

The Author and Finisher
God Will See His Plan to Completion
Ambassadors of the Kingdom - Part 1
Philippians 1:1-6

Introduction

- **Jesus on the Cross** - *"It is Finished"*.
 - Jn 19:28-30 - "After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."
- **What did He finish?**
 - He finished living a perfect life to trade for ours.
 - He finished raising up the foundational pieces of what would become the church, His practical body living here after He was gone.
 - He finished all the preparation to and given up his will to the Father's so that He would walk into death for our sins.
 - He finished demonstrating that the Kingdom of God has been launched once again on the earth.
 - He finished His concrete example of both what the Father is like in Heaven, AND how we ought to live on earth.

God FINISHES What He Starts

- **New 7-Part Series - Called Ambassadors of the Kingdom**
 - **We Know who the real King is:** Jesus Christ
 - **We've talked quite a bit about the Kingdom of Heaven** - it's God's Influence areas on earth.
 - **We are going to finish the year out talking about what it looks like to be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God.**
 - Not just living in it ourselves, but living it out for others and inviting them in.
 - **Ambassadors are authorized representatives of a nation while living in a foreign nation.** We are Christians with our citizenship in heaven, but we live here on earth where Satan has a great amount of control and influence. We are to live here on earth with a heavenly mindset.
 - **Ambassadors, like embassies are mobile members of another country** who live with the mindset and resources of their home country.

Lesson

- **Living Proof**

- **The Church is a Collection of Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God**

- *Php 1:1-6 - "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:*

- **Who the Letter is Coming From** - Paul & Timothy - who are they?

- **Saul/Paul of Tarsus** - A man born in modern-day Turkey, a city called Tarsus. Raised as not just a good Jewish man, but religious of the highest sort, a Pharisee, a master of the law, someone completely devoted to the Old Testament Law of God. He was orthodox in all senses of the Word. That passion led him to take an active part in the crushing of a new movement called Christianity. He, being Orthodox didn't believe that Jesus Christ could have been who He said He was and therefore was condemned as a heretic and blasphemer. So, it was Paul's job along with many others of his type to wipe out any form of His following (The Way). Paul was aggressively putting Christian leaders in prison and stomping out this new concept. But one day as he was on his way to do just that, a shining light blinded him on the road. He heard a voice, the voice of the risen Christ, who told him that indeed he had been wrong this whole time. The voice told him that Jesus Christ, the One speaking, was real, alive and that any damage Paul did to His followers was damage to the very Kingdom of God. Paul was left blinded and began a new journey of discovering what it mean to follow Christ and unlearn much of what he had held tightly. Eventually he was released by the Lord to be a traveling evangelist for the Gospel, the good news. He was a church planter setting up church wherever he could. Looking back he was perhaps the greatest evangelist that this world has ever experienced. He is writing a letter.

- **Timothy, the protégé of Paul** - mentioned together with Paul in 6 of his letters. Timothy was Paul's protégé. He had been saved when Paul was on one of his first missionary journeys. Timothy was young, but he was all in. He soaked up everything that Paul did as his spiritual apprentice. Eventually they traveled together and at some points he was sent as a pastor in Paul's stead to handle the more difficult situations. He's important to the Philippians.

- *Php 2:19-24 - "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰ For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*

22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, 24 and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also."

- **Who They Consider Themselves to be - Servants/slaves (doulos) of Christ Jesus.** It's more slave, than servant in context. Paul means that they are freed by Christ but choose to live a life wholly dedicated to the agenda of Christ, a chosen slavery to His ways. Everything is about Jesus Christ to these men. It's about submission and dependence on the Lord to do His purposes. They were AMBASSADORS for The Kingdom of God.
 - **The Best Ambassador is one who embodies the home country.**
 - **"What You'll be Talking About In Your Groups..." - How well do you embody the home country of heaven, here on earth?**
- **Who the Letter is Going To** - a letter is not a novel. It is not a theological treatise. A letter is a personal conversation with another person or group. This letter happened to be going to a group of people, very personal to Paul. A Small church that he had planted in Modern-day Greece, the first church he had ever planted in Europe.
 - **All the Saints (in Christ Jesus) at Philippi**
 - **What's a Saint?** - a chosen person of God, who has been made holy and set apart for His chosen purposes. What are His purposes? To live as Christ would in this world. It's you and I.
 - **All of them** - there is no difference between them. They are all receiving this letter. He's not writing into a hierarchy church but a more flattened structure of a church of people connected and living out Christ's intentions.
 - **Where's Philippi?** - It's a unique place.
 - **Roman City/Colony - Named after Alexander the Great's father Philip II.** It was Roman, Roman, Roman. Special focus on Emperor worship and public proclamation of the Emperor as 'lord' (kyrios). 9 miles from the coast along the Gangites River.
 - **Paul's Church plant** - about 10 years prior he brought the gospel to them personally. His first church and first ministry in Europe!
 - **The church has been very generous financially** - it all started with Lydia in Acts 16:15 (see below), then it was the jailer's family who got saved after the miraculous earthquake while Paul and Silas were in prison. Then we have 3 different

