

Confident In Christ

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I am going to begin to talk with you about Philippians.

Our launch is actually next week but I am hoping that I can get you a little bit excited today about this amazing book, and that afterward you will go out and buy the study guide...outside...its only \$5... and that you will join us next week as we begin this all-church study together.

Don't get left behind! Get to know scripture...this is a chance to engage in one of our core values here at WVPC which is **Intentional Faith Development**...And, when you are intentional about growing in your faith, you begin to be more aware of God working in your life... Philippians is a book that works for everyone – whether you are new in your faith, or you've been a Christian for a long time...its jam packed full of good stuff...so don't miss out...

Today I want you to go out of here being confident..And I want you to be confident about **one thing in particular that Paul highlights again and again in the book of Philippians.**

If you are confident about this one thing, your life will be a joy-filled life...

If you are confident about this one thing, worry will cease to exist for you

If you are confident about this one thing, you will be able to live life, and take risks as God calls you to take them, without fear..

You've heard about this ONE THING before

You are going to agree with me when I tell you about this one thing

My challenge to you this morning is to LIVE LIKE ITS TRUE

The one thing I want you to go out of here confident about today is this...

God Can Be Trusted With Your life.

How many of you believe that? (raise hands)

If you have a wallet or a purse on you, and actually have money in there, you are actually carrying around the statement t that you trust God...Cause

It's on your currency...on your money, right? In God We Trust...
Rather ironic because for a lot of us the things we worry about most
and trust God the least about has to do with money...(maybe that's
why its on there)

But if someone came up to me and asked me today, "Do you believe
God can be trusted."

I'd raise my hand right with you.

I am confident of this, as I stand up here on Sunday morning and
speak - I can trust God

I am confident that I can trust God, lifting my hands in praise and in
worship when I feel great...

I am confident that I can trust God with my life when my prayers are
answered the way that I want them to be answered

I am confident that God can be trusted when I can see that things are
working out the way that I feel they should be working out...

But what about at other times?

When things are not working out the way that I would like?

I remember being so distraught about a situation that I was in years
ago as a young minister just getting used to a new church situation.
It was a very difficult church. I was working so hard in a particular
department and getting little acclaim as a Christian educator. My
supervisor, for some reason, seemed to constantly criticize everyone
including me. I wanted to quit but I couldn't because of financial
reasons, and I just felt in a terrible bind.

I became cross and grumpy; a real pain to be around...Finally
I went to see a mentor and friend about this. And this man was older,
and wiser and a long time Christian.

He looked me right in the eye after listening to me rant, and rave, and
and get all worked up.

He said these words and I'll never forget them because he said these
words with such confidence like he knew that they were true from the
inside out. "Kim," he said. "God has been faithful to you in the past.
He will not let you down now. Trust him. He will come through for
you. If he doesn't, you, my dear, are in the wrong business."
(meaning ministry, right?)

I've always remembered those words.

And yes, as I began to substitute my worry and anxiety for trust
Something new opened up, when I thought it never could, and I was
able to leave my current job and go to a much better situation.

But I began to think, gee... I tell people to trust God all the time
But I don't do a very good job of it myself!
When I can't see the outcome, and circumstances go south, I act like
God isn't there...and the joy goes out of my life!
I become the wicked witch to those I love the most
Because maybe I am not as confident as I think I am that God is
utterly trustworthy.

My life has been a step by step process of simply learning, step by
step, day by day... to trust God just a little bit more...and the more I
trust instead of fear...the more my joy quotient goes up...and the
more I see God working...
It's almost like trust ushers in joy (as I let go of worry and negativity)
...and joy ushers in God's presence

I've shared with you before that people often say at the end of their
lives **"If I had it to do all over again, I would have worried less and
trusted God more."**

Well, the reason I love Philippians is that Paul, is 100% confident in
the one thing that I want you to be confident about today as walk out
that door...Paul was 100% confident that he could trust the
faithfulness of the God of Jesus Christ in all circumstances....

Joy spills across the pages of this letter of Philippians and it has
nothing to do with good things happening to Paul AT ALL

The joy that you find in Philippians is completely independent of
anything that could even remotely be called "good-luck" or
"fortuitous" or "miraculous".

When you read this book I want you to remember that Paul is under
house arrest, in Rome, facing probable execution.
His future on earth is pretty bleak – his past has not been a walk in
the park since he started sharing the gospel by any stretch...

In fact look at the litany of things Paul has been through...he recites them in 1 Corinthians...

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 2...27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked....

Listen to that! I took some of it out to make it shorter...but WOW!

So why would someone like Paul, who had suffered so much and is now nearing the end of his life, under house arrest, write a letter that is overflowing with joyful praise to God?

Why would Paul, under these circumstances, write the most joyful book in the whole New Testament.

Is he delusional? Is he in denial? He ought to be bitter at God, wishing that he had had an easier life!

The answer? I think it is because, Jesus Christ was so REAL for Paul...more real and more present than the circumstances he was dealing with...

He has his eyes fully fixed on Jesus...this world with its trivial inconveniences and suffering was a minor irritation compared to who Jesus was

And he knows, that knows, that he knows that this wonderful Saviour and Lord who has turned his life around will be faithful to him no matter what circumstances he encounters...

For those of you who love to study scripture...notice in this first part of Philippians the language...is the language used in a courtroom... As Paul anticipates his own trial here on earth, he transfers this to what is going on in heaven...

