

# The Final Hope

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] It's for a short time, Philippians chapter 1, and looking to that verse we all know a few verses in this chapter that are our favourite verses of many.
- For this evening just verse 6, Philippians chapter 1 verse 6, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
- If you recall the last month and a bit now, we've been looking, broadly speaking, at encouragement, spiritual encouragement. We started, I think of Daniel, we've moved through various evidences how even when providence seems complicated, we can still trust in the Lord to do good to his people.
- Well, if we were to give a title perhaps to tonight's sermon, it would be roughly something like the final hope or the final idea of spiritual strength.
- What does it all lead to? If we are saying that God gives his people spiritual strength and we saw examples of that, then where does it all go? How can it be summarised for us?
- [ 1 : 1 0 ] Well, I believe that verse 6 here is a good summary for us of what it means to trust in the Lord, to fully trust in the Lord. We read the whole chapter together, Philippians chapter 1 together, and we saw even that chapter alone, Paul is still suffering.
- He's still suffering. In many ways, Paul is not ashamed to say that he wants to go home. He's tired. And he wishes to be with the Lord. It is a better thing to be with the Lord.
- He's got no shame in saying that. He is honest. And for the Philippians and all the other churches, they know how much Paul has suffered. They know he's a man who has been, humanly speaking, stretched past his limits.
- Who's been in prison time and again and suffered, as we said before, assaults and awful things. And Paul is quite honest saying it is better for him, of course, to go be with the Lord.
- But he is there still to encourage the people of God. So the man who is saying this encouragement at verse 6, we know it's Paul.
- [ 2 : 1 5 ] It's a man who himself, we can assume, we know, in his writing, in his prayers, we know Paul's a man who has time and time again had to find encouragement in the Lord.
- Because he's found it not in himself or in a situation. So taking verse 6, just section by section, phrase by phrase, let's break it down a wee bit together and ask the question or seek to answer the question, what is the end?
- What does the final completion look like for our spiritual hope? Again, just taking it very simply and very shortly, just phrase by phrase, where Paul says, And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
- The first phrase is obvious for us. I am sure of this. I am sure. If I was to ask you, how sure are you of your place before the Lord?
- As was alluded to in prayer, theologically speaking, I hope we all say, take away all the caveats, all the ifs and buts, and just say that I know, theologically speaking, I love the Lord.

- [ 3 : 37 ] Christ is my saviour. He has died for me. Therefore, I know I am secure with the Lord. I know my place is with him. Theologically, we can say that. That's all fine and well.
- But are we just purely theological, logical people? I'm certainly not. I don't know if any of us are, or very few of us are. If I was to ask you day by day, take it next week.
- Every evening I ask you, how sure are you of your position for the Lord? How sure are you of your salvation? How sure are you of your place in glory? How sure are you that at the end of the day, the Lord will say to you and call you a good and faithful servant?
- How sure are you of that? Well, some days you might be thinking, well, after a good day today, I'm fully enthused. I'm fully enthusiastic for the Lord.
- And I know that I am one of his. I know my place is secure. And I know that I am a servant. And I know that he loves me. And I love him much. Other days you might think, well, after weeks you might think, well, I haven't opened my Bible.
- [ 4 : 49 ] Not really opened it. You might have opened it. But I haven't really truly engaged in God's word in a week or so. I haven't really been praying much. At least if I have been praying, they've been pretty hollow prayers.
- I just feel so dead. I feel so far away. You might say, well, look at my life. There's so much going on just now with my own family situation and health situation.
- X, Y, Z. I haven't got time to worry about anything else. I haven't got time to think about the things of the Lord. I'm so busy. I'm so stuck. Anything's so hard.
- But there are plenty of reasons, in other words, for us not to be sure. Plenty of reasons for us to lose confidence. But Paul's confidence when he says, I am sure of this, his confidence is not based on self.
- We know that. It is partly based on lived experience. Paul can say that he is sure that the Lord will have him. The Lord will keep him. He can say he is the Lord. It's because Paul, again and again, has seen various situations, both physical and spiritual, where the Lord has kept him.
- [ 6 : 00 ] And, brothers and sisters, we can go through our history and look back, I'm sure, and think back to various situations, both physical and spiritual, where we're attacked either way. We'll go through trials and go through difficult providences.
- And we can say, well, that was hard. That was grim. That was dark. But yet, here I am. And yet the Lord has kept me.
- I am sure because he has brought me this far. I am sure because I am here now. Yes, maybe battered and bruised. Yes, maybe of small faith and slow faith.
- But I am still here now. I am sure of this, that he has not let me down. In summary, this is a confidence that both we and Paul have, not on ourselves.
- What's it based on? It's based on the total sovereign power and the total sovereign love of our Saviour.
- [ 7 : 00 ] We take his promises as truth and we apply them to ourselves. This sure fact we would also perhaps call the preservation of the saints.
- A phrase I'm sure we've heard before. Let's remind ourselves. It's a phrase that tells us quite simply that the Lord will lose none of his own. The Lord will lose none of his own.
- This is a glorious truth. It's a very base of our faith. Those the Lord saves. Those the Lord rescues. Those the Lord calls mine.
- He doesn't just give them up. He doesn't just give them away. He doesn't lose a single one of them. To summarise even more simply for us.
- The power that God uses to save us. If we can say that. The power that the Lord uses to save us. That eternal power. It's the same eternal power he uses to keep us.

