



# KING'S CHAPEL

## Daily Devotional - Philippians Study

Week 1 - Day 4

### Approaching God

The sixteenth century sailor and Christian Sir Francis Drake once prayed this prayer: “O Lord God, when Thou givest to Thy servants to endeavor upon any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same unto the end, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through Him who for the finishing of Thy work laid down His life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Drake was certainly a “finisher” as well as a “beginner.” As well as being a legend for his military exploits, he was also known for sailing around the entire world. Once you’ve set off on a journey like that, there’s no point stopping halfway. This is the confidence Paul has at the beginning of his letter to the Philippians. That God himself is a finisher of that which he starts. The particular work which he has begun, and will finish, (in their lives and in ours) is entirely a work of grace. Take a moment as you start this study today through the first verses of Philippians to thank God for the work he has started in you, and that this is a work of grace which he will carry onto completion in your life. Ask him to make you not only a “beginner” but a “finisher” in the work and relationships he calls you into as well.”

### Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Philippians 1:1-6

**Paul's letter starts out in the typical form of a Roman-Greco letter of the period. The author identifies himself, his audience, and offers an introductory greeting.**

*koinonia - the greek word Paul uses in vs. 5 which is translated as “partnership.” It means intimate fellowship, a common sharing of life amongst people of jointly held values and mission. It communicated a deep bond of not only friendship but also protection and care for one another. It is this affection fellowship that characterized the first church in Acts 2:38-42.*

**Philippians 1:1-6** - **1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** 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.

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. Which words or phrases stand out to you as significant, important, or unusual? Is anything repeated or emphasized?

## Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

- What does it mean that Paul refers to himself and Timothy as “servants” of Christ? Why is that significant?
- What is the significance of Paul addressing the believers in Philippi as “saints in Christ Jesus?”
- What good work does verse 6 refer to? Who began the good work and how do you know if the good work has begun in your life?

## Meditation & Reflection Questions

- What key truth are you taking away from today’s study? Why might God be showing you this truth today?
- How is Jesus **AND/OR** my need for him shown in this passage?

## Close in Prayer:

Thank the Lord that he sees you as a “hagios” or saint in Christ Jesus. Ask the Lord to help you to enter in and experience a deeper sense of partnership in the gospel with those in your church community. Pray that he might finish the good work he has started within you and those close to you in Christ.

### Commentary on Philippians 1:1-6

**1:1**- Paul starts his letter as all letters of that time were commonly written. He uses a form where things are told in the following order: author, recipient, a greeting or blessing is given, then there is thanksgiving and/or a prayer. He includes Timothy for several reasons. (He may have been the secretary who wrote the letter for Paul.)<sup>1</sup> Timothy was his partner in planting the church in Philippi in Acts 16. Paul was planning to send him to the church again and wanted the church to know that he came in Paul's authority, with his doctrine and blessing. Paul does an amazing job of setting up his protégé for success through measures such as these. Timothy was Paul's son in the faith, who traveled on several of the missionary journeys with Paul. Paul often sent him to check up on and help churches they had started.

Paul typically refers to himself as an apostle in the intro to most of his letters to secure his authority so that all will remember to listen to his words as being divinely inspired. He does not do so here for several reasons. One, he has no need to. The Philippian church is obviously so close to Paul that they love and value him (as expressed by so many financial gifts). They do not have to be reminded. They stand ready to listen. Second, this letter is not mainly for the purpose of setting forth doctrine or addressing a problem, so Paul does not have to "wear" his authority as heavily. Lastly, he may have reframed so as to put Timothy on more equal ground with himself.

He defines himself and Timothy as **servants**. This word described slaves, those who were fully committed to serving their master. They were both committed servants of Christ Jesus. Paul probably refers to Him in this manner because he knew Him first as the risen Messiah and then as Jesus, rather than as Jesus first, and then the risen Messiah as the other apostles did. He is the Lord of their lives and the foundation of their ministry, faith, love, joy, truth, and this letter.

