

KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday 3rd July 2022 10 am

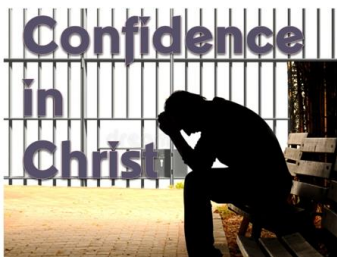
Confidence in Christ

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture from Ps 135,136
Hymn MP 1141 You're the word of God the father
Scripture 1 Sam 2:1-10 (page 272)
Prayer
Children's talk Going forwards with Jesus
Chorus MP 37 As the deer pants for the water
Notices Lydia, Quinton trip, Joyce C, Fellowship lunch,
Communion Warning, members, Isaiah 59:12
Prayer time
Reading Philippi 1:18-26 (page 1178)
Hymn MP 1165 Crown of glory
Sermon Confidence in Christ.
Hymn MP 624 Take my life and let it me
Closing Prayer:

Close

He who speaks on his own does so to gain honour for himself, but he who works for the honour of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Joh 7:18



*May we love Jesus more dearly
Follow Jesus more closely
To speak for Jesus more boldly*

Prayer & Exordium

- 24th February 2022 was the most shocking day in the modern history of Ukraine. A date impressed on every Ukrainian mind. They awoke to hear that their country had been invaded by the Russian Army. Everyone would remember where they were when they heard the news. Do you remember where you were with the 9/11 attacks suddenly appeared on our screens.

How chaotic and fearful it all seems. Something similar has happened here to the church at Philippi.

No, a physical attack or gunmen through the door, that does happen. Paul the Apostle and founder of the church had been arrested and put in prison.

[Like when Nelson Mandela the champion for freed was imprisoned.](#)

As the news trickled in so the shock waves ran through the church. "Paul the champion of the faith was behind bars and may any day face execution."

They had come to saving faith through his ministry, they had nailed their colours to the mast and were behind him in the task of worldwide Gospel proclamation. They were a gospel church, it was the first thing that Paul had commended them for (Phil 1:5). They are deeply concerned that Jesus the saviour should be made know to all, they urgently sought the advance of the Kingdom of the God in the world, Just as we too should also.

So to see the herald of the faith banged up in jail comes as a great shock, the question is "how will this now affect the work and progress of the gospel?"

Paul assures them that the Lord who is Sovereign ruler of all the universe has brought good from what looked like a disaster. You can hear him say "Don't fear, the Lord we serve is a God who reverses things". He does.

What appears to be a stick in the spokes of gospel work is not. Under the Lord's plan he will turn every situation around, - for his glory - and for his kingdom.

"¹⁸ But what does it matter? Paul says x2 The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. x2

The message is continuing to spread - you can hear his Hallelujahs

**He knows that though they chain the man, they cannot chain the message
Though they kill the messenger - they cannot kill the message.
Such is God's word!**

Christ is preached. That is what Paul is concerned about.

- Just as when aid comes to a country, say grain gets through to starving thousands in East Africa, when finally the lorry arrives full of sacks of grain, there is great rejoicing.

No one asks: “how did it get here? Was it only good people who brought it? Did any of the opposition rebels have a hand in this?” No they are just glad they have food.

- Go to the chemist for those pills you need, the ones that can cure you, and all you want to know is – “do you have them”

You do not ask “how did you get them, what supplier was there? “What route did they take to get to you, how long did it take?” You are just glad you have them - for they will keep you alive!

- ✚ So with Christ, the main thing is that he is made known. Period

No wonder Paul rejoices. **what does it matter?** Christ is preached. x2 Paul’s concern is that the world may know about the Lord, the author of life, the one true God who became flesh, who became the servant, who suffered, who died and who rose again and returned to Glory. Here now is the One who can give forgiveness all the sins of any sinner who looks to him. Here is the medicine we all desperately need, here is food from heaven, the free gift of everlasting life.

Yes this healing balm is the medicine that cures death itself, here is the answer for the deepest need of every man or woman who has ever lived.

That is what Paul is concerned about. That Christ is preached. So he rightly says: **And because of this I rejoice.**

This we looked at last time. 1:12-18.

In the verses 1:27-30 Paul is charging the church to stand firm. Stay faithful, don’t wobble. This we will look at next time.

