

A FLOURISHING FINISH

TEXT: Philippians 1:3-6, MSG)

³ Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. ⁴ I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. ⁵ I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. ⁶ There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

INTRODUCTION

1. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV).
2. "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Philippians 4:11-12, NIV).
3. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV).

I. LET HIM FINISH HIS WORK IN YOU

A. Don't Quit

1. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7, NIV).
2. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1, KJV).
3. "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly" (I Corinthians 9:25-26, NIV).
4. "I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us" (Philippians 3:14, NLT).
5. "No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (I Corinthians 9:27, NIV).
6. "So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:15-18, NLT).

B. Fight Hard; Run Hard

1. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24, NIV).
2. "No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it" (I Corinthians 10:13, MSG).
3. "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6, NLT).

C. The Author and the Finisher

1. "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6, NLT).
2. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2, KJV).

II. IN THE CARPENTER SHOP

1. "will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6, NLT).

A. A Prayer for You and Me

1. "My prayer is not for them alone (those living at the time he prayed the prayer). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message" (John 17:20, NIV).
2. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2, NIV).

B. Perfected through the Word

1. "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17, NIV).
2. "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (I Corinthians 5:1-5, NIV).

C. Perfected by Fire

1. "Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture: 'They kill us in cold blood because they hate you. We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.'
"None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us" (Romans 8:35-39, MSG).
2. "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6, NLT).
3. "I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:18-19, NIV).

III. ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL

1. "Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use" (Romans 9:21, NIV)?

A. God Gave Us Life

1. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive" (Ephesians 2:4-5, NIV).
2. "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Romans 8:11, NIV).

B. We Are His Workmanship

1. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:9-10, NIV).