

Philippians ch 1:1-11

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[0 : 00] And we ask you to praise me, all those thanks for heaven. Amen. If you would turn back with me, please, to that portion of scripture that we read in Philippians chapter 1.

Philippians chapter 1, and we're going to look at the verses marked 1 to 11, or in particular 3 to 11. And I think we'll take as our text, verse 6, words of great assurance to the Christian. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

If there was a theme for the whole of the book of Philippians, I think it would have to be that God's people ought to be hopeful in holiness.

Hopeful in holiness. And what we have here in this Philippian letter is, what we see, what Paul shows us, is a model church.

[1 : 14] It was not a perfect church, but a model church that was built on prayer and love. Prayer and love.

Paul shows us in these verses from 3 to 11, he shows us how to pray. And he shows us how a church ought to shine in his generation and in our generation.

So verses 1 to 8, he shows us how to pray with thanksgiving. And that is what we do.

I don't understand Gaelic much, but I'm quite sure that when Faracher prayed there, he prayed with thanksgiving. Not only praying for particular people to be saved or particular events to take place, or particular things in our lives to take place, but always with thanksgiving.

Give thanks always, every time we pray. That's what Paul does here. I thank my God and all my remembrance of you.

[2 : 40] You see, the apostle is excited about this little Philippian church. He is thankful for this little Philippian church.

And he tells us why in verse 5, because they share, they are partners in the gospel. And we'll come to that in a moment. Now, I'm reading between the lines as I read the text here.

I may be wrong. I don't know. But I'm reading between the lines and I maybe think that this was Paul's model church. And he rejoiced over it.

Of all the churches that Paul and the other apostles built up throughout the known world as the gospel went out, if you were around in the first century, I think the Philippian church would have been a nice church to have been in.

It would have been one of the better churches to have been in. As we read the whole of Philippians, we see that, yes, they do have problems. They have false teachers coming in.

[3 : 58] And a couple of the ladies in the church have fallen out and these things. But they do, this church does not have the same problems, say, as the Galatian churches have.

Where the gospel was being twisted. Where the gospel was being bent by others coming in and teaching a works righteousness. And telling the Galatians that, no, it's not just faith in Jesus Christ that saves.

You've got to work for your salvation. Going back to Judaism. No, the Philippian church did not have that problem that the Galatian churches had.

Reading between the lines, the Philippian church did not have the same problems as the Corinthian church had. Where there was so much division and so much infighting.

No, if you were around in the first century, I think this little Philippian church would have been a nice church to have served in. And Paul is thankful for them.

[5 : 02] He has founded it. It has flourished. And he loves them. And Paul, here in his prayer from a prison cell, he has cultivated the discipline of remembrance.

How often do we come to prayer and we finish our prayer and other things come into our mind and into our focus. All the time. We can't remember everything.

So Paul, here, is cultivating a discipline of remembrance. He says, in all of my remembrance of you. You know, Paul had many churches and he had many Christians to remember.

And he had not forgotten the Philippians. You know, it was not just the churches that had sprung up, that had all the problems like the Corinthian churches or the Galatian churches.

It was not just the problem churches that needed prayer. It was the churches that were doing, well, they were doing okay. They were taking along nicely.

[6 : 09] Perhaps Paul could have said, well, I don't really need to pray for this little Philippian church. Things aren't going okay there.

No. No, no. In all my remembrance of you, he says. Do you think the devil was going to leave this little Philippian church alone?

No. No. He wasn't. Paul remembered them. He knew they were doing okay. You know, every church in our day and in our generation, every church that just seems to be getting on fine, just tickety-boo, ticking over.

Every church needs prayer. Every church. In our prayers. Not just the persecuted church. But every church. Every church. And in our prayers and in our quiet times with the Lord, oftentimes, as you heard me pray there, we pray for those who are unwell.

[7 : 17] Yes, of course we do. We pray for our children. We pray for those that are going through troubled times. But what about those Christians that, on the outside, things are going okay?

They're doing well. Spiritually, they're mature. Things are going okay. They're serving. They're working. Do you not think the devil can get into that?

Mature Christian, too. Of course he can. Of course he can. We must pray. We must pray not only for those who are less fortunate than ourselves, but we must pray for all those that seem to be doing just okay as well.

