

- 1 **"Things We Can't Afford"**
Philippians 2:14-16 NIV
- 2 **¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky**
- 3 **¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.**
- 4 **So here we are, at the beginning of a new year.**
 - Last week, we talked about how 2014 stretches out before us as a year of opportunity.
 - In particular, it's the chance make God a priority in our lives and to show it, to demonstrate it.
 - We can do this by worshipping and serving with his people, being part of his church, praying for each others, listening to Him through reading his Word, and living by faith.
 - But what are some practical ways that we can do this?
- 5 **Next week we'll have our annual meeting following morning worship.**
 - Our new church council will go into effect.
 - We'll vote on our 2014 budget.
 - We've done a lot of hard work to get ready for 2014 and I'm proud of that.
 - 2014 is a year of opportunity for our church. A year to exercise faith – to show that we love the Lord and believe Him.
- 6 **One of the focuses for 2014 is rightly our budget.**
 - We are concerned to be good stewards of the resources God has given this church.

- We don't want to be wasteful or foolish.
- We certainly don't want to spend our resources on things we can't afford.
- Yet what are the most costly things that we can't afford? That's a good question. I would suggest that the "things we can't afford" are mostly things you can't put a dollar sign by.
- Let me repeat that. Let me underscore that. The things we can't afford are mostly things we can't put a dollar sign by. Now where do I get that? Paul says,

7 **"Do everything without grumbling or arguing."
Philippians 2:14 NIV**

8 **Paul is saying that the thing we mostly can't afford is "negativity."**

9 **Negativity kills faith.**

10 **Did you know that? And if negativity kills faith then that's something we can't afford. Amen?!**

11 **We can either take a positive approach or a negative approach.**

- It's like the story of the sweet little old lady of faith sitting beside the worldly young man of doubt on the airplane.
- She had to do a lot of traveling by air for her business. But flying made her quite nervous so she always took her Bible along with her to read since it helped her to relax.
- The young man saw her pull out her Bible. He gave a little chuckle and then went back to his "Adult" magazine.
- After awhile he turned to her and asked: "You don't really believe all that stuff in there do you?"
 - The lady replied: "Of course I do, it's the Bible."
 - He smiled: "Well what about that guy that was

swallowed by that whale?"

– She replied: "Oh, Jonah. Yes, I believe that – it's in the Bible.

- He asked sarcastically: "Well, how do you suppose he survived all that time he spent inside the whale?"
 - The lady said: "Well, I don't really know. I guess when I get to heaven, I will ask him."
 - "Well, what if he isn't in heaven?" the man smiled, mockingly.
 - The little old lady smiled back: "In that case, you will be able to ask him."

12 **Will we take a positive approach or a negative approach?**

- Will we say things that promote faith, or things that promote doubt and fear?
- Will we express confidence in each other or distrust?
- Will we build each other up or tear down?

13 **Truly the thing that we can't afford is negativity.**

- It is more costly than any line item on our budget.
- We can't give enough money to offset it's costly effect.
- Negativity, fear, doubt, grumbling, murmuring, dissension, argumentiveness are the things will sink us for sure.

14 **It's like the children of Israel on their way to the promised land.**

- They dealt constantly with the tendency to murmur and grumble.
- One of their very first tests moved them to murmur and grumble.

15 **Exodus 15:22-27 NIV ²² Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water.**

- 16 **23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.^[k]) 24 So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"**
- 17 **25 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink.**
- 18 **There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. 27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.**
- 19 **Let me put this in context. The Israelites have just experienced the greatest, most spectacular miracle in history – the parting of the Red Sea and deliverance from Pharaoh's Army.**
- How long did it take for them to forget it? Three days! Just three days.
 - You'd think that they'd taste the bitter waters of Marah, and have a little faith. Just a little.
 - Maybe think, God can part the waters of the Sea, surely he can make some bitter water sweet.
 - We are always tempted to murmur, to complain, to doubt, to express fear rather than faith.
 - God provides such tests to give us the opportunity to actually express and develop faith.
 - In the moment we don't realize it – but just up ahead there's an oasis, an Elim with 12 springs and 70 palm trees.
- 20 **Well if negativity, fear, doubt, grumbling, murmuring, dissension, argumentiveness are the things we can't afford this year, what are the**

things we can afford?

- Indeed, there are positive promises of Jesus that he freely gives us.
- For every negative impulse, Jesus gives a positive promise.

- 21 **1. When you say: "It's impossible!" - Jesus says, "What is impossible with men is possible with God. All things are possible for him who believes." (Luke 18:27; Mark 9:23)**
- 22 **2. When you say: "I'm too tired" - Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt. 11:28,29)**
- 23 **3. When you say: "I'm not able to carry this heavy burden." - Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11:28,29) "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall." (Psa. 55:22)**
- 24 **4. When you say: "The pressures from the world, the flesh, and the devil are too strong for me." - Jesus says, "In the world you will have tribulation but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)**
- 25 **5. When you say: "I am not able to solve this problem." - Jesus says, "You can do everything God asks you to do with the help of Christ who gives you the strength and power." (Phil. 4:13)**
- 26 **6. When you say: "I do not have sufficient strength, resources or wisdom to handle this**

problem." - Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for you for My power is perfected in your weakness. For my power shows up best in weak people. For when you are weak, then I am strong. The less you have the more you depend on Me." (2 Cor. 12:9,10)

- 27 **7. When you say: "It's not worth it." - Jesus says, "All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)**
- 28 **8. When you say: "I cannot manage with what I have." - Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." (Matt 6:33)**
- 29 **9. When you say: "I am afraid and fear the worst." - Jesus says, "I have not give you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." (2 Tim. 1:7) "Fear not for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isa 41:10)**
- 30 **10. When you say: "I don't have enough faith." - Jesus says, "Stop doubting and believe." (John 20:27)"If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you can say to this mountain, be removed and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:20**
- 31 **11. When you say: "I'm not smart enough for what lies ahead of me." Jesus says, "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Me." (Col. 2:3)**
- 32 **12. When you say: "I feel like quitting." - Jesus says, "When He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will**

guide you into all truth. You shall receive power when the Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (John 16:13; Acts 1:8)

33 **So what are you going to put in your budget this year?**

- Things you can't afford?
- Or the promises that Jesus freely gives that produce life and faith!
- Let's us say with Jesus, "We choose faith!"