

Bound For Joy
Philippians 1:1-6
Pastor John Miller

We'll read verses 1-6 because that's our text, and then we'll go back and unpack it together tonight. Beginning in Philippians 1:1, it starts with the human author, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy," there's our theme. "For your fellowship," the Greek word *koinonia*, your joint participation, "in the gospel from the first day until now," and we love verse 6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he," referring to God the Father, "which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

I'm convinced that there is no church, of all the churches that Paul the Apostle started on his missionary journeys, as near and dear and precious to Paul as was at the church at Philippi. Paul writes to them and says, "My dearly beloved, my longed for, my joy, my crown," and he loved these people. This was one of the few churches that financially supported Paul, and he allowed them to do that.

A little background about the church in Philippi. It was started through the ministry of Paul the Apostle, Silas, Timothy, and Luke on the second missionary journey. If you're taking notes, I'll try not to go into too much detail, but write down Acts 16. If you read Acts 16, and I'm sorry that you didn't know it before you came tonight, we're not going to turn there. In Acts 16 you have Paul just getting started on his second missionary journey. Paul leaves with Silas, picks up Timothy in chapter 16, evidently Dr. Luke is traveling with them, and they start on their trip through Asia, which is modern Turkey, headed west. In every direction they wanted to turn the Bible says the Spirit forbade them. The first thing we see is the voice of the Spirit leading them, sending Paul and Barnabas on this trip, and Paul and Barnabas then split and went different directions.

On this trip, the Spirit said, "No, you're not going to go north, you're not going to go south, you're not going to go east, you're going to go west." They ended up in a little town called Troas, which is actually on the coast of the Aegean Sea, which is to the west. If you get a map and look at Paul's second missionary journey...every Christian's Bible should have the maps of the journeys of Paul, and you can check this out.

That night, when they went to sleep, Paul got a vision. He heard the voice of the Spirit and got a vision of a sinner. It was a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us." It was God speaking to them in this vision, calling them to go west, over the Aegean Sea, to the continent of Europe. This is the first time the gospel is spread to the European continent. It's actually northern Greece, known as Macedonia. They came to the coast there, finally get into Philippi, and when they went into Philippi, they went down by the riverside where a small group of Jewish women were worshipping. Wherever there were ten male Jews in an area, they would

build a synagogue. Evidently, there weren't ten male Jews there, they didn't build a synagogue. The substitute was to worship by water so they could use it for their rites of purification and so forth. The Bible says there was a woman there who was a merchant woman, a seller of purple. Her name was Lydia. The Lord opened her heart and she and her household believed in Jesus. She was the first convert to Christianity on the continent of Europe—a woman, Lydia. She compelled Paul and his missionary group to come stay at her house, and Paul spent some time with Silas traveling around the city preaching the gospel.

All of the sudden there was a slave girl who was demon-possessed, probably a Gentile. She had a demon and was following Paul and Silas saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God which show us the way of salvation." Now, it might be that her message was okay, but Paul didn't want the devil advertising for his ministry; so the discerning spirit of Paul, realizing this woman is not of God, rebuked the spirit, cast it out of her, she was delivered, he shared the gospel, and she was converted. Now, we have two Christians in Europe, both of them women. One of them was at the top of the social ladder, a very wealthy woman who had her own house, her own business, a seller of purple, from Thyatira, and from the very bottom of the social ladder, a slave who was demon-possessed. You don't get much lower than that.

As a result of this woman being delivered from this demon, she was owned by masters who used her to fortune tell and soothsay. They no longer could do that, their money was gone, so they went to the Roman magistrates (by the way Philippi was a Roman colony), so they said, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city and preach things and customs which are not good for us as Romans." They lied about Paul and Silas, got arrested—I'm trying to make a long story short but this is my favorite missionary journey so I'm getting into it—beat, whipped, as Roman citizens, which is against the law (they didn't know they were Roman citizens), thrown into prison—this is where the story gets really cool, hang onto your seats.