financial gifts given to Paul as he traveled: A.) When he was in Thessalonica; B.) when he was in Corinth; C.) Most recent brought by Epaphroditus.

- *Ac 16:11-15 - "So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, **12** and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. **13** And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. **14** One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. **15** And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us."*
- **With The Overseers** - plural, function (not office) alongside the church. *Episkopos* - comes from the word 'to visit', which meant to care for, or watch over. (Acts 20:28). They are the primary shepherds, caretakers of the church.
- **With The Deacons** - plural, function alongside the church. *Diakonos* - means 'servant.' It means anyone who serves someone else but seems here to designate a group of specific servants of the church.
- **Eternal Co-Op**
 - **The Church is a Collection of Contributors to the Kingdom of God**
 - *Php 1:2-5 - "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."*
 - **Grace from God** - *charis* - the normal greeting for letters in that day was *chairein* which means 'rejoice', but Paul changed it to simply Grace, which was the unearned favor from God. This is the gift that God gives. Its not earned, not deserved.
 - **Peace from God = *shalom*** - wholeness and full well-being to you both now and forever. This is the result of the gift of grace.

- **How we get it? From the Father through Jesus Christ** - the origination of this amazing Grace and Peace was from the Father, given to bless His people and He did so through the sacrifice of the Son, Jesus Christ.
- **I thank MY God - Is He your God?**
- **All, Every, All...Foreshadowing of Unity** - notice the constant uses of: all and plural language. Paul is later going to rebuke this church for a couple factions of division and he wants to be clear to them upfront that he is interested in all of them working together and that he loves all of them, in all ways, in all prayers.
- **The Partnership of the Philippians** - partnership is the word '*koinonia*'. It's sharing in, being a part of. Paul means that they have been a partner in the ministry in all different ways. We'll learn about some of them in this study.
 - **The Philippians Saw Church as a Partnership Co-op, not a Club to Attend**
 - **"What You'll be Talking About In Your Groups..." - Supporting the church and using your gifts at Bridgeway.**
- **He's Got It**
 - **Paul Encourages the Church that God Will Finish What He Started**
 - *Php 1:6 - "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."*
 - **I am sure of this: I'm confident that** - confidence that God knows how to handle things and finish what He starts.
 - **Begin and Complete** = scholars say that Paul is using *beginning* and *ending* of a Greek ritual sacrifice terms.
 - **He who began a good work in you** (*enarchesthai*) - salvation and the ramifications of that salvation (sanctification, grace, peace, love, etc.)
 - **Will bring it to completion** (*epiteleia*) - Finish His job of perfecting and glorifying us as promised. By the time we are in heaven we are cleaned up and ready to go for our next life.
 - **The Day of Jesus Christ** - when He comes back again, the second time. God's got time to work. How much? Only He knows, but it's plenty for Him to do what He needs.
 - **"What You'll be Talking About In Your Groups..." - God knows how to Finish What He Starts** - what work has He begun in your lives that it's going to take a while to come to fruition or completion. How can we encourage each other to hang in there in the difficult times while we wait for God to complete His Work?

Conclusion

- **Encouragement** for our congregation that God is not done doing His Works in you and around you.
- **We are impatient** and so it feels like God gave up. But who's in charge of the timeline?
- **Prayer for things not finished yet.**