

Coach House Church BEACONS

THIS IS NOT THE END

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Philippians 1:6 says "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 Jesus Christ returns."

Philippians was one of the letters written by Paul to the churches he started or was involved with. Paul was most probably in prison in Ephesus while he was writing this letter and so what he has said is even more meaningful. He wasn't able to go out anywhere and was imprisoned unjustly for things he hadn't done. So to say that God is always working on us, even in a place where your life seems to be going nowhere, takes great faith. Paul has such great faith that he can tell the truth about God and say what God has promised and will do with certainty. We need to aspire to faith like that, so that even in our hardest times we don't waver in the slightest. We need to know the heart of God and know His promises for our lives to keep faith at all times.

When you become a Christian, God moves in to your heart and begins to make you a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come". God makes us completely new beings and comes close to us to help us live how He would have us live.

However, as we all know that doesn't mean we immediately stop sinning. It doesn't mean we become perfect overnight. We still have to work on our failings. The good news is that we aren't working on them alone. Any kind of self help will often have temporary results. I have been on diets and lost weight, but eventually, I go back to eating what I was eating before and the weight goes back on. This is the same with our sin. If we are doing it in our own strength, it might work for a while, but we will soon go back to our own behaviour or the root of it will sprout out

somewhere else. We need the holy spirit in us to make a proper, lasting change and root out our sin.

Unfortunately, we will never get to the point in this life where this work is done. We will never be able to sit back and say that everything we are doing is perfect. All we can do is work with God to get one step closer each day. This starts with working on our relationships with God. The more we pray and get to know God's heart, the more we will understand what we're meant to do and more naturally act out of a place of peace rather than reacting in a poor way.

This is sometimes called the now-and-not-yet kingdom. God has made promises about what will happen when the kingdom of God is renewed. There will be no sickness or crying or pain. We will be made perfect. But we are not there yet. We are in the in between time in the middle of Jesus paying the price to allow us to enter into God's promises and us actually entering those promises. We know what will happen and where God will take us, but we can't fully enter into those promises until Jesus returns and until God brings His kingdom fully. This can be so painful to actually live out as we have periods that it feels that God is silent, and we constantly fail our own expectations. We should always hope for healings and for God to transform our lives, but it won't always happen as we think it should. God is bigger and has a better plan. When we die, or Jesus comes again, we will understand, and we will be made perfect. We will live in all the promises that God has made. We will live perfectly with God and each other for all eternity. So, we live in some of God's promises now but not yet fully. One day we will live in these promises, so we have the hope for our eternal future.

We don't need to get disappointed in ourselves or discouraged because we aren't making the progress we think we should be making. We don't need to compare ourselves to other people or make others think we are better or worse than we are. We don't need to stress ourselves out because that will only make it harder for us to make progress. We don't need to stress because we aren't alone. It isn't all on your shoulders. God is with you to help you become who He wants you to be. He wants you to be the best you can be. He wants you to be all He created you to be and fulfil His plan for your life completely. Later in Philippians Paul says "I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us." We need to keep going and keep pressing on, even when it feels that God's promises aren't coming true in our lives.

The exciting thing about never being finished is that we get to work with God every day to get closer to where He wants us to be. He has given us His spirit and a new life through His grace. It is because of His grace that we have this new life and a chance to spend it well. As long as we aren't dead, He's not done. This isn't the end of God's work in our lives. He won't be finished with us until the day that Jesus returns or we die, so we have greater things in our future. | Even on the day we die or Jesus returns* we have an eternity of perfection with God to look forward to. We will be made perfect. We won't have to worry about sinning anymore. We will have perfect relationship with God and with each other.

When we see the church, we see that it isn't perfect or where it should be yet. We still fall out with our brothers and sisters in ways that we shouldn't. We still get offended when there is no need. We still lie and gossip and cheat each other. We are far too careless with each other's feelings. We can improve and we can get better, but we are not there yet. One day we will be in perfect harmony and we will have perfect love for one another, but we aren't there yet.

So we are waiting. We aren't where we want to be or where we could be but we will get there. All we have to do now is allow God to make the progress in us that He wants to make and move forward towards His promises, keep pressing on towards the goal.



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