The Bible says at midnight Paul and Silas were in this Philippian jail and started singing songs. I would've sulked and complained, "Thanks a lot, God. If I get outta here, I'm not going to be a missionary ever again, and I'm not going to go to church on Sunday, and I certainly won't give anymore money to God," and the prisoners would hear me and nobody would get saved. It says they praised the Lord at midnight. They're whipped, beaten, put into stocks—feet and hands fastened in this prison—and, no doubt, one of them turns to the other and says, "Let's praise the Lord." They start singing and praising God, and an earthquake came. This is the first original "Jailhouse Rock," long before Elvis Presley, right?

The jail began to shake, the prison doors were opened, their bands were loosed, and every man could go free. Paul realized that he heard the Philippian jailer, thinking that the prisoners were going to escape (under Roman law he would actually be put to death for their crimes), so he said, "Do thyself no harm. We are all here." Again, if it were me and God sent an earthquake, I'd be running saying, "Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus!" I'm outta here! Paul was concerned for this Philippian jailer who had, no doubt, been the one who whipped, beat, and arrested him. "Don't harm yourself! Don't kill yourself! We're here." The jailer asks for a light, and the Bible says he came in trembling and fell down and said to

Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Isn’t that awesome? You have the voice of the Spirit, you have the vision of the sinner, and you have the victory of the Lord saving this Philippian jailer.

Paul the Apostle said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your household,” if they believe as well, “will be saved.” He was born again, he was baptized, and all his household believing in Jesus Christ. The church in Philippi started with three people: Lydia, a seller of purple, this businesswoman that was at the top of the echelon; the slave girl, demon-possessed; and a blue-collar worker right in the middle, the Philippian jailer. This was the beginning of the church in Philippi. What a ragtag group to start a fellowship, and the church was born.

Ten years later, Paul is writing back to them again in prison. There’s a lot in the gaps that I’m not filling in, but Paul was released from Philippi and ten years later he’s arrested and under house arrest in Rome writing back to them. What happened was the Philippians, and we’ll get this in chapter 2, a lot of the background I’ll develop as we go, they sent one of their congregants, Epaphroditus, to Philippi to take an offering to Paul. He was actually renting his own house but under house arrest in chains, and when they got there, they found out that he was sick. Word was sent back to them about how his condition was and what was going on with Paul. Paul is writing a letter back to the Philippians to let them know that Epaphroditus is okay. He was sending him back to comfort their hearts that were worried and upset about him being in prison so Paul writes to them. What you can realize is Philippians is really a missionary thank-you letter. Paul is thanking them, you’ll see it very clearly in chapter 4, for their financial support as he talks about that he partnered with them in ministry and that they fellowshiped with him by supporting him monetarily. It’s a missionary thank-you letter.

With this, Paul wrote his epistle to Ephesians, he wrote Colossians, and Philemon. This comprises what are known as the prison epistles of Paul. When Paul was in prison, he took to his pen and starting writing these letters from Rome. It was about 61 or more likely 62 A.D. In these four chapters, we see chapter 1 dealing with suffering, joy in spite of our suffering or circumstances; chapter 2 deals with submission, the mind of Christ, serving others, a joy in spite of people; chapter 3 we see salvation, joy in spite of things, we have joy in Jesus; and chapter 4 sanctification, joy that defeats worry. We don’t have to be worrying about things. We can cast our cares upon the Lord knowing that He cares for us.

There are a lot of different ways to outline these four short chapters, but the reoccurring theme appears about 19 times—the word “joy” or “rejoice in the Lord”—through the book of Philippians. The second most frequent phrase that you’ll find is “Jesus,” “Lord Jesus,” or “Lord Jesus Christ.” It’s all about joy, so it’s all about Jesus. Almost every verse in Philippians makes reference to Jesus Christ. There are big sections of Philippians where every verse has a reference to Jesus. We’re going to see that tonight in the first six verses—He’s referenced in verse 1, verse 2, again in verse 3—so it’s all about Jesus. If you want joy, as it’s been said, you put Jesus first, others second, and you put yourself last, spells joy. How marvelous that is.

