

He Will Finish His Work

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Philippians 1:1-6

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Now here is our text for today, Philippians chapter one, Philippians chapter one. I am going to be speaking from just one verse of Scripture. Let me give it to you. Paul said in Philippians one verse six, Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will finish it, will finish it, perform it, perfect it." Now that is the topic. "He will Finish his Work." That is our subject. "He will Finish his Work." That is what Paul is saying. "I am confident that he, our Lord, which hath begun a good work in you, he will finish it. He will perfect it up to the day of his return, until the day of Jesus Christ."

Now the apostle Paul came to Philippi. This is the Church to which he is writing this letter, the Church at Philippi, it is the Philippians. And he came to Philippi to preach the gospel.

Do you remember the vision? Do you remember when Paul tried to go here, there and yonder to preach and the Lord said, "No"? And that night a man appeared to him in a vision, a man from Macedonia and said to Paul, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Now Philippi was in Macedonia. Philippi is the chief city of Macedonia, military city. And this is where Paul went to preach the gospel to Philippi.

Now you are familiar with that. You know Lydia, when Paul went down by the riverside where the women were gathered to pray and he preached the gospel to them and the first convert, the first person to come to know the Lord in Philippi was Lydia of whom it is written, the Lord opened her heart.

I'll tell you another one that you will be familiar with, that is the Philippian jailer. You remember that Lydia was converted and then the young lady who was possessed of demons and made a great deal of money for her owners, her masters, and Paul cast the demon spirits out of her and she came to know Christ and these fellows got awfully upset and had Paul put in prison. And while he was in prison the Lord revealed the gospel to the Philippian jailer.

So we have Lydia, we have the young woman and we have the Philippian jailer who were converted at Philippi. These people were the beginning of the Church at Philippi.

Now Paul is in prison in Rome and he is writing to this church at Philippi and I want you to look, now, at the book. If you will open your Bibles to Philippians chapter one. And the very first verse says this. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ." Paul and Timothy was with Paul. And Paul includes him in the salutation. He says, "Paul and Timothy servants of Christ. To the saints, to all the saints."

And that is what believers are called. They are called saints. Every believer is a saint, sanctified by the blood of Christ, sanctified by the Spirit of God, sanctified by the Word of God. And he is writing to all the saints at Philippi with their pastors and with their deacons.

And verse two he says, "Grace and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

And then in verse three he says this. Paul loved these people. They were special to him. And he says in verse three, "Every time I think of you I thank God for you. Every time that I think of you, every time you come to my mind I thank God for you."

And then he said another thing in verse four and five. And he said, "Every time I think of you I pray for you. When I think of you I thank God for you. And every time I think of you I pray for you and in every prayer I thank God for your fellowship. I thank God for your fellowship in the gospel."

They stood with him in the gospel. They encouraged him and helped him in the gospel and he said, "I thank God for your fellowship in the gospel of Christ from the first day until now." It was an unbroken fellowship, an unbroken friendship from the first time that he visited this place and these people came to know Christ. Their fellowship was unbroken unto this day.

Now that brings us to verse six and that is the verse I want us to carefully and prayerfully look at today, verse six. And then he says concerning this church, "Being confident..." And that word is certain, being certain, confident or certain of this very thing.

Now what is Paul certain of? Well, it is the very thing of which he is confident. Well, now you listen. He said, "Being certain of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it, perfect it, finish it, until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, my friends, you all just draw a circle around that verse. You ought to type it on a piece of paper and put it in a prominent place so you can read it, if you are a believer, if you are a child of God. Because I tell you. If you can lay hold of what the apostle is saying in this verse of Scripture it will give you great comfort. It will give you great confidence. It will give you great assurance. Being confident. That is what Paul said, being assured. Being confident, being certain of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you, he will perform it. He will perfect it, he will finish it, he will finish his

work. If he has begun a work, he will finish it until the day that the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to this earth.

Now I'll tell you what I am going to do. I am going to take this verse almost word for word and deal with several very outstanding words, prominent words.

Now the first word is he. He being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you. Whose work is it? Who began the work? Salvation is not our work. Salvation is his work. He that hath begun a good work in you. That is...that is the title I gave the message. He will finish his work.

You see, salvation is of the Lord. That is what Titus wrote in Titus three verse five. He said, "It is not by works of righteousness which we have done. It is not our work that saves us. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he hath saved us. He hath called us. He hath redeemed us."

I want you to listen to something that occurred to me today in regard to this statement right here. Whose work is it? Whose work is it? This matter of the salvation of a sinner's soul. Whose work is it?

I looked through the Scripture and I found two groups of people set forth, who set forth their claims after death in eternity. Two groups of people in eternity after death, after judgment who set forth their claims. The first group is found in Matthew seven. And they stood before God and they said, "Lord, we preached in your name. We did many wonderful works in your name. We cast out demons in your name."

What was his response? That is their claim. "This is our work. We preached. We built churches. We did wonderful works in your name.

And then will I say unto them, "Depart from me. I never knew you."