And that is what Paul is doing here. A full, encompassed prayer life. All in my remembrance of you, he says.

He's not only showing us how to pray with thankfulness, but to pray with remembrance. You know, somebody once said, how we pray for each other will determine how we treat each other.

[8 : 26] And that is true. That is true. So Paul is teaching us to be thankful every time we pray. And to instill within our minds a discipline of remembrance.

He gives thanks with joy. Look at verse 4. That word joy is in the Philippian letter more than any other letter in the New Testament.

Always in every prayer of mine for you, making my prayer with joy. He had this burning zeal and joy within his heart for this little Philippian church.

This little insignificant Philippian church. He's in prison. For all he knows, he could be executed very soon.

And yet he has a joy within his heart. You know, it's only Jesus that can give you that joy within your heart.

[9 : 33] And within my heart. And within Paul's heart. This world cannot give you a joy. It's impossible for this world.

It might give you satisfaction up to a point. But it is only Jesus. And it's only being united with Jesus. And accepting Jesus as your Lord and as your Savior.

And saying, Lord, I am your servant. Do us with me as you will. It is only then that you can have real joy. And real passion. And real love in your heart.

Not only for those within your family. But for the wider church. We are to love one another in the bonds of Christian love and unity. And Paul is teaching us how to do it here.

You know, you could go to South America tomorrow on your own. And not know anyone. And you could walk into a church that was a true church.

[10 : 34] And you would be loved by the people in that church. Why? Because they have that same joy within their hearts as well as you do.

No matter where we go in this world. And many of you who are missionaries in this church. People testify to that. When you see strangers coming through here.

There should be a bond. A love. Because we have a joy for each other within our hearts. Because we belong to Jesus Christ.

He has that joy within his heart. And in verse 5 he tells us why. Because we are all partners in the gospel. Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

[11 : 31] They are partners with Paul in the gospel from the very start. As soon as he went into Philippi and this little church grew by the power of the Holy Spirit.

They have loved Paul. They have provided for Paul. They have prayed for Paul. As they share in the good news of Jesus Christ.

That is what binds them together. It's the gospel that bind Paul and the Philippians together. It's the gospel that bind you and me together. It's the gospel that binds all of God's people together.

The good news of the gospel. So what is this model church which is shining in Paul's generation done to deserve such high accolades from the apostle?

You know the apostle was a man who didn't mess with his words. Read the book of Galatians. Who has bewitched you, he says to them.

[12 : 32] Those false teachers who have come in, I hope they emasculate themselves. He was a man of strong words and he meant what he said. And here he is saying that he has joy within his heart for those in the Philippian church who are partners in the gospel.

He is not just saying it to be polite. In other words. He is saying it because he means it. He means it. You know Philippi had been the first church Paul had founded in Europe.

Paul had met Lydia. Do you remember? And you will remember that Paul had also been in prison there due to the riot that almost started. And you remember the fortune telling slave girl.

Go all the way back to Acts 16 and you'll see Paul in Philippi. So Paul was no stranger to the Philippians. And now he was in prison, chained to a Roman guard, which we'll look at tonight, God willing.

And he's writing this letter to them as they have sent a gift to him. They have sent a financial gift to him as well. And it's been delivered by a fellow called Epaphroditus.

[13 : 39] And Epaphroditus had travelled all the way from Rome to Philippi on foot with this gift and these messages of love from Paul to the Philippians.

And Epaphroditus had nearly died on the way. He had nearly lost his life taking this gift to Paul. And now Epaphroditus is well and he's sent back with Paul's letter to Philippi.

And it's not just a thank you note. Paul is saying, I love you the same way that Christ Jesus. That is what he is saying.

They are actively supporting Paul's mission with prayer and with financial support. You see that in chapter 4 and at verse 15 of the book of Philippians.

You know, the Philippians could have easily turned their back on Paul since he was in prison. What's the point of funding a missionary who is tied up in prison? But they didn't do that.

[14 : 41] We'll look at that more tonight, God willing, as well. They could have said, oh, we don't want to be stigmatized with Paul because he's in prison. And we don't want much to do with him anymore.

No, they did not do that. They loved Paul. But primarily they loved the gospel. And they loved Jesus Christ.

