

## Philippians 1:1–6

1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,

5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

## He Who Began a Good Work in You

### Philippians 1.1-6

Surprisingly, when the Apostle Paul took up the task of writing this letter from his prison cell in Rome to the church at Philippi, he wrote a letter filled with joy. Paul wrote about who he was and why he was thankful.

#### I. Who I Am (v. 1-2)

#### II. Why I Am Thankful (v. 3-6)

#### I. Who I Am (v. 1-2)

***“Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:***

***Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:1-2)***

A. Although the Apostle Paul was not a stranger to this church, he still wants to introduce himself and Timothy, his assistant apostle, to them again. ***“Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:1–6)*** Paul wanted the Philippians to

understand that Paul thought of himself and his co-laborer in the Lord as slaves of Jesus Christ.

1. Slaves were very common in the Roman Empire. A slave was someone owned by another. The slave was committed to the master's will. A slave had no rights or freedom apart from his or her master.
2. Paul told the Philippians he did not possess his own life. He was the Lord's to do with as He pleased. Paul believed this even if it meant sitting in a Roman prison not knowing whether he would live or die.
3. I wonder, "Do we think of ourselves also as slaves of Jesus Christ?" Sure, we are sons of God with the rights of inheritance, but are we at the same time His slaves? Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, "***Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***" We are His because He bought us at the price of His own blood.

B. If Paul thought of himself as a slave, how did he view this church? They are God's holy ones. They are those whom God set out as His own in a special way, and in whom He was working to change them into the image of His beloved Son.

1. Think about how Paul saw another church in **1 Corinthians 1:1-2**. "***Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:***" The Corinthians were called "saints," because God called them to be His in a special way.
2. The Lord Jesus calls us to this position as one of His holy ones, then He begins to work in us to make us into the holy ones He has called us to be.

C. In addition to the saints, Paul also greeted the leadership of the Philippian church as “the bishops and the deacons”.

## II. Why I Am Thankful (v. 3-6)

***“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:3-6)***

A. We catch a glimpse of the depth of Paul’s love for this church when he begins to speak of his thankfulness to God for the Philippian believers. We read in **verses 3-4**, ***“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.”***

1. The Philippian believers held fast to the truth Paul proclaimed to them.

2. Paul expressed his thankfulness by praying for them often. Every time he remembered them, he prayed for them. This is a wonderful discipline to develop. We need to cultivate the practice of praying for the people that we think about.

B. Besides his thankfulness for the Philippian believers’ spiritual growth and progress in the faith, Paul gave thanks for two other things. First, he thanked God for the Philippian’s fellowship in the gospel.

1. Some think this refers to the Philippian’s sending gifts to him to support him in his ministry. While the gifts may be a part of the fellowship Paul thought about, they helped him in the Gospel when he worked on starting the church there, and throughout the work and ministry of these people.

2. Paul wrote about their own sharing together with him in all that the Gospel brings us.

- (1) They shared together in the blessing of a relationship with the same Savior that Paul walked with.

- (2) They shared together in serving the same Lord and Master.

(3) They shared in His love.

(4) They knew the working of His life changing power in their lives.

I don't think money was on Paul's mind at all until the last chapter of this epistle.

C. Second, Paul was thankful that God who had begun this wonderful work in their hearts was not done with them. ***“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*** God was still working on them and in them.

1. Often, we think salvation is the beginning and the end of everything. While evangelism is immensely important, notice Paul's letters are seldom evangelistic. Instead, they focus on how we are to grow up in the salvation God has so graciously provided us. If we are growing in Him, we will be evangelizing for Him. You can't effectively lead someone to know a person to whom you have been barely introduced.

2. What did Paul tell us about our task in ***Ephesians 4:11-13? “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”***

3. Paul gave thanks to God because once He saves us it isn't the end. God who began a work in us won't let us go until He comes for us again. Has He begun such a work in you? Are we actively involved in seeking to grow up into Him who is the Head? He will not drop us, once He has saved us.

Where are we as we compare ourselves as a church and as believers to this Philippian church?

Are we a church that is serious about doing business with God?

Are we a people who are actively sharing together in the fellowship in the Gospel?

Are we sharing the Gospel with others? Is our priority to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Let us then continue getting to know our Savior even better so that the Lord might be pleased with us.

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