Our works...it is not by works of righteousness which we have done.

But what about the second group? Others stood before the Lord and they said, "Unto him, unto him who sitteth upon the throne, unto him who loved us, who washed us with his blood, who made us kings and priests to our God. Unto him be the glory."

And Christ said, "Come ye blessed, enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

Whose work is it? He that hath begun a good work. Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth.

Romans three verse 20 says, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

It is not my hold on Christ that saves me. It is Christ. I hold to Christ because he is my Savior. But it is not my hold that saves me. It is his hold of me. It is not my prayers that save me. It is Christ, the one to whom we pray, in whose name we pray. It is not even faith that saves. It is Christ in whom we rest, to whom we look. Do you see that? It is not an act of faith that redeems men. It is an act of Christ that saves men. Faith didn't die for me. He did. Faith doesn't intercede for me. He does. It is not in my feelings. It is Christ.

Our business is not with self. If we want to find cause for our redemption and cause for God's mercy and grace we don't look in here. We don't look at our works. We don't look at our deeds. We look to him, our Mediator at the right hand of God. He which hath begun a good work.

Well, notice the next word. He that hath begun a good work in you, he will finish it. But it is not finished yet. It is not finished yet. He hath begun the work. This is talking to living people.

This Scripture is talking to people who were in Philippi at that time. They were going about their work, their business making a living, raising their families and worshipping God. And the work wasn't finished. It was begun.

Now as far as...listen to me. As far as the curse of the law is concerned it is finished because Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. There is no more curse upon the believer. That work is finished. As far as our righteousness before God is concerned it is finished. He is our righteousness. That is what it says. He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him already. Already the curse is removed, finished. Already the righteousness is ours, finished. As far as judgment against sin is concerned it is finished.

That's right. There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ. All judgment is taken away in Christ. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us. As far as the curse of the law, it is gone, finished. As far as righteousness, it is finished. As far as judgment, it is finished. Our sins are purged.

But wait a minute. We are yet in this body. We are yet in this flesh. We are not yet glorified. We haven't yet died. We haven't yet been raised from the tomb and we haven't yet been made like Christ.

Oh, beloved, now are we sons of God. What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called right now the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is and be like him.

Now then that is when it will be finished. But it is not yet. He... whose work is it? It is his from alpha to omega, from beginning to end, author and finisher of our faith.

He which hath begun a good work in your. All right it is a good work. What kind of work is it? It is a good work. It is a good work and it is in you.

Now all that our God does is good. Everything that God does is perfect. Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above from the Father and this work, this saving work, this redeeming work is a good work, it is an eternal work, it is a blessed work. He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And it is a work in you.

Now listen carefully. Listen very carefully. Salvation is not just a work for us. You know we are always say, "Christ died for my sins." That is true. Christ obeyed the law for me. That is true. And Christ put away all my transgressions as my substitute. That's true. He chose us. He obeyed the law for us. He gave us a perfect righteousness. He died and put away our sins. He called us by his gospel. He adopted us into his family and made us his children. But Paul said he hath begun a good work not just for you, in your room and stead, but in you, in you. The love of God is shed abroad in you, in your heart.

This work of salvation is a work in us. What did he say in Jeremiah? I will give you a new heart. That is in here. He gave me a new record that's true. He gave me a new standing. He gave me a new family, but he gave me a new heart and he gave me a new spirit, his Spirit. And he said, "I'll write my law in your heart so that you will love it and I will write my law in your mind so that you will think on it. And if any man be in Christ he is a new creature."

Are you familiar with words like this? Regeneration. That is a work in you, in you. Substitution. I know that is a work for you. But regeneration is a work in you. You heard the work conversion? That is a work in us. Justification, that is a word for us. But sanctification is a word in us and a new nature.

John Newton said this. You, some of you read the life story of John Newton, the slave trader who was brought to a knowledge of Christ, a famous hymn writer, a famous preacher. He said this. He said, "I am not what I ought to be and I know that and I am not what I want to be and I am not what I expect to be, but I thank God I am not what I used to be because he hath begun a good work in me."

That is what Paul said, "And when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to call me by his grace and reveal his Son in me, not just to me, but in me."

And I tell you. If a man is in Christ he has a new spirit. He has a new heart. He has a new nature. He is a new man, created in Christ Jesus. He has got a new attitude. That's right, a new direction, a new family. God does a work in us, in us.

All right, now. Notice the next word. Being... "I am certain of this," he said. "I am absolutely confident of this that he, almighty God which hath begun that good work, that saving work, that eternal work in you, he will perform it. He will. He started it. He will fin-

ish it. He began the work. He will complete the work. He will perfect it. He will perform it. He will finish it in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ when our Lord comes again.”

Now our hope, this is my hope. I believe it is your hope, is to continue in the faith, continue in the faith of our Lord. By God’s grace I pray that you and I both will continue in faith. Never depart from the faith of Christ, that we will be able by his grace to die in faith like those men in Hebrews 11. These all died in faith, Moses and Abraham and Enoch, not Enoch, but Abel and all these men died in faith. I want to die in faith.

