

Convinced 2024 Pt. 4

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, October 13, 2024

COMMUNION

- 1) The Wafer Symbolizes the Body of Christ – Broken for Us
- 2) The Juice Symbolizes the Blood of Christ – Shed for Us All

KEY – In October 1971, the Shah of Iran invited 60 kings, queens and heads of state to celebrate the 2,500 years of the Persian Empire. The cost of the celebration was \$100 million, but it was not the costliest table ever spread. The Communion table is the costliest table ever spread. The elements on it cost very little, mere bread and juice, but this feast cost the Son of God His very life.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

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BABY DEDICATION

This morning is a special morning for this assembly, as we have the joy of dedicating a child unto the Lord. Before we dismiss the children and volunteers, I would like to invite the Barry family forward, with their daughter, Charlotte.

You stand here because you seek to dedicate Charlotte to the Lord. In this act, you are publicly devoting, committing, surrendering and entrusting that which is most precious to you unto Him. I would say the following concerning the dedication of a child...

Firstly, it is a supreme act of STEWARDSHIP. Dedication flows from the recognition that our children are ultimately His, as both Creator and Lord. Therefore, we serve as managers of that which He has placed into our care for a brief interval of time, knowing full well that we will be called to give account in the everlasting age to come (cf. Matt. 25). I call you to consider your role as stewards!

Secondly, child dedication is an act of FAITH. Scripture says that without faith it is “impossible” to please God (cf. Heb. 11), so a sense of belief must permeate and undergird this act. Today you entrust young Charlotte and the entirety of her life (i.e., all that is to come in her years) into His loving, capable hands, confident that He will prove faithful for time and eternity. I call you to unceasingly trust Him and His ways!

Thirdly, child dedication is an act or activity of HUMILITY. It is predicated upon the conviction that we desperately need the Lord, His Word, His wisdom, His empowerment, His provision, and His people to effectively raise the children He has placed into our care. We cannot and must not attempt to raise His “little ones” apart from His abiding work in our lives. I call you to humble yourself before the Lord, that He may lift you up!

In light of these precepts, I ask you the following. Please respond by saying “**WE DO.**” Katie and Shawn...

Do you recognize this child as the gift of God, giving heartfelt thanks for this blessing? Do you entrust this child to the One who gave her to you, surrendering all claims upon her life in the hope that she will belong wholly to Him? Do you pledge, as parents, to bring her up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, making every effort to show forth a godly example? Do you pledge in Christ to faithfully pray for the advancement of His will in her life, with all humility; particularly that she comes to a saving faith at the youngest possible age? Finally, do you promise to provide, through God’s blessing, for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of this child? If so, please respond by saying, “**WE DO.**”

Finally, CHURCH, let us make a commitment as well. It takes a village to raise a child. Parents have first responsibility, but they need the support of the community of faith. Do you promise by God’s help to be faithful in your calling as members of the Body of Christ to help this couple in their role as parents? Also, do you purpose to model a godly example before this child, that she might come to salvation in the course of time? If so, please respond by saying, “**WE DO.**”

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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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 in recent sessions, exploring our undergirding system of belief. To what degree(s) are we convinced of: **a)** God’s love; **b)** the reality of His pardon; **c)** a hope beyond death; **d)** His goodness; **e)** His willingness to both hear and answer prayer; **f)** His abiding presence; **g)** His good purpose; **h)** His ability to change us; and **i)** His ability to effect change in the world through us? Let us move forward today!

CONSIDERATIONS

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

Luke 12:22–32

22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life[b]? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

27 Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

ILL – Missionary statesman Hudson Taylor had complete trust in God's faithfulness. In his journal he wrote: “Our heavenly Father is a very experienced One. He knows very well that His children wake up with a good appetite every morning... He sustained 3 million Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. We do not expect He will send 3 million missionaries to China; but if He did, He would have ample means to sustain them all... Depend on it, God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.”

2) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD WILL GUIDE OR LEAD YOU?

Proverbs 3:5–6

T5 Trust 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.

