

Palisades Community Bible Church
Online Sunday School

Confidence!

November 1, 2020

Confidence. We hear it from the pulpit quite often; “Have faith.” “Be strong.” “Stand fast.”

OK, nice to hear. Tough to exercise in the clutches of despair, though. What is it to have faith or be strong when your loved one is on the brink? What is it to stand fast when you get that dreaded diagnosis? What is it to be faithful when all options are gone?

Does it not often boil down to abject fear? Aren't you so overwhelmed with dread that you really have no other choice but to call on God? Aren't you in such a state that you have no choice but to NOT LET GO of Jesus? When the worst is staring you in the face, do you truly exercise faith, or collapse, inside, from the horror? Remember the father of the son consumed by the demon in Mark 9: 24 “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

Yes, we believe, yet we have unbelief. It's a condition of our frail humanity. It's OK to confess this. God created you in His image....He understands.

There are those who have faced deadly fears often in their lives. Soldiers, miners, pilots, missionaries, cancer patients, etc., must go through their days with potential dread hanging over them. There are those who have faced certain death and seen the result of strong faith, and it has emboldened their faith all the more.

But, back to our question; What does it mean to have faith, be strong, and stand fast? What do you do?

If you cannot dispel the fear, or the dread, or the weakness of faith, you CAN be confident. That is what faith is; confidence. But, what does that mean? Let's first check in with Webster's:

Confident: full of conviction. Having or showing assurance.

Conviction: a strong persuasion or belief

Being confident is being full of a strong conviction and assurance. But, confident in WHAT?

Proverbs 14: 26 In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge. 27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death. When the Bible refers to the "fear of the Lord," it means having a deep respect, reverence and awe for God's power and authority.

Let's state this in a more modern way: When you live with a deep respect and reverence for God's power and authority, you will have a place of refuge, protection, and a strong persuasion that God will provide life and deliverance from the snares of death.

This is not saying we will not suffer, or die. It is saying that putting all your confidence in God will result in God's will in the situation.

Some cults teach this concept incorrectly, in that they prohibit blood transfusions, taking medicines, or even submitting to medical care. I could take several paragraphs explaining this, but really, it's just horse pucky! (yep, that's in the dictionary). God gave us all...that means ALL...the resources of this earth to enhance life and health. He does not prohibit medical care. Indeed, look at the many diseases that have

been controlled through medicine; polio, small pox, measles, whooping cough, etc., etc., etc.

Psalm 8: 6 You have given him (man) dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

Consider the opposite of faith; the opposite of what we are discussing. The author, Voltaire, hated Christ:

“Francois Voltaire: the noted French infidel. He was one of the most fertile and talented writers and strove to retard and demolish Christianity. His cry in health concerning Christ was, Curse the wretch! He said once, “In twenty years, Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear.” (Some years after his death, his very printing press was employed in printing New Testaments.)

The Christian physician who attended Voltaire during the last illness, has left a testimony concerning the departure of this poor lost soul. He wrote to a friend as follows: “When I compare the death of a righteous man, which is like the close of a beautiful day, with that of Voltaire, I see the difference between bright, serene weather and a black thunderstorm. It was my lot that this man should die under my hands. Often did I tell him the truth.” “

OK, let’s wash our ears out with this. Rush Limbaugh is the world’s most successful radio personality, who has spoken of his faith in Christ on many occasions over the 20+ years I’ve been listening to him. Rush was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer early in 2020, and has been dealing with the barrage of treatments all along:

"I wake up every day, thank God that I did. I go to bed every night praying to God that I'm gonna wake up," he said. "It's a blessing when

you wake up. It's a stop-everything-and-thank-God moment. ... It's a blessing to maintain as much normalcy as you can."

"The only thing that any of us are certain of is right now, today," he said. "I try to make it the best day I can no matter what. I don't look too far ahead. I certainly don't look too far back."

The top-rated host reiterated his personal relationship with Jesus Christ, "and that's why I'm able to remain fully committed to the idea that what is supposed to happen will happen when it's meant to. ... It's helpful to be able to trust and believe in a higher plan. The fact that I have that option and opportunity ... go get the Hallelujah chorus and have them start singing to me."

Rush doesn't dwell on his infirmity, but constantly expresses his confidence in God's perfect plan.

Psalm 17: 6 I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. 7 Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. 8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; (meaning cherished above all others) hide me in the shadow of your wings 9 from the wicked who are out to destroy me, from my mortal enemies who surround me.....15 As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

We Christians use the word "Hope" quite a lot. It actually has two meanings; a) to expect with great confidence and trust, and b) someone or something on which hope is centered – someone or something desired or hoped for. Biblically, Jesus is frequently referred to as the "great Hope."

2 Corinthians 3:12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

The combination of HAVING HOPE, and our confidence in the one HOPED FOR, gives us boldness to stand firm, hold fast and have faith.

I've mentioned in a previous study Mr. Duane Moyer of Faith Fellowship Church in Allentown. He sends wonderful prayer letters each week, and this one has an excellent story:

Duane and Joetta Moyer:

This past week Joetta was to her doctor for her semi-annual checkup. Before going, she had felt compelled to make up a 3x5 card with a verse that has meant a lot to her since her cancer diagnosis and the associated medical adventures. The verse is Philippians 3:20-21 from The Book.

“But we are citizens of heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything everywhere.” Philippians 3:20-21

At the end of the visit, she offered the card to her doctor. “This is what has given me strength through all of this,” she said. “Could I share it with you?” The doctor took it and read it, and Joetta said her eyes teared up. “Thank you! Thank you! I am so tired. It is so hard taking care of so many sick and frightened people. I wish I could hug you but it's not allowed.”

I'm telling this story just to say that sometimes it's the most unlikely people who are most in need of a word from the Lord. In this case, Joetta's doctor is apparently a believer but Joetta didn't know that. And though she has the same Bible as Joetta does, it brought healing and renewed confidence just to hear one of her patients, someone with “skin in the game,” affirm the hope that is in those words.

So, I want to encourage you to be ready “in season and out of season,” to share your own story with people who cross your path, to tell them what God has done for you and how he’s had mercy on you. You never know how the Lord has been preparing their hearts, or how your story will cast light on their own.

God Bless,
Duane Moyer

Isn’t that another way that we gain confidence; the sharing of our faith and hope with one another?

Hebrews 10: 24 And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. 25 Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

This has been a tough year on many fronts. I need not go down the list. Suffice it to say; we need to stand firm in our faith. We need to put our confidence in Christ and NOT in temporal things. When tragedy enters our lives, we must be so convinced of our GREAT HOPE that we fear not what God has planned for our next steps.

Father, God, teach us to pray.

Strengthen our faith.

Help us to approach your throne of grace with fear and hope.

Help our unbelief!

Amen