

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL

002 - LESSON - January 4, 2026

Uniting Heaven and Earth Christ in Philippians and Colossians
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Reasons for Thanksgiving and Prayer

SUNDAY: Fellowship in the Gospel

MEMORY TEXT: Philippians 1:6 (NKJV) “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 1:3-8 (NKJV) “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, (4) always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, (5) for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, (6) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; (7) just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. (8) For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.”

What is Paul thankful for? What reassurances does he give the Philippians, and why is that important?

How can Christian fellowship remain strong even when believers are separated by distance, trial, or hardship? How do you understand the promise that God will finish the “good work in you” (Phil. 1:6)? What does that mean? Will this work ever end before the Second Coming?

1. What Paul Is Thankful For

Paul expresses deep gratitude for:

- Their partnership in the gospel (**v.5**): The Philippians supported Paul’s ministry from the very beginning—through prayer, encouragement, and financial help.

Philippians 1:5 (NKJV) “For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.”

2. The Reassurances Paul Gives

Paul offers two major reassurances:

1. **God will finish what He started (v.6):**

“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This reminds believers that **salvation is both an event and a process—what God starts in our hearts, He is faithful to complete.**

They share in God’s grace together (v.7):

Philippians 1:7 (NKJV) “Just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.”

2. Even though Paul is in prison, he reassures them that they are united in the same mission and covered by the same grace—both in suffering (“in my chains”) and in witness (“defense and confirmation of the gospel”).

3. Why This Is Important

- Encouragement in hardship: The Philippians faced pressure from pagan society and opposition for their faith. Paul’s words remind them that their struggles have divine purpose.
- Unity in mission: Paul reinforces that they are not just supporters—they are *partners* in God’s work.

Summary Thought

Paul’s thanksgiving in Philippians 1:3–8 is

- Not just gratitude for what the Philippians *did*—
- It’s confidence in what God *is doing* in them.

His message can be summarized this way:

“You are not forgotten, your faith is not in vain, and the God who started His work in you will finish it faithfully.”

The Fellowship That Endures

(Philippians 1:3–8)

1. A Fellowship of the Heart

Key Texts:

- *Philippians 1:8* – “For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.”
- *Exodus 28:29* – “Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart.”
- *Hebrews 7:25* – “He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Insight:

Paul's love for the believers in Philippi flows from the very heart of Christ. Though separated by distance and chains, his affection reflects the interceding love of Jesus—our High Priest who carries our names on His heart before the Father.

Application:

True Christian fellowship begins in the heart. When Christ's love fills us, distance, hardship, or difference cannot break the bond that unites believers.

Reflection

Question: Do I carry others "on my heart" in prayer the way Christ and Paul did?

2. A Fellowship of Mutual Support**Key Texts:**

- *Philippians 1:5* – "For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."
- *Philippians 4:14–15* – "You shared in my distress... no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only."
- *Philippians 3:10* – "That I may know Him... and the fellowship of His sufferings."
- *Galatians 6:2* – "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Insight:

The Philippians didn't just believe Paul's message—they lived it. Their prayers, financial gifts, and compassion showed that fellowship (*koinonia*) means partnership in purpose, not just friendship in words.

Application:

Fellowship thrives when believers support one another through prayer, encouragement, and shared mission. Christianity is not a spectator faith—it's a shared journey of sacrifice and service.

Reflection

Question: Am I an active partner in the gospel or a passive observer in the church?

3. A Fellowship of Confidence and Witness**Key Texts:**

- *Philippians 1:6–7* – "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it... both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel."
- *2 Timothy 1:12* – "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him."

- *Romans 8:28* – “All things work together for good to those who love God.”
- *Acts 28:30–31* – “Paul... preaching the kingdom of God... no one forbidding him.”

Insight:

Paul’s chains became his pulpit.

- Rather than despair, he saw opportunity—
- The gospel could not be chained.
- His faith rested in the confidence that God would finish the work begun in every believer.

Application:

Faithful confidence in God transforms trials into testimonies. When we trust that God is still working, even setbacks become platforms for His glory.

Reflection

Question: Do I trust God to complete His work in me even when life feels uncertain or restrictive?

Thanksgiving & Praise

Philippians 4.6 NKJV “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”

Lesson 003 - Life & Death