



Trusting God to Complete His Work: Celebrating 26 Years Together
CRC's 26 Anniversary

April 23, 2023

Philippians 1:3-6 KJV

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Background on Philippians

- 1) Philippi was an ancient city in Macedonia, which is a region in the northern part of modern-day Greece. The city was founded by King Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, in 356 BC. Philippi was strategically located on the major east-west trade route called the Via Egnatia, which connected Rome to Byzantium (later Constantinople and now Istanbul). Apostle Paul visited Philippi during his second missionary journey.
- 2) Paul's visit was prompted by a vision he received.
 - a) **Acts 16:9-10 (KJV)** *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*
 - i) Paul was accompanied by Silas (**Acts 15:40**), Timothy (**Acts 16:1-3**), and Luke (See Luke's use of the words 'we' and 'us' in (**Acts 16:10**).
- 3) The preaching of the gospel resulted in many trusting in Christ for salvation and the establishment of the first church in Europe. The first members of the church included:
 - a) Lydia (baptized along with her household)
 - i) **Acts 16:14-15 (KJV)** A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying. 15 After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.
 - b) The Jailer (baptized along with his household)
 - i) **Acts 16:30-34 (KJV)** He escorted them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house. 33 He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. 34 He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had come to believe in God with his entire household.
- 4) Paul's letter to the Philippians was written from prison 10 – 12 years after his initial visit.
 - a) **Philippians 1:7(CSB)** 7 Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

- b) **Philippians 1:13 (CSB)** 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ.
- c) **Philippians 1:17 (CSB)** 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment.

5) **Paul had four main purposes of writing to the Philippian Church:**

a) **Expressing gratitude**

- i) **Philippians 1:3-5 (KJV)** I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;
- ii) **Philippians 4:14-18 (KJV)** Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

b) **Provide an update on his circumstances.**

- i) **Philippians 1:12-14 (KJV)** But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

c) **Offer Encouragement**

- i) **Philippians 2:1-2 (KJV)** If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind

d) **Warn them about false teachers.**

- i) **Philippians 3:2 (KJV)** Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.
- ii) **Philippians 3:17-19 (KJV)** Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

Today's Text

Philippians 1:3 (KJV) 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

- **Thanksgiving for the Philippians**

- o Paul begins this passage by expressing his gratitude to God for the believers in Philippi. This thanksgiving stems from Paul's deep love and appreciation for the Philippians, who have supported him in his ministry and shared in the work of the gospel.
 - **Philippians 4:10 (CSB)** 10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it.
 - **Philippians 4:14-16 (CSB)** Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship. 15 And you Philippians know that in the early days of the

gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times.

- **Application:** Like Paul, we should be thankful for the people God has placed in our lives, especially fellow believers. We should remember to express our gratitude for their partnership in the gospel and their support in our lives.

Philippians 1:4 (KJV) 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

- **Prayer with Joy**

- Paul's gratitude for the Philippians is not merely expressed through words but also through his prayers. He consistently prays for them with joy, a testament to their close relationship and mutual encouragement in the faith.
- The joy Paul expresses in his prayers for the Philippians reflects his deep love and appreciation for the Philippian Church. The Philippians have partnered with him in the gospel and supported him in his ministry. Their faithfulness and commitment bring joy to Paul, even in the midst of difficult circumstances, such as his imprisonment.
- Paul's joyful prayers also emphasize the importance of maintaining a positive and grateful attitude in our relationship with God and others. Even when facing challenges, Paul chooses to focus on the blessings and the work of God in the lives of the Philippians, which in turn fills him with joy.
- Paul's joy serves as an example for other believers, demonstrating that it is possible to find joy in difficult situations when we focus on God's work and the support of fellow believers.
- There are instances where prayer is marked by the exact opposite of joy.
 - **Psalms 22:1-2 (KJV)** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.
 - **Lamentations 3:19-20 (KJV)** Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. 20 My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.
 - **Matthew 26:38-39 (KJV)** Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
- While Paul prays with joy for the Philippians, there are other instances in Scripture where prayers are characterized by sorrow, lament, or distress. Ultimately, the Bible encourages believers to bring their **whole selves**, with **all their emotions**, before God in prayer.
- **Application:** We should also pray for one another with joy, recognizing the blessings that come from our fellowship and partnership in the gospel. Our prayers should be filled with thanksgiving and joy as we lift up the needs and concerns of our fellow believers.

Philippians 1:5 (KJV) 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

- **because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now**

- The source of Paul's joy is the Philippians' partnership in the gospel. This partnership has been ongoing since the founding of the church in Philippi and has continued to grow and strengthen over time.
- Don't allow fellowship to merely be something that happens over food and laughs (doesn't the world do the same thing?)
- The Philippian Church brought together people who very likely didn't have much in common with each other (Think about Lydia and the Jailer.) The gospel brought them together and united them as they locked into the call to make disciples.
- **Application:** We, too, should seek to be active partners in the gospel. This partnership involves supporting one another, sharing the good news with others, and participating in the mission of the church.

Philippians 1:6 (KJV) 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

- **Confidence in God's Work**
 - Paul expresses his confidence that God, who began a good work in the Philippians, will continue that work until it is complete. This confidence is not in the believers' abilities but in God's faithfulness.
 1. Salvation is God's Work
 - a. Salvation is a divine undertaking, wholly initiated and completed by God. The Philippians didn't start their salvation journey and then have God merely contribute to it. Salvation is solely God's work. Through His Son, Jesus Christ, God created the path to salvation and empowered the Philippians to embrace it.
 2. Salvation is a Good Work
 - a. Furthermore, salvation is an extraordinary gift. It rescues sinners from eternal condemnation and elevates them to become members of God's family, sharing in His everlasting glory. No one could argue that this isn't a truly remarkable blessing.
 3. Salvation is a Sure Work
 - a. Salvation is also a steadfast process. God doesn't initiate it only to abandon it later. He doesn't save His people from destruction, only to let them slip back into it. God sees the work of salvation through to the end. Unlike human endeavors that may fail, God's work is unwavering. Not a single one will be lost! God's faithfulness ensures the completion of His work!
 - **Application:** We should have confidence in God's faithfulness to complete the work He has begun in us. This assurance should encourage us to persevere in our faith and trust in God's ongoing work of sanctification in our lives.

Four Anniversary Exhortations

1. Be thankful
 - a. For the individuals that make up CRC
 - i. You have brothers and sisters you can count on.
 - b. For those who shepherd your souls

- i. You have Pastors, Elders, & Deacons that tirelessly serve you and your family.
- 2. Pray for one another with joy
 - a. You will pray joyful prayers for your brothers and sisters when you develop a deep love and appreciation for them.
 - b. You will make it easier for your brothers and sisters to pray joyful prayers for you when:
 - i. You are faithful and committed to one another (like the Philippian church was to Paul.)
 - ii. You open up and share what God is doing in your life (this can give reason for rejoicing)
- 3. Intentionally focus on our commonalities
 - a. The gospel of Jesus Christ
 - b. Our desire to raise Godly children
 - c. Our desire to see the world and operate with a Biblical worldview
 - d. Our command to make disciples
 - e. Our command to utilize gifts to edify one another
- 4. Trust God to complete His work

Happy 26th Anniversary CRC. May the blessings of God continue to overflow. May the strength of God hold us up. May the glory of God forever be our goal.