

‘I’VE GOT CONFIDENCE’

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Scriptures: Jeremiah 17:7; II Corinthians 7:4; II Thessalonians 3:4

Intro: Have you thought lately about the importance of something called
CONFIDENCE?

* *Confidence.....a firm belief in something; the fact of feeling certain; having an assurance (about something, or someone)*

* When it comes to what we attempt to do, in your life and in mine, confidence is such a huge factor!

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Illust: Confidence in my ability as an outfielder (start w/Calvary)

- Confidence, that started with a good throw in my first team practice, has helped me have some success as an outfielder ever since, motivating me to try to throw out one runner after another over all these years (right, Gordon Wetmore, Jr.?)

* But then, on the opposite end of things, there is the negative impact that a *lack of confidence* can create in our actions and activities

Illust: Back in 1971, the Pittsburgh Pirates played the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series (my bet with Mr. Cameron lost, and I’ve had a grudge against the Orioles ever since!)

One of the outstanding pitchers that helped the Pirates win the World Series – Steve Blass (3-hitter in Game 3; 4-hit victory in Game 7)

Not only a great pitcher in the World Series, but 19-8 (2.49 ERA) in 1972

But then, in the 1973 season, something went horribly wrong, and Steve Blass lost his greatness – he was so wild, he often threw behind batters; his record slipped to 3-9 (9.81 ERA); teammates said that he “looked relieved” when the manager would come to the mound to take him out of the game

* *Blass: “I never struggled at pitching before. I mean, I was never uncertain about whether or not I wanted to walk out to the mound. Now, it scares me..... You have no idea how frustrating it is. You don’t know where you’re going to throw the ball..... You’re helpless. Totally afraid and helpless.”*

A once great pitcher turned into a poor pitcher, and was never the same again.....and at the top of the list of factors was a loss of confidence (did you hear it in what he said?)

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* Confidence, or a lack thereof, has an amazing influence, don't you think?

* If you have confidence, it inspires you to feel that you **can** do lots of important things; and you become **more likely to do those things**, and do them well

* *But a lack of confidence can make you feel afraid, and hinder you from doing things that you would normally like to do*

* At this point, you may be wondering to yourself: “Why all this talk, in stories and in concepts, about **confidence**?”

* Well, consider again the situation that we find ourselves in at CCC – what do we call it again? Oh, yeah – I think it's called “the INTERIM”!

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* I suspect that a period of time like the interim can test a person's confidence in the local church he/she is part of.....and questions of confidence can arise.....questions like these:

1) Will my family and I be capably ministered to during the interim, in areas like crisis time in my personal life, and in the area of worship, and in the continual building of my faith, and in being able to enjoy a sufficient number of relationships in the church?

* It seems like, when guys like Don Lain and Larry Lain and their families are on the scene, one could have significantly less concern about the different areas I just spoke of. They did noteworthy ministry at crisis time, and during worship, and in faith building, and in relationships – but now they are in Ohio, and the church has only one pastoral staff member.....*and you may not be so confident about what will happen, regarding sufficient ministry for you and your family.*

* And then, there is another question of confidence that many of us may be mulling over:

2) How well will our church do during the Interim?

- * Will we be able to keep a good attendance, or will we lose people?
- * What will happen with our finances? Will we hold our ground, or will we get into deeper and deeper trouble?
- * What will morale be like over the next few months? Can we keep some enthusiasm, or will the fog of discouragement set in?

* Oh, and then there is one more question of confidence in the minds of some:

3) Will we get the right person for our next senior pastor?

We don't want to move too fast and get someone that really doesn't fit our church, and then before long have to start the search process all over again because the one we selected decided it would be best for them to move on. So, will we get the right senior pastor?

* I wonder if you knew that this many questions of confidence could arise, during a time like this, in our church history? Well, I suspect these questions are out there, trying to find residence in your minds – and if these questions of confidence find a place to live in you, *they will begin to **trouble you** about our church, and they will **spawn doubt** in your heart, and they will **keep you from taking important actions** needed to help this church remain healthy during the interim, and they will cause you to **negatively influence others at CCC** – hey, there really is a lot at stake, regarding these questions of confidence, isn't there?*

* So, what are we to do about this all-important matter of confidence (and especially, confidence during the interim)?

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- * Well, I want to lend you some hope today, and let you know, based on some things I've been considering recently, and based on what the Bible tells us, **that we can have confidence during the interim.** In fact, I will go out on a limb and say that there are three sources of confidence that I personally will trust in during the interim – and these sources of confidence make me feel that:
 - * Families will be capably ministered to during the interim, and.....
 - * Our church will do well and be healthy during the interim, and.....
 - * We will be able to choose an excellent next senior pastor, during the interim, that will help us experience some of our best days ever as a church

- * I'm going to share these three sources of confidence with you, and then I am going to ask you to join me out on the limb I spoke of earlier, as we look forward, with confidence, to some great times we can rejoice over during the interim

- * **And what are these three sources of confidence that I would ask you to take hold of during the interim?**

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1) The first source of confidence I have, that I would like to ask you to take hold of, is confidence in the congregation.

- a. You know, it's interesting to note the number of times in the New Testament in which Paul, for example, speaks of a confidence that he has in a local group of believers, a church.
 - * One example: From II Corinthians 7:16, where Paul says to the Corinthian church, "I am glad I can have confidence in you."
 - * Another example: From II Thessalonians 3:4 – "We have confidence, in the Lord, that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command."
- b. I'd like to borrow a page from Paul's book of confidence in a local church, and apply that confidence to you, **and affirm to you today that I have great confidence in you, as a church.**
 - * And what is that confidence based on? Well, among other things, I have seen you as a church rise up to do well during important occasions.

