

1) To get started, let's reread the introduction to the letter ...

Philippians 1:1–11 (NASB 2020)

Thanksgiving

¹ Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including 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 offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵ in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may overflow still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may discover the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.

2) Now, to pick up our thoughts where we left off last time, Paul expresses his confidence in their continued growth and participation in the gospel.

3) In vs. 6 Paul tells the Philippian church that he has been and will continue to depend on a much more important and powerful force to grow this church in knowledge and faith.

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

4) The He of this verse is God.

a) By using an expression instead of calling the name, Paul forces us to think about the particular quality he is highlighting.

We left with the question – What is that quality? What are your thoughts?

5) Simply put, I think the quality is God's commitment – what He starts He finishes!

6) Steven Runge in his High Definition Commentary: Philippians, comments on this:

“Despite the negative appearance of the circumstances, God is still in control and still accomplishing His purposes in the life of Paul and in our own lives. Beginning the “good work” was not a mistake that will be left incomplete. Adopting God's

perspective on the situation requires us to give up our wrong perspectives. Paul affirms in 1:7 that this is the proper way to think about things, implying that the Philippians should think this way.²

Do we think about our lives as a “good work” that God is working in us and is working to complete?

7) For me, one other thing that stood out in this verse was where Paul’s places the completion of this good work – “the day of Christ Jesus.”

What are our expectations of Christ’s return and does (or should) it make any difference?

- a) As we have discussed several times in the past, the early Christians in general had a more “immediate” view of Christ’s return.
 - b) I think if you had asked Peter 1 month after Pentecost when the Messiah would return as a multiple-choice question 20, 200, 2000 years, or later, he would not have answered 2000 years or later.
- 8) More importantly in this context and for us, our “good work” will not be over until then or we are called home.

- a) There is not a retirement plan for us as bondservants of Christ Jesus.

9) In his love expression for these folks Paul circles back to this idea once more in vs. 9 and 10.

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may overflow still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may discover the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ; ...

10) And how does this good work get completed?

- a) By more love grounded and completed by real knowledge and discernment.

11) What a daunting task this must have been for both the students and the teachers – to teach Christ.

- a) Considering the best guess is that none of the gospels existed yet that is a big factor.
- b) To present Him in a way that people who had never met Him or heard Him speak could understand who He truly was.
- c) It is one thing to explain the Messiah to a Jew who knew the prophecies – it is quite another to do so to a non-Jew who had no knowledge of prophecies, Messiahs, Saviors, God’s Laws.
- d) The real issue is how to teach Christ so one could know Him – not just about Him.

² Steven E. Runge, [*High Definition Commentary: Philippians*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2011), Php 1:1–11.

12) Paul concludes his prayer with the statement:

“having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.”

13) If we look at Gal 5:22, we do not find the “fruit of righteousness.”

Galatians 5:22–23 (NASB 2020)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

So, what is the “fruit of righteousness”?

14) As I looked at this question, I found it more difficult to answer for myself than I had originally thought.

a) Righteousness is a word that is truly found throughout scripture in many different contexts.

i) 92 times in the NT

ii) “fruit of righteousness” only 3 times, Phil 1:11, Hebrews 12:11, and James 3:18.

b) If we look at the “Webster” definition of the word, we really see it as rather cut and dry. The first two entries are:

- acting in accord with divine or moral law : free from guilt or sin
- morally right or justifiable

15) The nearly correct of the two is the first however, that depends on how you define divine and moral law.

a) If we consider divine law to be all that God has ever said we should do, then we likely will find a problem in reconciling the Law and the fulfilled Law.

b) If we consider moral law to be all encompassing then we will have a problem with righteousness being defined by “just being a good guy or gal.”

i) This may be considered the moral compass philosophy were we are our own guide as to what is right and wrong.

c) Then there is faith attributed to one as righteousness?

d) Where I landed was the fruit cocktail approach.

i) We know the law has been fulfilled so we are no longer obligated under it directly.

ii) However, if we do consider the fruit of the Spirit and all that it means to have all that, the fruit of righteousness could be the end result of the fruit of the Spirit.

Agree/Disagree – Thoughts, comments, questions?

16) In these first verses, we have seen Paul’s joy – an overflow of joy brought about by the love he has for these folks.

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- a) But also brought about by the confidence he has in them but especially in the confidence he has in Christ and the Holy Spirit
- b) He knew that the Holy Spirit and Christ would keep these folks on track and growing in faith and praise for God.