

# **PASSIONATE ASSURANCE IN THE LORD**

## **Philippians 1:6-8**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When the Golden Gate Bridge was first being built, 23 men fell to their deaths. Because of this, a large safety net was built as a safety precaution. After the installation of the net, 10 more men fell, but were saved from death by the net.

What is fascinating is the productivity increased 25% after the net was installed. The men, you see, had assurance of their safety. And they were free to work with their whole heart and energy.

### **READ Phil 1:6-11**

**Proposition:**

**I. Preservation of the Sovereign**

**II. Passion of the Shepherd**

**III. Participation of the Saints**

**IV. Passion of the Savior**

**So That:** Passionate Assurance in the Lord

**I. Preservation of the Sovereign 1:6**

Point – God is not the Author of unfinished business.

He completes what He starts.

Point – In the famous acronym TULIP, the ‘P’ has been called the Perseverance of the Saints. I actually like title we have here - the the Preservation of the Sovereign. The Saints do persevere in the faith because their Savior, because God, saves them. That is the point that Paul brings out here in v. 6.

We could even say it this way:

- Perseverance of the Saints; Preservation of the Savior
- Preservation of the Saints by the Savior

- Saints persevere because the Savior preserves them

The God who saves is the God who justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. The God who begins is the God who completes.

- A. Election/Justification**
- B. Sanctification**
- C. Glorification**

### **A. Election/Justification**

Proof – “<sup>6a</sup>***For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you***”

→ all three verses begin with **For** ( first one added by translators)

**“For I am confident** “ – literally means ‘myself having been persuaded’

– Trust and Conviction – 1:6, 14, 25; 2:24; 3:3-4

→ perfect expresses Paul’s certainty

Prior to God rescuing us from the power of darkness and granting us newness of life and giving us a new heart, we were dead. And corpses aren’t very good initiators. No, but God is. He is the Initiator.

Before salvation, we were Christless, hopeless, and godless. Our minds were given to futility; our understanding was darkened.

We were cut off from the life of God.

**“He who began”**

**Illustration** – Augustus Toplady – *“A man’s free will cannot cure him of a toothache or a sore finger. Yet he madly thinks it’s in his power to cure his soul.”*

### **B. Sanctification**

Proof – “<sup>6b</sup>a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

“**good work**” → salvation is a work (of God)  
and salvation produces work (in the believer)!

**Phil 2:13** – “for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

Paul has seen with his own eyes how the grace of God is transforming these Philippian Christians. When he is suffering, they are right there with him. When he is in need, they give generously out of their poverty.

What Paul cares about, they care about. They put their money where their mouths are in supporting his missionary journeys.

**Illustration** – In 1982, two Soviet cosmonauts returned to the earth after 211 days in space in very poor health. They suffered from dizziness, high pulse rates, and heart palpitations. They couldn't walk for a week. They had to undergo lengthy therapy for atrophied muscles and weakened hearts.

In zero gravity, you see, the muscles of the body begin to waste away because there is no resistance. The muscles begin to atrophy. To counteract this, the Soviets invented something called “a penguin suit,” a running suit laced with elastic bands. It resists every move the cosmonauts make, forcing them to exert their strength.

**Application** – In the same way, for believers in our day and age, we have a very cushy life in 21st century America. We don't know what persecution is (yet). We don't see what Christians have seen around the world historically. We are starting to see some oppression but generally speaking, we have it cushy. And there is a danger there. We don't want our spiritual muscles to atrophy.

### C. Glorification

Proof – “<sup>6c</sup>until the day of Christ Jesus.”

→ follows “from the first day until now” in v. 5

→ same as “the day of the Lord”

Luke 17: 24, 30 - Christ is talking about His second coming and what it will be like. For us, the believers, our final epic of God’s work of salvation in us is our glorification.

1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thess 5:2;  
2 Thess 2:2 → Final “day” of salvation → Glorification

This is technical but New Testament believers do not receive their glorified bodies until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

→ Glorification

Back to the main point:

Assurance

A person who believes a Christian can lose his salvation is really missing the boat on this one.

James Montgomery Boice has this passage along with **John 10:27-29, Rom 8:38-39** as his three strongest passages to support the eternal security of the true believer.