QUOTE – “Not for one single day
Can I discern my way,
But this I surely know—
He who gives the day
Will show the way,
So I securely go.”
–John Oxenham

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

James 1:–8

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. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Q. Will you heed the wisdom and direction He gives?

ILL – An old sailor repeatedly got lost at sea, so his friends gave him a compass and urged him to use it. The next time he went out in his boat, he followed their advice and took the compass with him. But as usual he became hopelessly confused and was unable to find land. Finally he was rescued by his friends. Disgusted and impatient with him, they asked, “Why didn’t you use that compass we gave you? You could have saved us a lot of trouble!” The sailor responded, “I didn’t dare to! I wanted to go north, but as hard as I tried to make the needle aim in that direction, it just kept on pointing southeast.” That old sailor was so certain he knew which way was north that he stubbornly tried to force his own personal persuasion on his compass. Unable to do so, he tossed it aside as worthless and failed to benefit from the guidance it offered.

4) 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.

ILL – John Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave. A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, “Who were all those men with you there?” Paton knew no men were present—but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

5) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN YOUR LIFE?

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.

ILL – The principle of God working all things together for good is well illustrated in the Old Testament account of Joseph’s life. Early in his life, Joseph’s jealous brothers sold him into slavery. In Egypt, Joseph rose to a position of responsibility. Then, he is unjustly imprisoned and forgotten about by his friends. God gifts him the ability to interpret dreams, and through that ability Joseph is once again raised to a place of honor and power. When drought forces Joseph’s brothers to seek food elsewhere, they travel to Egypt and encounter Joseph, who eventually saves them from starvation and grants them a livelihood in his new land.

ILL – Newscaster Paul Harvey told a remarkable story of God's providential care over thousands of allied prisoners during World War II, many of whom were Christians. One of America's mighty bombers took off from the island of Guam headed for Kokura, Japan, with a deadly cargo. Because clouds covered the target area, the sleek B-29 circled for nearly an hour until its fuel supply reached the danger point. The captain and his crew, frustrated because they were right over the primary target yet not able to fulfill their mission, finally decided they had better go for the secondary target. Changing course, they found that the sky was clear. The command was given, "Bombs away!" and the B-29 headed for its home base. Sometime later an officer received some startling information from military intelligence. Just one week before that bombing mission, the Japanese had transferred one of their largest concentrations of captured Americans to the city of Kokura. Upon reading this, the officer exclaimed, "Thank God for that protecting cloud! If the city hadn't been hidden from the bomber, it would have been destroyed and thousands of American boys would have died." God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work.

6) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT GOD GIVES STRENGTH AND 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.

ILL – In his book, *Against the Flow*, Oxford professor John Lennox notes that when God calls us to do something difficult he gives us the strength when we need it, not before we need it. Lennox illustrates this biblical principle with a story about an encounter with a Russian follower of Jesus who spent years in a Siberian labor camp for the crime of teaching his children about the Bible. Lennox writes: “He described to me that he had seen things that no man should ever have to see. I listened, thinking how little I really knew about life, and wondering how I would have fared under his circumstances. As if he had read my thoughts, he suddenly said: "You couldn't cope with that, could you?" Embarrassed, I stumbled out something like: "No, I am sure you are right." He then grinned and said: "Nor could I! I was a man who fainted at the sight of his own blood, let alone that of others. But what I discovered in the camp was this: God does not help us to face theoretical situations, but real ones. Like you I couldn't imagine how one could cope in the Gulag. But once there I found that God met me, exactly as Jesus had promised his disciples when he was preparing them for victimization and persecution.” Lennox adds, "We can be confident, then, that the Lord will give us a sufficient amount of grace to handle whatever comes our way, whenever it comes our way—and not necessarily a moment before!"

7) TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT THERE IS PEACE OR COMFORT IN HIM?

Psalm 34:18

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

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

QUOTE – “Safety consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God.”

ILL – In 1555, Nicholas Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!

8) 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.

QUOTE – “When you have nothing left but God, then you become aware that God is enough.”

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 – Check out the website for upcoming events and more (www.NewLifeBarre.org).

NOTE 3 – OCC National Collection Week is fast upon us. Shoeboxes due on Nov. 24.

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.