

Confident – Philippians 1:12-26

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read Vs. 12-18

B. Hassan Nasrallah & Benjamin Netanyahu

1. There's a joke told in the Middle East that goes something like this –
2. One day Netanyahu is sitting in his office when the phone rings. It's the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hassan Nasrallah.
3. Nasrallah says, "Mr. PM, I want to warn you we are going to attack tomorrow @ 9 AM."
4. Net = "Really. How many men do you have?" // Nas = "Let's see-there's me, my brother Achmed, 2 of his friends, & 4 guys from the corner market. That makes 8 of us."
5. Net = "We have an army of a million." // Nas = "Okay, well—let me see if I can round up some more men. I'll call you tomorrow."
6. The next day about the same time the phone rings in Netanyahu's office. It's Hassan.
7. Nas = "Okay, I've recruited a hundred more men & we now have 2 Mercedes & a truck." // Net = "We have 10,000 top of the line battle Merkava battle-tanks & 16,000 armored personnel carriers. **Oh**, & we just added another half a million to our force."
8. Nasrallah says, "Okay, let me see what I can do. I'll call back tomorrow."
9. The 3rd day the phone rings & Netanyahu picks it up.
10. Nas = "Our army is up to a thousand & we're airborne. We refurbished an old helicopter & gave the pilot a shotgun." // Net = "Hassan, we have 600 supersonic bombers, 3,000 elite fighter jets, & a 500 Apache helicopters. With the reserves our force is now up to 2 million."
11. Nasrallah says, "Give me one more day. I'll call you tomorrow."
12. So the next day the phone rings & the PM picks it up.
13. Nasrallah says, "Listen, we talked it over & decided to cancel the war. There's no way we can feed 2 million prisoners."
14. Now that's **confidence!** Misplaced – but confident nevertheless.
15. As Paul wrote Philippians his circumstances seemed bad.
 - a. He was under arrest & awaiting trial before one of the most cruel men in history.
 - b. In earthly terms, there wasn't much on the horizon to cheer Paul.
 - c. But he maintained a quiet confidence that had a huge impact on all around him.
16. That confidence is reflected in our passage today.

II. TEXT

A. Vs 12-14

¹² But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

1. The church in Philippi began thru Paul's work there.
2. For the last 10 years the Philippians supported Paul's efforts to plant churches in other places.
3. When word reached them he'd been arrested in Jerusalem & taken to Rome for trial before Nero, it seemed like his ministry was over.
4. It wasn't; it just shifted gears.
 - a. Paul wasn't free to go where he wanted, but Rome was a place he'd hoped to get to one day.
 - b. Little did he know his trip would be paid for.
 - d. As a prisoner, Rome took care of his passage & gave him an escort.
5. Once in Rome, because he was a **political** prisoner rather than a dangerous criminal, he was allowed to rent his own house where he could receive visitors.
6. The one requirement for being under arrest was the need to be chained to a Roman soldier 24 hours a day.
 - a. These soldiers were drawn from Caesar's elite troops, the **Praetorian** Guard.
 - b. They served 6 hour shifts.
7. And over time, many of them had come to faith in Christ.
 - a. Even those who didn't, came respect Paul as a man of integrity.

