

SERMON ARTICLE / Part 1

# THE JOY OF A FAITHFUL GOSPEL CHURCH

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-6

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## **Title: The Joy of a Faithful Gospel Church (Part 1)**

### **Philippians 1:1-6**

#### **Sermon by Pastor Rommel Insigne**

**Introduction:** What does having joy in the church look like? Who gives joy to His church? What makes a church joyful and faithful? How to be part of a joyful and faithful church? How should a church become joyful and joyous? What makes us joyful? How do you have joy in life? Is it our money in the bank that gives us joy? The medication you take that makes you sober and gives you instant relief? What makes you to rejoice in life? How can you attain and experience true joy? Taking medicine cannot fix our minds and turn them into joy. Running away or self-isolation cannot turn our loneliness into joy. Hopping from one church to another cannot bring joy to our hearts. But only the words of God can turn our depression, worry and loneliness. True joy is found in Christ. A true gospel church will have joy in Christ and live out the joy of Christ in public and in private.

**Historical background:** The book of Philippians was a letter to the church in Philippi on how to rejoice in the Lord. The book of Philippians was written by the apostle Paul in A.D. 61-63 from his imprisonment in Rome. This was the time he already finished his 3rd missionary journey, and his stint in Rome was his fourth, as several scholars would say. In this letter, Paul disclosed his imprisonment, his condition, and the location of his whereabouts. He was staying in the palace guards near Ceasar's Palace. This is a letter of joy and commendation to the church in Philippi despite not having Paul as their pastor. In the midst of trials and testings in the church and personal life, the church was striving to have faithful overseers, deacons and members serving Christ. That is why this letter is a personal letter of Paul having joy in his heart, knowing that the church is faithful and an excellent example to other churches. Paul encouraged the church in Philippi to continue their faithfulness to God and the Lord Jesus Christ in their good works and support to other churches and, most especially, to Paul as a prisoner in Rome.

How can you rejoice? Was Paul credible to say to us to rejoice always? You are about to be sentenced to die at the hands of pagan people. You are separated from your church and missionary work. Stripped of freedom and comfort. Falsely accused by religious leaders. Unfair treatment from the Roman government and religious pagan leaders. No support, no superannuation, no medical benefit, no dental and eye care. Accused by false teachers and prophets as a weak apostle. Doctrinally issues in the churches. People are living in immorality, adultery, idolatry, murder etc etc. How can you rejoice?

That is why the word "**Joy**" was mentioned by Paul in regularity. In Greek, joy is CHARA. The word "to rejoice" is mentioned 11 times in the book of Philippians. In the entire New Testament, the action verb rejoice in Greek is CHAIRO and was mentioned 96 times. The noun joy is 59 times. In the book of Philippians, 13 times, both words rejoice and joy were mentioned. Why this number? This is to encourage the church not to forget to rejoice and must continue to rejoice despite Paul's imprisonment and absence. The spiritual trials and persecutions the church was going through and the poverty of the church should remain joyful in the Lord. Have joy! Look at me as implied in Paul's letter. I have joy in the Lord and continue to show the church what it means to rejoice. Read this letter, and you will know what rejoicing means. In this letter of Paul to the Philippians, you and I will be encouraged by God and His Holy Spirit to rejoice in the Lord and have joy in our hearts always in trials and testings in life and ministry.

“The book of Philippians teaches that the Christian life focuses on seeking Christ and the pursuit of intimacy with God. It is devoting oneself to knowing Jesus Christ, and one measure of spiritual maturity is the degree to which this pursuit becomes our consuming focus and desire.” Nelson’s complete book of Bible maps & charts: Old and New Testaments (Rev. and updated ed.). (1996).

Now, let us examine his letter of joy. What does it mean to have joy in the Lord and in the church?

### **1) The Joy of having grace and peace from God (Philippians 1:1-2)**

**1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Let us read verse 1, **Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.** Paul started his letter with an introduction or greeting that Timothy and himself are just ordinary fellow believers and fellow sufferers of the Gospel. Paul introduces themselves as slaves, having nothing in this world to boast about—not better than the church in Philippi. This is a humble and humbling statement from Paul, who called themselves slaves of Jesus Christ!

