

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER, PT. 2; PHIL. 1:6 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION. ~~ OPEN TO PHILIPPIANS

WE ARE CURRENTLY IN PHIL. 1 AND THE FIRST MAJOR SECTION, ~ VERSES 3-11.

▶▶ Mainly, ~ as noted last time, ~ in this ¶, ~ Paul expresses thanksgiving & prayer.

▶▶ Used to get into trouble ~ 6-8 ~ Verse 6

▶▶ Approach: ~~ two levels. ~~ Details ~ Bigger picture

AFTER THE MENTION OF THE DAY OF THEIR SALVATION IN VERSE 5, ~ PAUL adds in verse 6 a parenthetical comment of great encouragement about their salvation.

"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."

▶▶ Why parenthetical comment

▶▶ Verse 6 of course applies and is an encouragement to all believers.

▷▷ God has begun a good work in every believer, ~ which He will bring to "completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

OK, ~ THAT'S GOOD NEWS. ~~ BUT WHAT IS THIS "GOOD WORK"?

▶▶ Most likely Paul is talking about our sanctification, ~ which God began the moment we were saved.

▷▷ Recall: ~~ 3 stages

▷▷ Here sanctification

▷▷ Briefly, ~ sanctification is God's work in causing us to progressively become more and more like Jesus.

▷▷ In Rom. 8:29, ~ speaking of believers, ~ Paul writes, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son ~ [i.e., ~ to become like His Son]."

▷▷ 2 Cor.: ~ Holy Spirit working w/in us ↯ 1/7

▶▶ Now, ~ important to understand that we are not passive in this. ~ God is at work, ~ but we work with Him.

▷▷ Peter: ~ "as he who called you is holy, ~ you also"

▷▷ Paul ~ Eph. 4:1 (not on PPT)

▷▷ And Paul brings this out in Philippians.

↳↳ There is a recurrent theme in Philippians of Christian growth being ascribed simultaneously to God's activity and to the believer's own efforts.

→→ 1:27 ~ 2:12-13 (not on PPT)

▶▶ Most importantly, ~ however, ~ and this is what Paul's emphasizing here, ~ God has begun the good work of sanctification in us and will complete it.

NOTICE IN VERSE 6 THAT PAUL DOESN'T SAY, ~ "I HOPE THIS SANCTIFICATION thing works out for you."

▶▶ "I am certain of this," ~ Paul says, ~ "that God who began the good work on the day you were saved of making you more and more like Jesus will complete it."

▷▷ What God begins, ~ He finishes.

↳↳ Num. 23:19a, ~ "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

→→ My . . . ~ has God ever spoken and failed to act?

↳↳ Has He ever promised and not carried it through?

↳↳ Is. 55:10-11, ~ "10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

▶▶ (Display verse 6) God will finish the good work of transforming us to be like His Son that He began in us.

▷▷ This will happen. ~ We will be like Jesus. 📖 2/7

AND WHEN WILL THE WORK BE FINISHED? ~~ "AT THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST." ~~ 2nd.

▶▶ God's work will not be done in believers until the time of Christ's return when we receive our resurrection bodies, ~ receive our inheritance, ~ and share in Christ's glory.

▷▷ Final stage

▶▶ God's work in us will be completed when Jesus returns.

▷▷ As Paul says in [Phil. 3:20-21](#)

▷▷ And [1 Jn. 3:2](#), ~ "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

▶▶ We should note here that if we die before Jesus returns, ~ we will be with Him, ~ and leave our sin nature and sinning behind, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but the actual final stage of our salvation will not occur until Jesus returns and we are resurrected in our resurrection bodies, ~ receive our inheritance, ~ and share in Christ's glory.

(Display verse 6) GOD, ~ WHO BEGAN THE GOOD WORK OF SANCTIFICATION within us, ~ will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

▶▶ So we can say that God's work in us is ongoing, ~ long-term, ~ and will be completed.

▷▷ And that leads us to three very important implications for us, ~ believers here.

▶▶ 1st, ~ since this work of God is ongoing, ~ long-term, ~ and will be completed, ~ it means that we, ~ believers, ~ are presently works in progress.

▷▷ Of course we are responsible for and are to continually be growing more and more spiritually mature in the faith.

↪↪ And being ... doesn't excuse spiritual immaturity, ~ spiritual laziness, ~ or sin.

→→ Author of Hebrews

→→ 2 Peter, ~ "grow"

→→ Paul, ~ "what then? ~~ Are we to sin" ¶¶ 3/7

▷▷Of course we are responsible for and are to continually be growing more and more spiritually mature in the faith. ~ And being works in progress does not excuse

▷▷But being works in progress does tell us that we need to be patient with ourselves and our fellow believers. ~ Because we're not the finished product yet.

▷▷Like the song says, ~ "There really ought to be a sign upon my heart: ~ 'don't judge him yet, ~ there's an unfinished part.'" ~ But I'll be perfect just according to his plan, ~ fashioned by the master's loving hand."

▶▶The 2nd implication. ~ Since God's work in us is ongoing, ~ long-term, ~ and will be completed, ~ it means that God will never give up on us, ~ no matter what.

▷▷He will never say to any of us, ~ "You're hopeless, ~ I give up, ~ I can't work with you."

↳↳Never will He say that ~ or even feel that way.

▷▷Heb. 13:5b, ~ NIV ~ "Never will I leave you; ~ never will I forsake you." ~ [DN]

▷▷Ps. 145:8, ~ "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast ~ [or, ~ unfailing] love.

