

Convinced 2024 Pt. 3

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, October 6, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us. Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time.

SETTING THE STAGE

NOTE 1 – In recent weeks we noted that St. Paul was convinced of a series of realities amidst his life and ministry:

1) Paul Was Convinced of the Love of Christ

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** 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.

2) Paul Was Convinced that Christ Died for All

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** 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.

3) Paul Was Convinced of Life Eternal and/or Enablement for Life and Ministry

2 Timothy 1:12

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**.

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**.

NOTE 2 – These translations reflect the underlying Greek (“my deposit”). Both are allowable and reflect truth(s).

A KEY QUESTION

Q. Yet what are we convinced of? What convictions do we live by?

NOTE 1 – There is real benefit in considering the convictions of Paul and coming to understand his belief system. Yet it is also necessary to personalize matters and contend with your personal, underlying convictions in Christ.

NOTE 2 – We pondered the following questions last Sunday morning, exploring our undergirding belief system:

- Q1. To what degree are we convinced of God's love?**
- Q2. To what degree are we convinced that we are forgiven?**
- Q3. To what degree are we convinced of a hope beyond death?**
- Q4. To what degree are we convinced that the Lord is good?**

CONSIDERATIONS

1) 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.

ILL – While crossing the Atlantic on an ocean liner, F.B. Meyer was asked to address the first class passengers. At the captain's request he spoke on "Answered Prayer." An agnostic who was present at the service was asked by his friends, "What did you think of Dr. Meyer's sermon?" He answered, "I didn't believe a word of it." That afternoon Meyer went to speak to the steerage passengers. Many of the listeners at his morning address went along, including the agnostic, who claimed he just wanted to hear "what the babbler had to say." Before starting for the service, the agnostic put two oranges in his pocket. On his way he passed an elderly woman sitting in her deck chair fast asleep. Her hands were open. In the spirit of fun, the agnostic put the two oranges in her outstretched palms. After the meeting, he saw the old lady happily eating one of the pieces of fruit. "You seem to be enjoying that orange," he remarked with a smile. "Yes, sir," she replied, "My Father is very good to me." "Your father? Surely your father can't be still alive!" "Praise God," she replied, "He is very much alive." "What do you mean?" pressed the agnostic. She explained, "I'll tell you, sir. I have been seasick for days. I was asking God somehow to send me an orange. I suppose I fell asleep while I was praying. When I awoke, I found He had not only sent me one orange but two!" The agnostic was speechless. Later he was converted to Christ. Yes, praying in God's will brings an answer.

2) 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.

ILL – One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In each, I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints; other times there was only one. During the low periods of my life I could see only one set of footprints, so I said, "You promised me, Lord, that you would walk with me always. Why, when I have needed you most, have you not been there for me?" The Lord replied, "The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

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

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

ILL – London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. "Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site." Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. When we become God's, the old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17). He makes all things new. All he wants is the site and the permission to build.

4) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD CAN USE YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

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."

ILL – There are many reasons why God shouldn't have called you. But don't worry. You're in good company. Moses stuttered. David's armor didn't fit. John Mark was rejected by Paul. Timothy had ulcers. Amos' only training was in the school of fig-tree pruning. Jacob was a liar. David had an affair. Solomon was too rich. Jesus was too poor. Abraham was too old. David was too young. Peter was afraid of death. Lazarus was dead. John was self-righteous. Naomi was a widow. Paul was a murderer. So was Moses. Jonah ran from God. Miriam was a gossip. Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal. Elijah was burned out. John the Baptist was a loudmouth. Martha was a worry-wart. Mary was lazy. Samson had long hair. Noah got drunk. Did I mention that Moses had a short fuse? But God doesn't require a job interview. He doesn't hire and fire like most bosses, because He's more our Dad than our Boss. He doesn't look at financial gain or loss. He's not prejudiced or partial, not judging, grudging, sassy, or brassy, not deaf to our cry, not blind to our need. As much as we try, God's gifts are free. We could do wonderful things for wonderful people and still not be...Wonderful.

Satan says, "You're not worthy."

Jesus says, "So what? I AM."

Satan looks back and sees our mistakes.

God looks back and sees the cross

5) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD HAS A DIVINE PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE?

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.

QUOTE – "I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole Church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my mission field." –John Wesley

SUMMATION

NOTE 1 – Your response(s) to these queries reveals the condition and state of your faith. This is of utmost import:

Hebrews 11:6a

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

NOTE 2 – Your response(s) reveals where you are weak and where you are strong, identifying areas for growth! Remember that faith is like a muscle, and it must be stretched and worked if it is to grow. If we are to become the people God has called us to be (i.e., ind. and corp.)—we must identify and live according to our convictions!

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – I would call you to worship through your giving. Feel free to give online or in person.

NOTE 2 – Women's Ministry slated for Tuesday evening, October 8 (Patty Noel for updates, etc.).

NOTE 3 – Our Men's Breakfast taking place on Saturday, October 12, from 9–10:15am.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The LORD bless you
and keep you;

25 the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.