

A Work In Progress Series

January 04, 2023

Scripture: Philippians 1:1-6

Summary: Part of an extensive study in Philippians, we are reminded here that God is not finished with us yet.

Content in Christ: A Study in Philippians

A Work in Progress

Illus. A retired preacher was cleaning out the dresser when he found 5 eggs and \$1K.

- He asked his wife and she said she saved 1 egg for every bad sermon.**
- 5 eggs in all those years. Not bad. But what's the money for?**
- Every time I got a dozen eggs; I sold them.**

Encouragement is a powerful motivator. We all need a bit of encouragement, don't we?

All too often, we receive the opposite – criticism or no response at all.

Today, we're beginning an extensive study into the Book of Phil. – "Content in Christ".

•This is Paul's "joy letter." It's full of encouragement, especially in the first 6 vv.

Not only is it full of encouragement, it's also full of challenge.

One challenge I want to give you right up front is to memorize the Book with me.

I. PAUL'S GREETING vv. 1-2

1 PAUL AND TIMOTHY, SERVANTS (bondservants, slaves – not apostle) OF CHRIST JESUS,

This letter is more personal, not one of authority, but of love and encouragement.

TO ALL THE SAINTS IN CHRIST JESUS AT PHILIPPI, TOGETHER WITH THE OVERSEERS (bishops) AND DEACONS:

There are three key words in this greeting we need to look at:

A. Saints are the recipients of the Gospel.

The word means “holy one”. It’s mentioned 45x in NT and refers to all believers.

- It implies someone who is holy, sanctified, set apart for God.**

When we come to Christ, we are made holy by the blood of the Lamb.

When’s the last time someone called you a saint?

When’s the last time you felt like a saint, or viewed someone else as a saint?

Illus. “Pastor” reminds me of my role, how I behave.

- We need to be reminded that we’re all saints.**

B. Grace is the means to the Gospel.

2 GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This was a standard greeting from Paul, but more than a “how are you doing?”

- His greeting was possible because of the Gospel of God thru Jesus Christ.**

The Gospel is a Gospel of grace (not our effort).

We are saints because of His righteousness, not our own. (cf. Eph. 2:8-9)

C. Peace is the result of the Gospel.

When we come to Christ, our sin is forgiven.

Only in and thru Christ can we experience true, lasting, real peace.

This whole passage (and letter) revolves around the Gospel.

We are saints who can enjoy real peace because of the Gospel of grace.

II. HIS TRIBUTE vv. 3-5

A. He praised God for them.

3. I THANK MY GOD (the God of me) EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU.

How many times have we been reminded to pray for a brother/sister in Christ?

- **How often do we follow through on His reminders?**

How often do we thank God for our fellow believers?

As leaders, how often do we thank God for those who follow?

The Philippians were on Paul's heart and First Baptist needs to be on our hearts.

B. He prayed for them.

4. IN ALL MY PRAYERS (petitions, supplications) FOR ALL OF YOU,

This word isn't the usual word for prayer. It only occurs 5x in the NT.

- **It gives the idea of longing/yearning for, a strong, passionate desire.**

Rom. 10:1 BROTHERS, MY HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR THE ISRAELITES IS THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED.

Jas. 5:16 THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN CAN ACCOMPLISH MUCH.

When's the last time we prayed fervently for our brothers/sisters in Christ?

C. He rejoiced over them.

I ALWAYS PRAY (same word) WITH JOY (delight, rejoicing).

Every time Paul thought of the Philippians, he thanked God and was filled with delight.

Remember, Paul's missionary trip to Philippi was anything but joyous.

- **He was arrested, severely flogged, and thrown into prison (Acts 16).**
- **But while in prison, what did Paul do? He prayed and sang hymns to God!**

Not only that, but Paul was currently in prison in Rome facing the death sentence!

- **Nothing could diminish Paul's joy over the Gospel and those who accepted it.**

This really is Paul's attitude behind this whole letter.

- **He is perfectly content in Christ alone. In Jesus he has found real joy.**

Illus. Tom Huckel, "Why do you have that silly grin on your face"?

- **"Because I know the Messiah and I'm going to be with Him forever!"**

How often do we rejoice over/with our fellow believers or our own salvation?

"I'm so excited. And I just can't hide it..."

How could Paul always pray with joy for the Philippians?