**Illustration** – There was once a preacher who was always warning his congregation about the dangers of becoming false professors and falling away, and some of his congregation began to feel that he was really an Arminian, that is, someone who believes a true Christian can fall away from the grace of God and be lost. So one of them went to see him and said, “Pastor, I am told that you are against the perseverance of the saints.” “Not at all,” he said, “It is the perseverance of sinners that I oppose.”

The man was not happy with that answer and he said to him, “Don’t you think that a child of God can fall very low, and yet be restored?” But the wise old minister had the last word as he looked at him and said, “I think it would be very dangerous to make that experiment.”

Yes, we are secure and held fast in the arms of God. At the same time, we know from **1 John 2:19** when sin runs amuck, when there becomes an ongoing, clear, relentless collision with the authority of God, John tells us this:

“They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

Someone confronted **Martin Luther**, upon the Reformer’s rediscovery of the biblical doctrine of justification, with the remark, “If this is true, a person could simply live as he pleased!” “Indeed!” answered Luther. “Now, what pleases you?”

**Illustration** - When a young student became a Christian her old friends tormented her that she couldn’t do what she wanted. “Yes I can,” she said. “I can do what I want to do.” “Then come out drinking and drugging with us,” they said. “I don’t want to,” she smiled and said. That is the key! She was free from the bondage of serving sin to serve the Lord. There is a change of heart, a change of passion.

Beloved, that is what flows of the great understanding of the great Truth that God brings out for us in **Phil 1:6**.

That is part of the wonder in the song we sang, in the last stanza of Come Thou Fount, Come Thou King:

“I was lost in utter darkness  
'Til You came and rescued me  
I was bound by all my sin when  
Your love came and set me free.  
Now my soul can sing a new song  
Now my heart has found a home  
Now your grace is always with me  
And I’ll never be alone.”

Motyer – “*The doctrine of assurance, biblically understood, keeps the saint on his toes.*” 😊

From soaring like an eagle heavenward towards the glory of God, Paul now brings us down to the rushing torrent of the raging river of his beating heart ...

## **Preservation of the Sovereign.....**

### **II. Passion of the Shepherd 1:7a**

Point → Paul ministers with the head and with the heart

#### **A. Ministry with the Head**

“<sup>7a</sup>**For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all,**”

“**to feel**” – from Greek word φρονέω – seen 26 times in New Testament, 23 times in the writing of Paul, 10 times in Philipppians!

It is literally translated as : to *think, have an opinion, have understanding*; (2) *ponder on, be intent on, keep thinking about*; (3) as having an attitude or frame of mind *think in such a way, purpose, be inclined*

Like-Mindedness – 1:7; **2:2 (2 times)**, 5; 3:15 (2 times), 16,19; **4:2**, 10 (2X) →with each other, with Christ

→ **unity** comes from likemindedness!

Paul’s appeal to unity. The way to achieve unity is in like-mindedness. It is not to set aside doctrine.

#### **B. Ministry with the Heart**

Point – Duty and Delight!

Proof – “<sup>7b</sup>**because I have you in my heart,**”

Paul cherishes this Philipppian church in his heart.

**Illustration** – On June 21, 17 days after my beloved went home, I created a Facebook post, with a picture of Margie and me. The photo was taken from behind us as we were sitting on a bench at the top of South Mountain, looking out over the valley. With my arm around her and her head nestled into my shoulder ... cheek to cheek.

→ With the words, “I will forever have my beloved in my heart. And my beloved will forever have my heart.”

**Application** – In the same way (minus the romantic love of course), Paul has the sweet Philippian church in his heart and always will. Paul who is inspired by God, who is brilliant in mind - he has a heart the size of Texas.

A brief pause on the passion of Paul.....

**Preservation of the Sovereign, Passion of the Shepherd,**

**III. Participation of the Saints 1:7b**

Point – Diligent Co-Labors; Perseverance of the Saints  
**Gospel and Grace**

Proof – <sup>7b</sup>**“since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.”**

**“you all are partakers of grace with me”** – they are a solid sanctified church

**Turn to: 1 Cor 9:19-23**

Passionate Co-Labor

- Paul will surrender his Christian liberty for the sake of the gospel
- Paul is telling the church in Corinth to follow him as he follows Christ
- Corinth is an immature church - they are not co-laboring for the sake of the gospel
- the Philippian church are partakers and co-laborers in the gospel

**“imprisonment”** – Paul writes from Rome while under house arrest for 2 years during his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28)  
→ Prison Epistle – 1:7, 13, 16 – Eph, Phil, Col, Philemon  
There is a risk that Paul could lose his life. But Paul is full of joy.