Let me die the death of the righteous. And I want to be raised from the dead. Don’t you? In the day he comes I want to have a part in the first resurrection and I want to be like Christ. Now then who is going to do all that for me? I can’t do it. Two questions are raised here. Who is able to do all this for me? I can’t do it. And the second question is: If one is found who is able is he willing to do it for a fellow like me and you? That’s the two propositions that need to be dealt with. Is he able? Who is able? Who is able to raise us, change our vile bodies and make them like the Son of God? Who is able to finish this work? I can’t. And secondly, is he willing?

Well, I tell you who is able. He. He that hath begun a good work in you, he shall, he shall perform it. He is able. He is able to do. Abraham said all that he promised. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. He is fully able. He is able to keep us from falling, from perishing. He is able to keep that, Paul said, which I have committed to him.

And listen. He is able to raise our vile bodies and make them like unto his glorious body. He is able. Ah, turn him loose. I have found a ransom.

If a man sin against a man who is going to stand for him? What do the old prophets say? Let a man stand for him. But if a man sin against God who is going to stand for him? No man is able. No angel is able. No creature is able. But Christ is able. He has somewhat to offer. He is a high priest who has somewhat to offer, his own blood.

Well here is the second question. Is he willing? Is he willing? Well, the Father said he would The Father said in Isaiah 46, “I have spoken it. I will bring it to pass.”

God who promised eternal life cannot lie. He said, “I have spoken it. I will bring it to pass. I purposed it. I will do it. You can rest assured.”

The Son said he would. He said, “All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will...I will in no wise cast out. See, I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me that all that see the Son and believe on him might have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day. That is my Father’s will. I will do it.”

And then Paul said he would. He said, “I am certain. I am confident, absolutely confident that he which hath begun a good work in you, he will perfect it. He will finish it in the

day of Christ Jesus.”

Now, then. I am going to ask you four questions and I will close, four serious questions. I want you to think about this. What I am saying is he that hath...what Paul is saying. He that hath begun in you that good work of salvation and redemption, he will finish it. If he began it, he will finish it, complete it in the day of Christ.

Now here is the four questions. Number one, if God does not finish the work of redemption which he hath begun, if he saves a man and then for some reason or another casts him out, what do we do with his promises, all the promises of God when he said, “I’ll never leave you. I will never forsake you. Lo I am with you always even to the end of the earth”?

What about John 10 when he said, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them I must bring and they shall hear my voice and they shall be one fold and one shepherd. My sheep hear my voice. They follow me. I give them eternal life. They will never perish. Neither can any man pluck them out of my hand”? What are we going to do with those promises if he doesn’t finish this work that he began? See what I am asking?

If he doesn’t finish the work, what about all these promises?

All right. Here is the second question. If God does not finish the work which he began... I say that God saved me. You say that God saved you. All right. If he doesn’t finish that work what about his attributes?

“Preacher, what are attributes?”

His character, his characteristics, his personality. What is God’s character? Well, he is all wise. Well, if he started something and can’t finish it he is not very smart. Where is his wisdom to purpose and fail, to start something and not complete it? Where is his power? Where is this almighty? Is he not? Is he part mighty God or almighty God? Where is his power if he can’t finish what he starts?

What about his love? He said, “Having loved his own he loved them to the end.” Well, he quit loving them.

What about his immutability?

You say, “What’s that?”

“I am the Lord, I change not.”

He is the same yesterday, today and forever. If he starts a work and doesn’t finish it, he changes.

Where is his justice? He said our sins were paid for and they are not.

Where is his mercy? "I will be merciful to sinners," he said. He loves to save sinners. But a fellow sins and he drops him. A human father won't do that. A human mother won't do that. Send my boy to jail and I will still love him, but one of God's children commits a sin, he casts him into hell. Where is his mercy? Where is his love? Where is his immutability? It can't be.

Third question. If he does not give the Lord Jesus Christ what he paid for and what he bought, where is his justice? Where is the justice of God? He said in his Word, "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things, all things that Christ bought, all things that Christ paid for?" Where is the justice? He put away our sins and he called them back. He says you are forgiven and then he says you are not forgiven. He says you are saved and then he turns and now he says you are not saved. Where is his justice?

I tell you when sins are put away they are remembered no more.

Here is the fourth question. If he does not finish the work which he began, what of the intercession of Christ? Our Lord Jesus Christ prays for us. He intercedes for us. Scripture says he ever liveth to make intercession. He is asking the Father for the children that he gave him. And if some of them are lost God didn't hear his prayer, didn't answer his prayer and that is an impossibility.

I like what this old timer wrote in a song. Listen. "My name from the palms of his hands eternity will not erase. Impressed on his heart my name remains in indelible grace. Yes, I to the end will endure just as sure as the promise is given. More happy, but not more secure are the glorified saints up in heaven."

Yes. He which hath begun a good work in you, he will finish it on the day that he returns.