

# The Good Work God Will Complete – Phil 1:6

(Originally part of - The Strong Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ #6)

**Introduction** – There is a doctrine called “*the Perseverance of the Saints*” which really should be understood as “*the Preservation of the Saints*,” or “*the Perseverance of God*,” or “*the Strong Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ Applied to Me*.” Without the efficacious work of God through Jesus Christ, there is not a chance in the world you could be saved. Without the efficacious work of God through Jesus Christ, there is not a chance in the world you will be perfected in holiness. But the efficacious work of God is exactly where our confidence is to rest.

**The Power of God in His Gospel Promises** (Phil 1:6) – The purpose of this text is to encourage all the saints of the church in Philippi (1:1), for whom Paul thanks God always with great joy (vv3-4). While he loves these people and commends them, his confidence is not in them. His confidence is in the promises of God and in the God of those promises.

**All the Saints** – You might think that there are some who are basically good, or at least much better than others. But Paul knows that every believer needs the grace of God from beginning to end in order to complete the race. Elsewhere he condemned the idea that Christians would add to the work of the Spirit in order to “do our part” in our salvation (Gal 3:3, 5:16-17).

**All of Grace** – You were saved by grace through faith and you will be sanctified by grace through faith. Being born again, brought from darkness to light, delivered from the bondage of our fallen nature and dead heart, this is all a miracle; no one but God can do it (Jer 13:23). Conversion is a work comparable to the making of a world. Only God could fashion the heavens and the earth and only God can create a new nature. But the same is true of your ongoing sanctification. Paul does command us to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil 2:12) because when it comes to your own personal holiness, you are a piece of work. But then he says that it is “*God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*” (Phil 2:13). God always gives what He commands; we work out what He has worked in.

**Applying this to Your Besetting Sin** – If all of this is true you might ask why you are still trapped in your besetting sin. If the power of God is that good, if His promises are that true, if they are for you, then why do you continue to fall? The Gospel teaches you to see that your sin is not calling into question God’s ability to sanctify you. The Gospel teaches you to question your claim that your sin is besetting. Not only do you need to repent of the sin; you need to repent of your weak, man-centered gospel.

**Who Keeps Whom?** (1 Pet 1:4-5) – There is a promise that if we have been saved, we are guarded in that salvation by God Himself. Our perseverance is based upon God’s perseverance, protection, and power.

**God’s Work, Not Mine** (John 10:28-29) - We should consider each phrase.

“*Eternal life*” – Either what you have received is temporal or eternal. If it is temporal, it could (and will) come to an end. Jesus is as clear as day – it is eternal.

“*And they shall never perish*” – If one could lose his salvation, he could perish.

“*No one can snatch them out of My hand*” – We ask the wrong questions. Rather than asking if I could lose my salvation, we should ask if God can lose us. We cannot lose our salvation because it is not our salvation to lose. You were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20).

“*My Father....is greater than all...*” God is omnipotent. He is greater than all external temptations and all inward corruptions which war against our souls.

**Grace That Saves to the End** (Rom 8:28-39) – If the point is that nothing can separate us from the love of God, how can we be left assuming that something can? A classic objection is that our own personal decision is an internal thing, unlike this list of external threats. But these external threats are the very temptations by which men are led to fall away. If an internal decision to abandon Christ was the thing that would cause me to lose my salvation, what comfort could this passage possibly be?

**Applying This to Your Doubts and Dark Times** – There are times we find our lives are like walking in darkness. While there were times of sweet communion with Christ, there is now some temporary depression of spirit that seems to overwhelm you, or some heavy personal trial that threatens to last forever. But if it is true that all things are working for good, then it is true whether you believe it in the moment or not. If it is true that the testing of your faith produces patience that will make you complete (James 1:2-4) then it is true whether you believe it in the moment or not. Repent of balancing your faith on your feelings and your hope only on what you can see (Heb 11:1).

**Benedictions of God’s Ongoing Powerful Sanctification** – In a benediction, God, by means of His minister, places His name upon His people as they leave the assembly and go out to their varied callings. Having been dealt with by His Word and feasted at His Table, we are sent into the world with a grace that, in the midst of whatever sufferings, will “*perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle*” us (1 Pet 5:10-11). It is to place each of us in the hands of Him “*who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*” (Jude 24-25). How can these ministers say such things? Because they are confident in God, “*that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*.” May He strengthen your confidence in His Strong Gospel. Dave Hatcher – August 21, 2022 (originally preached in 2017).