- b. Word spread among them that Paul was a follower of Christ & that the cause of his imprisonment was due to his faith.
8. While like any human being Paul had faults, he'd shown himself to be a man of integrity to his guards.
- If you were attached to someone like that for 6 hours at a time, every other day for a couple years - How well would you get to know that person?
 - Those guards heard Paul share the Gospel many times with the people who visited him.
 - It was **always** the same message. He didn't spin it for different people.
 - Those guards had a chance to hear him talk about all kinds of things to different people & realized he was **consistent**.
 - You need to understand: These soldiers served in Nero's palace.
 - They knew all about politics & power.
 - As members of Caesar's household, they were sworn to secrecy & knew how people in power lied to get & keep power.
 - The intrigues of the palace were legion.
 - But they saw no political maneuvering on Paul's part. Even though by making bribes of currying the favor of certain people he could get a favorable ruling. **That's how business was done in Rome.**
9. Whatever else they might think about Paul's message, it was obvious to them all believing in Jesus had made Paul a good man.
10. And as a result, many of them came to faith.
11. Paul's witness didn't impact just Caesar's household. It had brought great blessing to the church in Rome.
12. Some thought Paul's arrest & upcoming trial would cause him to be depressed or doubt God's love & power.
13. On the contrary—Paul knew God had him right where He wanted him.
- His passion was to preach the Gospel & win the lost to Christ.
 - He'd always understood the importance of starting a healthy church in strategic cities, knowing from there the Gospel could reach the surrounding region.
 - So he'd ministered in **Antioch**, the center of Syria; **Ephesus**, the center of Asia Minor; **Corinth & Athens**, centers of Greece.
 - Rome was the center of the world.** >> It had long been his desire to go there.
 - God hurried things along & paid his way by moving the Romans to take him there.
14. As we saw last week, being under arrest **wasn't** the condition Paul would have chosen.
- But looking back, he could see how perfectly God had arranged the whole thing.
 - And NOW – the Gospel had reached into the very palace, the power-center & heart of the Empire!
15. Paul wasn't depressed – He was **stoked**; & used **every** opportunity to preach the Gospel.
16. This bold determination to live for God's glory encouraged everyone who visited him.
- They left after visiting Paul, more determined than ever to share Jesus with others.
 - If Paul could do it while in chains, they could do it while free.
17. Many years ago, I had a cousin who married a guy she met in college; Jan & Louie.
- They were planning to go out on the mission field.
 - But just a couple months after their wedding, he was diagnosed with cancer.
 - From the time it was diagnosed till he died was a few months – most of it was spent in the hospital.
 - We were on vacation in Seattle when he was there & went to see him a couple weeks before he died. Louie was amazing!
 - He was in intense pain & needed to be on meds but would often tell the nurses to not give them because they dulled his senses & made him drowsy.
 - He wanted to be alert because he knew he only had a little time left & wanted to spend his last days telling people about Jesus.
 - He had the most amazing ability to ask questions that disarmed people & got them talking about their dreams, their fears, desires & longings.
 - Then Louie took all of that & showed them how Jesus was what they were **really** looking for.
 - He led **many** of the nurses & doctors to Christ.
 - I'll never forget our visit. My family went in to his room all quiet & sad because he was dying.
 - But he wouldn't allow it. He was funny & soon we were laughing. An hour later when we left there was a smile on our face & a sense of purpose we'd not had when we entered.

l. Even as young as I was – I didn't get the sense he thought what was coming for him as death so much as going home – & he looked forward to it.

m. But in the meantime, he was going to fill every minute with as much living & service to Jesus as possible.

18. His commitment to live with such strong purpose for God in the midst of his ordeal empowered dozens of others to be more purposeful in **their** lives as well. After all – if he could do it, why couldn't they?

19. This is what happened with the Christians in Rome as they witnessed how Paul handled his ordeal.

B. Vs. 15-18

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

1. Don't forget that the church **began** as a **Jewish** movement.

2. There were many Jewish followers of Jesus in Rome.

a. Some of them were from a group called the **Judaizers**.

b. They believed Jesus was the Jewish Messiah but wanted to hold on to all the laws & rituals that had been passed down to them by the rabbis.

c. The Judaizers didn't like Paul because he said **Gentiles** could love & serve Jesus without the need to keep kosher & follow all the Sabbath rules & all the rest.

3. Seeing Paul under arrest prompted them to do what they knew **he** would do if he were free, preach & teach.

a. Their motivation wasn't to win people to Jesus so much as to make Paul **envious** of their freedom.

b. Paul's **supporters** reasoned that with him in prison, **they** needed to get out & do what he'd do if he could.

c. They hoped their service would encourage Paul, while the Judaizers were just trying to make him jealous.

5. Paul's **actual** response was: It's God's business to evaluate & judge motives.

6. He was just stoked because Jesus was being preached!

7. We all know there are false teachers out there who use the Bible & the Name of Christ to rip people off.

a. They quote Scripture because they know it will trick people into thinking they're okay.

b. It's like baiting a hook.

c. But I've been fishing and can tell you, sometimes the fish swims away with the bait & leaves the hook behind.

d. I've known people who were saved under the ministry of false teachers.

e. They didn't get saved **BECAUSE** of the false teacher, they got saved **in SPITE** of them.

f. Jesus said that in the final judgment there would be those who say, "Lord, didn't we do lots of really cool stuff in your name?" And he will say to them, "Depart from me into outer darkness – I never knew you."

C. Vs. 19-21

¹⁹ For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

1. At first blush v. 19 looks like Paul says because the Philippians were praying for him, he knew he'd soon be released.

2. But v. 20 reveals the **deliverance** he meant wasn't from being held; it was from hopelessness & disillusionment.

3. Paul **really did** trust that **whatever** happened to him was the will of God.

4. He was confident that whether he was released or ended up at the chopping block – he'd continue to live just as he always had – Boldly for the glory of God!

