

6. Confidence Only in Christ (1Q 2026 Christ in Philippians and Colossians)

Biblical material: Phil. 3:1–16; Rom. 2:25–29; John 9:1–39; Eph. 1:4, 10; 1 Cor. 9:24–27.

Quotes

- Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. *Martin Luther*
- We have full confidence in Jesus Christ. Our confidence rises as the character of God becomes greater and more trustworthy to our spiritual comprehension. The One with whom we deal is the One who embodies faithfulness and truth—the One who cannot lie. *Aiden Wilson Tozer*
- Religion is the possibility of the removal of every ground of confidence except confidence in God alone. *Karl Barth*
- He that rises after his falls, with confidence in God and profound humility of heart, will become, in God's hands, a proper instrument for the accomplishment of great things; but he who acts otherwise can never do any good. *Paul of the Cross*
- We don't need self-confidence; we need God-confidence *Joyce Meyer*
- The Church always fails at the point of self-confidence. *Samuel Chadwick*

Questions

As a Christian, is it wrong to have self-confidence? What confidence can we have in the church? In what ways can our confidence be misplaced? How does our trust in God depend on knowing his true character? Why couldn't the Pharisees trust the evidence of their own eyes? What has confidence in Christ have to do with the great controversy?

Bible summary

Paul counts everything as loss in comparison to the incredible benefit he has received from knowing Jesus. He has confidence only in him (see Philippians 3:1–16); In Romans 2:25–29 Paul talks about circumcision and points out that in and of itself it has no value. John 9:1–39 is the debate over Jesus' healing of the man born blind. We are chosen in Jesus (see Ephesians 1:4, 10). In 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 Paul talks about running the race to win an eternal prize.

Comment

At one time “you had no hope and you lived in the world without God,” Ephesians. 2:12, but now, “I want to be found in him, not being right because of what I've done, or what the law requires, but made right through confidence in Christ, set right by God through trusting in him.” Philippians. 3:9.

When we refer to confidence in God, we're talking about spiritual strength over time—a consistency of attitude and approach that is not subject to emotional whim. Yet this does not come from ourselves. It comes from God as we place our confidence in him. This is the source of our spiritual strength—that's where our resilience comes from.

Having confidence in God gives us the strength to live, and the strength to share the glorious good news. Trusting in God as the source of resilience is what gives us assurance and conviction. God through us gives to others the hope to live for the God-filled present and God-promised future. This is the motivation that confidence in God provides, and the strength that is renewed. “Those who trust in the Lord will have their strength renewed. They will fly high with wings like eagles. They will run and not be tired. They will walk and not be worn out.” Isaiah 40:31.

That's why it is important to place our confidence in the Lord. It's the only source of spiritual strength—for we have none of our own. Our hope's foundation is in God and his eternal majesty and power, expressed in the humility and love of Christ. So we should have the mind of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 2:16).

If our confidence in God's enabling power dies away, we need to go back to the Bible and restudy the "hope promises," and pray for the re-strengthening power of God. Confidence recovered brings bright glory to the message, and restores motivation. The key is rediscovering our confidence in God, and sharing it with those around us.

That is how we transmit confidence in our loving Lord. This is what we should be celebrating—not our own strength. It is not from us, but from the Eternal God himself. As a result: "We hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." Hebrews 3:6 NIV. While the way we express ourselves differs with each of us, the heart of the message remains the same. Our boldness and courage lie in our conviction of the reality and truth about God. Our boasting is not in ourselves, but in the God we preach and teach, the God of that exciting future together with him that makes such a difference to the way we experience the present.

We need to grow in God's grace, confidently trusting him as we become more like the Lord and his matchless character. Notice however what is spelled out as a life worthy of the calling: completely humble, gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love. Sometimes we have the idea that God calls us to some staggering task or overwhelming achievement. On the contrary, what God is looking for is on the inside, attitudes that reflect the way we treat one another. Only then can he call us to the work he wishes us to do.

The source of our strength is God. We become confident by trusting in him: Hoping in the Lord is our source of spiritual strength. This confidence in God means renewal, a re-invigorating supply of spiritual energy. Soaring like eagles, running without becoming tired, walking and not being exhausted: we are spiritually re-charged by trusting in the Lord.

Ellen White Comments

Then take your eyes off yourself, and encourage hope and confidence in Christ. Let your hope not be centered in yourself, but in him who has entered within the veil. Talk of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. {RH June 9, 1896}.

Oh, how I wish that we would honor Christ by realizing what He wants to do for us, and taking Him at His word. If we would do this, we should be sunshiny Christians. By beholding Christ, we would be changed into His likeness. {UL 359}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem so forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. His understanding will be placed at their service, that they may not err in the carrying out of His purposes.

There is to be no despondency in God's service. Our faith is to endure the pressure brought to bear upon it. God is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the strength they need. He will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him. He will give them the wisdom that their varied necessities demand...

Oh, my brethren, hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end. The light of God's truth is not to be dimmed. It is to shine amidst the darkness of error that enshrouds our world. The word of God is to be opened to those in the high places of the earth, as well as to those in the more lowly. {8T 11}

We cannot find salvation in our own individual selves; we are to look unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith and as we look, we live.... How hard poor mortals strive to be sin-bearers for themselves and for others! but the only sin-bearer is Jesus Christ. He alone can be my substitute and sin-bearer. The forerunner of Christ exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world".... Then take your eyes off yourself, and encourage hope and confidence in Christ. Let your hope not be centered in yourself, but in Him who has entered within the veil. Talk of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. {RH June 9, 1896}