

Jesus Is Lord: Conviction and Confidence in Christ

Philippians 3:1-11

Big Idea: God wants you to be confidence in the right (eous) things.

Over-confidence

Sometimes the brightest men in their field make wrong decisions. These missteps could be the product of little or incorrect information, bad judgment, or over-confidence.

William Orton was a brilliant and successful businessman and president of Western Union. In 1876 he decided not to take a flyer for a new invention by Alexander Graham Bell. The new-fangled contraption was called the telephone. Orton declared “while it is a very interesting novelty, we have come to the conclusion that it has no commercial possibilities.” The higher ups at Western Union thought the apparatus little more than a toy. **Over or misplaced confidence can have devastating consequences.**

On New Year’s Day, 1962, Dick Rowe, the official talent scout for Decca Records, went to office, little realizing that this was to become one of the most notorious days in music history. He and producer Mike Smith had to audition bands and decide if any were good enough to be signed on to the record label.

That morning the men listened to a group of 4 boys who had driven for over 10 hours through a snowstorm from Liverpool, play 15 songs.

After a long day spent listening to other bands, the record executives signed on a local group that would be more cost effective. The band they rejected went on to become one of the greatest acts in musical history – The Beatles. They were allegedly dismissed with the statement “**Guitar groups are on the way out**”. **Over or misplaced confidence can have devastating consequences.**

Today’s message and scripture addresses a struggle every person has: the struggle between misplaced confidence in the flesh vs. eternal conviction and confidence in Christ.

Big Idea: God wants you to be confidence in the right (eous) things.

Read Philippians 3:1-11

Paul, the writer of Philippians, begins this passage on confidence on the right-eous things by reminding us that the Word of the Lord is a safeguard. **Confidence is the feeling or belief that one can rely on something/firm trust.** The Holy Scriptures are sure/confident and safe. Said in millennial language: **the Bible is the original safe space.**

The word safe [*sfallo*] in Greek means to make to [not] totter or fall. It is the same word that we derive our English fall or fail. Truly the Word of Life keeps you from falling. We must be people of

the book because these words are: breathed out by God, living, active, written for your hope, a lamp for your feet and a light for your path, and remains forever. Even Jesus affirmed that man can not live on bread alone but every WORD that precedes from the Father.

Obedience to the revealed will of God (Word) is often just as much a step of faith as claiming the promise of God – Jerry Bridges

Put the Word of God in your heart in your mind and heart daily until your soul sings with **confidence** that you are new and a child of the King. God wants you to be confident in the right(eous) things: His unchanging Word.

When you have confidence in Christ, you watch out for false-Christ (3:2-7)

Watch out. If we are to have extreme confidence, faith, and conviction in Christ, the opposite is true of that which opposes the Gospel. Immediately Paul addresses these *false-confidences*. Look out = turn the thoughts or direct the mind. *Confidence is not putting your head in the sand like an ostrich- rather confidence is keeping watch.*

Watch out for Dogs—the word dog suggests several immediate thoughts. First, you might think of your beloved pet fluffy. Or, you think of the word as an extreme vulgar insult. For the Jew, the term had a *significantly religious meaning*. Dogs in the ancient world were considered unclean and despised because they would eat anything including dead animals, human corpses, or their own vomit and were outside the community of faith.

We are reminded to watch out for those cultural Christianity –that eats *anything beneficial in the moment*. Deists/pantheists/atheists/agnostics, who are not Christian but adhere to Christian values and appreciate Christian culture. Although they think they are part of the faith they are not. Don't put confidence in this lifestyle. **Cultural Christianity is false confidence.**

Watch out for evil-workers—These were Judaizers who were earthly-minded false brothers teaching the works of the flesh. Be careful of anyone who give lip-service to Jesus Christ but has no desire to serve or support causes of the gospel Beware when you are building your own kingdom and have no conviction that you are a citizen of heaven. **Earthly mindedness is false confidence.**

Watch out for those who mutilate the flesh. No these are not zombies! This warning concerns anyone (ministers) who draw people away from faith in Christ by insisting on the primary importance of religious rituals or traditions. **Hope in traditions or religious observance is false-confidence.**

The greatest assault against Christ in your life will not come from without but within. **Watch IN.** Paul, in one of the most brilliantly introspective passages in all of Scripture **gives a self-righteous portrait:**

1. **Circumcision-** Paul was a first-class Jewish family. Even if Gentiles came to faith and were circumcised they were “2nd class”
2. **People** of Israel- Paul is claiming genealogical purity.

