloth, she was a worshipper of God, or a God-fearer. She was close. You know, there's people in your life who are close the kingdom, and they're waiting on

somebody who would have the willingness. There are people in your circle who need the presence of God, and God put you in their life. And you're part of a church, at many of our locations we have so many seats available, everybody could bring somebody next weekend. We'd be full if everybody found one person who needed Jesus last week. Our church would double in one week.

And not even thinking about the impact of our E-fam that's watching online. I mean, we use social media to spread everything. Why not the message of the only name that saves? Why would you sit on a message? Why would you sit on something that has the power to save? Paul took the message across the sea, and sometimes I'm burdened that we just come to get our needs met. And we don't get 'em met, 'cause God doesn't meet your needs through thinking about your needs. You've got to get outside of yourself, and outside of your customs, and outside of your traditions, and outside of your expectations, and outside of your entitlement. Paul said it's not even about me. And this woman, Lydia, I don't know a whole lot about her except for I'm thankful for her.

And I feel like there are many Lydias watching me today whose names may never be known, but whose purpose is important. And watch what happened when Paul's need to preach met her need to hear. This woman, who was sitting by the river, it says, "The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message". That means she decided to become a follower of Christ. "And when she and the members of her household..". See, it's never just about you. It's not just about you. The first thing she did when she was touched by the power of God was to think about somebody else. God, who have You connected me to that needs You, that needs hope, that needs Jesus?

And I love the language. It says, "After those who were in her household were baptized..". The people closest to her: "she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, 'come and stay at my house,' and she persuaded us". And the Lord told me like this. He said, "I opened her heart and she opened her house. And some of the people that you've preached to, I've opened their heart and I've blessed them, but they haven't opened their house yet". And they're in this big church just thinking about me and my needs, and it's so easy to do, and I do it all the time. And so we sing about breakthroughs, and blessings, and it's good, it's good, it's good.

I promise, man! I helped write the song. I know a breakthrough is comin'! By faith... God told me to tell you, be the breakthrough. Be the breakthrough. Be the breakthrough. Be the breakthrough. Be the breakthrough for somebody else, and watch how God will breakthrough for you! Be the breakthrough for someone else. It's time to turn the pain — you've been rehearsing it over and over again. It's time to release it and ask God to use it. God lets you go through that for something. God didn't just keep you through all of that so you could just be a survivor! You are to be an agent of change and the world needs what we have, but we've gotta give it!
