

“CONFIDENCE”

Psalm 118:5-9,14-17; 2Corinthians 5:1-9

In the fall of last year when the economy began to falter, we began to hear commentators and analysts speak of a “crisis of confidence.” The Gallup poll began to track how the average American viewed the economy. In September 2008 38% of those polled thought the current economic conditions were poor and 78% expected them to get worse. A month later 59% of those surveyed thought the current economic conditions were poor and 90% believed the economy would worsen. Gallup reported these findings in an article “Record Crisis Of Confidence on Main Street.”

“Crisis of Confidence” was a speech given by President Jimmy Carter in July 1979. That was a time of recession and long lines at the gasoline stations. He had already given four speeches and planned to give a fifth speech to the nation on the energy crisis. Instead, deciding to find out what Americans were thinking, he called a cross-section of leaders to a conference at Camp David. Then, he went out for 10 days across the country. He carried a notebook and wrote down the people’s comments. Here are a few of those comments:

“Don’t talk to us about politics or the mechanics of government, but about an understanding of our common good.”

“Mr. President, we’re in trouble. Talk to us about blood and sweat and tears.”

“If you lead, Mr. President, we will follow.”

“Some of us have suffered from recession all our lives.”

“Some people have wasted energy, but others haven’t had anything to waste.”

1.) It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes. (Psalms 118:8-9 NKJV)

The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation. (Psalms 118:14)

In the history of the American Presidency, there is a recurring theme of Savior. A number of our Presidents were regarded as saviors and some were even called that. Washington saved us from British tyranny and oppression; Lincoln saved the nation from splintering into two or more nations; Woodrow Wilson was the architect of world peace and was going to save us from ever going to war again; Franklin Roosevelt saved the nation when it was in the depths of the Depression. In many Presidential candidates' campaign there is the veiled promise of a savior. You can detect that hope in comments President Carter cited.

All of the men I named died or will die because they are human. All of them made mistakes because they are sinners. Some historians believe that if Lincoln had lived he would have brought reconciliation and we would have been spared the abuses and ill will brought about by Reconstruction. Woodrow Wilson drafted a formula for world peace but his own country refused to adopt it. He had a stroke or a nervous breakdown and was unable to perform the duties of his office.

God is eternal; He never dies. God is almighty, omniscient, and holy; He never makes a mistake. God is unwilling that any should perish but wants all mankind to repent and be saved. He loved us so much that He gave His Son to die on the cross to be our savior.

If you lose your job and you are going to lose your home, who will you trust? Will you trust the government to have a program that will save you? Or will you trust the God who loves you to give to you the bread and shelter you need for that day? God may use the government,

but it is God who supplies your needs from His riches in glory. He wants you to be confident of His love and thank Him for what He gives.

2.) For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Corinthians 5:1 NKJV) So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.(2 Corinthians 5:6-9 NKJV)

What is the basis for our confidence that God loves us, that He will provide all our needs according to His riches in glory, that He has a home prepared for us in heaven? We do not have basis for such confidence from what we can determine with our senses and our reasoning – what we call scientific evidence. The sound of crashing thunder, the sight of lightning striking, the fury of hailstones, the impenetrable shroud of fog, the horrific destruction of floods, hurricanes, tornados, tsunamis, the darkness of death do not lead us to conclude that a kind Father is attentive to our cries for help and will sympathize with us in temptation and pain.

Where then do we find this confidence? What source does Paul say: For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. (2 Timothy 1:12 NKJV)

The basis for faith, confidence, and hope is in the words of God revealed to us in the Bible and through the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us so that we can understand the Bible. Some people may wish upon a star. Others may whistle in the dark. Still others may resign themselves to fate. Christians can walk tall in the midst of tribulation. The basis for their confidence is in writing. We walk by

faith, not by sight, but we are confident. Those things that others trust are as flimsy as a tent. Our hopes are in solemn promises from God.

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge,... (Romans 15:14 NKJV)

Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything. (2 Corinthians 7:16 NKJV)

And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. (2 Thessalonians 3:4 NKJV)

But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. (Hebrews 6:9 NKJV)

You and I need to begin to have confidence in those whom God has made brothers and sisters in Christ. We ought to look to them and allow them to look to us as our first responders in time of need. I have seen some examples of this in my lifetime. The fact they surprised me shows how far we need to grow as Christian churches in this country. In poorer countries Christians are confident of help from the Christians.

I once lived beside a bank. The man who owned the bank, a godly man, would sometimes call me to his office. He would ask me what I knew about a certain person or family. If I didn't know, he would tell me to find out. I would report back to him and he would thank me, and tell me to "let this be between you and I and God." Before long I would hear that that person had found a job or was helped in some way. I always kept his secret. He died and I'm sure went to his reward.

When I was in the Air Force, an airman received word that a family member died. His family was thousands of miles away. The Air Force was going to loan him money for a ticket. He said, "That won't be necessary. I'll go to the church in town, someone will take me part of the way, then another. I'll get home as quick as if I took a plane!"

In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,...(Proverbs 14:26-27a NKJV)

