



PSALM EMOJIS (Week 5) - Confidence

Opening Prayer

Our Father in heaven, we have come to worship you, to adore you, to seek you, to ask you to inhabit our praises. Please come down, as it were, and manifest Your presence in this, Your church. Please visit us by Your Spirit. You are the Lord our Maker, and we are the people of your pasture, the sheep of Your hand (Ps. 96:6-7)

Remember Your promise, O Spirit of Christ, to be present in the midst of Your worshipping people when two or more are gathered in Your name. Grant us the joy of Your fellowship; speak to us through Your Word;

and be blessed by our prayer and adoration (Ps. 22:3; 144:5; Mt. 18:20); even as we pray as our Lord taught us to pray...

Worship

Welcome & Offering Prayer:

To all who are weary and need rest. To all who mourn and long for comfort. To all who feel worthless and wonder if God cares. To all who fail and desire strength. To all who sin and need a Savior. This church opens wide her doors with a welcome from Jesus Christ, the Ally of His enemies, the Defender of the guilty, the Justifier of the inexcusable, the Friend of sinners. Welcome.

Last Song

Dismiss Children

Prayer before Sermon

Our Lord Jesus, on this Lord's Day, your day, we confess as we open Your word that You are Jesus (God in the flesh), we confess that You are the Christ (the Messiah, the yes to every promise of God), and we confess that You are the Lord, the God of both covenants, old and new. Jesus — Christ — Lord, may we hear Your Spirit speak to us this day and may

we each understand more clearly the fullness of Your name.

What gives you confidence? Now, that's a rather open-ended question, I realize. Most of us, when we think of confidence generally think of self-confidence, but what I want you to consider this morning is what gives you self-confidence before God? What gives you confidence that He hears you? What gives you confidence that He cares? What gives you confidence that He is for you? What gives you confidence that church helps? What gives you confidence that it doesn't help? What gives you confidence before God?

Sadly, I would say the vast majority of both Christians and non-Christians get their confidence from their behavior. When we feel like we're doing exceptionally well, morally speaking, we tend to have confidence before God. When we're not doing so well, we shrink away.

When we are doing well morally, we tend to judge others by comparing them to ourselves. That is why self-righteousness is so isolating, because it communicates, "I am better than you. I am morally superior. And I

can tell because I just compared myself to you.” There’s no common ground with that kind of thinking. It doesn’t invite others into the common ground of being a sinner before a holy God.

This is also a problem for non-Christians who think God will accept them because they’re “a good person.” And that is always comparatively speaking. They see themselves as morally superior to some or at least no worse than others, somehow believing God will judge us comparatively.

But what if you were told that God isn’t going to judge you by comparing you to others? Would that make you less confident about facing God in death? What if God compares you only to His standard?

Today, we’re going to look at where our confidence should come from...

Psalm 46

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song.

46 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Refuge: shelter, place of safety, haven, retreat, hiding place. A place we flee to when we’re in trouble. Is that God to you? When you are in trouble do you first run to the Lord in prayer? If not, it’s probably because you have no confidence that He’ll actually help you, that He will give you strength.

Strength: physical power or energy. God gives us strength and energy through the power of the Holy Spirit. It’s supernatural help. It can be an internal strength to say yes to God. It can be an internal strength to say no. It can be an internal strength to continue on when we know we can’t move forward on our own.

So, when we run to him for shelter from whatever it is we’re facing, He then gives us strength (supernatural power) to face whatever it is we have to face.

And the psalmist says God is a very present help — right now. So, if you need a refuge or you need spiritual strength, He’s a very present help right now.

The irony is this. We run to God because we can’t face some fear and in the shelter of His

care He gives us the strength to face that very fear.

This is why Psalm 23 is one of the most famous Psalms in the world and it happens to be a Psalm of Confidence.

Psalm 23

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;

Because He is with us...