5. V. 21 is an important insight into what made this man Paul tick.

a. Here's why he's gone down in history as one of the world's most influential people of all time. **For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.**

- b. Notice that ‘*is*’ is in italics = added by translators.
- c. What Paul wrote is = “For me, to live, Christ; and to die, gain.”
- 7. Take away the words “Christ” & “gain” & you have the story of all –
 - a. “For me, to live and to die.” / We’re born, we live, then we die.
 - b. For many life is a short interruption in oblivion.
 - c. They weren’t, they are, then they aren’t again.
 - d. As Shakespeare has Macbeth say – “*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*”
- 8. Not for Paul! Life was all about knowing, loving & serving Jesus.
 - a. His life had purpose, meaning, direction, vision.
 - b. And because life was all about Jesus, death was turned from a thing of dread into hope.
 - c. Death was not the end of life; it was the **beginning of real life – eternal** life
 - d. Life where there are no more chains, no more prisons, no more shipwrecks, no more Neros playing petty political games.
 - e. No more sin, pain, suffering, sorrow. // f. No more death, no more goodbyes.
- 9. For Paul, because life was Christ & death meant **even more** of Him – it was all good.
- 10. Life for the Christian is a win-win situation. // We **can’t** lose.
- 11. Paul’s life motto was: **For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
 - a. Every one of those soldiers chained to Paul, whether believer or not would by reason of close inspection of Paul’s life say, “Yep. There’s no doubt that’s his motto.”
 - b. How about you? What’s your motto? Fill in the blank - “For me, to live is _____ ??”
 - c. If someone was chained to **you** 24/7, what would they report as the fill in for that blank?

D. Vs. 22-26

²² But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. ²⁴ Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶ that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

- 1. Paul admits he was ready to get it on & do the Heavenly Boogie.
- 2. The word ‘depart’ in v. 23 was used of a ship untying from the dock & catching the wind to set sail.
 - a. Ships weren’t built to sit dockside.
 - b. Sure they’re found there as they take on cargo & passenger.
 - c. But they were designed & built to sail across the water, to launch out & visit other lands.
- 3. Paul saw death as little more than setting sail for glory; and that’s what he wanted to do.
- 3. But he knew there was still more work for him to do on Earth & was happy to remain a while longer so he could bring more to faith & help believers grow in grace.
- 4. As he’d prayed, he had the sense the future held his release at Rome & return to Philippi.
- 5. We’re not certain what happened to Paul after this.
 - a. The book of Acts ends with him still under arrest in Rome.
 - b. But it’s a relaxed kind of house arrest where he seems to be pretty far under the radar of the authorities.
 - c. There’s some evidence he was released & spent the next couple years going to Philippi and a couple other churches, then went to Spain for a short work there.
 - d. Eventually, he was re-arrested & brought before Nero who by then was insane & condemned Paul to death.

CONCLUSION

III. CONCLUSION

A. Confidence

1. I want to end this morning by looking back over these verses for the evidence of Paul's **amazing confidence**.

2. Look at v. 12

I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

3. Vs. 19 & 20

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed.

4. V. 25 –

And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all.

5. Confidence is the knowledge that no matter what challenge arises, you're going to make it.

6. In recent polls, when people were asked what makes a person attractive, the first non-physical trait people mention is **confidence**.

7. Confidence is appealing because it's something we all **long** for.

8. Paul's confidence was the fruit of his faith in God.

9. His **circumstances** as he wrote this weren't so good – but look at how confident he was!

10. His joy, peace, & purpose weren't based on his circumstances; they were rooted in the love & goodness of God.

We live in challenging times.

Everything modern man has trusted in & looked to is proving hollow & unstable.

The Earth is shaking – **literally**, as this last week in Ventura County proves.

Hebrews 12:26-29 warns us that God will shake things up one last time before the end.

He has promised, saying, "*Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.*" This means the removal of those things that are being shaken, . . . that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God with reverence and godly fear. For our God *is* a consuming fire.

God loves the lost. He wants them to turn to Him before it's too late.

So He's going to shake things up & get people to realize **nothing works but faith in Him**.

It's essential they see us who believe in God living confidently when everything is shaking.

If we're freaking out, we're no different than they.

Is God real? Does He love us? Is He all powerful? Has He promised to take care of us?

Did He promise us life would be a **breeze**?

Or did He promise to be our refuge when the breeze becomes a **storm**?

Life here & now is all about living **for** Him,

then we get to go Home & live **WITH** Him for eternity.