3. **Benjamin-** The tribe of Benjamin produced the first king of Israel, maintained loyalty to Judah, and inherited within its territory the city of Jerusalem. Paul's name, Saul, may reflect the pride his parents had in one of its most famous members.
4. **Hebrew of Hebrews-** Paul clearly places himself on the side of those in Israel who 'chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant.'
5. **Pharisees-** the approach he chose for his interpretation of the law was that of the Pharisees. This perspective, which emphasized the 'ancestral traditions' was widely perceived as the one most faithful to Scripture. The Judaizers could not have asked for anything more impressive (Silva, 151).
6. **Zeal-** Paul puts his position as a Pharisee at the radical end of the spectrum of devotion to the law.
7. **Blameless-** Paul can hardly be claiming that he was sinless. Such a concept was quite foreign to Jewish theology. The point is rather that anyone interested could have 'checked the record' and found that Paul had never been charged with transgressing the law (Silva, 151).

Paul: I have tried religion. I was born into the church, a true southerner who does good, works hard, and respects others, my dad the char main of the deacons and my grandfather helped build this church. As to zeal: I have always known about Jesus, sent to VBS, and even walked an aisle. I know all the hymns and long for the good ole days. Maybe your story sounds like Paul but you know there is more. But whatever was gain I consider loss. Paul looks back at his self-portrait and realizes it does not compare to his new identity in Jesus Christ. **Your self-portrait determines your self-image and identity.** Big Idea: God wants you to be confidence in the right (eous) things.

Have conviction in Jesus Christ (3:8) Your savior-portrait determines your spiritual image

In short, Paul has given up his own efforts toward becoming righteous through the works of the law. Listen to the apostle, **self-righteousness never works!**

It is possible that years of progress separates verse 7 and 8. Years of confidence in Christ separate these verses. The more confidence that Paul becomes in Jesus, the less confidence he becomes in himself.

Confidence is this: knowing Jesus Christ my Lord. You cannot gain this knowledge of Christ through theological reflection but by receiving the **revelation** from Jesus Christ and acknowledging Him as **Lord**. Paul doesn't know of **Jesus- He Knows Him**.

Confidence is this: knowing true gain. Knowing what is true and profitable brings eternal satisfaction. When you chase the wind you will always be disappointed. Even if you catch the wind, you will be dissatisfied.

Confidence is this: being found in Him. First, we know that Jesus is the rescuer and the searcher. He seeks after the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost sons. And he seeks after you. That which God finds cannot be lost. For Paul this means that even on the final day when he stands before God and gives account—he is found in Christ.

Confidence is this: righteousness through faith. Faith is a human response empowered by God's grace. Faith is conviction and confidence in that which is true. Faith is not the absence of thought or confidence. I have faith because I have confidence that Jesus is the son of God and took my place offering me hope from despair and forgiveness for my shame. True faith looks away from self-achievement and looks to Christ.

Response

John Ortberg shares the following story:

A few weeks ago, when I was out surfing, there was no one else in the water except for a huge guy practicing martial arts on the beach. After I'd been out a little while, a tiny wisp of a kid came paddling up out of nowhere. I couldn't believe he was out there by himself. He pulled his little board right up next to mine. He was so small he hardly needed a board. He could have stood up in the ocean on a Frisbee. He told me his name was Shane. He asked me how long I'd been surfing. I asked him how long he'd been surfing. "Seven years," he said. "How old are you?" I asked. "Eight."

Then he said, "What I like about surfing is that it's so peaceful. You meet a lot of nice people here."

We talked a while longer. Then I asked him, "How did you get here, Shane?"

"My dad brought me," he said. Then he turned around and waved at the nearly empty beach. The Goliath doing martial arts waved back.

"Hi, Son," he called out.

Then I knew why Shane was so at home in the ocean. It wasn't his size. It wasn't his skill. It was who was sitting on the beach. His father was always watching. And his father was very big.

Big Idea: The people of God must be confident because knowing else compares to the surpassing worth of know Jesus Christ as Lord.

One of the greatest tragedies is to see churches and homes filled with people who are self-conscious when they should be confident in the Lord Jesus Christ. Look to the Father, put his revealed will/word in your heart until your heart sings with confidence!

Maybe today for the first time:

Phil. 3:7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so **that I may gain Christ**



Phil. 3:1 In addition, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write to you again about this is no trouble for me and is a safeguard for you.

