

Our faithful and gracious God. Philippians 1:1 – 11 and 4:4 – 23

There is a building directly across the street from our children's old primary school in the city that took over 7 years to complete! When we used to walk past it during this time we could sometimes detect small signs of progress, but it seemed to proceed at a snail's pace. We often commented to each other that we couldn't imagine why the building's owner would put so much time and money into this building unless he had plans to eventually complete it."

In Paul's letter to the church at Philippi he confidently states to them (and us), "*He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 1:6). Furthermore, in Philippians 4:19 Paul reminds us of God's promise to supply everything that is necessary to build us up together into Christ-like disciples. What gave Paul the confidence to make two such extraordinary promises?

When Paul first entered the strategic Roman city of Philippi, the people who first received his letter were strangers to him, and even his enemies (e.g. see Acts 16:25 – 34). But having been saved by the power of the Christ's gospel, these Philippian Christians became Paul's friends and mission partners. Later, while imprisoned in Rome for preaching the gospel, Paul received a glowing report about the believers in Philippi from Epaphroditus, their spiritual leader. This news filled Paul with an inexpressible joy because he now had a first hand testimony that God was faithfully leading this Christian community toward spiritual maturity and completion in Christ (Philippians 4:19). God has already paid the full upfront price for our salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, it only stands to reason that he is now committed to completing his good work in us.

1. Read Philippians 1:1 – 11. What is the nature of the work that Paul says God will complete in us (especially verses 1:9 – 11)?
2. What role does prayer play in this work of God (Philippians 1:3 – 9; 4:6 - 7)?
3. Why does Paul keep reminding us to always rejoice in the Lord (e.g. 4:4)
4. Why does Paul instruct us to continually meditate on things that are true, noble, right, pure, etc (4:8 - 9)
5. What role are Christ's followers to have in supplying one another's needs (4:10 – 18)
6. How literally should we take Paul's promises in Philippians 4:13 and 19?

Take time to pray for our church that, as it goes through this time of transition and change, God will bless us with strength and graciously supply all our needs. Remember also to pray for Steve, Joy and Sharon as they leave this church to carry on Christ's work in Eastwood.