Paul knew that his circumstances—he was in prison—were under the control of a loving God as ours are as well, we can rest assured, and that his suffering for Christ helped to do three things. I want you to write this down. First of all it strengthened the fellowship of the gospel, verse 5. That's what we're going to focus on tonight. Secondly, it promoted the furtherance of the gospel, verse 12. Thirdly, it brought about a guarding and protecting of the faith of the gospel. Paul could rejoice—listen carefully—in spite of his suffering, in spite of his circumstances, because the gospel brought him into fellowship with the other believers, verse 5, it furthered the gospel, it gave him an opportunity to preach to those he wouldn't normally preach to, and it gave him an opportunity to defend or guard the faith of the gospel, verse 27. You find this reference in verse 5, "fellowship in the gospel," in verse 12, "furtherance of the gospel," and in verse 27, "the faith of the gospel." Tonight as we begin our study, we're going to deal with that first category, "the fellowship in the gospel."

There are three divisions in our text tonight, and I want you to note as we go through this. Verses 1-2, we see Paul's greetings. This is the opening greeting or typical Pauline salutation, "Paul and Timotheus," that's the elongated form of Timothy, "the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi," that's the city, the Roman colony in northern Greece, Macedonia, "with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." I want you to note three things in this greeting. First, the servants, Paul and Timothy. The human author is the first word in verse 1, Paul. The name Paul means little.

My middle name is Paul. My name is John Paul, and I'm glad that I have a biblical name. My grandmother one time said, "John Paul," she called me Johnny Paul, "you have a very good name. Live up to it." She's been in Heaven a long time, but by the grace of God I'm living up to my name, John Paul.

Now, we know he was first known as Saul of Tarsus. This guy wasn't always an apostle; he wasn't always a Christian. He was a Jewish man who was very trained in the law. He was a Pharisee, and he hated and persecuted Christians. So, as it has been said, God took Saul the persecutor and turned him into Paul the preacher—the one who tried to destroy the faith, to one who would defend and proclaim the faith.

In Acts 9, and two other times in the book of Acts, we have the marvelous historical record of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. On his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, he was apprehended by the Lord and was converted. God taught him, educated him, turned him around, and we are going to get his spiritual autobiography in chapter 2 as a Pharisee who was saved but was turned into Paul the Apostle as he began to travel and minister among the Gentiles. I don't think there's any question about it, Paul the Apostle was the greatest Christian that ever lived. What would we do without Paul the Apostle. I'm not talking about Jesus. He's the Son of God. He's in a different category. I'm talking about Christians. What a great, great man Paul...if you want to be blessed, do an actual character study of the life of Paul the Apostle. It's a marvelous, marvelous thing to see the grace of God. Paul said that God's grace was given to him who was the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because he

persecuted the church.

Then, we have Timothy. The name “Timothy,” and the elongated version “Timotheus,” means honor to God or one who honors God. He was a native of Lystra, as I said Paul picked him up on his second missionary journey. He was the son of a Greek father and had a Jewish mother. As a young child he learned the Scriptures from his godly grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. He was converted to Christ through Paul’s ministry. On the first missionary journey, he was picked up by Paul, and they took off traveling together. Again, I could talk a lot about Timothy for a while. There are two books of the New Testament written to him by Paul, 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, which are in the category of pastoral epistles. He became a pastor, and Paul wrote those two letters to him.

In Philippians 2:19-23, we’re going to get, in several weeks, what Paul had to say about this young man Timothy, one who honors God. He said, “For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.” That word “likeminded” literally in the Greek means of a kindred spirit. I love that. He’s like-souled or of kindred spirit, so he became a very close traveling companion of Paul and was Paul’s son in the faith.

Notice the description of these two individuals, Paul and Timothy, “...the servants of Jesus Christ.” Our English translations generally render that word *doulos* as servants, but it literally means slaves. There are some modern translations that, and I think rightfully so, render that “slaves of Jesus Christ.” Sometimes people kind of cringe and shy away from that because it has a bad connotation—we don’t even want to use the word “slaves”—but you’re either a slave to Jesus Christ or you’re a slave to the devil. There are no other options. People think, I’m not a Christian, I’m free. You’re a slave to your flesh. You’re a slave to Satan. Satan has a ring in your nose, not literally, and he pulls you wherever he wants you to go.