He calls **God as a witness** (v. 8) to confirm his own truthfulness He takes the role of a preparatory lawyer, some commentators say, and he **urges his "clients" to press on in love** and not be swayed

Then in verse 10, **God becomes** not just the witness but **the judge** on the last day which Paul calls “the day of Christ”.

He is saying between the lines... ***that’s the day in court that matters...***

Get ready for that! Don’t be so concerned about here...

God’s plan is unfolding and what God started he’s going to finish, and he will finish it well!!

In the midst of everything difficult, Paul is joyfully confident in Christ’s unconditional love for him and that God is leading him every step of the way.

He is joyfully confident that what God began in the churches will continue to grow and be blessed.

“I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

AND...he is confident that even though he is under house arrest God is going to work it for good; Even his imprisonment God has used...

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,^[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

An amazing perspective. An amazing ability to trust and to see God at work in all things.

Today, no matter who you are or what you're going through or where you're sitting, God is

inviting you to confidently TRUST HIM WITH YOUR LIFE a little bit more

Trusting God is not always an easy thing to do.

Like any relationship, trust involves risk. Trust involves uncertainty.

As we mature in our faith God continues to say "Trust Me." Trust Me

More.”

Part of my response is often a question or a doubt... "Well are You really trustworthy God? Can I trust You with what matters most Lord? Can I be confident that you are there?"

That's very normal, and if that is where you are I get it.

Our goal however as Christians is to more and more be able to move into a place where we can say...

"Yes, I fully trust you God. I'm there.

I believe it. I'm confident. It's whole-hearted, and I will live in such way that confident trust in you...not worry and fear... is my guide."

This is the good news and this is what we're made for, a kind of joy-filled, trust in our God, that allows us to fully engage in life with generosity, with unending hope, and to love people unconditionally....and to take risks as he calls us to do that...

To know that no matter what is going on in our lives..."He who began a work in us...maybe way back when we first believed....will complete it..." and complete it well (even when circumstances seem to say otherwise)

God doesn't abandon us mid-stream.

He's right with us. And the more we trust him, the more we will see him.

Remember those Olympic athletes that we watched perform several weeks ago? I got so nervous for those little girls doing their gymnastics routine. I was nervous for them on the vault, nervous for them especially on the balance beam. I think because they looked so nervous, I got nervous!

And part of it was all that pressure, right? Will I make it...what will the judges think...am I going to be disqualified? What if I fall...what if I hurt myself and on and on...you could read it on their faces.

I mean they can do their routine a thousand times in practice but with all those judges staring at them...how can they possibly stay steady on a balance beam?

And then I had this thought; what would happen if somebody came up to one of them, right before their routine and said to them...

Guess what! You've already won! The scores have been tabulated

and there is no way that you can lose the gold medal at this Olympic Game. You are just too far ahead! The rules say you have to perform, so go out and enjoy the opportunity. Perform with all you've got!

Do you think they might have cracked a smile?
My hunch is they would have done a far better job at what they were trained to do, if they knew they couldn't lose.
They would have done a joy-filled routine, because they were focused on a victorious outcome that they knew was just waiting for them.

Friends, as followers of Jesus Christ, ultimately we cannot lose! If God is FOR us who can be against us? He who began a good work in you will complete it...know that today!!

If I had to summarize all the commands of Scripture, everything God is asking us to do, the sum of it all would be God saying "**TRUST ME**" ...

"Trust Me With Confidence. I am God and will bring you victory!
Trust Me with your life. Trust Me with your career. Trust Me with your relationships. Trust Me with your marriage. Trust Me with your security. Trust Me with your resources.

It's sounds so simple, but it is so difficult. But God calls us to it because...

When we trust him we can let go of worry
When we trust him we can let go of resentment
When we trust him we can take risks, and do what fear would keep us from doing
When we trust we can begin to feel the joy returning

As we participate in communion today remember that Jesus trusted God perfectly
That's why he could go to the cross and know that God would bring victory even out of that kind of torture and execution
"For the joy set before him, he endured the cross"
He knew that God was faithful and would win even in the worst circumstances...and that joy would be the outcome!

Perhaps as you take communion this morning there is something that has you worried or concerned
Something that does not seem like a victory in your life at all
Its taking the joy from you...you are lying awake at night worrying about it
Perhaps this is...
something that you would like to give back to God this morning and trust him for...more completely

Even if you can't fully believe it right now...I am here to assure you that God is completely trustworthy
You are going to put your trust somewhere...in you, in others, in money, success, in fate, or in your Loving Creator and Savior Jesus Christ

I highly recommend the latter
God is able to handle my life far better than I can, or anyone else
He is all powerful God and
he loves you more than you can fathom...that's why he went to the cross...*he didn't let you down then, did he?*
and he will not let you down now...

As I wrote this talk as I was ending it a song came on the Shuffle of the cell phone that I hadn't heard in years. The song was an old one called "His Eye Is On the Sparrow"...

The essence of the song is that if God is watching all sparrows as Jesus said he did, then I don't need to worry cause I know he's watching me...

TRUST GOD WITH YOUR LIFE. He is utterly trustworthy...

Be confident today in that truth and be filled with joy! You can't lose

Let's spend a few moments together in silence offering up whatever burdens are on our hearts, and asking the Lord to give us the grace to Trust Him With Our Lives in Confidence ...