Safeguard- **804. ἄσφαλής; *asfalēs, asfales*** (*sfallō* to make to totter or fall, to cheat (cf. Latin *fallo*, German *fallen*, etc., **English *fall, fail***), *sfallomai* to fall, to reel) (from Homer down); a. *firm* (that can be relied on, confided in): *angkura*, Heb. 6:19 (where I, and Tr have received as the form of accusative singular *asfalēn* (Tdf. 7 *asfalēn*; cf. Tdf. at the passage; Delitzsch, commentary at the passage) see *arsēn*). Tropically, *certain, true*: Acts 25:26; *to asfales*, Acts 21:34; 22:30. b. *suited to confirm: tini*, **Phil. 3:1** (so Josephus, Antiquities 3, 2, 1).*

Phil. 3:2 **Watch** out for the dogs, **watch** out for the evil workers, **watch** out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh—

It is hard to reproduce the force of the rhetoric: “Beware the curs! Beware the criminals! Beware the cutters! (Theilman, 167).

Watch Out- 991. βλέπω; *blepō*; (imperfect *eblepon*); future *blepsō*; 1 aorist *eblepsa*; (present passive *blepomai*); the Septuagint for *rā`ā, pānā, ḥāzā, hibîṭ*; in Greek writings from Aeschylus down; *to see, discern*:

2. metaphorically, to see with the mind’s eye; a. *to have* (the power of) *understanding: blepontes ou blepousi*, though endowed with understanding they do not understand, Matt. 13:13; Luke 8:10. b. *to discern mentally, observe, perceive, discover, understand*; absolutely: *di’ esoptrou*, 1 Cor. 13:12; of the omniscient God *blepōn en tō kruptō seeing in secret*, where man sees nothing, Matt. 6:4,6,18 (here L T Tr WH *blepōn en tō krufaiō*); *engizousan tēn hēmeran*, Heb. 10:25 (from certain external signs); *Iēsoun ... estefanōmenon*, we see (from his resurrection and from the effects and witness of the Holy Spirit) Jesus crowned, Heb. 2:9; followed by *hoti*, Heb. 3:19; James 2:22. c. *to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing, to consider, contemplate, look to*; absolutely *blepete take heed*: Mark 13:23,33; with an accusative of the thing or person, 1 Cor. 1:26; 10:18; 2 Cor. 10:7; **Phil. 3:2**; Col. 2:5; followed by *pōs* with indicative (Winer’s Grammar, 300 (282); Buttman, 255 (219)), Luke 8:18; 1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 5:15; *to weigh carefully, examine, followed by the interrogative ti* with indicative Mark 4:24; *eis prosōpon tinos*, to look at i.e. have regard to one’s external condition — used of those who are influenced by partiality: Matt. 22:16; Mark 12:14. By a use not found in Greek authors *heauton blepein to look to oneself* (equivalent to *sibi cavere*): Mark 13:9; followed by *hina mē* (cf. Buttman, 242 (209)), 2 John 1:8; *blepein apo tinos* (equivalent to *sibi cavere ab aliquo*) *to beware of one* (Winer’s Grammar, 223 (209), cf. 39 (38); Buttman, 242 (209), cf. 323 (278)), Mark 8:15; 12:38; *look*

to in the sense of *providing, taking care*: followed by *hina*, 1 Cor. 16:10; followed by *mē* with subjunctive aorist, Matt. 24:4; Mark 13:5; Luke 21:8; Acts 13:40; 1 Cor. 8:9 (*mēpōs*); 1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:15; Heb. 12:25; followed by *mē* with future indicative, Col. 2:8; Heb. 3:12. The Greeks say *horan mē* (cf. Winer's Grammar, 503 (468f); Buttmann, 242f (209)).

Confidence- **πειθω; peithō** ((from the root meaning 'to bind'; allied with *pistis*, fides, foedus, etc.; Curtius, sec. 327; Vanicek, p. 592)); imperfect *epeithon*; future *peisō*; 1 aorist *epeisa*; 2 perfect *pepoitha*; pluperfect *epepoithein* (Luke 11:22); passive (or middle, present *peithomai*; imperfect *epeithomēn*); perfect *pepeismai*; 1 aorist *peisthēn*; 1 future *peisthēsomai* (Luke 16:31); from Homer down;