So they stick with Paul. They stick with Paul. So you might ask the question, there might have been one or two in the Philippian church, you might have asked the question, well, how's Paul's mission going over in Rome?

Well, in the world's eyes it's not going very well. He's in prison. You know. But remember the Philippians have somebody in their church who was converted as a Philippian jailer.

Do you remember? Do you remember? So in the eyes of the world, Paul's mission might look like a failure. He was locked up. But the Philippians knew that even when Paul was in prison, the message of the gospel of free grace would get out.

[15 : 49] Because he was preaching to the guards and anyone who would listen. The Philippians are in partnership in the gospel with Paul.

No matter what. And they will stick with Paul. They are in fellowship. They are in koinonia. You know, if you were to go into business with somebody, you would be in fellowship with them.

You would be in partnership with them. You would share a vision for the business to flourish and do well. It's the same idea here. Our utmost aim as Christians is for the gospel to flourish.

That is what we all have in common. We're all invested in it. Because we've been arrested and gripped by the love of our Savior who died on a cross for us. And it is the least that we can do. It's the least that we can do. You see, the Philippian church was a missionary-minded church.

[17:00] They shared that same vision of getting the gospel out into the world. And Paul is thanking them for their fellowship in the gospel and for their partnership in the gospel.

They have rolled up their sleeves and they have got stuck in. And this church is shining like a beacon. Shining like a beacon in this day. It was the church that was built on prayer and it was built on love.

First of all, a love for Christ. And secondarily, a love for one another. The church that was most Christ-like. We all share that same vision, don't we?

Don't we? You might say to yourself, well, I don't do much. You pray. You give. You speak to your friends about Jesus.

You try to live a life that is worthy of the gospel. You're invested in it. I'm invested in it. David, your minister, is invested in it.

[18:07] Elders and deacons are invested in it. The missionaries are invested in it. We're all invested in it. We should all be of one mind. And all united. That we would see sinners saved.

That we would see sinners come to faith and to repentance. And that they would not have to enter through the gates of hell when they leave this world.

That is their vision, is it not? That was Paul's vision. And it was the vision of the Philippian church. And ultimately, it was Christ's vision.

That's why he died. Give thanks always. Always. Because of God's grace. And this, verse 6, is probably one of my favorite versions in the whole of Scripture.

What does he say? And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work, and you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Do you know what he's saying there?

[19:14] He is saying to the Philippians, you are the real deal. I know you belong to Christ. I have seen your good works. I have seen you at prayer.

I see how you treat one another. I can be assured of this, that each and every one of you in this church are truly born again believers in Jesus Christ.

Do you ever doubt your salvation? Do you? Do you ever say to yourself, my sin is so great, Christ cannot forgive me?

Do you ever say that? I do. I do. Do you ever doubt that Christ loves you? Do you ever doubt that everything that he did as he hung on that cross on Calvary, that all the work he did there cannot cover your sin and your doubt and your unbelief?

Do you ever doubt? I do. Put your hands up if you doubt. I do. There are days where you doubt, where we doubt. Come to this verse. And what does it say? He who has begun a good work, and you will see it through at the day of Christ Jesus.

[20:21] What he is saying here is when Christ enters into the heart of a sinner and arrests a sinner and puts a sinner on their knees and they cry out for mercy and they're saved through his blood.

They are saved for time and for eternity. Not might be saved. The work of Christ on the cross of Calvary will save.

Will save. Don't wait for some word from heaven. Don't wait for some feeling within your heart. Oh yes, I think Jesus loves me today more than he loved me yesterday.

No, come to the scriptures which are God-breathed. And through this verse, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to the completion of the day of Jesus Christ.

There is your assurance. In that verse, that is your assurance. Whether you feel it or not, if you are in Christ.

[21:32] And that is what he is saying to them. And he thanks God for the grace. He thanks God. Paul thanks God for the grace that the Lord has poured out on these Philippians.

They belong to Jesus. They belong to Jesus and Paul knows it. Jesus would say you'll know them by their fruits. And Paul is certain of it.

They are servants of Christ just like he is. What does he say in verse 1? That he is a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul had been changed.

But he is still being changed. You see, he is certain that God has begun a good work in them. That is our assurance.

