

Confidence

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God. 1 John 3:21
For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. Proverbs 3:26

Confident because of confidence in ...

Ever pondered Jesus' confidence? I'm not sure that the Bible reflects the same Jesus that so many have portrayed to us via Sunday School flannel boards or Hollywood movies. Jesus' boldness scares me sometimes but is also what lures me to Him. He is straight forward, peaceful, resourced & equipped, always getting to the heart of a matter, speaking with great intelligence and never looking back. Jesus never justified Himself – a true sign of purity and authenticity. To me, as I view Him from my careful-be-nice-because-you-are-a-canadian-christian filter, I sometimes have a problem with the way He spoke to people ... Hmmm. But then I have to ask, whose problem is it? I need to learn. I need to listen. I need to be close to Him.

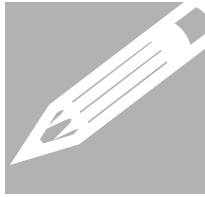
Confidence (*Noun*)

1. Self-assurance.
2. Expression or feeling of certainty.
3. The quality of trusting.
4. Information held in secret.

(*Wiktionary*)

Jesus led by example. He did not ask anyone to do what He would or could not do. He moved confidently toward His destiny (the cross), showing us how to live – how to suffer, to respond to questioning, to worship, to pray, to believe, to lean on His Father... Let's observe today's passages through this lens. Watch Jesus at work: leading His fearful disciples and teaching them without bringing embarrassment or flattery, healing a blind man, riding into Jerusalem boldly, taking charge of nature, honouring God's house and leading temple leaders. And, take courage from who Jesus is. Know His secret strength. Let His Spirit infuse yours.

Take courage from who Jesus is. Know His secret strength. Let His Spirit infuse yours.



Look up these verses and make comments on them. How did Jesus demonstrate confidence in these situations?

Mark 10:32-34 – Going to Jerusalem

vs. 32 – led the way

Vs. 34 – gave hope by talking about His resurrection

(this is the 3rd time that Jesus has mentioned His death & resurrection to them.

This time was with more detail...

- Confidence leads.

Mark 10:35-45 – James & John and the rest of the Disciples

- Jesus was not offended or angered by their questions. He was not insecure or arrogant or He would have been quick to take the defensive or disgusted by their simple-mindedness and audacity to even ask such a question, like He was a machine that you could get prizes out of.
- Vs. 36 – He asks them a question and throws it back on their lap and heart (one of His great techniques!)
- Vs. 41 – He creates a situation that reveals all of the disciples' hearts, treating them with respect, Jesus takes them aside (again) and teaches them
- Vs. 45 – Confidence serves other's destinies and God's purposes & heart.

Confidence does not equal
arrogance!

Now faith is
confidence in
what we hope
for and
assurance
about what we
do not see.
Hebrews 11:1
NIV

Mark 10:46-52 - Bartimaeus

- Vs. 49 – Jesus stopped and commanded (NKJV)
- Vs. 50 – Bartimaeus also shows tons of confidence by his persistence and then, when He finally gets Jesus' attention, he throws his coat off and jumps up to go to Him. I love this picture!
- Again, we see that confidence leads.

Mark 11:1-11 – Riding into Jerusalem

- Jesus knew where to get the donkey and what the response of the owner would be
- Rode into Jerusalem boldly even though He knew it would stir things up, and that He, in essence, was riding to His crucifixion.
- Confidence is full of courage.

Mark 11:12-14, 20-26 - The Fig Tree

This is somewhat of a puzzling scenario as it almost looks like Jesus is a spoilt child and is whining when something isn't going His way... But no! We all know this to be an impossible conclusion! This is Jesus that we are talking about – no sin... What is He teaching the disciples, and us, in His bold judgement of this tree then?

- For one thing, He understands that it is just a tree. I know that sounds elementary, but let's face it, in our culture we sometimes value things disproportionately.
- Jesus knew His authority & position over nature, sin and mankind
- This analogy is possibly a comparison to the bankrupt people of Jerusalem. They had every opportunity to produce fruit, especially with Jesus there, and were refusing to do so by believing in Him.
John 15:1-8 may also give some insight into this...

Confidence doesn't
need to be fed.
Arrogance does.

Mark 11:15-19 - Clearing the Temple ... again

- As already discussed, the Jewish leaders had forgotten the real purposes of God. Jesus' anger flares again in the temple (the other time was at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-16))
- Jesus said in Matthew 13:45-46 - Again the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is a dealer in search of fine and precious pearls, who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it.
- Confidence defends God and gives everything for Him!

Read this excerpt from 'Conspiracy of Kindness' Chapter 10:

"If you look in the maps section of your Bible, you may find a layout of the temple in Jerusalem. The outermost portion was designated as the "Court of the Gentiles" where non-Jews could hear teaching on the one true God. We can see in this arrangement that God's heart has always been inclusive. He has always provided a place for outsiders to hear about His mercy.

In Jesus' day, this area of the temple had been taken over by the religious rulers and designated as a place for exchanging money and selling animals to be used in the temple sacrifices. Because of their action, the pearl of great price had been locked away in the temple so that outsiders were excluded from experiencing the grandeur of God's love.

Jesus became furious with these temple leaders. His anger drove Him to the point that He expelled the moneychangers from the temple, turned over their tables, and scattered their animals. It seems ironic that the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, expressed such tremendous anger in this particular setting. I believe that Jesus was displaying the heart of God in a way that we've seldom seen. Nothing makes God angrier than people who keep the pearl from being displayed for the world to see."

Mark 11:27-33 - The Temple Leaders once More...

- Vs. 27 - 'And they came again to Jerusalem...' Jesus kept coming back, kept walking right into His destiny. Jerusalem, the growing hostility of the temple leaders and the cross were His destiny. But His eyes were focused on the fruit of His human suffering
"... He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus saw beyond what everyone else saw. He saw heaven and what the final picture would be. What was His joy - His drive? I've heard it said that it is us. There was no other reason that He did what he did. It was more than just getting to sit at God's right hand, I'm sure. If He did not save us, He would be sitting in an empty heaven with only He & His Father...
- Vs. 29 - His confidence did not allow Him to be intimidated by interrogation. He threw the questions right back at the chief priests, scribes and elders.
- Vs. 32 - the temple leaders displayed the opposite of confidence. They were afraid of the people. (see Mark 12:12 as well)
- Confidence lacks fear and gives way to wisdom.

What does Jesus teach us? In this lesson we saw that confidence:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| - <i>leads well</i> | - <i>does not need to be fed</i> |
| - <i>does not fear</i> | - <i>defends God, stands up for truth</i> |
| - <i>serves God and others</i> | - <i>walks toward its destiny</i> |
| - <i>does not seek position</i> | - <i>gives security & peace to others</i> |
| - <i>is brave and courageous</i> | |

Fear not, for I *am* with you; be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. *Isaiah 41:10*

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Psalm 118:8

For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. *Proverbs 3:26*

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ... what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. *Excerpts from Philippians 3:3-14*