- [ 8 : 05 ] Our faith in him is kept by him. And of course, yes, we will wonder.
- Many of us, not all of us, will in some way small or not so small. We will wander away. We will backslide. There will be times of sin. Times of sadness.
- Times of fogginess of our spiritual minds. There will be times we are bad examples and bad witnesses. Of that we have no doubt. Does that nullify what God says to us?
- No. Does our waywardness as Christians nullify the fact that God calls us his? No. And we all know, and some will say, well, if you believe in the preservation of the saints, that God will keep his people regardless.
- That God has his people and he will keep his people. Then surely that gives you the excuse that I can sin and do what I want and live whatever lifestyle I want to live. And think, well, I've got a ticket to heaven.
- [ 9 : 11 ] I've got a sure entry to heaven. Then I can do what I want in life. Well, the true Christian doesn't think that way, do they? The true Christian doesn't act that way.
- Yes, we sin. And yes, we fall away at times. And perhaps for a long time. For a long time. And I want to remember that. We must be very careful that, brothers and sisters, until the end of life, if there's a brother or sister who's fallen away, we must never, yes, in terms of church discipline, things must be enacted.
- But note, in church discipline, they might lose their membership. They might lose access to the table and so on and so forth. But we're never saying to them, we're never saying to them, you are never coming back.
- We're never saying to them, you're too far gone. We're never saying to them, the Lord clearly does not have you as his own anymore. That's never pronounced in church discipline formal.
- And for ourselves privately, we must be mindful when we discuss and talk of Christians who perhaps, as far as we understand, might have fallen away. We don't condone sin if we're engaged in it.
- [ 10 : 20 ] We don't agree with sin if we're engaged in it. But at the same time, we remember them and we keep them in prayer. The Lord does not lose a single one of his people.
- We mentioned Spurgeon in the session room, in a different context before we came in. And Spurgeon didn't coin this thought, but Spurgeon, once or twice to his students, would remind them that there'll be people in heaven, and he would say then, even Presbyterians, there'll be people in heaven who will surprise us.
- Spurgeon was a greater theologian in many ways than I'll ever be. But he is happy to say, we've got people in heaven that will surprise us. We will write people off, and we will write brothers and sisters off.
- For the Lord says, those who are his, he will not lose. To quote another theologian, Berkhoff. Now, Berkhoff, a great theologian, not the easiest of times to read, but when he's easy, he is easy.
- He says about perseverance. Perseverance, it's quite a long quote, but just stick with me. Perseverance may be defined as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that has begun in the heart is continued and brought to completion.
- [ 11 : 46 ] It is because God never forsakes his work that believers continue to stand to the very end. An easier quote, perhaps, for us is from the Puritan, Richard Baxter.
- He has an image here in one of my sermons to help describe preservation. He says, In other words, brothers and sisters, if we know and love the Lord, if we can say Jesus is our saviour, we can say, I am sure of this.

Whatever you might feel or think, you might say, I don't feel very good. I feel like a pretty terrible Christian. And perhaps if I sinned, repent of it, repent of it.

Absolutely. But don't say, because I feel like a bad Christian. Perhaps because I feel far away, therefore maybe I've lost my salvation. That's a lie straight from the pits of hell itself.

