

**Title:** What is the Reason for our Extravagant Hope?

**Text:** Philippians 1:6

**Date:** Aug 30, 2020 at FBCW

## INTRO.

**Background of Philippians.** The city of Philippi heard the gospel from Paul/Silas on Paul's second missionary journey. Paul's original goal: to go from Asia into Bithynia.

But the Holy Spirit didn't open that door. The Spirit of Jesus wouldn't allow it (Acts 16:6-7).

Though Paul wanted to travel to Bithynia, at night, a vision came to him about taking the Gospel to Macedonia — “alter your plans”

Q: has this ever been your personal story? This is what I originally wanted and planned for \_\_\_\_.

A: but God said no, I have something else.

**The Story of Philippi.** This was a major city in Macedonia...but Paul seemingly had “little success” there in his early days.

1. He ministered outside of the city.
2. His first convert was a lady named Lydia (and her family).
3. Paul cast a demon from a slave girl.
4. Paul and Silas were thrown into jail for ministering in the name of Christ.

Acts 16:22 reports they were: *stripped of their clothes...beaten with rods...severely flogged...guarded closely in the inner prison...feet were placed in stocks.*

Acts 16:25 — *but at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God from within the jail.*

Earthquake...doors open...chains of the prisoners break loose.

The jailer sees the commotion and plans to commit suicide; he assumes all the prisoners have run free.

Paul stops the jailer, “No sir, don't harm yourself. We are all here.”

Q: What power/presence was on Paul/Silas to sing even in jail?

Q: What draw/magnetism was about them that the prisoners would rather stay with this man singing in prison than run away and escape?

Ultimately, the jailer and his whole house came to faith in Christ.

So in context, the book of Philippians — is Paul circling back in a letter to this little, fledgling church that meant so much to him (the church of Philippi).

Note, Paul is in jail again (this is a prison epistle).

Note, many of the Philippians suffered because of saying “yes” to Jesus.

Paul is saying to them 1) I know standing for Christ is difficult, but it’s worth it. And 2) Once again, though I am in jail, God has used it for His glory and to bring about the Gospel.

Lesson: God is working. God is working today. God wants to work in you.

Lesson: this is not the 2020 we wanted...but this is the 2020 God knew we needed.

Paul: “We wanted Asia...but God said, no, head to Macedonia.”

Paul: “The only converts we had were a handful of women, a slave girl, and a jailer.”

Paul: “Preaching the gospel has landed us in jail.”

FACT. Our setbacks are often setups in disguise!

The reason for our great hope is that Jesus has promised to finish what He started...Jesus is still working...Jesus has the last word!

**Big Idea**. The reason for our extravagant hope is Jesus! He is alive. He is working. He is trustworthy.

**First, Christ started this good work (v 6a)**. The work is not my work...it is Christ’s work.

Maybe it feels heavy because I think it’s my work.

Jesus Christ has taken the initiative for my life, salvation, and ministry.

Matt 16:18, *I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*

Psalm 127:1, *unless the Lord builds the House, those who are labor are building in vain.*

Q: are you saved today? Have you been born again?

(If you are not saved...listen carefully...perhaps Jesus is calling for you today.)

FACT. You cannot save yourself!

FACT. If you are saved, it’s Jesus that is still carrying you. He did not save you, and then expect you to do it all yourself. He saved you so that you will still remain dependent on Him.

Christ has begun the spiritual work that is happening in all of us!  
This work is ongoing.

The devil has also begun work against the human race, too. But it will end.

Rom 16:20, *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

FACT. My work has an expiration work. Christ's work lasts/remains forever.

**Second, Christ will complete what He started (v 6b).** Have you ever driven past an unfinished home, or project, or building? The years go by, but the work is unfinished.

LESSON. God does not bring us into His kingdom, only to leave us on our own to grow. No! God is taking us somewhere. We are all under construction.

Remember the little song, "*He's still working on me...*"?

FACT. We are all under construction.

FACT. This work of God in us is called sanctification. It started at our salvation. It will be completed upon our glorification (Rom 8:30).

Some of us — the reason we are so miserable — we're fighting against the work of God in our life.

Why are you in school? (To learn)

Why would you join the Marines? (To protect)

Why are you working? (To provide for my family)

Why are you a Christian? (To be like Christ)

(ILLUS: When I carried Buddy in my arms to the vet last week...He was scared and fidgety but I did not let him get away).

Christ is taking you on a journey...it's called Christlikeness! (Phil 3:12-14)

**Third, Christ will return soon. Let us be prepared (v 6c)!** Let me share with you today what is called the doctrine of imminence — the belief in the imminent return of Christ.

The return of Christ is drawing near. It could be at any moment. We must maintain the belief that the return of Christ — the day of Christ — has never been closer.

Q: if 2020 isn't a year of warning and sobriety — then my, what could be?

2020 has been the year of difficult news:

Kobe Bryant...COVID-19...racial and societal pain/unrest...

The nastiness of politics, hate, and division.

I could say a great deal about global news, but suffice it to say just over the last few days.

Two hurricanes bearing down on the Gulf Coast.

— Issues made worse b/c of COVID sheltering.

— Economically many could not afford to leave.

— Lake Charles, LA one of the poorest in the nation.

Would it be possible for us to hear Positive News? I think I'd pay money for positive news:  
(What if there was a station that just ran positive news...real news...not terrible news?)

I can't control the national news — but I do know this —

1. God loves us (Rom 5:8).
2. God will always be with us.
3. Christ is coming back for us.
4. Heaven is a real, prepared place.
5. I'm going...and I'm ready in case it's today.

Where are we on the agenda of Christ's return? Bottom of the 8th? Top of the 9th?

Maybe our task is to raise the generation that will finish the task of world evangelization. Eventually there will be a last generation. Could this be it?

ILLUS: my kids, it's not been easy for them. Not a normal childhood (masks, out of school, closed playgrounds, never been this long without SS and worshipping with their friends, etc.) (childhood is short and now a big piece of there is not normal)

God is preparing them for a non-normal existence!

Some generation is going to finish the mission and be the last generation — if it's us, may we be found faithful!

**CONCL.** 2 Timothy 1:12, and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.