Who is Paul, and who is Timothy, who called themselves slaves of Christ? How did they become believers and slaves of Christ? Let us learn who Paul is. Paul was a Hebrew boy who, growing up, followed the laws of Moses. He was an educated man and became one of the teachers of the law. He was even under the teaching mentorship of Gamaliel. Who is Gamaliel? A renowned Jewish teacher. He was a highly respected master teacher of Jewish Scriptures. He was awarded as true Rabban (president of the Sanhedrin like a senate president) who was like the classical patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses). He (Gamiel), in a way, contributed to or protected Peter and the apostles in their preaching of the Gospel so as not to harm them.

Paul came to know the Lord on the road to Damascus. He was about to kill and imprison all followers of the Way (Jesus Christ). But the Lord stopped him, blinded his eyes, and confronted him on the way to Damascus. We can learn the account in the book of Acts 9:1-19. That was the start of his journey of faith in Jesus Christ and the calling of Paul to be a witness for Christ to the Gentile world. That he will suffer in the hands of kings and governors and religious leaders and then die for Christ as a faithful martyr. When Jesus healed him, Paul right away went with Ananias and was baptised in water.

Paul became a faithful follower of Christ, a missionary and an apostle of Jesus Christ. A true witness, a preacher, a teacher, a writer, a pastor and a church planter. He spread God’s word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and planted churches. He met Timothy in one of his missionary journeys, and they became partners in spreading the Gospel. How many churches were planted by Paul? Some scholars said that around 14 churches. But there is no specific number mentioned in the Scriptures. Like how many churches in Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, and Colossae) for the span of 13 years of missionary work (a total of 3 missionary journeys). Paul wrote the books of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. (13 books). Many scholars believe Paul also wrote the Book of Hebrews. He is one of God’s instruments for why we are here today. Of course, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we got saved and became disciples of Jesus Christ through Paul’s writings. In his final life and ministry, he was imprisoned and beheaded in Rome outside the city walls of Rome.

Who is Timothy, whom Paul called a slave of Christ? How did he become a believer and slave of Christ? Obviously, Timothy was one of the converts of Paul and became a spiritual son in the faith, a faithful companion in the ministry and in mission. A known evangelist, missionary and pastor. Born in Lystra. His father was Greek, and his mother, Eunice, was Jewish. He heard the Gospel from Paul's preaching, got converted to Christ, and became a loyal companion of Paul in his missionary journey and church planting work. Paul mentioned Timothy several times and even personally wrote letters to Timothy (his beloved and faithful child in the Lord). Timothy saw and witnessed not only Paul's ministry but even his suffering and death. The tradition said about Timothy's church life that Timothy became a bishop and a pastor in Ephesus. Timothy was also a well-known evangelist and a faithful slave of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote his letter to Timothy to encourage him not to be ashamed of the Gospel. Timothy was also arrested and travelled many rough roads and places for the sake of the Gospel. Served in the church for many years. Paul seems to mention Timothy because Timothy was with him in Rome while writing his letter to the church in Philippi. With all the faithfulness, achievements, and commitment of Timothy alongside him, they called themselves and introduced themselves to the believers in Philippi slaves or DOULOI (plural and DOULOS singular form). Paul mentioned he was a doulos or a slave of Christ when he wrote his letter to the church in Rome, and to Titus and to the church in Philippi.

Slaves means servants, but more than a servant. The lowest rank in the household. A bond-slave and true servant giving himself up for the service of others (Exodus 21:5-6). They were unpaid slaves because their masters owned them. The owner has the only right to use his or her slave for his own pleasure. Being a slave of Christ is to be a fellow sufferer for Christ. They fully follow their own Master. They were not the masters, but their Master is Jesus Christ, their discipler, teacher, and chief Shepherd. Just like Peter, James and Jude also considered themselves slaves of Christ. They followed the orders from Christ and were not allowed to quit. As slaves of Christ, they gave up their privileges and their rights to Christ alone. Willing to suffer and die like Christ. Completely being under the control of Christ in life, family and ministry, and even their own future. Christ owns them. Paul and Timothy were owned by their Saviour Messiah and Lord God Jesus Christ alone. He is their Master and Owner of their lives and souls. They followed Christ even to the point of death. Paul needed to say they are **"Slaves of Christ Jesus"** for his own encouragement and comfort and to the churches, particularly the church in Philippi. We as slaves of Jesus Christ cannot serve two masters at the same time. Either you hate the other one or love the other. Choose the real Master Jesus Christ!

