

## “Confidence in Jesus”

Psalm 27:1-6, 13-14; Philippians 1:12-26

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Illustration: When you are taught how to referee a basketball game you are taught to exude confidence. If you call a foul from 20 feet away, you are even taught to run towards where the foul occurred as you call it so that it looks like you were in the perfect position to make the call to begin with.

Confidence in that situation, like we are often encouraged in our culture, has a lot to do with self-image, even self-preservation. Show that you are confident and you will win others to your corner.

Self-confidence in our society is not the same as the confidence we see in the scriptures – the greatest western lie: that freedom is the same as self-autonomy

There are many so-called “Self-Help” books and gurus out there. We love thinking about “pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps.” The power and importance of the individual is what we are taught to focus on.

The Truth is – Freedom is **from** self and **for** Jesus

This type of freedom is directly connected to the type of confidence that we find in the scriptures, specifically confidence in Christ. It is a freedom and a confidence that points beyond self to the greater reality and hope we have in Jesus.

(Read Philippians 1:12-26)

“Confidence” occurs 7 times in the letter. Similar word to the word for “to have faith” or “to trust” (pistis is the Greek work for “faith” or “trust” and that word occurs 4 times in Philippians )

“Rejoice” also occurs 7 times in the letter, but I don’t want to skip ahead too much! We’ll get there in a few weeks.

Let’s step back for a moment. Background on the letter: Paul imprisoned; has a deep affection for the Philippians that isn’t seen in all Paul’s letters; the Philippians have partnered with Paul in the past (1:5), which would have included financial partnership. This backdrop makes both Paul’s rejoicing and confidence that much more incredible.

**Phil. 1:14, “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.”**

Confidence in Jesus produces: Risk – Routine – Relationship – Rejoicing. Really these four words can be used to summarize the entirety of the book of Philippians.

Today we will look at Risk. Next week at what I mean by “Routine” and “Relationship” and in two weeks we will cover “Relationship.”

Risk: Confidence in Jesus deepens not only reliance on Jesus, but risk-taking for Jesus.

From: *The Insanity of Obedience* – Sometimes persecution, when it comes because of who Jesus is and not for secondary reasons, is both not something we can avoid or something that God would call us to avoid. We have to discern when to leave Joseph in Pharaoh’s prison.

Illustration: Bait for Jesus. In a cross-cultural context a mission worker attracts local interest because he is foreign. If there is a relationship built with local believers, then that natural attraction can be used to get unbelieving locals connected with locals who can lead them to Christ, disciple them and pastor them. A local pastor is certainly better equipped to pastor another local in a different culture than I would be, although in the history of Western mission too often the Western worker leads a few locals to Christ and then becomes unable to lead more to Christ because the worker begins pastoring his new flock.

What if in mission contexts Western workers opened themselves to just being the bait, without having to take the credit? The credit and glory are God’s anyway, right? It sounds risky on a number of levels.

This model, which I’ll flesh out more over the next few weeks, easily translates into our home culture. What if, instead of our standard form of evangelism being, “Come listen to my pastor, he explains everything so well,” ordinary pew-sitters began to take risks in showing others what it means to follow Jesus? The risk is usually only that we might be rejected, but it is still often too much for us.

Many of us don’t have or don’t know if we have friends that are not believers. We live in a bubble. A lovely lady who is in her 70s said in a bible study I was leading on this topic in the most innocent and naïve way, “I don’t think I have any friends who aren’t Christian.”

Risk is often the first step in living out the confidence in Jesus that our faith provides to us. Risk alone, however, isn’t enough to be effective in sharing the Good News with others – we need to have developing Routines that feed Relationship that are couched in Rejoicing.

More to come! Amen.