Psalm 46

2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

That sounds like an earthquake to me. The ground beneath your feet is moving. The earth is opening up like some dry dusty mouth trying to swallow you.

The psalmist is declaring that even in the midst of an earthquake, no big deal — we can have complete confidence that God is

with us. God is at our side. It's His earth. Who do you think's doing the quaking?

Maybe “selah” means “run to the doorway.”

This is why children don't have to fear thunderstorms, because the God who is causing the crashing thunder is the same God who is by our side.

Revelation 20:11

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

This is a picture of the earth and sky wanting to flee from the presence of God, who is the Lord of the earth and sky. God is greater than His creation and so should be feared more than even an earthquake.

But this should give us confidence when we realize that what's astounding about this God with this power is that He wants to help us.

Psalm 46

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

This is the power that God wants to help us with. The Holy Spirit in Scripture is compared to streams of living water that spill out from inside of us. And a church where the Holy Spirit is active and working will be a church of glad people. This is saying that the people of God, the church, is where God makes His habitation. It's where God hangs out.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.

God will help the church when morning dawns. That means everyday. If there is a tomorrow, God will be there. And if the day dawns again, He will be there the next day. And the next day and the next and the next and the next.

But most of us don't draw near to God with such confidence. Why? Because we tend to base our confidence before God on how well we have measured up over the past few days.

If we think we've lived up to our pet list of Christian rules and regulations, then we have confidence. If we feel like we've failed in living as we believe we should be living, we don't have confidence. But when we turn to

the book of Hebrews, the writer here doesn't seem to have behavioral categories at all. He just says, "Brothers, we have confidence."

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

When the nail pierced through the flesh of Jesus and dug into the cross, this opened the way for us to always come before God with confidence.

Before the death of Christ, there was a thick curtain between us and God. This curtain of human sin had no opening and it blocked the presence of God from us. Human goodness could not tear it or break it or find a way into the presence of God behind this curtain. But the pierced flesh of Christ tore this curtain wide open for us to enter into a true relationship with Almighty God.

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,

That means that we have absolute confidence that the death of Christ in our

place brings us into a favorable relationship with God.

with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

That's why you don't have to waver, that's why you can maintain your confidence — because He who promised is faithful.

Will He forgive us because Christ died in our place? Yes.

Will He always forgive us because Christ died in our place? Yes.

Will sin ever cause us to lose our place as His children? No.

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

God will help her when morning dawns.

“The work of Christ frees us to gather not as those who have our lives together but as those who don't.” (Dan Cruver)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone. It may be that Christians, notwithstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their...service, may still be left to their loneliness. The final breakthrough to fellowship does not occur, because though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among them. So we remain alone with our sin, living lies and hypocrisy. The fact is we are sinners. But it is the grace of the Gospel, which is so hard for the pious to understand, that it confronts us with the truth and says: You are a sinner, a great desperate sinner; now come as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you... He does not want anything from you, a sacrifice, a work; He wants you alone. God has come to save the sinner.” (Life Together)

Next week, we will cover why God came to save sinners. We know that He did. Why did He?

It's interesting how this Psalm sets-up two worst case scenarios of fear. What do you fear most in life? Earthquakes? Political unrest? Bears?

Psalm 46

6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

**Remember that earthquake? Nothing.
Political turmoil? Forget about it.**

7 The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Maybe the circumstances of your life feels like an earthquake that is going to swallow you up? He says, "God is with you and He will help." Are you afraid another nation is going to overpower us? He says, "Don't fear. God is with you. He's the God of the earth and sky and the God of princes and kings."

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.

The psalmist is asking us to look at the desolations that God has brought.

Desolation: the condition of a place or thing that has been so severely damaged that it is no longer suitable for people to use or to live in. We still use the phrase "an act of God," or at least insurance companies do. The Psalmist is telling us to look at these acts of God and realize however frightening we find them, the God who brings these desolations is at our side.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
10 "Be still, and know that I am God.