Straight from the enemy. I am sure of this. That's a confidence based not on ourselves, but based on the Lord. Paul, who calls himself the chief of sinners, is able to say, I am sure of this.

[ 13 : 10 ] Because of the Lord, I am sure of this. What is he sure of? What is Paul sure of? That he who began a good work in you. That he who began.

Brothers and sisters, the he, of course we know, is the Lord. He began the work in us, the work of salvation. That work, when did it begin in us? When did the Lord begin the work of salvation towards us?

Well, I would say, I would think myself, we can go right back before time, can't we? Before time, before space, before reality.

There's this triune God. There's no angels. There's no heaven. There's nothing. Nothing. No creation yet. We can't imagine it, but it's there.

It is God. At that point. And there is no point, because there's no time. But for triune God. There, the work of salvation began for us.

[ 14 : 17 ] How can we say that? At that point. When there is no point to begin. There is no beginning. In eternity past. Which itself makes no sense. In eternity.

Our triune God. Set that he would save you. The work begins then. Work begins then.

It carries on then. In the creation of the world. It carries on then. And of course in the sun. Coming. And living and dying. A life of obedience. A perfect obedience. Now everything else we know our saviour is.

And our saviour has done. And our saviour does on the cross. That work continues there. Through Jesus. His life. His death. His resurrection. And in our experience.

At some day. At some week. At some hour. For many of us who can pinpoint it. Others of us can't pinpoint it. But at some point. We were living a life. We did not know him.

[ 15 : 19 ] We did not love him. We did not care for him. And suddenly. Perhaps in a moment. For others. Over years. But there is a difference.

Once we didn't care. Once we didn't mind. Once we hated. Once we ignored. And now we love him. Now we follow him. Now he is Lord and saviour. That work was in us.

But that work itself began. Whilst we are still away from him. But whilst we are still sinners. Christ died for us. But whilst you are still away from the Lord. He began that slow and steady work.

In your heart. To in his way. In his time. Bring you to himself. I don't know. I said this before. But speaking. To some friends recently.

And we are discussing. When salvation begins. Thinking it loud. And we are wondering. And we are just. We haven't got an answer yet. But. In many ways.

[ 16 : 16 ] From the moment we are born. The Lord is working things out. For our salvation. If you think back. In ways we don't know. But the Lord is placing people.

In their story. To interact with us. Or the Lord is putting ministers. In certain congregations. To then preach a sermon. That we hear. That pricks our heart.

Or the Lord is making us. With certain friends. At certain times. Who interact with. And share a word. In season with us. Whatever your story of salvation is. It's been going on. From the start of your life.

The start before that. And before time itself. The work goes right back. And it is his. Work. It is his.

Work. I am sure of this. That he who began. A good work. In you. Again. The work of salvation. Just encourage us.

[ 17 : 15 ] The work is good. The work is good. No matter how small. Or how. Useless. Use that word. We feel. The evidence. Of that work is.

In our lives. In our. Stories. So far. We must be careful. You must be careful. As we. Denigrate ourselves. As we. Put down on ourselves. As we. Perhaps think.

Too. Badly on ourselves. For who we are. In Christ. It might feel like. We're being humble. But let's be careful. Not to put down. On the good work. That he has done.

In us. You say. Well. I'm a bad Christian. I'm a failure of a Christian. Is his work. Not good. Is his work. Not good. And is his.

Is the goodness. Of the work he's done in us. Is that then measured. By our ability. To serve him well. Well. I don't think it is. The work that he does.

[ 18 : 10 ] In his people. It is a good work. It's a good work. Small faith. Tiny faith. Large faith.

Whatever way. We are in between. It is his work. That's a good work. Brothers and sisters. You are. The good work. Of God. The work of salvation.

As you were saved. And as you're. Now being saved. It's a sign. Of his good work. Yes. There's a place for humility. But never false humility. Yes.

We are jars of clay. We. Happily. And humbly. Admit that. And again. Those of you. Who have. Engaged. In public. Preaching.

Up here. Even with yourselves. Even with friends. We are very aware. Especially at times like this. We are very aware. We are jars of clay. And brothers and sisters. All of us are.

[ 19 : 05 ] Very aware. We're jars of clay. We're a bit dusty. A bit broken. At times. A bit useless. But what's in the jar of clay. It's treasure.