Now after mentioning that Timothy and himself are slaves of Christ Jesus and called to serve as full-time ministers of the Gospel, Paul mentioned **"To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with overseers and deacons."** Paul called all believers in Philippi saints. But not all Philippians are saints. What is a saint in Jesus Christ? Sixty times, the word saints (In Greek HAGIOIS and in Hebrew QODESH) was mentioned, and it was a natural way of introducing a believer of Christ synonymous with the word Christian a believer in Jesus Christ. Who was made holy and pure in the eyes of God (1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Saints mean holy, sacred, pure, set apart in Jesus Christ. Dedicated to serving and following Christ for a purpose and for the glory of God. Saints who are still alive in this context are called by Paul the living saints, not the physically dead saints. Saints who are faithfully (physically and spiritually) walking with Christ. They are serving the Lord with their whole being. Who believed in the Gospel

of Jesus Christ. We are saints in Jesus Christ the moment we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone (Romans 4:22-24).

The “**in Christ**” statement of Paul mentioned in his letters means that believers in Christ have established a relationship with Christ and with God the Father in heaven. To be in Christ also means God made us righteous in His eyes through faith in Jesus Christ. God also assured us of eternal life. Only a Christian can say he or she is in Christ. No other religion can say what we say to ourselves that we are “**in Christ.**” To say we are in Christ is to believe we belong to Christ. Our spiritual inheritance is found in Christ. Our loyalty is in Christ. We become free from the penalty of sin and from the bondage of sin because Christ is in us and lives in us. We are crucified with Christ. We are bought by the blood of Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenly places. We are made alive in Christ. We become spiritually alive in Christ. In all of Paul’s letters, the phrase in Christ Jesus has a total of 129 times. It is a significant encouragement and comfort to all believers of Christ by the grace of God to have an identity and eternal affiliation in Christ. This is our peace and our joy! You and I became saints (Santo) in Christ Jesus alone, not by any means of good works, religious affiliation, or show of kindness and compassion to others apart from Christ. Our sainthood comes from our relationship and partnership with Christ and will definitely result in bearing fruit: A life of obedience and service to Christ till we die.

Where are the saints, overseers and deacons located? Philippi was located in the city of Macedonia, one of the provinces of Greece (northern Greece). The real name of Philippi was Krenides or Spring. They changed the name to Philippi when Rome conquered Krenides. Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, conquered it. Philippi eventually became a Roman province, and those who lived in Philippi were automatically Roman citizens. They received many benefits and privileges as citizens of Rome. Latin became the official language of Philippi. Philippi was the first European city to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The first Gospel church in Philippi.

Paul planted the church by the grace of God during his second missionary Journey. Paul was imprisoned in Philippi for some time. We can see the conversion of a woman whose name is Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman selling purple-dyed garments. Scripture told us that the whole household of Lydia got saved. Paul mentioned specifically leaders in the church of Philippi, **overseers and deacons**. Who are these overseers and deacons in Philippi? It’s good to know the church has its own leaders. It seems it is an established church and a growing in Christ church. The first established church in Europe. Philippi was God’s chosen place when Paul received a direction from the Lord to go to Macedonia and preach the Gospel (Acts 16:9-10). The first converts were from Jewish families, and eventually, Gentile converts became the majority members of the church.

“**Overseers**” in Greek is EPISKOPOIS and NASAH in Hebrew. Overseers are also called Bishops. The word overseer was only mentioned 4 times in the New Testament. Bishops or elders, pastors, shepherds, or pastor-teachers were used interchangeably. We can also say they are guardians or watchers, stewards, leaders, and carers of the church, spiritually speaking. Basically, they are church leaders with high standards of commitment spiritually and morally. They are real above-reproach leaders. By the grace of God, the church in Philippi had spiritual leaders or pastors who were shepherding the flock. Shepherds of their souls or shepherds of the church of God. Paul made them or called them overseers because of their faithfulness in serving the Lord. We know Paul gave a high qualification for eldership in the church. Paul believed the overseers and deacons in the church of Philippi were excellent spiritual leaders (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).