D. He partnered with them.

5. BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW,

The word here is “koinonia”, fellowship - more than a formal business partnership.

- It implies uniting, joining together, a common bond.

In this context, it implies a common fellowship in the Gospel.

In Gen. 1-2, Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect “koinonia” with God in the Garden.

In Gen. 3, that fellowship was broken.

- Ever since, God has been working to restore that koinonia.

He finally and forever succeeded in the Person of Christ at the place of the cross.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ restores our partnership/fellowship with God.

Paul rejoiced because the Philippians shared in that fellowship with Him.

- They were partners with Him in the grace of God thru Jesus Christ!

Some commentators take this to mean that the Philippians were partnering with Paul in sharing/spreading the Gospel.

- That was true, but I believe what Paul is saying here is that they shared in the Gospel with him. They were fellow heirs/fellow saints with Christ.

Paul wasn't alone in prison. He was together with all the saints in Christ Jesus.

- If you're a saint in Christ, you are never alone.

I wonder how often we view our brethren as fellow heirs with Christ?

- Too often, instead of saying, “Praise the Lord”, we say “Oh Lord”.

Paul praised God for them, prayed for them, rejoiced over them, partnered with them.

- How would you like to hear someone say that about you?

Paul's encouragement is just getting started.

III. HIS ENCOURAGEMENT v. 6

6. BEING CONFIDENT (since I am confident) OF THIS, THAT HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU...

A. God has begun a great work in us.

“Having begun”. Perfect tense. He started it, and it continues.

- **“The countdown has begun.”**

There are two aspects of this great work.

First, God has begun a great work here at New Hope.

- **It's obvious that God is working among us and is beginning to do some exciting things thru us.**
- **He's given us a great vision; it's up to us to see that vision become reality.**

God has also begun a great work in every believer here.

Our salvation is not the ending, it's only the beginning.

God didn't just save us so we could be with Him forever.

- **He has a plan, a “good work” for our lives.**

Eph. 2:10

Phil. 2:12 ...CONTINUE TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING...

We are His Body and everyone has a vital role to play or the Body is incomplete.

What good work has God begun in us/in you?

B. God will complete His great work in us.

WILL CARRY IT ON TO COMPLETION UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST JESUS.

“Carry it on to completion” – stronger sense than simply completing something.

- **Fully perfect it, make it complete.**

Illus. “Be patient, God’s not finished with me yet.”

God’s not done with us yet. He’s just getting started.

When will His work in us be completed? When He comes again for His Bride.

- **He won’t come until the work of the Church is completed on Planet Earth.**
- **Until He comes again, we all have work to do.**

Do you see why Paul, even in prison, was rejoicing over these believers?

IV. HIS CHALLENGE

There are so many challenges for us in this passage. Let me give you 5.

A. We need to live like saints.

We need to live like the saints that we are.

B. We need to pray for the saints.

We need to be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit to intercede on their behalf.

Who knows how many tragedies have been averted or people encouraged right when they needed it most because people prayed!

- **Concert of Prayer Tonight!**

C. We need to rejoice with the saints.

It’s exciting to know Jesus. We need to be excited for one another, cheer for one another.

- **Members of a winning baseball/football team.**

D. We need to encourage the saints.

True koinonia/unity can only take place when we encourage/build up one another.

Encouragement is like a diamond ring – a small thing that brings great light/beauty.

- **It's like investing in an IRA. A small investment now can bring great dividends.**
- **It's like dish soap. A little amount can help wash away all sorts of dirt/grime.**
- **One word of encouragement can effectively erase 100 words of criticism.**

Illus. Encouragement file. Some here w/ gift of encouragement.

E. We need to work together with the saints.

We need to join God in His work at First Baptist.

V. 6 isn't necessarily an unconditional promise. It requires that we work with God.

Too many professing believers have given up on God. They've dropped the ball.

- **Many because they were never encouraged.**

When's the last time you earnestly prayed for/rejoiced over a fellow believer?

When's the last time you joined God in His plan?

The Bottom Line: Be encouraged. God's not finished with us yet.

He has a great plan for us, but we need to join Him in that plan if we're going succeed.

How about you? What work has God called you to?

•Are you working on His work? Are you encouraging others who are working?

Prayer/Challenge (pick 3 of 5 challenges)

•Encourage someone this week (make it real, not just because you have to).

Hymn: He Who Began A Good Work in You