Isn't it? Absolute treasure. Yes. Acknowledge. Your fact. Your jar of clay. But never let that. Overshadow the fact. The treasure inside.

That he has begun. A good work. In us. A good work. That what? That will be brought. To. Full. Completion.

Now question of the word. Full. It's not in the text. The word. Full. Is literally implied. In the grammar being used. It will be brought. To. A complete.

To be literal. A complete. Completion. We could say it. And translate it. More literally. But perhaps. Not as catchy. Not as easy to read. He will bring it. To a complete.

[ 20 : 00 ] Completion. He will bring it. To a full. Completion. There is. An end. We're not yet. The finished product. We know that. There is much.

Lacking. From our service. There is much. Lacking. In our faith. There is much. Lacking. In our duty. There is much. Lacking. In our discipline. There is much. Lacking. In X.

Y and Z. That we. Can happily. Affirm. But. There will. Soon. Enough. Be a day. Of completion.

Also remember. It's not just you. That's lacking. Other brothers and sisters. Are also not yet. The finished product. There is much. Lacking still.

And you might say. Yes. I can see that. There is much. Lacking still. In other brothers and sisters. Perhaps. Perhaps. They are also. Not dealing with things. The right way. Or have enough faith.

[ 20 : 55 ] Or have enough discipline. And so on. And so on. And so on. Brothers and sisters. Each one of us. We're jars of clay. As it were. We're not quite yet. Been fired. We're not quite yet. Going into the.

The completion mode. But we're heading that way. We're heading that way. And soon. Like a bit of pottery. Have you ever done pottery? I did it once in my life. Quite randomly.

In my days in UHI. It's got nothing to do with my course. But. Anything for a skive at times. Anyway. Went to pottery class. And. I mean. You can imagine. Left handed and short sighted. My. My pot had a hard time.

But anyway. It was there what it was. And it was. Looking like a disaster. We painted it. A wee bit. And did whatever it was. Glosses and things. Dang.

I said. It's been it afterwards anyway. Good fun. I've been it. But once it goes into the oven. And it cooks for a while. And it. Does its job. And it comes out the other side.

[ 21 : 49 ] And the other. Literally the other side of the oven. It goes in that way. It comes out that side. My poor wee bit of pottery. It looked quite nice. Shiny. And it held water.

And it still holds water to this day. And it. It looked half decent. It's a bad illustration. For what is a beautiful. Truth in this verse. We perhaps live our whole life.

Thinking we're a. Bit of a rubbish bit of pottery. But the gold inside. The treasure inside. The gospel. Our living soul. It gives us hope.

And a reminder. That one day. One day we will. As it were. Be the finished product. We'll be. Brought back. Again.

Raised again. Raised again. With bodies. Incorruptible. No more sin. No more evil. No more sadness. No more tears. No more grief.

[ 22 : 45 ] No more mourning. No more sea. As I said before. There will. Be a day. Of completion. Where is that? On the day of Jesus Christ.

When he comes. As it were. Back. To collect. His church. When he comes. With his saints. When the bodies. Are again. Raised from the grave.

And if those of us here. Perhaps. We'll be still alive at that time. Who knows. He knows. If we're still alive. We'll be made perfect. With him. And all together. On his day.

On that final day. Of this creation. We. Will. Be made. Perfect. The good. Work. That began in us. In our own experience.

That began. In time. And space. That began. Before time. And space. It will then. At that day. Find its full completion. How is it completed? It's completed with us.

[ 23 : 43 ] Beside our saviour. In the presence of our saviour. In the new heavens. And the new earth. For all time. Time. Without. End. Quite literally.

Brothers and sisters. That is. The fulfilment. The final hope. The final source. Of spiritual strength. We're not there yet.

But let's be careful. To acknowledge the fact. As Paul does here. For where we are now. It is God's doing. It is God's work. And who we are now. It is God's doing.

And God's work. And if we're in him. And he is in us. We are precious. Precious. Brothers and sisters. And precious. Precious. Sons and daughters. Precious to one another.

I hope. Also precious. To the Lord. I am sure of this. That he who began. A good work in you. Will. Bring it to completion. Of the day. Of Jesus Christ.

