

THE PREACHER'S GREEK COMPANION TO

Philippians

A Selective Commentary for
Meditation and Sermon Preparation



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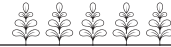
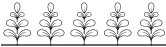
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INTRODUCTION



The Philippians were doing pretty well as a congregation, and so Paul can begin the letter with a wholehearted affirmation of how thankful he is for his friends in Philippi. While Paul follows his usual pattern of making his first thoughts a kind of table of contents for the letter, he focuses his prayer for them on the need to grow in love and insight, all in the confidence that God is working in them. They are doing well, and they need to continue to make progress by loving like Jesus.



6a

πεποιθώς αὐτὸ τοῦτο

*pepoithōs auto touto***I am convinced of this,**

6b

ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει

*hoti ho enarxamenos en hymin ergon agathon epitelesei***that he who began a good work in you will complete it**

6c

ἄχρι ἡμέρας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

*achri hēmeras Iēsou Christou;***up to the day of Christ Jesus,**

7a

καθὼς ἐστὶν δίκαιον ἐμοὶ

*kathōs estin dikaion emoi***just as it is fitting for me**

7b

τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν,

*touto phronein hyper pantōn hymōn,***to think this way about all of you,**

7c

διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς,

*dia to echein me en tē kardia hymas,***since I have you in my heart,**

7d

ἐν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου

*en te tois desmois mou***both in my chains**

7e

καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

*kai en tē apologia kai bebaiōsei tou euangeliiou***and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel,**

7f

συνκοινωνοὺς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας·

*synkoinōnous mou tēs charitos pantas hymas ontas;***and since you are all partners with me in this grace.**

8a

μάρτυς γάρ μου ὁ θεός,

*martys gar mou ho theos,***For God is my witness**

8b

ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς

*hōs epipothō pantas hymas***how I long for you all**

8c

ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

*en splanchnois Christou Iēsou.***with the compassion of Christ Jesus!**

6a

πεπειθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο

I am convinced of this,

πεπειθῶςhaving become convinced/
persuadedPERF ACT PTCP
NOM SG MASC

verb

πειθῶ

*pe·poi·thōs***αὐτὸ**

itself (intensive)

ACC SG NEUT

personal

αὐτός

au·to

pron

τοῦτο

this

ACC SG NEUT

demonstr

οὗτος

tu·to

pron

Paul's seemingly off-handed mention that he is “persuaded” or “convinced” (πεπειθῶς) of what follows is actually important for the letter: he is going to repeatedly stress the need for a proper “mentality” or “outlook on life,” and so he models this by showing *his* mind-set about the faithfulness of God.

6b

ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει

that he who began a good work in you will complete it

ὅτι

that

conj

ὅτι

ho·ti

ὁ	the (one)	NOM SG MASC	article
ὁ	<i>ho</i>		
ἐναρξάμενος	(he) having begun	AOR MID PTCP	verb
ἐνάρχομαι	<i>en·ar·xa·me·nos</i>	NOM SG MASC	
ἐν	in	---	prep
ἐν	<i>en</i>		
ὑμῖν	you all	2ND DAT PL	personal pron
σύ	<i>hy·min</i>		
ἔργον	work/deed	ACC SG NEUT	noun
ἔργον	<i>er·gon</i>		
ἀγαθὸν	good	ACC SG NEUT	adj
ἀγαθός	<i>a·ga·thon</i>		
ἐπιτελέσει	(he) will complete/finish	FUT ACT IND	verb
ἐπιτελέω	<i>e·pi·te·le·sei</i>	3RD SG	

6c **ἄχρι ἡμέρας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·**

up to the day of Christ Jesus,

ἄχρι	until	---	adverb
ἄχρι	<i>a·chri</i>		
ἡμέρας	day	GEN SG FEM	noun
ἡμέρα	<i>hē·me·ras</i>		
Ἰησοῦ	of Jesus	GEN SG MASC	noun
Ἰησοῦς	<i>I·ē·sou</i>		
Χριστοῦ	(of) Christ/Messiah	GEN SG MASC	noun
Χριστός	<i>Chri·stou</i>		

The second half of the verse, well known to many, makes a great centerpiece for a sermon on this text, and for the whole series in Philippians: God has begun a good work in the Philippians (note that ὑμῖν is plural, so he is concerned with the congregation as a whole), and he can be trusted to complete it.


7a **καθώς ἐστιν δίκαιον ἐμοί**


just as it is fitting for me


καθώς	just as	---	adverb
καθώς	<i>ka·thōs</i>		
ἐστιν	it is	PRES ACT IND	verb
εἰμί	<i>e·stin</i>	3RD SG	



As you meditate on this passage and contemplate how you might teach or preach it to others, consider the following areas of emphasis.

 **Big Idea.** Recognize that God, who began a good work in you, will complete it!

 **Bridge to Theology.** As is typical for Paul's introductions, he provides a kind of "table of contents" of themes he will explore throughout the letter—so it is hard to find just one theological point. He mentions *joy* (v. 4), which will show up again and again in the letter; he refers to the Philippians' "partnership" or "fellowship" in the gospel (vv. 5–7), another recurrent theme; he will likewise repeatedly stress the need for a proper "attitude" or "mind-set" (vv. 6–7, 9); and, finally, the repeated use of "all" (vv. 3–4, 7–9), coupled with the key statement that "he who began a good work in you will complete it . . ." (v. 6), signals the idea of fulfilling one's Christian vocation in confidence of God's empowering grace. In addition, we can note the warm, personal tone that suffuses the letter (v. 8), and Paul's overarching concern for the progress of the gospel both in the lives of the Philippians and throughout the world (vv. 5, 7). You can develop all these points over the course of the sermon series.

 **Illustrations.** Since this will likely be the first sermon in a series in Philippians, it is appropriate to give some overview of both the historical setting and the major themes of the letter. Details about ancient Philippi and Paul's imprisonment can be found in the major commentaries, while the important themes are summarized above. You can use this sermon to preview some of the things you will be discussing throughout the series.

For this reason, your opening statements may be pretty matter-of-fact about the epistle, even as you convey enthusiasm about the wonderful things you are going to learn about in the following weeks. Since Paul starts with thanksgiving, it would be a good time to reiterate your own gratitude for the congregation in which you serve (assuming things are stable enough for that to be sincere—but do recall that Paul managed to thank even a crazy congregation like the Corinthians!).

Amidst the many things Paul mentions here, "God completing his work in you" makes a good central idea for a sermon (once you get

past the introductory material). You might begin by helping people remember the various ways God has worked in the lives of your congregation over the years.

One of the blessings of this epistle is that the Philippians are doing pretty well as a church, and so Paul can affirm where they are at even as he encourages them to keep growing in love. If your congregation is in decent shape, then this gives you the opportunity to work from a place of affirmation and encouragement rather than of strong critique. There will be plenty of challenges presented (especially as we are urged to follow Christ's example of self-sacrificial love) and even some mild rebukes towards the end of the letter (Euodia and Syntyche have to be told to stop arguing with each other), but overall, Paul's tone is one of helping those who are already moving forward to keep making progress in love.