That's a great word for politicians: shut up. Any power you have has been given to you from above. (And all I can say to that is, "God must be disciplining this country.")

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"
11 The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

He is our refuge. He is our strength. He is our very present help in trouble. No one else. No man. No woman. No system. Nothing. Whom do we have to fear? This is our great confidence — the God we serve is our very present help.

It has been said, “Psalm 23 captures what life feels like and looks like when Jesus Christ puts his hand on your shoulder.” So, let’s contrast life with Christ and life without Christ as David Powlison has written an antipsalm 23. Let’s compare the two of them.

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**I’m on my own.
No one looks out for me or protects me.
I experience a continual sense of need. Nothing’s quite right.**

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

**I’m always restless. I’m easily frustrated and often disappointed.
It’s a jungle — I feel overwhelmed. It’s a desert — I’m thirsty.**

3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

My soul feels broken, twisted, and stuck. I can’t fix myself.

**I stumble down some dark paths.
Still, I insist: I want to do what I want, when I want,
how I want.**

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

**But life’s confusing. Why don’t things ever really work out?
I’m haunted by emptiness and futility — shadows of death.
I fear the big hurt and final loss.
Death is waiting for me at the end of every road,
but I’d rather not think about that.
I spend my life protecting myself. Bad things can happen.
I find no lasting comfort.**

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

**I’m alone ... facing everything that could hurt me.
Are my friends really friends?
Other people use me for their own ends.
I can’t really trust anyone. No one has my back.
No one is really for me — except me.
And I’m so much all about ME, sometimes it’s sickening.
I belong to no one except myself.**

My cup is never quite full enough. I'm left empty.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

**Disappointment follows me all the days of my life.
Will I just be obliterated into nothingness?
Will I be alone forever, homeless, free-falling into
void?
Sartre said, "Hell is other people."
I have to add, "Hell is also myself."
It's a living death,
and then I die.**

Prayer of Confession:

**O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we
confess and acknowledge sincerely before
your holy majesty that we are poor sinners,
conceived and born in iniquity and
corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any
good as you measure goodness in light of
Christ, and that in our depravity we transgress
your holy commandments without end or
ceasing. We have purchased for ourselves,
through your righteous judgment, our ruin
and condemnation. Nevertheless, O Lord, we
are grieved that we have offended you; and
we condemn ourselves and our sins with true
repentance, asking for your grace to relieve**

**our distress. O God and Father most gracious
and full of compassion, have mercy on us in
the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
And as you blot out our sins and stains
because of Christ, magnify and increase in us
day by day the grace of the Holy Spirit; that
as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with
all our heart, we may be moved by that
sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance
in us and producing in us the fruits of
righteousness and love which are pleasing to
you. We ask that you do all this through our
Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Psalm 52

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech."

52 Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man?

The steadfast love of God endures all the day.

2 Your tongue plots destruction,

like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

3 You love evil more than good,

and lying more than speaking what is right. Selah

4 You love all words that devour,

O deceitful tongue.

5 But God will break you down forever;

he will snatch and tear you from your tent;

he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah

6 The righteous shall see and fear,

and shall laugh at him, saying,

7 "See the man who would not make

God his refuge,

but trusted in the abundance of his riches

and sought refuge in his own destruction!"

8 But I am like a green olive tree

in the house of God.

I trust in the steadfast love of God

forever and ever.

9 I will thank you forever,

because you have done it.

I will wait for your name, for it is good,

in the presence of the godly.

Psalm 16

A Miktam of David.

16 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;

I have no good apart from you."

3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,

in whom is all my delight.

4 The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;

their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out

or take their names on my lips.

5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;

you hold my lot.

6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;

in the night also my heart instructs me.

8 I have set the Lord always before me;

because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices;

my flesh also dwells secure.

10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,

or let your holy one see corruption.

11 You make known to me the path of life;

in your presence there is fullness of joy;

at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.