When I became a Christian, as a young man I realized that I was actually a slave to Satan, that he was controlling my life, so what a glorious thing to become now a slave to Jesus Christ and to be having Him as my Master and to be following Him, leading me the way that He wanted me to go.

Paul was born again and became a slave of Christ. A slave in the Roman world, when they had children, those children were automatically slaves. Spiritually, Timothy becomes a slave in this epistle with Paul. Something that kind of blessed me today is you have Paul and Timothy, slaves of Jesus Christ, yet they’re writing to the Christians in Philippi and what does he call them? Saints. Here we would normally think, “Saint Paul and slave Philippians,” but they reverse it, “...the servants,” slaves, “of Jesus Christ,” writing “to all the saints.” You think, My goodness, that’s kind of crazy. They’re writing to all the people in the congregation, the believers of Jesus Christ, and he calls them saints. What a glorious truth that is. They are slaves, as we are slaves; but they are also the saints of God. Notice that in verse 1, ...to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”

Who are the “saints”? The “saints” are Christians. Again, I know that this may be something

you already know. This is super basic, but trust me, there are some baby Christians or new Christians that don't realize that when you become a Christian, when you are born again, when you trust Christ as your Savior and He forgives your sin and gives you the Holy Spirit and you regenerate and become a child of God, you are classified by God positionally as a saint. You might be saying, "No I ain't." If you're a Christian, you are a saint.

This, again, brings up the concept of positional truth. It's absolutely essential for you to understand that if you are a Christian, you are "in Christ," positionally declared holy, huios, or righteous. There's so much implication in this concept. We are holy or righteous before God because our sin was paid for at the cross, dead and buried in the grave, and then we rose again with Christ. His righteousness is now imputed to us by faith—we're as righteous as Jesus Christ. We are declared "saints," but we don't always live saintly. For that, you can say, "Amen!" The goal of the Christian life is to bring my behavior up to my position, and that's a lifelong process. Some of us have a long way to go. Amen? That's what we call sanctification. That's a lifelong process, but our position doesn't change.

I'm convinced biblically that the moment you are born again, you are taken out of Adam the first, you are transferred into Jesus Christ, the last Adam, and you are righteous "in Christ." Once "in Christ," you're always "in Christ." Nothing can change that, and you can't put yourself "in Christ," you can't take yourself out of Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to you, so you're standing in Him complete. See yourself as not only forgiven of your sins but declared by God a saint, so it's all Christians.

Here's an interesting thought: Nowhere in Scripture is any person by proper name addressed as a saint. It is used in the plural, collectively of entire churches or the family of God. Nowhere in the Bible do you read of Saint John or Saint Thomas or Saint Matthew or Saint Luke or Saint Fred or Saint George or Saint Mary. It's not there, but Paul writes in the Bible, "...to all the saints," collectively. These are not individuals that the church canonizes after they die and vote on who gets to be saints. Years ago the Catholic Church had to raise their standard for sainthood because so many people were requesting that so-and-so become a saint. They were getting so many petitions for people to be saints that they had to raise the standard a little bit, but that's not biblical. We're all saints. Never does the Bible say we can pray to saints or that they can intercede for us. "For there is...one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," and that's the only way to get to the Father is through Jesus Christ. Amen? We, as believers, are all corporately declared to be saints as our position. Notice the phrase in verse 1, it's so good, "...in Christ Jesus," that's why we are declared saints, we are "in Christ Jesus."

Paul is also writing to the bishops and deacons. I just want mention these two individuals or groups of individuals. Bishops would be what we call today pastors or elders, and deacons are those who are designated as servants in the church. They serve the people, and they serve and assist the bishops and the elders or the pastors. The word "bishop" is the Greek word episkopos. We get our word Episcopalian from it, and it conveys the idea of oversight. These are different terms used to describe the one office, they're not different offices. So the churches where we have bishops and cardinals over pastors or priests, no ministers are called priests in

that sense either in the Bible. These are different terms that convey their function of one individual. They're overseers called bishops. It's used of Jesus Christ Himself in 1 Peter 2:25, who is the "...Bishop of your souls." It's used of spiritual leaders who are called elders. The Greek word there in Acts 20 is presbyteros. We get our word "Presbyterian" from it. It's also used for pastors or shepherds in 1 Peter 5:1-2. They're called bishops, elders, pastors, which is the word "shepherds" which speaks to their feeding and leading the flock of God.

