

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

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“OUR DYNAMIC HELP - LOOKING UP IN CONFIDENCE”

Philippian 1:1-14

As we focus on the theme for 2020 - Our Dynamic Help from *Ps. 121:1-2*. Jesus instructed us to be “Looking Up”. He said in *Luke 21:28*; “Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Our theme for 2020 is: “Our Dynamic Help - LOOKING UP” we will learn to look up to God for *confidence, encouragement, vision and determination*.

There is a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, titled “The Wind Of Fate.” It says:

One ship sails east, One ship sails west,
Regardless of how the winds blow.
It is the set of the sail, And not the gale,
That determines the way we go.

The Apostle Paul was a man of amazing confidence and an excellent attitude. As we see in these verses: *Acts 28:31; Rom.15:14; 2 Cor.7:16; Gal.5:10; 2 Thess.3:4; Philemon 21*. One particular passage that brims with Paul’s confidence is our text in *Philippians 1:3-11*, particularly *v.6*. Let’s dig in and learn to look up to God with confidence in the days ahead of this New Year.

I. WE CAN BE CONFIDENT IN GOD’S POWER (vv.3-6).

The letter to the Philippian church is a journal of joy. Though he is imprisoned under house arrest in Rome, though he is physically bound in chains, his spirit soars. Perhaps the whole letter can be summed up in *4:4*, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” *Acts 16* tells the story of how God brought Paul to Philippi on his second missionary journey. As Paul writes, he is overflowing with tender emotion as we see in *verses 3-5*.

In *V-6* Paul says he is absolutely “confident.” We need to be reminded of that confidence today! Let’s look closely at two reasons we can be confident in the work of our church.

First, We can be Confident because God has **BEGUN** this Work by His Power. Second, We can be Confident because God will **COMPLETE** this Work in His Power.

II. WE CAN BE CONFIDENT IN GOD’S PLAN (vv.7-8).

Why is it then if we have this all-powerful God who is working in us and through us that we lose confidence? What causes us to stumble and falter? What causes us fret, worry and stress? The answer is that our circumstances change. Paul the Apostle you, lest I have labored for you in vain” (*Gal.4:11*). In *2 Cor. 1:8*, he tells us that he and his colleagues were “burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.” Yet in *V-7*, he tells the Philippian church, “I have you in my heart.” In *V-8*, he says, “I long for you all with the affection of Jesus.” Why did he “long for them?” Why did he just have them in his “heart?” Why didn’t he go and see them in person? The answer is in *V-7*. He was in “chains?” However, even shackled in chains, Paul was confident. He was confident in God’s plan.

III. WE CAN BE CONFIDENT IN GOD’S PEOPLE (vv.9-11).

Look now to the last few verses in our text. Paul tells us of his confidence not only in God’s power and His unseen plan but also in His people. In fact, the Apostle shares his prayer list for the Philippian believers. I want you to know I have been praying this same prayer for you.

In *V-9a*, he prays that their “love will abound.” He means that they will truly care about each other. In *V-9b*, he prays that their love will be seasoned with “knowledge and all discernment.” He didn’t want them to merely be an emotionally-charged but doctrinally-devoid church. Genuine agape love always goes hand in hand with sound doctrine.

In *V-10a*, he prays that they will “approve the things that are excellent.” He prays that they will have the right priorities and make the right choices. In *V-10b*, he prays that they will be “sincere and without offense.” He desires that they live lives of integrity and honor. The word “sincere” means judged by sunlight and literally means without wax. In *v.11*, he concludes the prayer by asking the Lord to fill them with “the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Paul could be confident in God’s people because he was confident in God.

So, what does our future hold for 2020? I don’t know. I am convinced that God has begun a good work here and He will continue to work in us, perfecting and completing us until Jesus returns. I am convinced that even though we will occasionally go through arid valleys that God’s plan will lead us again to beautiful mountain vistas. I am very confident in you. Let me close with the full version of the poem I quoted earlier. It is called “The Winds of Fate”, by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

One ship sails east, One ship sails west,
Regardless of how the winds blow.
It is the set of the sail, And not the gale,
That determines the way we go
Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate,
As we voyage along through life
Tis the set of a soul
That decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.

Let’s set our sails and let the Spirit fill them as we **Look Up At Our Dynamic Help for 2020!** Our greatest days are yet to come!