

Convinced?

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, May 26, 2019

Main Theme – The apostle Paul was convinced of certain truths and realities – are we convinced?

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Regular Events**
 - Potluck Supper – Taking Place TODAY Following – Morning Service
 - Men’s Ministry – Taking Place Saturday, June 8, from 9–10:30am
 - Women’s Min – Taking Place Tuesday, June 11, from 6:30–8pm
- **Special Events**
 - Royalty’s 1st Birthday Party – Open to All (Post-Service – Sunday, June 2)
 - Teen Challenge Sunday – Scheduled for Sunday, June 30 (Whole Service)

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work

-Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

MEMORIAL DAY PRESENTATION

Special Presentation – Memorial Day is MORE than an opportunity to enjoy a three-day weekend. This holiday provides for us the annual opportunity to pay remember and pay tribute to fallen soldiers. Ron Phelps is a man who is passionate about such remembrances. I want to INVITE him to share at this time. Please consider his remarks this morning.

POST – I INVITE you all to join us for tomorrow’s Memorial Day observances, starting here in South Barre at 9am and continuing uptown at Noon. May God bless this Memorial Day weekend, and may He bless this nation!

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN’S CHURCH**
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INTRODUCTION

As always it is wonderful to see you. I do look forward to these moments of corporate worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what the Lord has for you today. Please have your Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes (**SLIDE**).

SETTING THE STAGE

May the Lord BLESS you all on this Memorial Day weekend! Though Memorial Day is a holiday RICH with themes that I could touch upon this morning (e.g., courage, service, sacrifice, etc.), I have felt particularly LED to offer the following STANDALONE message through recent times of prayer and study.

Thus, may we have ears to hear what the Lord is saying in this hour.

NOTE – The apostle Paul was both a PROLIFIC biblical AUTHOR and a PILLAR of the Early Church. For nearly two-thousand years, Christians have been informed by his inspired writings and impacted by the legacy of his Christ-like example. Those who know me know of my REGARD for this figure and his works (much of the NT).

-It is my joy to touch upon them again this morning!

FYI – There is MUCH that we could note re: the life of Paul (e.g., a man of insight/revelation; tirelessness in ministry; persistent despite opposition; great courage, etc.). However, this morning I want to hone in on ONE facet of the life/ministry of the apostle Paul...

KEY – Paul was a man of faith who was CONVINCED of abiding spiritual truths. Through his writings we discover that there were realities Paul was completely SURE/CERTAIN of (i.e., CONVICTIONS that were FOUNDATIONAL to his life and living). And you don't have to take my word for it. We can consider HIS own words (and we will today).

Allow me the opportunity to cite a few EXAMPLES (3) from his writings. As we read – NOTE those things that Paul was convinced of.

LET'S DELVE IN...

TO THE WORD PT. 1

NOTE – The FIRST text I want to consider is a timeless text from the Book of Romans (chapter 8).

Romans 8:35, 37–39 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am **convinced** [i.e., persuaded; sure and certain] that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

KEY – The apostle Paul was CONVINCED of the LOVE of God. He recognized that the love of God in Christ was a CONSTANT that was unaffected by any element of creation. i.e., The love of God TRANSCENDED earthly difficulties/circumstances, death, life, spiritual powers, time, earthly or spiritual forces, location, emotional condition, and more.

NOTE – And this was NOT simply a truth that Paul intellectually assented to or mentally recognized. This was a REALITY he had come to know in the deepest fibers of his being as he EXPERIENCED hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, the sword, matters of death/life, spiritual opposition, earthly hostility, and beyond!

-Consider his RESUME...

2 Corinthians 11:23b–28

[Comparing himself to the false teachers who had diminished his apostleship] – I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

KEY – And despite all of this he was CONVINCED of the following – nothing was able to separate him from the love of God that was made manifest in and through Christ Jesus – an ABIDING reality!

TO THE WORD PT. 2

NOTE – The SECOND text I want to consider is a text from the Book of 2 Corinthians (chapter 5).

2 Corinthians 5:11, 14–15 (Emphasis Mine)

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are **convinced** [i.e., persuaded; sure and certain] that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

KEY – Paul was CONVINCED that Christ had GIVEN Himself for the WHOLE of humanity. Thus, the offer of forgiveness, peace with God, life abundant and eternal was for ALL. This is highly significant:

- Christ died for both men and women
- Christ died for both the Jew and Gentile
- Christ died for both the old and the young
- Christ died for both the rich and the poor
- Christ died for both powerless/powerful
- Christ died for the 'best and the worst'

KEY – This final point was particularly meaningful to the apostle Paul (PERSONALLY):

1 Timothy 1:15

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

NOTE – And it was this conviction (deeply-held belief) that Christ died for all that motivated him:

2 Corinthians 5:14

14 For Christ's love compels [i.e., drives and motivates] us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

NOTE – And this act of sacrifice should be met w/ a RECIPROCAL self-denial by the believer...

2 Corinthians 5:15

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

TO THE WORD PT. 3

NOTE – The THIRD text I want to consider is a text from the Book of 2 Timothy (chapter 1) [FINAL]
FYI – Please note we are going to go a bit DEEP on this particular text (brief). Follow along closely...

2 Timothy 1:9–12 (Emphasis Mine)

9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am **convinced** [i.e., persuaded; sure and certain] that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

KEY – Let's ZERO-IN ON verse 12 in particular:

2 Timothy 1:12 (Emphasis Mine)

12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am **convinced** that he is able to **guard what I have entrusted to him until that day**.

FYI – Something STRANGE takes place when you look at this in other English translations (ESV):

2 Timothy 1:12 (ESV)

12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am **convinced** that he is able to **guard until that day what has been entrusted to me**.