Aside from overseers, the church in Philippi has had “**deacons.**” What is a deacon? In Greek, DIAKONOS. They are church servants who help the overseers and bishops in every church ministry activity and event. They are also carers and helpers in the church. Helping church members with their spiritual needs and physical and relational needs. Aside from regularly praying and visitation. Providing food for church members and raising support for the needy (Acts 6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). They have complementary partnerships with the elders and pastors of the church. The same qualification: Husband of one wife, able to manage their household and children. Not addicted to wine, Not a gossip, pugnacious, having uncontrolled anger. teacher of God’s word. Prayerful and leading and serving in the church (visitation, communion services and other ministry). Paul and Timothy gave their greetings and blessings to the church with overseers, deacons, and all the saints in Philippi to have grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

What is grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? Let us begin by defining grace or, in Greek, CHARIS. A simple definition is having favour from someone, a free gift, or receiving a blessing or goodwill. An unmerited favour. Getting more benefits in this life. Grace also means receiving kindness, love, and compassion. Receiving a helping hand or support, care and counsel, whether monetary, physical, emotional or spiritual. Paul’s prayer of blessing is God’s grace to the church or grace be received from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in Philippi. Paul was blessing the church in Philippi to receive the richness of the grace of God. The church would receive continuous love and forgiveness from God, faith and truth, free from the love of self and money, and free from the bondage of sin but free in Christ. These are the graces of God, and the result is the peace of God. Church leaders and members in Philippi were not perfect and sinless people. Paul was asking God for His grace and peace to be upon them, which means to receive true salvation and spiritual growth. To receive acceptance and favour from God. To be pleasing and pleasurable in His eyes. To walk and guide them in their journey in this crooked and perverse generation. To receive acceptance even though we don’t deserve the blessing of God the Father.

How about peace? Peace in Greek means EIRENE. The church is to receive true peace with God after the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. A true peace from God is to believe Jesus Christ is Lord and God who died as the perfect lamb of God who takes away the sins of all who believe. True peace with God, peace in mind through faith in Christ, and having peace in Christ are the results of God’s grace. To have peace from God and Jesus Christ is freedom from over-worry in this life, we can cast all our cares upon Jesus, the true peace of our souls. Having peace from God and Lord Jesus Christ becomes the true partnership of love relationship between God to man and man to God. To have peace in Christ is to see God is gracious. God satisfies our needs and fulfils our desire to know God. True peace is found in God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord alone. This is our joy, having the grace of God and the peace of Christ in our hearts.

The name “Lord” is KURIOS. The same meaning as God. The Sovereign Ruler and King. The one who is in control and who is coming back again to judge the living and the dead. Despite being a small church, my prayer is that we will receive grace and peace, grace and peace always in life and ministry. And the Lord will provide like-minded spiritual leaders like Paul and Timothy, true slaves of Jesus Christ. Overseers, deacons, and faithful members who are committed to Christ

and want to follow Christ till the end. May grace and peace from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be upon our churches today.

## **2) The joy of abiding in the Gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:3-5)**

**3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.**

Paul gave some encouragement to the church in Philippi in spite of his absence. First, Paul extended his thanksgiving to God and second, offered prayers to God on a regular basis. Paul prayed for all saints, overseers and deacons. Why does the church have joy in the Gospel and in partnership with Paul? Why do you think God was very pleased and honoured? The church was faithful to God and faithful to help Paul in the Gospel ministry. The church abides and connects with Paul from the first day of their partnership in the Gospel and on-going. Paul commended the church in Philippi for their faithful fellowship in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let us begin in verse 3, **I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.** Paul was thankful and grateful to God's faithfulness to the church in Philippi and the faithfulness of the church for their good works in proclaiming the Gospel. What made Paul thankful to God? **"In all my remembrance of you."** What does this mean? Paul planted the church during his second missionary journey. He remembered the dramatic call of God: instead of going to Turkey and helping plant churches, the Lord stopped him. Instead of going to Ephesus, the Lord led him to go to Macedonia. A man appeared to him in a vision and called Paul to go and visit them and help them to hear the Good News. Paul was being challenged to preach the Gospel to this Gentile city. So Paul obeyed God's leading (Acts 16:9-10). By the grace of God, his missionary journey was successful. The church was planted and became one of the main financial supporters of Paul despite their extreme poverty, along with other churches in Macedonia. Aside from supporting Paul, they also supported other churches, including the church in Jerusalem.