I don't need to create controversy or open up a can of worms, I usually do it and probably shouldn't do it, but I'm going to do it anyway because there's a very unbiblical and dangerous trend that's going on in the church today, that is, the ordination of women in the church as pastors or bishops or presbyteros or elders or giving them the title of pastors, and they're preaching from the pulpit on Sunday morning to the congregation of the church. I'm convinced the Bible teaches that the office of a pastor, which I said is also a bishop, elder, or overseer, is for a man, a spiritual leader in the church.

Turn with me real quick in your Bible to 1 Timothy 2:11 and we'll read down to 3:2. Again, the only reason why I mention this is because it's become a real hot topic. Just a few weeks ago the Southern Baptist Convention met in Orange County, and they're debating this very issue of the ordination of women as pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention. It's tragic to me that it would even be an issue to debate or discuss. They wanted to form a committee to try to determine whether or not women could be pastors when we've had the Scriptures pretty clear and plain for a long time. I also, in light of the verses we're going to read and others, believe that the pastor's wife is the pastor's wife. My wife is not Pastor Kristy, she's Kristy. I can't do what I do without her support, and her prayers, and her encouragement—we're a team—but I don't believe that the wife of a pastor automatically becomes a pastor or should be preaching from the pulpit on a Sunday morning.

Let's read this text, 1 Timothy 2:11, and you can go all the way back to the first verse and check it out later tonight, but it says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence," the reason or rationale, verse 13, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." He basis it on creation order, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." He basis this concept of women are not to teach, and I think that would include the preaching, so called, in the church, but they're to be in subjection based on creation order—Adam first, then Eve—and then the curse or the fall, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved," not salvation of her soul but I think the calling and the ministry of her life, "...if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

This is not to say, and I don't want to get bogged down, I still have to get back to Philippians, a woman can't teach or preach because God can do that in the church, but in the corporate congregation she cannot have the office of a pastor, nor do I believe that it implies that she can teach the congregation when there are men there lest they voluntarily sit in on her teaching, but

she's not to be in that place of authority of a teacher in the church.

Go to chapter 3, where we have the qualifications for a pastor, verse 1. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop," there's our word, "he desireth a good work." This is obviously talking about a man. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach," or an ability to teach, and you can go on continuing to read. Notice, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," so I believe that these verses are clear. I've read all the arguments in opposition to that, I don't think it's a sound interpretation, so I believe they are complimentary—God has His place and role for women in the church, God has His place for men in the church—and the office of a pastor is for a man. Go back with me to Philippians. I based all that on that Paul is writing to the bishops and they are men.

Now, notice also the deacons. The Greek word is diakonos in verse 1. Deacons are referring to servants, but there is an actual office. There are only two offices in the church, that of the pastor and that of the deacons. Again, the deacons are men, "...the husband of one wife," and so forth. You can read their qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. There is a woman that's called a deaconess, used in the feminine, but there's no indication in the Bible that there's the office of a deaconess in the church. In Acts 6, there were servants chosen to wait on tables. This is believed to be the first group of deacons to serve.

Notice the salutation, verse 2, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul's greeting of grace, which is the Greek word charis, and peace, which is the Hebrew shalom. We are saved by grace, we're being justified freely by His grace to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we are sanctified by God's grace, we serve by God's grace, and we are given God's grace to bear in our suffering, 2 Corinthians 12. Paul opens with grace and ends with grace, then he wishes them peace. Grace always comes first bringing the peace of God and peace with God. That's so very important.

What is the source of God's grace and peace? Notice it in verse 2, "...from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." It's from two Persons within the divine being of God, the Godhead, and it uses one preposition, "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," linking the Father and the Son in one common source. What this does is indicate that Jesus is God equally to God the Father. They're both the source of that grace and peace as well.