The letter is written to all the saints in Christ Jesus. "**Saints**" is never used to refer to an individual in the Bible, but only to groups of believers. This shows that the word is not to be reserved for the super-spiritual few. It is to be applied to all the true church. Paul even uses this term to refer to the sinful Corinthians. Whenever someone is saved, and thus in Christ, they are a saint by virtue of His righteousness and not their own. This refers to our positional, legal righteousness. He writes to all the saints in Philippi, which seems to indicate that though there probably were many different small groups meeting in houses that they were joined to form one church in that city.

The picture of an established organized church is correct because they had officers. Deacons are the servants and administrators of physical needs. Elders or overseers or bishops are those that rule and lead and teach. They are specifically mentioned to show honor.<sup>2</sup> They probably were responsible for the collection that was taken for Paul.<sup>3</sup> Also, they are responsible to see that the truth taught here is applied in the church.<sup>4</sup>

**1:2** - This is Paul's typical introduction. It is the same in all his epistles except for 1 and 2 Timothy where he adds mercy. It is not just a flowery greeting. It also has a theological sense. "Grace" refers to the unmerited favor that began our entire salvation experience. "Peace" refers to the peace we have between ourselves and God. Peace also refers to all the continued goodness that we experience from God daily. It is a sign of our continuing experience of this on-going salvation. This grace and peace

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<sup>1</sup> William Hendriksen, Philippians, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 2002). p.44.

<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, Philippians, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker,2003.) p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Martin, Philippians, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.) p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Hendricksen, p. 49.

comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul refers to both probably because with many Jews still in the church it was still important to continually point out that Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus are one in unity and power and authority (2:9-11 and Isaiah 45:22- 23). Both are equally God and equally responsible for salvation and equally deserving of worship. God is most importantly our Father. Jesus is primarily known as our Lord. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned probably because He was not at the center of the controversy over the Godhead.

**1:3** - Paul dives in with a prayer that starts with thanksgiving. It can be a great encouragement to tell others how you are praying for them, especially how they are causing you joy. Paul says that every time that he remembers this church he has joy. All of his memories of them bring joy to His mind. This is especially noteworthy in light of the fact that when they first brought the gospel to Philippi, they had been beaten with rods and put in stocks (Acts 16:22-24). Paul can even look on those memories with joy because he saw how it brought the fruit of salvation. It is similar to Acts 5:41.

**1:4** - The “always” denotes that he prays for them regularly and continually, as we should for those whom we have responsibility. It seems to say that every memory he has of them turns into a prayer for them. He is flooded with joy in all of his prayers for them. He has almost a giddy sense of love and affection for them.

**1:5** - The main reason that he has such joy is because of their “partnership” or participation with him in the gospel from the day of their salvation until now. They had participated through several financial gifts (4:10,15, 16), sharing in his hardships (maybe they suffered persecution as well, as he did in Philippi in the first days 4:14), in proclaiming the gospel, and in the fellowship of experiencing God’s grace and loving one another. Mainly the word refers to a mutual shared experience. They had shared in experiencing and spreading the gospel.

**1:6** - Not only does he have joy and thanksgiving in his heart towards God because of their financial support. He rejoices and gives thanks because he is so sure, confident, fully persuaded, and moved by the evidence to trust that they are real believers. His mind is pacified and at ease about their salvation. He is sure that God started a genuine work in their hearts years ago. Therefore, he is confident that God will finish it. God will continue to sanctify them and all true saints, even when we cannot see or sense it. His sanctifying hand is always, slowing but surely moving his children forward towards holiness and Christ-likeness, even though there will be many ups and downs along the long road. He is now in the process of completing it. This sanctifying process will continue, moving unstopably forward in all true believers until the day of Christ, when He returns or calls them home. When we see him face to face at the final judgment and the consummation of all things, the work will then be totally complete and perfected.

How can Paul be so sure, especially in light of truths such as 1 John 2:19, Matthew 7:14-21, and 2 Corinthians 13:5? He sees their fruit. He sees that in every possible way, even in hard times, persecution and poverty (4:14 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-4), they participate with him in the experience and the mission of the gospel. For a further study on perseverance of the saints, the doctrine that all believers in whom God starts a saving work will definitely have it finished by God, see: John 6:37, 44, Romans 8:30-39, 1 Corinthians 1:8, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Peter 1:3-5.