3. 2 perfect *pepoitha* **to trust, have confidence, be confident**: followed by an accusative with an infinitive, Rom. 2:19; by *hoti*, Heb. 13:18 Rec.; by *hoti* with a preparatory *auto touto* (Winer's Grammar, sec. 23, 5), Phil. 1:6; *touto pepoithōs oida hoti*, Phil. 1:25; *pepoitha* with a dative of the person or the thing in which the confidence reposes (so in classical Greek (on its construction in the N.T. see Buttmann, sec. 133, 5; Winer's Grammar, 214 (201); sec. 33, d.)): Phil. 1:14; Philemon 1:21 (2 Kings 17:20; Prov. 14:16; 26:26; Isa. 28:17; Sir. 35:24 (Sir. 32:24); WisSol 14:29); *heautō* followed by an infinitive 2 Cor. 10:7; *en tini*, to trust in, put confidence in a person or thing (cf. Buttmann, as above), **Phil. 3:3,4**; *en kuriō* followed by *hoti*, Phil. 2:24;

Dogs- the word dog in English is normally applied insultingly to people considered worthless or vulgar. For the Jews, however, the term had a distinctly religious sense: it referred to the Gentiles, those people who, being outside the covenant community, were considered virtually unclean. This is not as insult as much as a religious statement (Silva, 147). .

Dogs were not lovable, huggable pets and companions in Paul's Jewish culture. They were regarded "as the most despicable, insolent and miserable of creatures" (Hansen, 218). Dogs were despised because they would eat anything including dead animals, human corpses, and their own vomit.

Workers of evil- The Judaizers were earthly-minded false brothers, whose teaching led to the works of the flesh.

Mutilate the flesh- his warning applies to all ministers who draw people away from faith in Christ by insisting on the primary importance of religious rituals (Hansen, 220).

Flesh- at times, Israel placed such confidence in possession of the physical mark itself that they felt their election was secure even if their hearts strayed after other gods (Theilman, 168).

Confidence in the flesh and in Christ are mutually exclusive. It is impossible to place one spiritual foot on the foundation of flesh and one spiritual foot on the foundation of Christ. Both must be firmly planted on either one foundation or the other (Thielman, 169).

⁴ although I have reasons for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

The “boastings of Paul” fall into two distinct categories. The first four items describe privileges that Paul acquired simply by virtue of his birth, while the last three focus on voluntary choices of his own (Silva, 150).

By presenting this self-portrait, Paul demonstrates that he meets every qualification for greatness and excellence in Jewish society. Nobody can surpass him (Hansen, 222).

Benjamin- the youngest of Jacob and Rachel. From this tribe: Saul, Mordecai, Paul. Benjamin was known for fighting left handed, brave and skilled archers. In the blessing of Jacob Benjamin was referred to as a ravenous wolf (Genesis 49:27).

Law- “Paul uses the word ‘law’ loosely for the teaching of religion, however much corrupted it was at the time” (Calvin).

Paul’s self-portrait.

8. Circumcision- Paul was a first-class Jewish family. Even if Gentiles came to faith and were circumcised they were “2nd class”
9. People of Israel- Paul is claiming genealogical purity.
10. Benjamin- The tribe of Benjamin produced the first king of Israel, maintained loyalty to Judah, and inherited within its territory the city of Jerusalem. Paul’s name, Saul, may reflect the pride his parents had in one of its most famous members.
11. Hebrew of Hebrews- Paul clearly places himself on the side of those in Israel who ‘chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant.”
12. **Pharisees**- the approach he chose for his interpretation of the law was that of the Pharisees. This perspective, which emphasized the ‘ancestral traditions’ was widely perceived as the one most faithful to Scripture. The Judaizers could not have asked for anything more impressive (Silva, 151).
13. Zeal- Paul puts his position as a Pharisee at the radical end of the spectrum of devotion to the law. Especially during the Maccabean revolt against Hellenistic forces, the challenge to protect the purity of Israel for righteous leaders would show zeal.
14. Blameless. **Blameless**- Paul can hardly be claiming that he was sinless. Such a concept was quite foreign to Jewish theology. The point is rather that anyone interested could have ‘checked the record’ and found that Paul had never been charged with transgressing the law (Silva, 151).

Phil. 3:7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. **8** More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ

But everything—Paul looks back at his self-portrait and realizes it does not compare to his new portrait in Jesus.

In this portrait, Paul's whole life revolves around Christ: nine times by name or pronoun in these 5 verses, Christ fills all of Paul's vision (Hansen, 231).

Notice the shift in tense from the perfect in v.7 (I have considered) to the present in v.8 (I consider).

These verses repeatedly set a negative evaluation of his prior way of life against a positive description of his new experience (Silva, 156).

