

Shades Student Staff Devotion Day 1

*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
Philippians 1:6 (ESV)*

Do you ever second-guess yourself? If I'm being honest, I do way too often! I don't always express my doubts about a decision out loud, but I'm always questioning decisions I make in my mind. I ask questions like: "Should I have ordered that on the menu?" "Should I have just gone through the drive-thru at Chick-fil-a when local restaurants really need my business during this COVID-19 season?" Or "should we really keep re-watching the Office on Netflix when there are probably many more great shows out there?"

I tend to have doubts about trivial decisions like what to eat or what to watch on Netflix, but I can also have doubts related to my faith. I can ask myself, "Should a student pastor struggle with that issue?" Or "Shouldn't I be more mature in my faith than I am when I deal with anxiety, fear, and doubt?" And left to my own thoughts apart from the truth of God's Word, on bad days I can have doubts about my faith and worthiness to be a part of God's work in the world.

But I'm thankful for a verse like Phil. 1:6 for a few reasons. The confidence that Paul has in what he expresses in this verse are what lead him to say this later in the chapter: "To live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Verse 6 gives Paul confidence and in turn gives us confidence to press on even in trying times for 3 reasons:

- 1) **God is the one who began a good work in us.** The One who spoke life and all of creation into being, the One who is in control of all things, the One who offers a way of hope and new life through His Son Jesus, is the One who began that good work in us! He deserves all the credit for our salvation, and He is the one working in us and in our world. Our doubts come from focusing on ourselves and neglecting to rely on God. God is faithful. God can be trusted. Our doubts can be put at ease because He is the one who began a good work in us!
- 2) Because God is the one who began this work, **Paul is completely confident in his salvation and in the work the Lord calls us to.** We can be completely sure of our salvation because of Jesus. We can be completely sure of our calling to minister to others in the name of the gospel, not because of our own works (See Ephesians 2:8-10) but because of God's work in us and His plan for us to share with others (See Matthew 28:18-20). There is no reason to doubt if we have genuine faith in Jesus.
- 3) **The story of our salvation and the work of Jesus in us will be complete on the last day.** We have a promise from God that we won't always be "in process" when it comes to our transformation into becoming like Jesus. When Jesus returns, the work that God began in us will be complete! This is a promise from God. This should free us up to work on our relationship with God. It should motivate us to confess our sin and repent from

our sin. It should strengthen us in trying times like today. We don't have to be controlled by fear or worry, but we can trust that God has a plan and our salvation is secure!

I'm thankful that a verse like Phil 1:6 reminds us that God began this good work in us, and he will be faithful to bring that work to completion. That should bring clarity and confidence to our salvation. We are trusting in God, and not on ourselves. I hope that it can bring peace that surpasses understanding even in a difficult season where we aren't sure what or why this pandemic is happening. May we trust in Jesus and his work in us!

Questions for application, reflection, and/or discussion:

- 1) Are you a person who is confident in decision making or do you tend to second guess? Why do you think that's the case for you?
- 2) What causes doubt about your salvation or God's plans for your life?
- 3) How can Phil 1:6 give us confidence and calm our fears and worries?
- 4) How can we use this truth to help others deal with their fear and anxiety about what's happening in the world today?

Close in prayer. Ask the Lord to provide peace for you. Ask the Lord to help you give others confidence and security if they genuinely believe in Jesus. Pray for those who don't know Jesus in your life and that you can be used to point them to the hope that Jesus can bring them.