


Title	God Will Finish What He Started	
Text	Philippians 1:1-11	
Date	10 January 2021	

OVERVIEW

Welcome to our look at Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. We call it the New Testament book of Philippians.

The author of this short letter/book [it's only 4 chapters] Paul, was no stranger to emotional stress. Giving his life away for gospel ministry landed him in prison, and yet one of the key words in this letter/book is the noun "joy" and the verb "rejoice". As we dig into Philippians we see some of the resources for the joy-filled Christian.

The subtitle is "***Finding Joy Right Where You Are.***" The graphic tells that story.

- The **prison bars** on the top left remind of us where Paul was where he wrote it.
- The **location marker** at the bottom right is the icon that helps your phone locate your current position.

If Paul could find joy in prison, we can find joy no matter where we are. If joy is contingent upon moving to a different place, or experiencing a different set of circumstances, our joy is not in Jesus.

Let me encourage you to immerse yourself in this letter and let it inhabit you because that's what Paul wants his hearers/readers to do. He wants us to learn to think differently, to think in the Messianic way, in the Jesus way, in the kingdom of God way. And there is a lot in this letter about a whole new way to think: to think wisely, to think discerningly, about God, about Jesus, and about yourself.

TEXT

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all God's holy people in Philippi who are in union with Christ Jesus, including the church leaders: We greet you with the grace and peace that comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God for you every time I think of you. And every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy because of your partnership in gospel ministry from the very beginning until now. And I am confident of this that God who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus. You are always on my heart! And so it is only right for me to feel as I do about you. For you have all shared with me in this privilege that God has given me, both now that I am in prison and also while I was free to defend the gospel and establish it firmly. God is my witness that I tell the truth when I say that my deep feelings for you all comes from the heart of Christ Jesus himself.

This is my prayer for you: that your love will flourish and overflow more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you will be able to discern and choose what is best, so that you will be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ. Your lives will be filled with the righteousness that comes because of Jesus Christ – all for the glory and praise of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Introduction – Getting to know each other

- Have you ever started a project and left it unfinished? How did that leave you feeling?
- Why do you think Paul tells the church at Philippi *“that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”* v6?

Looking at the Text

- Read Philippians 1:1-11
- Are there words or phrase or ideas that pastor Mike talked about in the message that you didn’t understand?
- What is one thing that stuck out to you from the message?
- Read the **BACKGROUND** section for details about Paul and this letter.
- As you read Philippians 1:1-11 what words, phrases, thoughts stand out to you? Why did these strike you?
- Notice what Paul says about the Philippians:
 - He calls them *“holy people”* v1.
 - He’s thankful for their *“partnership in the gospel”* v5.
 - He’s *“confident”* that God will finish what he *“began”* in them v6.
 - Paul says he has them *“in my heart”* v7.

Why do think Paul writes these things? What is his purpose in saying these things?

- Would you use these phrases to describe a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?
- Paul says he prays *“with joy”* v4. Does that describe how you pray for others? Why or why not? Do you need to adjust the way you pray? How will you do that?
- Paul also prays *“that your [the Philippian believers] love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God”* v9-11.
 - Did you notice those key words in Paul’s pray?
 - Knowledge in context... *“To know God and his ways”*
 - Where do you find knowledge? How do you gain knowledge?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends have *“knowledge”*?
 - Depth of insight *“To know how to apply knowledge to specific situation”*
 - How do you know or measure this?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends have *“depth of insight”*?
 - Discern *“To test and be proven genuine”*
 - The value of precious metals is determined by heating. Are there areas where you have recently felt the heat of being tested?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends be *“discerning”*?
 - Best *“To understand and choose the best option”*
 - When I go to the optometrist he asks me *“Which option is better? One or two?”* When was the last time you prayed for excellence or the best in a decision you needed to make?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends be *“best”*?
 - Pure *“To be genuine, authentic, not false”*
 - In the ancient world defective clay pots were sometimes passed off as *“pure”* by filling in the cracks with wax. Do you ever find you are falling apart and then try to look like you have it all together? If so, why?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends be *“pure”*?

- Blameless *“To live in a way that gives no ground for accusations”*
 - There can be things that are not wrong or sin, but can negatively affect other. How do you decide how to act?
 - How can you pray that your family and friends be *“blameless”*?
- When you think of praying for others, do you pray like this? If not, why not?
- What is the value of praying like this?
- What does it mean to pray like this for someone?


THIS WEEK

- Read the letter/book of Philippians –it’s only 4 chapters.
- Whenever you think of, or see (in person or on-line) another follower of Jesus, pray for them, in the way Paul prayed:

that your [their] love will flourish and overflow more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you [they] will be able to discern and choose what is best, so that you [they] will be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ. Your [Their] lives will be filled with the righteousness that comes because of Jesus Christ – all for the glory and praise of God.
- Count up the number of times that Paul uses the noun “joy” and the verb “rejoice”.

BACKGROUND

I've put this at the end, because these details are not what we are focusing on. There are lots of commentaries and articles you can search about this. And while there is some debate on some of the following questions, these are the basics.

Who wrote Philippians?	Paul
When was Philippians written?	~61-62AD
Where was Paul when he wrote Philippians?	Paul was either in Rome or in ?? when he wrote this letter
Where is Philippi?	<p>Philippi was a city in present day Greece.</p> 
Biblical references to Philippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In Acts 16 Paul visited the city (likely in 49 or 50AD)▪ Paul visited the city on two other occasions, in 56 and 57AD (Acts 20)