Many Jews and Gentiles during the stay of Paul in Philippi were converted to the Gospel of Christ. A Jewish woman in the name of Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman, attended her sabbath day and it so happened Paul also attended and joined them. Paul started to preach the Gospel during that Sabbath gathering. Lydia heard the gospel and got converted to Christ. Lydia, a true worshipper and seeker of God, became one of the faithful followers of Christ. She even invited the whole household, and many of them converted and baptised in the name of Christ (Acts 16:13-15).

Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi. Why did Paul and Silas go to prison? Paul rebuked the girl and taught the Gospel. The girl was known for divination. The girl called out in mockery Paul and Silas and scandalised the city for days. The girl was shouting at Paul and Silas: "Servants of the most high God." Paul stopped and corrected her about the wrong way to find life and peace with God. Paul preached the Good News to her and got converted to Christ. Her divination business has stopped and followed Paul and the Gospel of Christ. But the problem now is that the money she brings in the family business through fortune telling and divination is all gone (Acts 16:16-18). The girl's owners got angry at Paul and Silas, so they called men to apprehend and persecute them. When they found Paul and Silas, they dragged them into the marketplace, tearing their garments, beating them with rods and inflicting them with many wounds. Thank God they didn't die. After all the beating, they imprisoned Paul and Silas. But in the middle of the night, while singing and praising God with all the pains, wounds, shame, false accusations and

imprisonment, the Spirit of God sent an earthquake. All the doors were opened, chains loosened, and all the prisoners were free to escape. The jailer who was there saw the condition of the prison and the prisoners. He decided to kill himself, as it seemed all the prisoners were ready to escape. But Paul saw the jailer and stopped him. The jailer said, "What must I do to be saved? Believe in Jesus Christ, and you and your entire household will be saved." True enough, they were saved, and his whole household were baptised in Christ. (16:25-34). Paul and Silas went to the household of Lydia and had their regular church gathering with all their converts in Christ (Acts 16:40). They Defended the Gospel against false teachers in the church. With all these life and ministry experiences of Paul in Philippi, he was thankful to them and always offered prayers to God for them. So therefore, as a result, in verse 4, **I am always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.** What does this mean for the church in Philippi? First, Paul was always in constant prayer for all the church members, from the overseers, deacons, and all the faithful saints to the true followers of Christ. What prayer of Paul normally? Grace and Peace. Forgiveness and faithful walk with God, to be blessed with wisdom and faith. Prayer for deliverance from sickness, false teachers, and false teachings in the church. Praying for God's protection, wisdom, and strength to keep believing. To turn away from immoral living, repentance from sin, trust God and always rejoice. When he prays (Paul's prayer), he prays with Joy always. Remember their faith, growth, steadfastness, faithfulness, and obedience to the Gospel. Paul was always offering prayer with joy. What does this mean? Offering prayer means making a request to God, bringing concerns and growth, protection and provision and healing. Faith, joy, peace, wisdom and strength. Patience and self-control. Provision and faithfulness in the ministry. It is not a burden to pray for them. In fact, what a joy and what a privilege to pray for the church in Philippi. To pray for the overseers and the deacons, the church members, the family of Lydia, and the jailer's family. Sustain the church and give growth to the church. The church was always on the top list of his prayers and thanksgiving. Can you imagine Paul, the righteous man of God, called by God to preach to the Gentiles, always praying for the church in Philippi with Joy? For Paul, it was not a burden at all, but it was his joy. This letter of Paul was indeed a letter of joy! A letter of rejoicing! A letter of joyous spirit. A joy of a successful life and ministry. A joy of a successful church. This is Paul's definition of true joy. There is joy in the midst of suffering when the church remains faithful to the Lord. What motivates Paul to pray for them on a regular basis, and what gives him the joy to bless them with grace and peace every time he remembers them in their ministry and in his personal prayer time?

#### **Verse 5 because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.**

What is this fellowship of the Gospel? The other translation is participation in the Gospel. Fellowship or participation in Greek KOINONIA. It means communion with Christ and His Gospel ministry either through service or generous giving. Paul had this joy in offering prayer to the Lord for the church members in Philippi because of their faithfulness to the Gospel. Paul described their participation or fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. How they gave their hearts and lives to the Gospel. How they continue to grow in faith in Christ. How they were baptised and became members of the church and assigned elders or overseers and deacons, and how they protected the church from false doctrines and false teachers. And their faithful giving and generosity. How they build the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. How true is their faith in Christ. How they fully embraced the Gospel of Christ. Christ's death and resurrection. His ascension



and His coming back again. They didn't give up and continued on even without Paul, Silas, and Timothy. They stayed on and became a faithful church in Macedonia.

