



*NEW YEAR'S REVOLUTION: "Security"

Biblical Text: Philippians 1:3-11

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* (play clip.) * It has been a fun five weeks, for at least three reasons. 1st - I love the Beatles, but you knew that. 2nd - I've been teaching spiritual principles I believe in. And 3rd - our Bible lesson has one of my favorite Bible promises, Philippians 1:6. ***"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion."**

It's where I find my sense of *security and confidence to press on and keep on believing. *"He who began a good work in me, in you, will bring it to completion."*

*More about that later. I want to spend a few minutes reviewing where we've been in the series. We've been looking at 5 components that help move us forward: ***Identity** - **Capacity** – **Motivation** – **Endurance** – and **Security**.

We claimed our ***identity** – we're made *in the image of God. We claimed our ***capacity** - the gifts and graces we all have*. We talked about ***motivation** - *choosing to believe in God and in ourselves. We talked about ***endurance** – keeping on going when things get tough.* Our final topic topic is ***security**.

Security is a big word in our time. Political debate on **"secure borders"* holds our budget hostage. Gun violence means we have *security policies in every school. Our houses have home security systems. * We worry about *cyber-security and identity theft. **Have mercy!** But all those are a *subset of a bigger issue.

See what I did there? Set theory reference is something I learned in High School – now my grandchildren started learning set theory in the first grade. Security is a big set problem, and our worries are just a part, a subset of it. Gotta love math.

*So - security is a big deal – it is about who or what we count on, what we look to be for our foundation through the challenges of life. *So what do you trust in and count on? Your home, family, government, elected officials, savings, social security, the stock market...? **Where do you find true security?**

I love this reminder from *Bible Study leader, Beth Moore: ***"Faith is not finding security in myself or anything I possess. Faith is finding my security in an unshakable God when everything in me and around me trembles and quakes."**¹

¹ From *Praying God's Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds* by Beth Moore. Copyright © 2000, B&H Books.

The Bible is filled with that kind of faith. **“Some trust in chariots, in horses, or in kings, but we will trust in the name of the Lord our God.” (Psalm 20:7)

****“Whoever listens to me will dwell secure, and be at peace...”*** (Proverbs 1:33)

****“We have his hope as an anchor for our soul, firm and secure.”*** (Hebrews 6:19)

****“He is faithful, will establish you securely, and keep you from evil.”*** (2 Thess. 3:3)

And, of course, from our Bible passage for today, *“I am sure of this: he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.” (Philippians 1:6)²

Our text, ***Philippians 1:3-11**, is the front end of Paul’s letter to the Church at Philippi, from which so many powerful promises of our faith come. The Church was founded in the home of Lydia, which you can read about in Acts 16.

Our text is divided into four sections. Verses **3-5** are Paul’s ***thanksgiving** for his close relationship with the Christians at Philippi. ****“I thank my God every time I remember you... *...constantly praying with joy for all of you... *...because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.”***³

Verse 6 is the heart of his message to the Philippians. Our ***security** is in God. We need not fear. In times of weakness, we have confidence, because the end story is already written, and the outcome is secure in him: ****“I am confident of this, the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.”***⁴

Verses 7-8 return to his thanksgiving theme, but in **verse 9**, Paul begins to lay out a ***life plan** for all Christians based on finding our faith and security in God.

****“...this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more...”*** Since the love of God has been poured into our hearts, we can let that love overflow from us, and not get entangled in worry and fear and anxiety – we are secure in him.

Look at his second step in this life plan. Since the future is secure in God, we can let his Word guide us and not agonize and second guess every step we take.

****“...with knowledge and full insight, God will help you determine what is best...”***

And if we trust in God’s grace, and follow in his way, we have confidence that ****“...in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless...”***⁵ Not because of our perfect life but because of God’s forgiveness, grace and his work in us.

Verse 11 tells us the **outcome**: ****“(your faith) will produce a harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.”***⁶

² Quotations are from various English translations of the Bible, paraphrased and harmonized by the author.

³ Philippians 1:3-5, *New Revised Standard Version*®. Copyright © 1989. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁴ Ibid. Philippians 1:6. *New Revised Standard Version*®.

⁵ Ibid. Philippians 1:9-10, *New Revised Standard Version*® - some portions condensed and paraphrased by the author.

*So, if we have faith and trust in God, we can live with confidence and security. Our problem is that we so rarely do. **We rarely trust completely in God.**

Think again about the question I asked earlier – **“What do you trust in and count on? Your home, family, government, elected officials, savings, social security, the stock market...? **Where do you find true security?”***

Regardless of what your answers might be, as Christians, we must ask to whom, or what, we look for security. Our temptation is to fall into **“practical atheism,”* where we claim to believe in God but, in practice, we act as though God doesn’t exist or have any real power to help us live our lives.

I’ll never forget, years ago, when I heard *Dr. Charles Swindoll say this *“We are masters at building a three-tiered altar to the trinity of me, mine, and myself.”*

*It is an indelible image, isn’t it? We place ourselves in the position of being in charge of making things secure. We try to build the biggest barrier to change and protect the well-being of those close to us. And I’m not suggesting that we shouldn’t do those things. However, we dare not fall into the all too common trap of making God superfluous or secondary to the Kingdom of our lives.

*The only path to true certainty and security is with the God who holds each of us and history in the palm of his powerful hand. **Only his promises are sure.**

My new series, * **“Less is More”** that starts next week, is about clearing stuff away so that we can draw closer to God. But why don’t we start today?

You can trust in these promises every day!

“I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to help you and not harm you. Plans to give you a future with hope.”* (Jeremiah 29:11) **God holds your future!

“Believe in him - you rejoice with indescribable joy. And the outcome of your faith is the salvation of your souls.”* (I Peter 1:8-9) **You don’t need to ever worry!

“I am confident of this, the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.”* (Philippians 1:6) **The ending of your story and mine is already written!

Thanks be to God! *Our true security is in God alone. Amen.

⁶ Ibid. Philippians 1:11, *New Revised Standard Version*®.