Loss- Zemia- Paul tells us that he now regards his previous assets not merely as without worth but as positively damaging, as spiritual 'liabilities' (Silva, 157)

After his conversion to Christ, Paul recalculates the value of all of the advantages of his family and his accomplishments, his social class, and his moral achievements, and then he enters the bottom line: they all add up to one overwhelming disadvantage, one huge loss (Hansen, 233).

Paul reminds his friends that knowing Christ cost him everything.

Knowing Christ- Paul did not gain this knowledge of Christ Jesus through his own theological reflection but by receiving the revelation of Christ Jesus and by acknowledging him as my Lord (Hansen, 235).

We cannot but notice the personal nature of this transaction, its sheer individuality (Motyer).

We are immediately struck by the fact that the years between the counted of verse 7 and the count of verse 8 have been, for Paul, years of progress (Motyer, 160).

Paul's up to date testimony brings us a final word, satisfaction (Motyer, 162).

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ the righteousness from God based on faith.

Found in Him- for Paul, to gain Christ means that he will be found in him on the final day when he stands before God and gives account for himself (Thielman, 171).

It is very important to note the explicit opposition between the righteousness that comes from God and that which comes from the law. Clearly, Paul conceives of the two as mutually exclusive. In short, Paul has given up his own efforts toward becoming righteous through the works of the law (Silva, 161).

The gift of righteousness from God includes union with Christ (Hansen, 240).

Faith is a human response empowered by God's grace (Hansen, 242).

Faith is the agent (through faith) and the foundation upon which righteousness from God rests (Hansen, 242).

True faith in Christ looks away from self-achievement and looks to Christ (Hansen, 242).

10 My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, **11** assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

Faith is Confidence- **4102. πιστις; pistis, pisteōs, hē** (*peithō* (which see)), from (Hesiod, Theognis, Pindar), Aeschylus, Herodotus down; the Septuagint for 'ēmūnā, several times for 'ēmet and 'āmānā; *faith*; i.e.:

1. conviction of the truth of anything, belief (Plato, Polybius, Josephus, Plutarch; *thaumasia kai meizō pisteōs*, Diodorus 1, 86); in the N.T. of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it: Heb. 11:1 (where *pistis* is called *elpizomenōn hupostasis, pragmatōn elengchos ou blepomenōn*); opposed to *eidos*, 2 Cor. 5:7; joined with *agapē* and *elpis*, 1 Cor. 13:13. a. when it relates to God, *pistis* is the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ: Heb. 11:6; 12:2; 13:7; *pistis epi Theon*, Heb. 6:1; *hē pistis humōn hē pros ton Theon*, by which ye turned to God, 1 Thess. 1:8; *tēn pistin humōn kai elpida eis Theon*, directed unto God, 1 Pet. 1:21; with a genitive of the object (faith in) (*tōn Theōn*, Euripides, Med. 414; *tou Theou*, Josephus, contra Apion 2, 16, 5; cf. Grimm, Exgt. Hdbch. on WisSol vi., 17f, p. 132; (cf. Meyer on Rom. 3:22; also Meyer, Ellicott, Lightfoot on Col. as below; Winer's Grammar, 186 (175))): *hē pistis tēs energeias tou Theou tou egeirantos auton* (Christ) *ek tōn nekrōn*, Col. 2:12; *dia pisteōs*, by the help of faith, Heb. 11:33,39; *kata pistin*, equivalent to *pisteuontes*, Heb. 11:13; *pistei*, dative of means or of mode *by faith or by believing, prompted, actuated, by faith*, Heb. 11:3f,7-9,17,20-24,27-29,31; dative of cause, *because of faith*, Heb. 11:5,11,30. b. **in reference to Christ, it denotes a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God** (on this see more at length in *pisteuō*, 1 b. γ.); α. universally: with the genitive of the object (see above, in a.), *Iēsou Christou*, Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; *Iēsou*, Rev. 14:12; *Christou*, **Phil. 3:9**; *tou huiou tou Theou*, Gal. 2:20; *tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou*, James 2:1; *mou* (i.e. in Christ), Rev. 2:13 (certainly we must reject the interpretation, *faith in God*

Just as Christ's death was the means through which God worked the miracle of the resurrection, so Paul's own suffering in faithfulness to his calling is the means through which God is bringing spiritual life to the congregations of believers he has been establishing (Thielman, 173).

Satisfied to:

Know Him

Suffer for Him

Raise to new life with Him

Illustrations

Application

Do you have confidence or conviction?