- * I've seen you pour out hour after hour of willing work as we cleared a field full of thorny trees, and worked together to add needed labor to the completion of the **new church facility** that we currently occupy.
 - * I've seen you rise up to Pastor Don Lain's challenge, during our first anniversary in this new facility, to take up an **offering** for the purpose of ministering to others (and you raised over \$ 40K)
 - * And, even recently, I saw you invest many nights in a row, and hour after hour behind the scenes, to produce an outstanding **VBS**, so that kids can get to know Jesus
- * You, the Christ Community Church family, know how to rise to important occasions – and I would submit to you that the interim is an important occasion
- * And what would we ask you to do, specifically, to rise to this important occasion? The Church Board, a couple of Monday nights ago, produced this list of specific things you can do to help during the interim (**this is your interim “job description”**):
- 1) Attend church and S.S. faithfully during the interim
 - *Don't miss a Sunday, if you can help it at all*
 - 2) Keep on being faithful in giving your tithes and offerings
 - *I promise to say as little as possible about financial needs during the interim, if you promise to keep on tithing*
 - 3) Participate fully in the church's activities and ministries
 - *Because the Lain families were so thoroughly involved in so many ministries, we need your help more than ever to fill those vacant slots, and help in other ministry needs*
 - *A good guideline: Get involved in at least one ministry in the church, to pour out your time and efforts in that area*

4) Keep on bringing your friends to church

- *God is going to be at work in the days to come, and you want to afford them the opportunity to see Him at work, in their lives especially as well as the lives of others*

5) Pray for your church now more than you ever have before!

- *If you haven't done so already, get involved in some organized prayer efforts (Corp. Prayer; Sunday morning prayer; Prayer Triplets; prayer in your classes & Care Groups)*

- *Pray for your church each day (6 p.m., for one minute!)*

* Hey! I've got confidence in you, the congregation, that you can rise up to meet the challenge of the interim, through attendance, giving, ministry, bringing friends, and prayer

* Are you up to the challenge? [Response]

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2) The second source of confidence I have, that I would like to ask you to take hold of, is confidence in your church leaders.

a. You know, I have been part of this church now for almost 4 years. And if someone were to ask me what 3 things I value most from those 4 years, well, one of those things would have to be the tremendous times I have been able to experience with your church leaders.

b. Illust: For example, it's been a tremendous privilege to be part of ministry with Joe Call. Three years ago, or so, our church started a ministry to new Christians (and God has given this church quite a few new Christians over the years). I started out to conduct this ministry on my own, but then I got to know Joe through a CLASS 301 on Christian service, and it became evident that the Lord had built a love for new Christians into Joe, and Joe needed to be involved in this new Christian ministry.

Joe has been more than willing to be involved, and has done everything I've asked him to do in conducting classes, and conducting Bible studies and the N & G Care Group, and so much more. I think he had a greater ministry to the people of this group than I have now, but that's okay by me! Great job, Joe!

- c. And Joe is just *one* example of the terrific leaders we have here at our church. I want to reintroduce them to you now.

[Read list, and intro leaders as they continue to stand]

*** To you church leaders, I echo Paul's words in II Corinthians 7:4 – "I have great confidence in you, I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged....."**

- * Well, there is one more source of confidence that I haven't mentioned yet.....can you guess what that source is?

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3. The third source of confidence I have, that I would like to ask you to take hold of, is really the supreme source of confidence....and that source is God Himself.

- a. Did you know that there are at least 18 verses in the NIV Bible that offer a direct connection between the word "confidence" and God Himself? This suggests that, over and over again, the Bible calls you and I to have confidence in God! [Try it 18 ways?]

* *One example: Jeremiah 17:7-8 [Read it]*

- b. This type of confidence in God comes in really handy during a tenuous time like an interim.....comes in really handy if you are the only remaining pastoral staff person given the responsibility of helping a church of 300-400 people run well while a new senior pastor is being sought!

* And I am glad to report that I believe God has given me several things we can trust Him for, and be confident about, during the interim:

- 1) He's going to be doing some great things during the Interim (salvations, healings, great answers to prayer to celebrate, etc.)
- 2) He is going to be drawing people to Himself (people who don't have a relationship with Him yet)
- 3) He is already helping us formulate plans for a good number of "Special Days" on Sundays this Fall (more details on that later!)
- 4) That we can trust Him to make the Interim a time of increase at our church.
- 5) That we won't have to settle for a "circle the wagons" mindset, and just sit around waiting for the new senior pastor to arrive (hence, we can adopt a slogan for the Interim at CCC, based on what God will do for us:
"DON'T JUST SURVIVE.....THRIVE!")

*And as we watch God do these things in the months to come, we can sing along with Christian musician Andrae Crouch,
*"I've got confidence. God is gonna see me through!
 No matter what the case may be,
 I know He's gonna fix it for me!"*

*And our job will be to hang our congregational hats on the promise found in Hebrews 4:16 – *"Let us then approach the throne of grace (presence of God) with **confidence**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

*So, I suggest to you that we have plenty of reasons to be confident, as a church, during the Interim.....and what are those sources of confidence again?:

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1. Confidence in the Congregation
2. Confidence in the church leaders
3. Confidence in God Himself

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CCC can have confidence during the interim!

- Will you choose to have CONFIDENCE?
- Let's move out together to NOT JUST SURVIVIE, BUT THRIVE!