Today it is the section in the middle, 18-26 Paul in prison.

Whatever happens...

- If the archbishop of Canterbury was thrown into prison – shocking event that would be – and judging by his gospel stance – somewhat unlikely - If he was, we may well ask ‘how is he coping?’
Who’s the most well-known Christian you know? Imagine they were thrown into jail. Wouldn’t everyone be concerned for his safety?

It is normal to ask that of a leader, or of anyone in prison. “Paul how are you coping? How has this affected you? How are you doing?” Paul understands this and in v18-26 puts their mind at rest about himself.

No he is not licking his wounds, he is not morose, - he is rejoicing! Really?

It is easy to have confidence in Christ when things are going well, but come the sudden car accident or sudden illness and it quickly slips to concern for the physical, - and it is right to be concerned, but can I have confidence in Christ here too? Will he not bring something from this for his purpose and glory?

The message of the world says look after yourself, at all costs make sure you are safe, protect yourself. Sadly it is easy for us to slip into health and safety prayers which are not primarily concerned for Christ and his Glory.

In those days the prisons were really dreadful places, you won’t wish them on your worst enemy, Yet Paul writing from prison says: **Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**

See the paragraph break splits rejoicing - with rejoicing.

Paul rejoices that Christ is preached and glad that the gospel the power of God is changing others - but he also rejoices that Christ’s power is in him, - in him now - in his situation now.

That is why he goes on to say: **²⁰I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.** To exalt is to ‘declare great’

Why does he say **whether by life or by death?** Paul in prison is awaiting trial and he doesn’t know whether he will be acquitted and set free – or whether he will be condemned and die.

He does not know – but he is prepared for either.

whether by life If he is permitted to live, if he were acquitted, the effect would be to honour Christ. He would say “this is what Christ has done, He is in charge, I trust him, and now I will continue to devote myself with new ardour to his service; so that you will all know that Christ is able to save”.

or by death. If his trial should result in his death then he believed he would be able to do honour to Christ and his cause. “I am not afraid to die, for with Christ in me I believe I can bear the pains of death in such a way as to show the power of Christ”. Christ lives within a every true believer - through the easy and the hard. He is with me through the valley of the shadow of death,

which is what this dark world is like. And to death itself. That is 'confidence in Christ'. *The title of this sermon.*

Paul knew that and so should all of us who have trusted in Christ, to have confidence in him whatever happens. **For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.**" Rom 14:7-8

Christ is "magnified" in the death of Christians when his presence and power is seen to sustain us. To go calmly into the dark valley; to confidently commit our eternal all into his hands. That is what made Paul happy.

✚ A God who can do that is a truly great God and one worth serving.

Paul's Jesus is every true believers Jesus so let us trust Him whatever happens. For Paul waiting for news of his trial felt assured that the great purposes of Christ would be honoured in it whether he died as a martyr, or whether he lived many years to proclaim his gospel. Here is the man at peace. x2 and you?

✚ As a Christian I am to live for Him, but I am also to be willing to die for him? Am I?

How about you?

How about you? You don't need to be in prison to have asked that question.

■ Every soldier in the field has time to think, as he lies down he ponders his fate and the very real prospect of his death.

The truth is that whether on the battlefield, in prison, or here today at peace; death could come at any time. Are you ready for it? If it was to be today?

It could be today. You don't expect it, I don't expect it. I haven't even made my Will. Have you made yours? When is the right time? the right age to make a Will?

The man or woman ready for death is the man or woman most ready to live.

Will today be the day when your heart will beat its last? I know you are assuming it won't be today, - but it could.

Roman left church and within a matter of hours had a heart attack.

Are you ready? Are you ready for it if it was to be today?

Most of you have experienced the loss and death of others, those dear to you. How hard it is. But how are you about your own death?

David bowie's "my death" lying down on my bedroom floor and crying at the emotion, the finality of death and the end of everything.

How miserable it is, all that learning, the precious relationships, all the building of a life, all the hopes, all gone, all wasted, all futile.

For some this world is it - and the thought of losing it all terrifies.

I don't mean the pain of it, praise God there is much relief there, but are you fearful because you have no certainty about the future?.. all you have is this world? Those bold affirmations you've made about going to heaven - do you know it with certainty? It's really important! x2

■ Here is one way - "I haven't really thought about it" said the lad next to me on the coach from back London. That's the English way.