How long did they become a faithful church and faithful in fellowshiping with the Gospel? From the time they heard the Gospel and believed the Gospel of Christ until the present time. They kept believing the Gospel. They kept fellowshiping with the Gospel of Christ. Kept preaching the Gospel of Christ. Kept baptising. Kept meeting as a church, breaking bread, fellowshiping, praying, and preaching the words of Christ. They also kept partnering in the Gospel through their giving. **From the first day until now.** They were faithful to the Gospel and to Christ's commands. They lived a sanctified life, working out their salvation in Christ with fear and trembling. They got the point of the Gospel, holding fast to the word of life.

Let us be like Paul and Timothy and the church in Philippi. They were true slaves of Christ in suffering and in blessing (Hebrews 11). With Paul beside them or without Paul in their ministry, they continued on with joy. The best way to have a meaningful partnership with God is to pray for the growth of the church. To be more gracious and forgiving for each other. To love God and others. To remain faithful until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that we will not give up our faith in Christ. Even though we fall into sin and fall short of glorifying God and Christ, we repent from our sins right away and go back to our first love for God and Christ. Hate the world for good. Keep baptising new members in the church. Evangelise and discipline church members if there is a need. Pray to be a more generous giver. Pray for protection from any attacks of satan and his demons.

### **3) The joy of seeing God's faithfulness to His church (Philippians 1:6)**

**6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

As we end this sermon in verse 6, let me just summarise verse 5, Paul was joyful in offering prayer to the church, which is faithful from start to finish. From the start of their conversion, they were faithful to the Gospel they received. From the start of planting the church until the imprisonment of Paul, the church is still faithful to the Gospel. How do we know the church is faithful to the Gospel and fruitful in ministry? Can the church in Philippi stand faithful in the midst of all the pressure of the culture they were living in? The culture war from biblical gospel culture to worldly culture? The pragmatism of the world without a sense of dependency upon God, His Spirit, and His Word? Who will live their lives faithfully to the Gospel till the end? Who will really persevere till the end? Who amongst us will finish the race and receive the reward of righteousness? In this last verse, we will see that it is God who is faithful to finish the work of our salvation till the end.

Let us read our concluding verse **6 For I am confident of this very thing.** Paul was very assuring and affirming personally to the church in Philippi. His confidence comes from God first and foremost. The word confidence means to be exactly sure and very persuaded and convinced. Paul was very certain, 100% accurate and sure in his calling and the salvation of God. Paul was very certain that he could trust and obey God's faithfulness, truthfulness and sincerity.

What does this phrase mean, **"this very thing"**? This is where we can say the affairs of God to the church, the called-out ones. His sovereign will and work to God's people according to His good pleasure. God chose the church to be faithful from start to finish. His work, plan, and purpose for the church and to every faithful believer in the church God promised to protect, bless, and save continually. HE WILL NEVER ABANDON HIS CHURCH. HE WILL REMAIN FAITHFUL TILL

THE END. HE STARTED HIS CALL AND ELECTION BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. AND GAVE THEM THE GIFT OF FAITH AND EMPOWERED THEM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Paul was confident of this thing because **“that He who began a good work in you.”** Paul was very confident in the salvation of God and the works of God in the believers' lives. Particularly to all the believers in Philippi. He started the good work in the believers and will finish it according to His own good pleasure. What is this good work God began in the believers? Election before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:1-5; Romans 8:8-9; John 6:44), faith in God and in Christ and His words, obeying Christ and following Christ from start to finish. All these things happened because God the Father brought Christ the Lamb of God down to us who died for our sins.

The good works of pleasing and honouring God, being faithful and truthful to the Lord's work. Loving God and loving others. Sharing the Gospel and serving the Lord as slaves. From salvation to faithfulness. From faith to sanctification. From doctrine to sanctification. God started the good works in the believer's salvation and life purpose. Being born again and spiritually alive and having Christ in our hearts and our fellowship with Christ keeps growing and deeper by the grace of God. These are all God's work and a show of His faithfulness to us from the day God called you and saved you until He comes back to get you and me to Himself.

