

Philippians

DEVOTIONAL SERIES

PRAYERS OF JOY AND THANKSGIVING

Thursday, April 16th 2020

Philippians 1:3-6

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Paul was THE evangelist in the New Testament. He wasn't the only one, but many Jews and Gentiles everywhere came to faith in Jesus Christ through Paul, and churches came into existence wherever he preached the Gospel.

Paul was also a man of fervent prayer. Many of his letters begin with prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for the church he was writing to. And that's what we see here. He does this regardless of the circumstances; regardless of whether his specific situation gives him a lot to be thankful about, and we see here that Paul is even writing this letter from prison. We also can see from the rest of his letter that it's not only the introduction that's full of joy and thanksgiving.

When I imagine sitting in Paul's prison cell, then his introduction makes sense. What else can he do other than pray? What brings him joy and makes him thankful is not only the fact that the Philippians were probably supporting him through this difficult time, but most of all that the Philippians are being faithful to the gospel and that God will continue to perfect the good work He began in them. It's amazing to read how Paul gets his strength and joy from seeing God's good work in others, and interestingly begins this letter not talking about himself but instead about the Philippians! Paul doesn't look himself, but first and foremost at his brothers and sisters in the faith.

I can obviously only partially compare my situation to Paul's in prison. And yet I ask myself, what am I doing all day at home during this time of limitations due to Corona? Am I praying and thanking God that He will perfect the good work He began in me? Am I praying for myself and perhaps also for those around me? Am I praying for my church, for schoolmates, work colleagues, for my neighbors? For those whom I may not even like? Am I letting fear and insecurity debilitate my witness for Christ, to spread His gospel?

Or can I gain strength and confidence because once again we are aware of just how little control we have over our lives, and therefore how truly reliant we are on God and His grace?

Oh, where we would be with prayer and thankfulness!

#Prayerworks

Prayer: *Thank you, Father, that you have counted me worthy to begin a good work in me. Thank you, Father, that you will perfect this good work! Thank you that these aren't just some empty words, but that they are the words of true life, words of truth and hope! Your work in me allows me even in times and circumstances like these to come before you in prayer and to be thankful and full of joy. Help me as you helped Paul in his times of hardship and difficulty to never forget your sacrifice, and to continue testifying to others of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. AMEN.*

-Janis Arzet-