▷▷And this is how we should be in working with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

↳↳See this played out in Acts (not on PPT). ~ Acts 13:4-5, ~ 13; ~ 15:36-39

↳↳2 Tim. 4:11b, ~ "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry." ~ Total change. ~ Why?

▶▶And the third implication that the fact that God's work in us is ongoing, ~ long-term, ~ and will be completed leads us to is this.

▷▷Even though we have a part in our sanctification, ~ the finished product is not dependent on us ~ but on God

AFTER HAVING LOOKED AT THE DETAILS, ~ WE'RE GOING TO ZOOM OUT NOW and look at the bigger picture of verse 6.

RECALL AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MESSAGE TODAY, ~ WE SAID THAT VERSE 6 IS A digression.

▶▶The question is why did he include this parenthetical comment? ~ Well, ~ we don't really know. ~ But I do have two suggestions as to why. ↴ 4/7

▶▶ So no one gets lost in the details, ~ Ill list them quickly

▷▷ 1st, ~ Paul may have wanted to assure them that no matter what the circumstances, ~ God would complete His work in them.

▷▷ And 2nd, ~ he may have wanted to get these believers' focus off of present circumstances and onto the glorious future that awaited them. ~ Expand

1st, ~ IN LIGHT OF PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT, ~ HE MAY HAVE WANTED TO ASSURE THEM that no matter what the circumstances, ~ God would complete His work in them.

▶▶ And this leads us to two very clear and encouraging messages for us, ~ believers living in the 21st century.

▶▶ 1st, ~ despite the appearance of the negative circumstances in which we find ourselves at times, ~ God is still in control and will accomplish His work in us.

▷▷ In Is. 46:9b-10, ~ the Lord says, ~ "I am God, ~ and there is none like me, ~ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, ~ saying, ~ 'My counsel shall stand, ~ and I will accomplish all my purpose.'"

▷▷ Job acknowledged this. ~ In Job 42: 2, ~ he told the Lord, ~ "I know that you can do all things, ~ and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

▷▷ In part of his testimony after God humbled him, ~ King Nebuchadnezzar declared, ~ as recorded in Dan. 4:35b, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ that God "does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; ~ and none can stay his hand or say to him, ~ 'What have you done?'"

▷▷ So no matter what happens to us in this life, ~ because God is sovereign, ~ He will complete the work.

↪↪ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ no matter what we go through, ~ no matter what happens to us in this life, ~ the outcome will be the same.

→→ God will complete His work in us.

→→ We will still have eternal life, ~ we will still have every spiritual blessing there is, ~ we will still live forever with Jesus.

↪↪ That should give us great encouragement even in the darkest of times. ¶¶ 5/7

▶▶ The second very clear and encouraging message we get from the fact that that no matter what the circumstances, ~ God will complete His work in us is this: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ The genuine believer . . . is eternally secure in his or her salvation.

▷▷ Jn. 6:37-40

▷▷ In 1 Pet. 1:5, ~ Peter says that believers ~ NASB ~ "are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

▷▷ And in Ps. 37:28a, ~ David declares, ~ "For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever ~ [i.e., ~ They are permanently secure]."

▷▷ Rom. 8:31-39 ~ ~ **Eternally secure in Christ**

OK, ~ TO RECAP THE FIRST SUGGESTION: ~ ~ PAUL MAY HAVE WANTED TO ASSURE them that no matter what the circumstances, ~ God would complete His work in them.

NOW LET'S TURN TO THE SECOND SUGGESTION EXPLAINING WHY PAUL ADDED THIS parenthetical verse..

▶▶ Paul may have wanted to get these believers' focus off of present circumstances and onto the glorious future that awaited them.

▶▶ That Paul wants all believers to do this is made explicit in Col. 3:1-2

▶▶ For at least three reasons we should get our focus off our present circumstances and onto the glorious future that awaits us.

▷▷ 1st, ~ a focus on our glorious eternal future will give us strength to persevere, ~ and help us remain joyful today and every day until Jesus returns or calls us home.

▷▷ Next, ~ focusing on the glorious future that awaits us will help us keep all adverse circumstances, ~ trials, ~ and suffering in this life in proper perspective.

↪↪ Paul points out that proper perspective in at least two places.

→→ Rom. 8:18, ~ "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

↪↪ This future glory is so great that present sufferings are insignificant by comparison. ~ ~ Also the glory is forever, ~ whereas the suffering is temporary.

→→ And in 2 Cor. 4:17-18, ~ Paul writes, ~ "17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

↪↪ Our present troubles are small and won't last very long. ~ Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

↪↪ So our focus should not be on the troubles we can see now. ~ Rather, ~ our focus should be on the things that cannot be seen, ~ like the glorious future that awaits us.

↪↪ For the things we see now will soon be gone, ~ but the things we cannot see will last forever.

↪↪ The glorious future that we are looking forward to is eternal.

↪↪ Focusing on that glorious eternal future will help us maintain this proper perspective.

▷▷ The third reason we should get our focus off our present circumstances and onto the glorious future that awaits us is this.

↪↪ It will remind us that this present world is not our home.

→→ Foreigners ~ Temporary residents ~ Citizenship ~ City

↪↪ This present

→→ Something of which we should remind ourselves often.

CONCLUSION.

AND THAT BRINGS US TO THE END OF THE MESSAGE FOR TODAY.

▶▶ Much to think about and to apply.

LET'S PRAY 7/7