[ 24 : 40 ] We can. Let our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord. We thank you. For the gift. Of your word. And the promises. In it we find. The reminder. Even this evening.

That short reminder. That despite. What may be. Thinking or feeling. Perhaps. Alongside. The apostle Paul. After suffering. Many hardships. After suffering.

Many disappointments. We find ourselves. Wishing. Things were different. And wishing. Perhaps. We were. On the other side. Of things. We understand. We are. Where we are.

And you have made us. Who we are. And placed us here. At this time. We are living in. We acknowledge. That as of yet. We are not. The finished product. As of yet. There are still.

Many cracks. As of yet. In the clay. As of yet. There are still. Many rough edges. But as of yet. We still see no end. To this pilgrimage. But in us.

[ 25 : 35 ] Is the glorious. Hope of glory. In us. Is the beauty. Of a saviour. Who calls us. His own. In us. It is the hope. As we call ourselves. Brothers and sisters.

We do so. Because we are. Sons and daughters. Of the most high. The one. Who before time. Ordained. And planned. To save. A people.

Who in time. Sent his son. To redeem. That people. And who for all time. Will be with us. And call us. Your people.

Until we see. These days of glory. Until we join with you. In paradise. Until we see. And walk. On the new heavens. And the new earth. And breathe in the air. Of eternal glory.

Help us Lord. To serve you well. Help us to be faithful. In all you've called us to be. And all you've called us to do. Bless us. As we carry on. This week. We pray especially. Mindful of this coming.

[ 26 : 30 ] Lord's Day morning. It will be a. A joyous occasion. We also pray Lord. In terms of evangelism. It will be a chance. That perhaps. Some other young. Couples.

Or young families. Or individuals. Would come along. And see the baptism. Pray Lord again. Once more. For Finn. Lord as we prayed for him. Last Sunday. We prayed for him again.

Just now. Pray also Lord. For Lionel. And for Fiona. And the grandparents. On both sides. And the family. On both sides. Lord bless them. Just now also. Thank you Lord. As we prayed before. For all your good gifts.

Towards us. As a congregation. Help us not to rest. In these gifts. We thank you for them. But help us. Now to use these gifts. As a platform. For us.

To keep on going. And keep on sharing the gospel. And keep on seeking. New opportunities. And new people. And new chances. To share the gospel. With these people. All for your glory.

[ 27 : 22 ] All for your name's sake. Help us to go home. In peace. And to. Enjoy. This evening. Thinking over. Your word. Keep us safe. From the evil one.

As he prowls around. Your word tells us. Like that devouring lion. Lord. He be kept away from us. Help us. In our own lives. To give him no foothold. Pray for our own safety.

Just now spiritually speaking. As he fires the arrows into us. Lord. We be mindful. You've been given us. The full armour of God. We may put it on. And take a full defensive stand.

Against the evil one. Knowing that before us. Our saviour has gone. Preparing that way. That he is a conquering king. That he is the one. Who has fully stamped. On the head of the serpent.

The serpent. Yes. Has bit back. Has injured back. But he is. Dead. His plans. Are dead. And what we see.

[ 28 : 19 ] And what we experience. In our own experience. Are the. The last throes. Of a dying serpent. We look forward to the day. Of his destruction. Until these days.

Give us peace. We ask. In the finished work. Of our saviour. In his name. And for his sake. We ask these things. Amen. Again. Closing on Psalm 86.

Verse 11. I have written. Verse 11. Down to verse 14. Do just 11. Down to verse 13.  
That's okay. Psalm 86. Verse 11. Down to verse 13.

Psalm 86. Verse 11. Down to verse 13. Teach me thy way. And in thy truth. O Lord. Then  
walk while I. Unite my heart. Thy heart. That I thy name.

May fear continually. Psalm 86. Verses 11 to 13. To God's praise. Teach me thy way.

[ 29 : 20 ] And in thy truth. O Lord. Then walk with I. Jerolle commit always.

Ar■ quote all must come to you. Everywhere.

Then put my heart. In thy heart to thee. O Lord, my God, with all my heart to thee I will  
give peace.

And I love glory, with us, I come to thy name always.

Because thy mercy covered me in greatness at the end.

[ 30 : 33 ] And thou delivered hast my soul out from the lowest hell.

In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of  
the Holy Spirit, both for now and for evermore. Amen. Amen.