

1) Picking up where we left off last time...

Philippians 1:6-8 (NASB 2020)

Thanksgiving

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. ⁷For 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. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- 2) As we continue this introductory paragraph, we cannot help but see the depth of love Paul has for this church – yes and most assuredly those whom he knows personally.
- 3) This is especially evident in verses 7 and 8 again expressing his love for these folks and his appreciation for their help.
 - a) Help, not only in “defense and confirmation of the gospel” but also help while he has been in prison in Rome.
- 4) As I think about this introduction, one other thing becomes apparent – Paul has been in correspondence with this church throughout its existence.
 - a) Though this is the only letter we have that is addressed to this church, we must assume that there may have been other correspondence.
 - b) As you may recall, I mentioned Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians in which he references “letters” plural that they should be reading.
 - c) Perhaps even visits through the years beyond those we have recorded.
 - d) The idea being that Paul is very much invested in these folks and cares deeply for them.
- 5) Here in vs. 6 Paul tells them 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 than himself.

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.

6) The He of this verse is God.

- a) By using the expression

“He who began a good work among you”

with a pronoun “He” instead of calling God’s name, I believe that Paul is forcing us to think about the particular quality of God he is highlighting.

So, what do you think this quality of God is that Paul wants us to think about?

7) Simply put, I think the quality is God’s commitment – **what God starts God finishes!**

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

“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.⁵”

9) So, let’s try to make this a little less esoteric.

How are our lives a “good work” that God is working in us and is working to complete?

- i) Our lives are to reflect Christ to everyone we meet.
- ii) We are His representatives and as such we must always try in every way to live a life that is worthy of our calling.

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

- a) As I am sure you realize, the early Christians in general had a more “immediate” view of Christ’s return than we probably do.
- b) I think if you had asked Peter the month after Pentecost when the Messiah would return as a multiple-choice question 20 years, 200 years, 2000 years, or later, he would **not** have chosen either 2000 years or later.

What are your expectations of Christ’s return – date, situation, etc.?

How do these expectations make a difference in the way we live each day?

11) More importantly in this context and for us, our “good work” will not be over until then or we are called home – whichever comes first.

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

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

Philippians 1:9-11 (NASB 2020)

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

⁵ Steven E. Runge, [*High Definition Commentary: Philippians*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2011), Php 1:1–11.

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the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.

13) And how does this good work get completed?

- a) By more love grounded and completed by real knowledge and discernment.
 - i) Real knowledge meaning “knowing Christ” – **not** just knowing about Him.

14) As we discussed last time, this was a daunting task for both the students and the teachers – to teach Christ in those times.

- a) None or perhaps only one of the gospels existed – this 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.
 - i) It is quite another to do so to a non-Jew who had no knowledge of prophecies, Messiahs, Saviors, or God’s Law.

15) Continuing, Paul concludes his prayer with the statement:

“... ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.”

16) If we look at Gal 5:22, we do not find a “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.

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

- a) Righteousness is a word that is found throughout scripture in many different contexts – 92 times in the NT alone.
- b) “fruit of righteousness” only 3 times, here in Phil 1:11 and in Hebrews 12:11, and James 3:18.

Hebrews 12:11 (NASB 2020)

¹¹ For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

James 3:18(NASB 2020)

¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

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

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

18) The one 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 laid out for us to do, then we likely will find a problem in reconciling the Law and the fulfilled Law.
 - i) If we consider moral law to be all encompassing then we will have a problem with righteousness being defined by “just being a good person.”
- b) The second definition – “being morally right or justifiable” can be considered more “humanistic”
 - i) That idea may be considered the “moral compass philosophy”
 - (1) In that, we are our own guide as to what is right and wrong.

19) Then (obviously not part of Webster’s definitions) there is faith attributed to us as righteousness?

So, what say you; what is the “fruit of righteousness”

Is it different from “righteousness”?

- a) 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 – then to have all that, we could say that in this context, the fruit of righteousness might be the end result of the fruit of the Spirit.

Further thoughts, comments, questions?

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

- a) Joy 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.

21) So moving on ...

Philippians 1:12–18a (NASB 2020)

The Gospel Is Preached

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers *and sisters*, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brothers *and sisters*, trusting in the Lord because of my

imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. ¹⁵ Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill; ¹⁶ the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking that they are causing me distress in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice.

- 1) So Paul now changes subjects to give the Philippians an update on how things are with him.
- 2) Paul’s attitude in these verses is absolutely amazing!
 - a) He has been in prison for more than four years at this point yet, he begins by calling it “my circumstances” – in fact this could mean all he has endured not just prison.
 - b) The BHGNT translation reads:

Now I want you to know brothers, that the things which have happened to me have helped and did not hinder the progress of the gospel

- c) Regardless of the translation, Paul does not complain about his lack of freedom or any other negative point.
- d) Instead of complaining he simply lists all the positive things that have happened as a result:
 - i) Greater progress of the gospel.
 - ii) Cause of Christ known throughout the praetorian guard and everyone else.
 - (1) When we consider the “everyone else” comment, it would have to mean all others whom Paul has spoken to about Christ in this period.
 - iii) All those in Rome (brothers and sisters) trusting the Lord because of his imprisonment and are far more courageous speaking the word of God without fear.
- e) Finally, without regard for the reasons, Christ is proclaimed and in this he rejoices!
- f) We should remember here that 4 years ago after the third missionary journey, everyone had been trying as hard as they could to convince Paul NOT to continue on the Jerusalem.
- g) However, on that journey at one of his most vulnerable times, the Lord had told Paul that the outcome would be exactly as we see reflected here ...

Acts 23:11 (NASB 2020)

¹¹ But on the following night, the Lord stood near him and said, “Be courageous! For as you have testified to the *truth* about Me in Jerusalem, so you must testify in Rome also.”