

November 8, 2015  
Hebrews 9:24-28

Proper 27B  
Confident!...in the Expectation of Christ

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Don't you admire people who seem to be full of confidence?? I'm not talking about people who brag a lot, people who are prideful or full of themselves. I mean those people who don't get frazzled or defensive when criticized or who don't become easily fearful when faced with a new challenge or problem that they need to confront. That kind of coolness in the face of adversity is considered an important characteristic of leadership.

It seems that a lot of people wish they had more confidence, at least by the quantities of books on the topic. A search on Amazon.com indicated that they sell over 26,000 books on the topic of building confidence in one-self. But that's nothing! A web search came up with over 31 million Internet sites that deal with the topic of over-coming doubt and increasing confidence. There are blogs, books, and other things you can find about increasing confidence and over-coming doubt. *100 Tips for Increasing your Confidence and Happiness. How to Develop Self-Confidence: Killer Tips and Habits for Building Self-Confidence. 25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self-Confidence. 8 Ways to be more Self-Confident.* AND MANY more. Wouldn't it be nice to have more confidence? I can tell you there are times that I wish I had more.

Do you know what it's like to live confidently, and do you wish you could? Don't we often make commitments to ourselves that we won't get angry at the insults of others, or that we'll keep our cool when our ideas are challenged or dismissed? Yet when things don't go our way, or when what we think or say is rejected, we can find our confidence shaken, and we still may react with anger and self-doubt. Can you think to anything in your lives where that has occurred?

You see, there problem is that there are many things that work to tear away at our confidence. Here's a small list:

- Maybe you've been hurt too many times by those who build themselves up by tearing others down.
- Maybe you feel you simply don't have the opportunity to be heard in our busy world.
- Maybe you've found that the "venom of perfectionism" can make it impossible for you to live up to your self-imposed standards.
- Maybe you've suffered a big loss—like a job or a loved one—that can shake shake your confidence.
- Maybe you've never felt like you have succeeded in anything or that's what you have been told.
- Finally, we're all plagued by our inability to live up to God's Law. God gives us his law in the Ten Commandments and sums it up nicely... "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind and Love your neighbor as yourself."

We're all broken here. Perhaps we've been like the scribes and Pharisees in our Gospel who live with some false self-religion. Perhaps we give out of selfishness in order to benefit us. Perhaps the only ones we look out for is ourselves. Perhaps we don't even trust the Lord completely to take care of us. You see we can't live up to God's Law. Our sin convicts us, shattering any self-confidence build on ourselves.

Yet our text this morning talks about those who are confident, those who are eagerly waiting for Christ. There is a source of confidence in the face of any self-doubt or challenge in life. That source of ultimate confidence is rooted in the person (who he is) and work (What he has done) of Jesus Christ.

We can confidently live our Lives in eager expectation for Christ. As you may or may not we are at the third to last Sunday of Church Year so now we focus on this eager expectation for Christ, from now through Advent.

You see, once and for all, Christ has dealt with the root cause of our lack of confidence. The writer to the Hebrews compares a sacrifice carried out by a sinful human with a the perfect sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews writes: *<sup>24</sup> For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. <sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*<sup>1</sup>

As you just heard again, He entered not a temple made by humans, like the Old Testament Priests, but heaven itself, where He appears before God on our behalf. We also note and believe that Jesus is God Himself, so only one sacrifice, rather than repeated sacrifices was needed. Praise be to God that only one final sacrifice was needed. And that sacrifice was the Lamb of God.

The forgiveness, life, and salvation that Jesus accomplished were for all people. Hear again from Hebrews 9: *<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*<sup>2</sup> The word many, often times in the bible means all people. For example in Isaiah 53, we read: *<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*<sup>3</sup> He, Jesus, bore the sin of all people. Jesus Christ died for all people! He died to forgive all sins. NO sin is too grievous, no sin is too serious or

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Heb 9:24–26). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Heb 9:28). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Is 53:12). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

heinous, that it hasn't been covered by the sacrifice of Jesus. Christ forgave the people who killed Him. Christ forgives ALL SINS, from the little white lie to the taking of human life.

Jesus "put away" sin by sacrificing himself. We heard that earlier. That sin is "put away" means it has been dealt with; it's no longer a factor as God looks at us. The Greek word for "put away" means to remove. The better translation might be *But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.*<sup>4</sup> That's exactly what His sacrifice meant, the removal of your sin. This removal of your sins, is a source of real confidence, knowing that all those things, both big and small, that tear away at us, have been put away...they have been removed.

What confidence then we can experience, knowing Christ has dealt with it all! In Christ, God has promised to give us all things, so we need not doubt in ourselves. It's not about us and who we are...it's all about Jesus.

The widow in our Gospel reading saw that it was all about Jesus, that's how she could give her last two small coins, that was only a small fraction of a day's wage. In the Old Testament reading we met another widow, the widow of Zarephath, who was running out of food. She had faith in the promised Messiah and knew it wasn't about herself, but about Jesus and that's how she was able to follow the instructions of Elijah. In our introit this morning, we exclaimed, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever!" We know it's all about Jesus and that's how we could say that. We will pray that again near the end of Divine Service after we have eaten the meal together. We know it's all about Jesus, we know His mercies endure forever.

Since it's all about Jesus and not us, that is why we can eagerly wait for the Lord, living confidently, knowing Jesus has done it all...and Jesus has given it all.

What's your source for self-confidence? There certainly are psychological explanations for why some people seem to lack confidence and others have more confidence, and no doubt there's truth to some of those factors. But the message of our Epistle from Hebrews is that we can all live in confidence in Christ. We can confidently live our lives in eager expectation, because in Christ we can be confident of God's love and forgiveness. We can expect it because it is done.

IN Jesus Name. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

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<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Heb 9:24–26). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.