There's one of the devil's ploys - or the lie in the 'all will be well' delusion.

On the internet there is plenty of advice on how to die well. A catholic priest has a website called "The art of dying" He explains how some die in hospital, some chose the tranquillity of a hospice surrounded by experts in helping them have a peaceful death, while others chose to be at home. The family close around them, their dog at their feet and the sound grandchildren playing in the garden. What more could one wish for as they enter peace. So says the man with the clerical collar.

"Tell the truth" I feel like shouting to him: "Tell the truth of what will really happen next!" **Man is destined to die once and then the judgment** Heb 10:9

You will meet your maker. Hear Ecclesiastes 12:7 "**the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.**" Ec 12:7

✚ Each human soul is brought before the God of the universe.

After their eyes close in death, all so serene and quiet - their eyes will open to the horror of the reality of God, they will see in the starkest manner the radiant holiness of God and the filthiness of their sin. There will be the shudder of regret at a lifetime of resisting the hand that reached out to them. There will be the most dread filled scream, can you hear it? They have been found wicked in the sight of God and there is no peace. No **but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.** Heb 10:27 **how will you escape if you ignore such a great salvation?** Heb 2:3

Praise God that for me and many others all that has changed, Now I am convinced that this world is not all there is, this is preparation for the next and with Christ all will be well with my soul. Yes. Christ's finished work on the cross and resurrection from the dead means I can have confidence in Him. **Christ in me the hope of Glory.**

For anyone who has Jesus Christ the moment our eyes close and we depart this world we move into a state of judgment free bliss.

✚ **Do you have that confidence? Are you ready for death when it comes?**

Not ready? Remember **the man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** Joh 12:25

Turn to Christ while you can. Seek peace with God while you can. Change your ways, repent and you will receive Christ's righteousness, you will know the certainty of peace with God, and the assurance of everlasting life through the Spirit of Christ.

- Like the man at the antique roadshow who turns over what looks like a plain object and finds out it is of considerable value.

The mark of God's people is that we are ready to die.

The people of God have always had that confidence which is why so many have gone willingly into the flames or to the noose.

- Adoniram Judson Missionary to Myanmar said "I go as a boy bounding away from school"

✚ **Paul's confidence is not in Paul, no Paul not is able, but Christ is able.**

²¹ **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** The gain is to have Christ in life and if you have him Him in life - you have him in death

Jesus was ready to die, he came into this world ready to die. He said: **'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.'**" Heb 10:7 quoting Ps 40:7

Jesus was no masochist, he did not like pain any more than anyone else yet he wanted to honour his father with his body - in life – and in death - that is why he went steadfastly to the cross.

We are told for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, Heb 12:2

God people have always been different: **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.** Re 12:11

What an example we have in Him, let us then have the same attitude as he

Heb 12:2 **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

That is where Paul's confidence lay

So he could say - **now as always Christ will be exalted in my body,**

Just as Jesus trusted his father and said **"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."** Joh 17:4

So as God's people we are to see Christ exalted and glorified - in our life – and in our death.

Christ is able, Paul was at peace about what was going to happen to him.

He knows the one he serves, he has seen his hand on his life and has confidence that he who started a good work will see it through get the glory.

²² **If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!** ²³ **I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.**

In other words we are here to be useful to Him. If you are alive – he has work for your to do – get on with it.

- **Christians need never sit around at the Job centre!**

If you are to go today - then go – it is **better by far** – don't be like Lot's wife viewing her life here in this world enviously longingly

Paul said ²⁵ **Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,** ²⁶ **so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me."**

In other words that Paul remains will help them in their faith, indeed the fact that Paul remains is in answer to their prayers

¹⁹ **for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**

Christ is at work in a person - through the prayer of His people. So let us be prayers! God has chosen to combine the two, so together the Kingdom of God grows.

I am convinced we would see wonderful changes here if we all sought the Lord together more in prayer.

Let us have confidence in him. In everything, yes in life and in death.

The man or women ready to die is the man or women most ready to live x2

In a moment we will sing "Take my life and let it me" as a prayer of commitment , read verse

✚ **Have confidence in Christ - He is able.**

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