

Remnant Life Church  
April 12, 2015

**What He Started He Will Finish**  
Philippians 1:1-11

- Being a good starter is important
  - Every July we honor the birth of the United States
  - Every business – Microsoft started by 2 college dropouts
  - Every relationship - the first date
  - Every church
- Finishing, while it gets less attention is equally important
- Paul was a great starter AND finisher
  - His start however was very different from his finish
  - He began as the church's greatest enemy
  - He finished by giving his life for it
  - *Acts 20:24 - However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*
- Paul speaks a great deal about how we live our lives, how we run the race

READ - Phil 1:1-11

*Phil 1:6 - 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.*

Who is Paul writing to?

- The city of Philippi (modern Greece)
  - Philip II of the king of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great) seized the territory around 400 BC and named it after himself
  - 200 years later the city passes into Roman control
  - In 42 BC that region is the site of a battle between Anthony and Octavius (later Caesar Augustus) who were the political heirs of Julius Caesar against Brutus and Cassius the chief assassins of Julius
  - Twelve years later Octavius disposes of Anthony and settles his defeated followers in this small town
- Paul first visits the city on the second of his three missionary journeys (*Acts 16:12*)
  - As a Roman city it had no synagogue for Paul to preach in
  - Jewish tradition stated that there had to be 10 Jewish men in residence to establish a permanent place of worship
  - There apparently were not that number living there but there were women present who worshipped God
    - The church therefore was comprised of Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians

- Paul joins a prayer meeting on the Sabbath led by a woman named Lydia (**Acts 16:13-15**)
- The city at this time was steeped in the Roman pagan culture
  - Paul frees a slave girl from demonic bondage (**Acts 16**)
  - Paul and Silas are put in prison for “*advocating unlawful customs for us Romans to accept or practice*” (**16:21**)
  - God frees them from prison with an earthquake
  - The jailer and his family became one of those converts (**16:34**)
- Paul’s time makes a great impact as they send him gifts of support
  - On one of these occasions he receives a gift from the small church while imprisoned in Rome (house arrest)
  - The letter of thanks that he sends back is the letter that we call the book of Philippians
  - Not just thanks but correction, encouragement, and instruction
- This group had shown a tendency toward disunity and contentiousness
  - The change of heart takes time to be seen in the change of actions
- Paul addresses this (**Phil 2:1-11**) as well as other aspects of church life including guarding against false teachers (**Phil 3:2-4:3**)
- The sixth verse of the first chapter reads in 2 ways
  - The first is the work of the church that was started there
  - The second is the work in each of us in our daily lives

# 1. God is always at work in our lives

- a. Drawing us closer to Himself
- b. Working the sinful nature out of our lives
- c. Giving us opportunities to put into practice what we know as Christians in our hearts and minds
- d. He begins the letter by addressing all the saints in Christ Jesus
  - i. These people didn’t act much like saints
  - ii. Who in this room is a saint?
    - 1. You would probably answer no one
    - 2. That is because we believe it is only an exclusive, singular definition
    - 3. According to Paul a saint is a believer in Jesus Christ (**1:1**)
  - iii. We need to see ourselves more as God sees us rather than how others or even we see ourselves
    - 1. In another letter Paul describes very clearly who we are
    - 2. **READ** - Rom **8:28-39**
  - iv. We are not God’s projects
    - 1. **Eph 2:10** says that we are his workmanship
    - 2. Because of that He disciplines us, adjusts us, corrects us because He loves us (**Heb 12:5-11**)
- e. God’s work in our lives is never finished until we get to heaven



## **2. The presence of abounding love**

- a. Paul's prayer to the church was that their love would increase (1:9)
- b. Why? (1:10-11)
  - i. To discern what is best (knowledge and depth of insight)
  - ii. Our lives may be pure and blameless
  - iii. Filled with righteousness
  - iv. To give God glory and praise
- c. These are the materials that will build our lives
- d. We will not see the finished product here
  - i. We are called to run the race (1 Cor 9:24 - *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.*)
  - ii. The prize that Paul is speaking of is not a physical reward but the ultimate prize of honoring God and being welcomed into His kingdom as a good and faithful servant.

## **3. Are you allowing God to work in your life today?**

- a. Are you holding to things, behaviors, actions that He wants to remove?
- b. He gives us a choice
  - i. We are not robots or puppets
  - ii. As in all things we can accept or reject the things of God
  - iii. What do you choose to do?