

Confidence Before the Father

1 John #8

1 John 3:19-24

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. Let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

People of God, When a man's an empty kettle. He should be on his mettle. And yet I'm torn apart. Just because I'm presuming. That I could be a human. If I only had a heart. Oh yes, I'd unravel every riddle. For every individdle. In trouble or in pain. With the thoughts I'd be thinking. I could be another Lincoln. If I only had a brain. Yeh, it's sad, believe me, Missy. When you're born to be a sissy. Without the vim and verve. But I could show my prowess, be a lion not a mou-ess. If I only had the nerve.

There's a reason the Wizard of Oz first premiered on the Silver Screen 85 years ago but still makes its way to the small screens in our living rooms. That reason is this: It's one thing to sing about whiling away for hours consulting with the flowers if you only had a brain; it's one thing to sing about being tender, being gentle, and being awful sentimental if you only had a heart; and it's one thing to sing about showing the dinosaur who's king around the forest if you only had the nerve. But it is quite another thing to boldly approach the throne of the Wizard with full confidence and full assurance and full boldness to ask Him, without a scintilla of doublemindedness, to grant something that only He can grant.

Church, on this Father's Day, I'm proud to announce that 1 John 3:19-24 is one of the most applicable passages of the book to our lives. It tells us one of the most important benefits of our salvation. It is this: if our hearts do not condemn us, we can have full confidence before the throne of God the Father and expect our prayers to be answered. That's because our Father is good and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

If you've gone to Jesus repeatedly and asked of Him something that only He can grant and you feel like those prayers are bouncing off the floor of heaven, then perhaps the reason is because you lack something in those prayers that you haven't thought much about. You lack confidence before God. My objective today is to inform you how to find that confidence before Him. Please turn with me to 1 John 3:19-24.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Confidence Before God Requires:

1. A Heart Condition (20-22a)

- **The Most Feared Reaction from Players on a Playing Field:** (1) Isn't watching the coach yell and scream from the sideline or dugout. (2). It's the coach shaking his head in disapproval or disappointment over something foolish. (3) It's hard to ask to coach to keep you in the game when you know in your heart there's a problem.
- **Confidence Before God Has a Condition:** (1) The condition is seen in v20-21 because both verses revolve around three words that occur in both verses: (1) "If" – that's a conditional conjunction where two outcomes are possible. (2) "Hearts" – when you see "heart" in the NT, it refers to one's whole being. (3) "Condemn" – In v 20, condemnation is you shaking your head in disappointment at yourself. For someone like that, there's only one way to cure it: "God is greater than our hearts." In 21, for someone whose heart doesn't condemn them, confidence before God is the result. (4) To see how both of these work, look no further than the Book of Joshua. God told Joshua to be strong, courageous, and confident. He was until Israel's disobedience caused them to be defeated at Ai and the condemnation came. But when they were given a second opportunity and operated according to God's instructions, the confidence before Him returned. And Israel took the land.
- **Confidence Before God Has a Reward:** (1) In v20-21, John tells us "if" our "hearts" do not "condemn," we have confidence before God (boldness) and "receive from him anything we ask." That's the reward. In other words, when there is no seared conscience, there is boldness before God and there are answers. (2) Look no further than the Parable of the Persistent Widow. She went to an unjust judge and said: "grant me justice against my adversary." He's didn't at first, but she wouldn't let it go until he granted her what she wished.
- **App:** Jesus isn't an unjust judge. He's a just one. When our hearts are free – not guilt ridden – we have confidence before – that leads to boldness in our prayers – And leads to our prayers being answered.

2. An Applause Condition (22b)

- **Different Kinds of Claps:** (1) When my kids were in preschool, they learned different kind of claps. There's nothing more satisfying than knowing your preschool tuition is producing a first-class education. (2) They learned the fireworks clap, the money clap, and the rodeo clap. (3) One of the best ways to have confidence before God is to know your life's goal is to hear the applause of heaven.
- **Receiving from God and Obeying Are Connected:** (1) We see this in v22. The conjunction "because" gives us two reasons why we receive. (2) The first is "because we keep his commands." (3) Do you remember the Prayer of Jabez? Jabez was a righteous man. But his name means "pain." Pain was all he had known. So, he said, "Oh that you would bless me, enlarge my territory. Let your hand be with me. Let it keep me from harm and pain." And God granted his request? Why? Obedience.
- **Receiving from God and Doing What Pleases Him Are Connected:** (1) We also receive "because" (v22) we do what pleases him. This is a great image in the language of the NT. It is the idea of the Lord rising to his feet and applauding. (2) There are two people in the Bible who never died: Enoch and Elijah. Both wanted people to know the Lord, to walk with him, and miss the coming judgment. Both lived to make stand and applaud when others would not. And they received from God the blessing of not tasting death.
- **App:** God honors bold prayers because bold prayers honor God. And the best way to have bold prayers is to obey him like Jabez and please him like Enoch and Elijah.

3. A Name Condition (v23a)

- **Names Above All Names:** (1) In every field, there is a name that stands above over names. (2) In the shoe world, it's Nike. In the cowboy boots world, it is Tony Lama. In the restaurant world, it is the Waffle House. (3) But in the Christian world, it is the name above every other name. It is the name Jesus.
- **It's an Emphatic Command:** (1) In v23, John says "this is the command... to believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ." Put the word "should" in front of "believe" and you have the idea. Surely, I tell you, you should believe because it has a definite impact on with regard to confidence. (2) It had a definite impact on the Philippians: "that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess" (Phil 2:10-11)
- **It's a Yokeless Command:** (1) Jesus said: "my commands are not burdensome." He's right. This command is liberating. (2) Abba, Adonai, Alpha and Omega, Ancient of Days, El Elyon (The God Most High), El Olam (The Everlasting God), El Shaddai (God Almighty), Jehovah Jireh (The Lord our Provider); Jehovah Nissi (the Lord our Banner); Jehovah Rapha (The Lord our Healer); Jehovah Ma'on (The Lord our Dwelling Place).
- **App:** Your name is a strong and mighty tower. Your name is a shelter like no other. Your name, let the nations sing it louder. For nothing has the power to save. But your name." Pray the names of God and watch your boldness and confidence before Him grow.

4. A Spirit Condition (23b-24)

- **Coins:** (1) Coins for currency are almost as old as time itself. (2) The reason is because each denomination has the same image for heads as it does tails. (3) For the Christian, the heads side is a loving spirit. And the tails side is being Spirit led. (4) Those two images are priceless when it comes to having confidence before God.
- **A Loving Spirit:** (1) It's the last phrase of v23 and connected to "this is the command." That's important because "believe in the name" and "love one another" form one command here, not two. To believe in the name is to love one another/To love one another is to believe in the name. (2) "By this all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:35)
- **Spirit Led:** (1) How do we know Jesus lives inside? We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (2) It's not a spirit of condemnation. It's a spirit of freedom. It's not a spirit of timidity. It's a spirit of boldness. It's not a spirit of timidity. It's a spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind. It's not a spirit of the world defined by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of live. It's a spirit set apart: It's the 3rd person of the Trinity. That Spirit is a "He." He is the spirit inside who intercedes for us before the Father when we cannot. He is our Jehovah Ma'on. He is our dwelling place.
- **App:** "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Be not afraid. Do not be discouraged. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Have confidence before Him. And when you have that confidence before Him, expect to receive answers from the name above every name: the Lord Jesus Christ.