In spite of our inconsistencies, unfaithfulness, weaknesses, and sinful habits, God will save His own chosen people. God will convict people to return to Him, repent from their sins and follow Him. That is why Paul said, I am confident. I am 100% sure and certain we might not be perfect in pleasing God, but God alone is perfect to make the church and us faithful till the end. This is His good work. While we are still here on earth, be reminded that God is faithful and will remain faithful to His call to us. From saving us unto salvation to our sanctification and holiness. And the comfort is one day when Jesus Christ our Lord comes back again, He said he will perfect it. God will make everything perfect and make us complete and 100% holy and perfect. Finished and completed the work of salvation in our life until the day of Christ Jesus. This is to say He will perfect His good works to all saints and His plan until we see Him face to face in His appearing and in the judgement seat of Christ.

For us Christians, the word **complete** means complete righteousness, justification, sanctification and glorification of those who are found in Christ Jesus. This is the Day of Christ Jesus. Meeting Christ and being in the likeness of Christ, clean, holy, and complete in heaven. sinned washed, and no unrighteousness is seen in us in the eyes of God. No more sins, no more tears, and no more separation. With our crown and glory in Christ. We will live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years and live with Him for eternity in His new heaven and new earth. (Romans 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 15:49, 52-53; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 21:1-5; Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Peter 3:13).

While waiting for the coming of Christ, we will never be perfect and holy, sinless and good. God never promises the perfection of life here on earth. Our perfection comes from Christ and in Christ. But in terms of living a perfect life and living a perfectly healthy body, we still need to abide in Christ and His words. Remember, we will still get sick and die physically. We are weak and most of the time, empty and in need. But He promised that He would be with us and work with us to make us perfect until His appearing.

Paul's prayer, we cannot do it alone. We did not begin the good work of fruitful church life and ministry with our own strengths and wisdom. Paul said it is God! It was God who was faithful! Paul's confidence is not in the churches or the church in Philippi or our church but in God. His

faithfulness. His confidence is God-confidence. He started our salvation (His divine Good work) and will continue to save us. He started our church and He will see to it the church will continue to grow and be protected from the evil one from start to finish. God already ordained our life and salvation before the foundation of the earth. Paul has joy because of God's sovereignty that in every work He started, He will finish perfectly according to His good pleasure and plan. And every plan He started is perfect and good. Nothing that is not perfect and good to Him.

From being attacked spiritually by satan, God saved me. My calling to serve Him, God saved me and sustained me. In my marriage, God saved us continually. My children, God saved them continually. Church growth and ministry, God is the one who saved the church. The Lord keeps saving me and even our stay here in Australia. He saved me and my family, and I believe the same with you.

Was it my confession of sin that makes me forgiven and saved? No! It is the work of Christ on the cross I received forgiveness of my sins and eternal life in Christ. Did my good work and the good work of my wife why we are here in Australia? No! It is God's work and plan. Did I begin this work of planting the church and building the church? No! It is Christ who started this church, and He will complete it until He comes back again. THIS IS INDEED THE PERSEVERANCE OF GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN US.

CHARLES SPURGEON SAID, "A good old minister was once asked whether he believed in the saints' final perseverance. "Well," said he, "I do not know much about that matter, but I firmly believe in the final perseverance of God, that where He has begun a good work, He will carry it on until it is complete." To my mind, that truth includes the final perseverance of the saints. They persevere in the way of salvation because God keeps them in it. Spurgeon, C. (2014). Spurgeon Commentary: Philippians (E. Ritzema, Ed.; p. 11). Lexham Press.

### **Conclusion: What was Paul saying to the church in Philippi and to us as a church?**

1. Paul was confident the church would continue to be perfect in Christ with the help of God today until the coming of Christ.
2. The church, like the church in Philippi, is not perfect, and its perfection of good works comes from Christ.
3. The church is doing good works because the church is faithfully abiding in Christ. The church is in constant fellowship with Christ and partnering in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
4. The church needs to be patient and persevere because one day, Christ will return to rapture the church and make the church fully perfect, holy and pure. A glorified church.
5. Let us be thankful and joyful, knowing that Christ is doing His good works in us. One day, we will be perfect not here on earth but in heaven for eternity.