That Christ can never let his people go. He can never let his bride go. We may fall. We may stutter. We will sin.

[22 : 36] We may say things we ought not to say. We may do things we ought not to do. And only ourselves can see the blackness of our own hearts.

But Christ still loves us. Christ came for the ungodly. Christ. The righteous died for the unrighteous. We are all like sheep who have gone astray and done our own thing. But Christ says, when I start a work in you, it will be completed the day when I return.

Because when you are converted, and when I am converted, we are set apart and we are made holy. Whenever God says that something is holy, it is holy.

Read the Old Testament. The Levites. The Garden of Eden. The Temple. And his people. But yet, at the same time, we might look at our own hearts and we see nothing but blackness.

[23 : 49] That is because you and I are going through a process called sanctification. On the one hand, we are completely sanctified and we are made holy by God, forensically.

We are set apart for the service of Christ. But yet, we must live in this world and we will be continually transformed into the image of Jesus.

That is the process that is hard. That is the process that takes tears. That is the process where we may doubt that Christ actually loves us.

Never use your circumstances as a barometer for Christ's love for you if you are a Christian here today.

Paul is in a prison. He might very well have said, Christ has left me and abandoned me. No. No. No.

[25 : 00] That is what God's grace does for us. He saves us for himself. We are on this journey. We are pilgrims and we are just passing through.

A minister friend once told me, he says, you know this, he says, I can't give you the date where I was converted. He says, I don't know.

It was somewhere between 1960 and 1970. But he knew he belonged to Jesus. He even preached the gospel.

He had his days of doubt. Same as you do. Same as I do. We are all that work in progress. That's what we are.

We are a work in progress. Paul is thanking God for his grace. And he's certain of a commitment to Jesus and the gospel.

[26 : 01] And we too are to be thankful for all that Christ has done in our lives. And they're to pray with Christian maturity in you.

We want assurance. We want assurance.

We want assurance. Christ died for the ungodly. I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion of the day of Jesus Christ.

Life may be a struggle at times. But we must continue in this work and in this life. And the Lord will use us even with all our failings.

And we will use you and we will use me to extend this kingdom in ways that we cannot see.

[27 : 12] In ways we cannot see. The second point I'm going to end up having to do tonight. Let's pray. Eternal God, we indeed thank you for these words that we have read.

And he that began a good work shall see it through. At the day of completion. At the day of Jesus Christ. Father, we thank you for the gospel.

And we thank you, Lord, that it is by grace that we are saved. And not through our works. Lord, we look at our own hearts. And we see blackness. But yet within our hearts we have this wonderful joy. Knowing that Christ has done all that seems impossible to us. That he came to die for us and to give us life as a ransom for many.

And our prayer is, oh Lord, that we would live lives that are worthy of that gospel. Even in all our failings. And Father, that we would be infilled by your Holy Spirit.

[28 : 20] And that you would mould us and transform us into the image of Christ. Help us to be the bride of Christ. Help us to be a model church, Lord.

And to be model Christians. Even with all our baggage. And even with all our sin. And help us, Lord, to serve you. In a way that is glorifying to you.

Lord, grant to each and every one of your people here this day that assurance of salvation. We thank you, Lord. We thank you that you have prepared a place for your people. And may each and every one of us in this church today be counted among your people. May each and every one of us lay hold of Christ. And see him for who he is. And Lord, may you do that work within our lives. We thank you that you have set your people apart and they are whole. But yet in another sense, Lord, you are changing us and sanctifying us. [29 : 26] Lord, would you have your way with us here this day. And bind us once again in the bonds of Christian love and unity. To uphold one another. Keep one another. And to pray for one another. And Lord, may our day and generation see many come to faith. For that our joy may be abounding within our own hearts. Bless us and go before us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I don't want to go on to point two. I've been here. Ben. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right. Looks like respect are some of the ones we where they may be zap ■. Even if you were put on, please. Amen. häufig cam is what they're going to■■ up. And they may be on a spot of the other. In the beginning, they are going to get up the other of their homes. With me is a also going to do that. The people of the new town get very cute with us. And I think with a little bit of our ■ Libraries of a new life to immer king says. There are some little groups in California, they may be lauders. Yeah.