Q. Why are the translations SO different (seemingly OPPOSITE)?

A. They are trying to capture the Greek underpinnings [lit. “my deposit”]

2 Timothy 1:12 (NIV w/ Greek Underpinning – Reflected in Some English Translations)

12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard **MY DEPOSIT** until that day.

FYI – A “deposit” is literally that which is entrusted to another – heart of the interpretive issue...

1) IF Paul used “my deposit” to mean “that which I have entrusted to God” (i.e., his faith, life and immortal soul) – it would mean that he was CONVINCED that God was FAITHFUL and would secure him a HOPE beyond death.

2) IF Paul used “my deposit” to mean “that which God has entrusted to/deposited in me” (i.e., his divine call/mission) – it would mean that he was CONVINCED in God's POWER to SUSTAIN him in that work until the mission was complete (despite challenge and affliction).

FYI – Both are completely VALID ways of translating/interpreting this Greek phrase!

NOTE – Theologians/translators ARGUE as to which is the BETTER interpretation. Yet, since BOTH speak to deep spiritual truths that Paul touched upon elsewhere, I am inclined to simply receive the truths of BOTH. Namely...

A) He was convinced that God was faithful and would secure a hope/life beyond death

AND...

B) He was convinced that God was able and would sustain Him in God's divine mandate

SUMMATIONS

Thus, with a small handful of verses we come to understand the CONVICTIONS of Paul...

- 1)** He was convinced of God's unceasing/abiding love
- 2)** He was convinced that Christ died for the whole of humanity
- 3)** He was convinced of God's promise to provide a hope beyond death
- 4)** He was convinced of God's power to sustain in His divine mandate and call

A KEY QUESTION

KEY – In light of all that I have just said CONSIDER the following (hear me):

Q. What are we convinced of?

Q. What are we sure & certain of?

Q. What are your imm. convictions?

NOTE – There is BENEFIT in considering the convictions of Paul and coming to understand his belief system. But it is ALSO necessary to PERSONALIZE this matter and INVENTORY your convictions!

-So, I ask YOU the probing (potentially painful questions):

Q. What are YOU convinced of?

KEY – I want to briefly cover a host of topics worthy of some reflection/response. May my words be like good SEED that finds fertile SOIL – bringing forth a mighty spiritual HARVEST that pleases our Lord!

CONSIDERATIONS

1) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED OF GOD'S LOVE?

Q. To what degree can you read John 3:16...

John 3:16 (NIV)

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

...In the following way and believe it to be true?

For God so loved ME that he gave his one and only Son, that I might believe and find eternal life.

2) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THERE IS FORGIVENESS/PARDON?

Isaiah 1:18

18 "Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the Lord.

"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.

3) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED OF A HOPE BEYOND DEATH?

John 14:2-3

2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

4) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THE LORD IS GOOD?

Psalms 145:9

9 The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.

5) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD HEARS YOU WHEN YOU CALL?

1 Peter 3:12

12 . . . The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.

6) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT HE IS PRESENT/WITH YOU?

Isaiah 43:2

2 When you pass through the waters,
 I will be with you;
 and when you pass through the rivers,
 they will not sweep over you.
 When you walk through the fire,
 you will not be burned;
 the flames will not set you ablaze.

7) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD CAN CHANGE YOU?

John 8:36

36 . . . if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

8) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD CAN CHANGE WORLD THROUGH YOU?

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD HAS A DIVINE PURPOSE FOR YOU?

Jeremiah 29:11

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

10) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU?

Matthew 6:31–33

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

11) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD WILL GUIDE/LEAD YOU?

Proverbs 3:5–6

T5 rust in the Lord with all your heart
 and lean not on your own understanding;
 6 in all your ways submit to him,
 and he will make your paths straight.

12) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD WILL GRANT NECESSARY WISDOM?

James 1:5

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

13) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD FIGHTS/ADVOCATES FOR YOU?

1 Samuel 17:47

47 . . . The battle is the Lord's

14) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD IS GREATER THAN YOUR ENEMY?

1 John 4:4

4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Isaiah 54:17

17 No weapon forged against you will prevail,
and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.

15) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN YOUR LIFE/LIVING?

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

16) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD GIVES STRENGTH/RENEWAL?

Isaiah 40:29–31

29 He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
30 Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
31 but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

17) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THERE IS PEACE/COMFORT IN HIM?

Psalms 34:18

18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

18) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT?

2 Peter 1:3

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

CONCLUSIONS PT. 1

As I move to a CLOSE...

NOTE – Your RESPONSE to these questions—i.e., what you are convinced of—is vital AS IT REVEALS to the state of your FAITH (that which is always CENTRAL). Why?

Hebrews 11:6a

6 . . . without faith it is impossible to please God . . .

KEY – Your RESPONSES—considering your convictions—reveals where you are WEAK, where you are STRONG, and where you can STRATEGICALLY EXERCISE your FAITH. Remember that your faith is like a MUSCLE – it must be stretched/worked if it is to GROW!

-LEARN to live your life in light of your convictions/through the lens of faith → Growth/Promotion!

NOTE – If YOU are to become the PERSON God has called you to be—and if WE are to become the BODY He has called us to be—we must become a people of deep CONVICTION (i.e., convinced, persuaded, sure and certain of abiding TRUTHS)!

CONCLUSIONS PT. 2

I believe there is a PROPHETIC-EDGE to this message:

FALL – Go deeper in preparation for what God wants to do.

SPRING – This is a time for raised expectation and anticipation.

SUMMER – What are you convinced of? Areas of active assurance.

KEY – HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD SO WE CAN MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER...

...Remembering that individual breakthrough brings forth corporate breakthrough!