I want to move to verses 3 and 5 where we have Paul's gratitude. Paul says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy," and what I'm thankful for is, "For your fellowship," koinonia, "in the gospel from the first day until now." Paul was in chains, but he wasn't crying. Paul was in prison, but he wasn't pouting. He was thankful to God and thoughtful for others. Again, Paul's in prison thinking about them and thankful for them. If I were in prison, I would be thinking about me and would want them to be helping me—bake me a cake, send it to me with a file in it. That's what I would say in my letter to the Philippians.

I love those little western movies where the good guys were in jail and their buddies or sidekicks would ride up on the outside of the jail with their horse, throw the rope through the windows with bars, tie it to the saddle, ride off, and the whole wall would blow out. They'd have their horse ready to jump on and say, "Yay!" That's my vision of what would happen to me if I got in jail. I want somebody to come rescue me.

Paul's saying, "You know, I'm thinking about you guys, and I'm thankful for you. Thankful to my God every time I remember you." I wonder when people think about you, do they thank God or do they curse God? Are they thankful for you? Are you a blessing? Or do you bring pain to their hearts. Paul was thankful and thoughtful.

It's interesting. In verse 3, he uses the phrase, "...remembrance of you;" in verse 4, "...prayer of mine for you;" and in verse 5, "...your fellowship;" verse 6, "...good work in you;" verse 7, "...I have you in my heart;" verse 8, "...I long after you." Here's Paul, and the reason he had joy in prison was because he was thoughtful and thankful of others.

I want you to note two things. Paul thanked God for them. The word "thank" is in the present active indicative which denotes a continuous action in the present time, so Paul was always, constantly giving thanks to God for them. We should also be thankful for others. Then, when Paul thought about them and was thankful for them, this is what he did, and we should, too, prayed for them. If you've got somebody that you're thankful for and thinking about, then pray for them. It's possible to be thankful and thoughtful for others but not pray for them. In verse 4, the word "prayer" and "request" are the same Greek word. It refers to an entreaty or supplication on behalf of another. Paul prayed always with joy, verse 4, for them because he knows that God cares and provides.

Notice the basis of his prayer in verse 5, he says, "For your fellowship in the gospel," so Paul was able to rejoice even though he was in prison because it brought him into a deeper fellowship, *koinonia*, with the believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Notice in verse 5, "...from the first day until now." Remember I said ten years? Remember Paul's first arrival in Philippi? Whipped, beaten, arrested, and thrown into prison. What a great way for a pastor to start his ministry in the city. "Where's our new pastor?" "He's in prison right now." There have been some great men and women put in prison. Paul was one of them. He goes all the way back to that first day, "When I came to Philippi, and the Lord opened Lydia's heart, and the Lord saved this demon-possessed slave girl, and the Lord saved the Philippian jailer, opened the prison doors and set the captives free. "...from the first day until now," I'm thanking God for you that I remember you. He's thankful and thoughtful; he's prayerful for them for their fellowship, their *koinonia*, their joint participation. How marvelous it is to be part of a fellowship—to pray for others, to care about others, to think about others, and to lift each other up in the Lord.

I'm going to read verse 6, make a few comments, and I was extremely tempted this week to stop here anyway. This verse 6 is amazing. Pray for me this week. I may just come back to verse 6 next week and do an entire message on verse 6, but let's close with it. This is the third section. Verses 1-2, Paul's greeting; verses 3-5, Paul's gratitude; verse 6, Paul's great

confidence. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it," the word "perform it" means complete it, bring it to completion; and the date that it will be completed, "until the day of Jesus Christ." When the Lord comes back in the rapture for the church, then it will be complete. God will wrap up the work that He begins in you.

Aren't you glad that when God begins a work in your heart, God completes and finishes it. This is why Jude said, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." God starts a work, God finishes a work. What begins with grace ends in glory. I have so much I want to say about this one verse, and I am going to stop right now. You can all say, "Praise Jesus!" Let's pray.