English Novelist and Poet Thomas Hardy – *“Some people can find the manure pile in every meadow.”* → Not **Paul!** Despite his circumstances, he is full of joy.

**“defense and confirmation of the gospel”** – 2 judicial terms

**“defense”** – translated from the Greek word ἀπολογία – 1 Pet 3:15

This church is loyal to him when things turn nasty.  
→ When the fires of persecution burn and Paul ends up in chains in prison, they continue to affirm and support him.

**Sinclair Ferguson** – *“How fickle we modern Christians are by comparison: often uncommitted and consequently unreliable in times of difficulty, failure, or crisis in the fellowship to which we belong. When difficulties arise (of whatever kind), we seek more comfortable pastures. Not so the Philippians. No wonder such a bond of love developed between Paul and these Christians.”*

**Illustration** - I remember the story of a homosexual man who was in the homosexual community of Southern California a couple of decades ago. He had AIDS and he was getting to the end of his life. He told his friends that he was getting fearful of his life, and more importantly of his soul. One of his friends in the homosexual community told him that if he was looking for truth and the Bible taught without compromise, he should go to Grace Community Church. And these weren't people who were part of the church or even attended.

That is what Grace Community Church was understood for. That is what it is like in the church of Philippi.

**Preservation of the Sovereign, Passion of the Shepherd,  
Participation of the Saints, ...**

#### IV. Passion of the Savior 1:8

Point – Divine **Authentication** and Divine **Affection**

##### Divine Authentication

Point – Paul appeals to the highest court there is.

Proof – “**For God is my witness, how I long for you all**”

God who cannot lie and who judges the hearts of men

- Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23; 1 Thess 2:5, 10

“**long for**” – *have great affection for, yearn for someone*

– a desire for what is absent

“**you all**” – 3 times in vv. 7-8!

This is not Texas Paul (y’all) speaking to a group of Southerners

☺ This is Paul speaking to a group of Saints.

The world in Paul’s day was filled with barriers just as it is now – barriers of ethnicity, wealth, education, and culture.

There were barriers between:

- Jews and Gentiles
- Romans and Greeks
- Slaves and Free
- Rich and Poor

There was no such thing as a brotherhood that could join them together. There was no fellowship that would bind their hearts together.

They came together not as enemies, but as those who had together been called out of darkness by Jesus Christ and made alive in Him.

Christians are one. One Lord, one salvation. All the “barriers” were there in the Philippian church, they just simply ignored them.

In the church of Philippi you had (Acts 16)

- A rich, Asian, Jewish proselyte business woman
- A poverty-stricken, Greek, pagan slave girl
- A blue collar, Roman, emperor-worshipping jailer

- All together in Christ. All part of the Band of Brothers.
- All part of the Fellowship of the Forgiven

### **Divine Affection**

Point – Paul’s love is patterned after and energized by Christ’s indwelling love.

Proof – “<sup>8b</sup>**with the affection of Christ Jesus.**”

“**affection**” – literally means *inward parts, entrails* —the seat of the emotions, in our usage *heart – Love, affection*

Lightfoot – “*Paul’s pulse beats with the pulse of Christ. His heart throbs with the heart of Christ.*”

**Richard Baxter** – “*I marvel how I can preach slightly and coldly, how I can let men alone in their sins, and that I do not go to them and beseech them for the Lord’s sake to repent, however they take it, and whatever pains or trouble it should cost me.*”

**Application** – Beloved, are you passionate about God’s truth? Do you have the Divine Affection of your Savior for God’s people?

**Illustration** – The story is told of the 19<sup>th</sup> century English actor William Macready. An eminent preacher once said to him: “I wish you would explain to me something.” “What is it? I don’t know that I can explain anything to a preacher.”

“What is the reason for the difference between you and me? You are appearing before crowds night after night with fiction, and the crowds come wherever you go. I am preaching the essential and unchangeable truth, and I am not getting any crowd at all.”

Macready responded: “This is quite simple. I can tell you the difference between us. I present my fiction as though it were truth; you present your truth as though it were fiction.”

## **CONCLUSION**