

A Different Perspective
A Confident Life in Uncertain Times
09-18-4
Holy, Holy, Holy

I talk to so many people who profess to believe this or that but when you look at their lives what you see is they live an uncertain life. For me, if I profess to believe that Jesus Christ died for me, if I profess to believe that I have eternal life through Him, which I do, you know something? I want to live confidently in that. Not arrogantly, no just a quiet confidence and assurance to know where I'm headed, to know that I'm safe and no matter what life throws at me.

For me there needs to be connect between my faith and my life, what I believe and what I do. And my hunch is when those two aren't lined up it becomes kind of hard to have any confidence in what we believe, because it's so different from what we're living and experiencing.

I read this on a web blog called reallifepreacher.com, it really spoke to me, this is what the anonymous author writes, "God I don't have great faith but I can be faithful, my belief in you may be seasonal but my faithfulness will not, I will follow in the way of Christ, I will act as though my life and the lives of others matter, I will laugh, I have no greater gift to offer you than my life, take it."

You know why I like that? Because it talks about a faith that's alive, you know what we believe in our heads and our hearts sometimes it does wax and wane, sometimes we do have questions, but what this person's saying here is that, that might happen but I know I can be faithful. You know my beliefs might be seasonal a bit but my faithfulness will not. I will follow you with my life.

It's about living out faith, it's about living out hope, I mean what's the point of believing in Jesus and not living as though we do? Why do we do that? It's simple because we focus on what we can see; our minds and our hearts are trained to react to situations and circumstances like Pavlov's dogs. Faith on the other hand is the gentle assurance of something we hope in, the conviction of something we can't see.

So many people live their life like a candle in the wind, like a cork bobby around the ocean blown this way, blown that way, and at the same time their moving lips and they utter the words "well I believe in Jesus." Don't get me wrong I'm not having a go at anyone I'm

just plainly and honestly setting out just how it is, setting the scene if you like for God's answer.

God has a plan; God's plan is that we should live a confident life in uncertain times. Over the last few programs we've been looking at a letter from the Apostle Peter to a bunch of Christians who were persecuted in the first century and so they fled and they were dispersed right through the known world and he deals with this, this disconnect between what we believe and how we behave this way. He says:

"Therefore prepare you minds for action; be self controlled, set you hope fully on the grace that is given to you when Jesus Christ is revealed as obedient children. Don't conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance but just as He who called you is holy so you be holy in all you do."

Whenever you see a little passage start "therefore" you've got to think, "Well what's he pointing back to, "therefore" what? Well actually he's pointing back to what Jesus did for us, he's pointing back to the certain living hope, he's pointing back to this, he writes these words earlier.

He says, "Praise be to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because in His great mercy He's given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish or spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you who through faith are being shielded by God's power."

So he's pointing back to that, he said because of what God's done for you, because of what Jesus did and because of this inheritance and because of this new hope, therefore prepare your minds for action, be self controlled, discipline yourself. It's actually time to say, "You know, I'm going to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, I'm going to start thinking differently".

God is talking here through Peter about bringing our actions into line with our faith, on a priority of focus, on this living hope this sense that I'm going some place. "And one day I'm going to stand in glory before Jesus, before God, I'm going to live the rest of eternity for ever and ever and ever with Him. I have a place where I'm going, my life is on track and you know something on the way I'm going to prepare my mind for action and because of what God has done I am going to change".

Now look at what Peter's saying again, let's read it again,

"After we change our minds, after we prepare our minds for action and we get self control happening, set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed, in fact put all of your hope fully in the glory that we will have on that day that we stand with Jesus, His goodness, His forgiveness."

How much of our hope? All of our hope in the grace of Jesus. Now it's interesting he now goes on and ties our thoughts and our hopes and our dreams to what we do as obedient children.

"Don't conform to the evil desires that you had when you lived in ignorance but just as He who called you is holy so you be holy in all you do."

Why should we be holy? Because if what we believe and what we do aren't lined up we'll go with what we do every time.

Let me give you a small example. Before I became a Christian, I mean all my adult life in my career and even now in ministry, I do a lot of flying. I'm often on planes and I guess I've flown thousands of times. Before I became a Christian I used to hate turbulence, not because I felt sick, I've got over that, because of the fear.

You know when you're in a plane, (if you've ever been in a plane) and its gets really bumpy you know, really up and down, I used to grip the arms of the chair and my knuckles would go white. You know after I became a Christian God really convicted me the next time we hit turbulence in a plane God really spoke to me and said "So who are you trusting? Who is your trust in? Because if your trust is in Me," God said to me, "Then stop doing the white knuckle thing."

And it was exactly what Peter's writing here. If I'm going to put all of my hope in Jesus Christ, I actually have to change my mind. And so this involved my mind, it involved saying, "I am going to change my mind about this," and then bring my actions into line with my faith. Of course there's some uncertainty. I mean, is the plane going to fall out of the sky? Maybe but probably not.

But you know something what I believe and the one in whom I believe is more important than doing this white knuckle thing. And so I decided that I would prepare my mind to be ready for action and I don't do the white knuckle thing anymore and in fact I just sit through them and I have a genuine peace because my hope is in Jesus Christ. You know something; if that plane crashes I'll just be with Him a little bit early.

And that's a pattern that I've followed in so many parts of my life. First thing, get the mind prepared for action, just get our mind sorted out and say, "I'm just not going to go down that road anymore, I'm just not going to think that thought anymore," and then to bring our actions into line with what we believe.

It's a critical point. If we react to things with fear, if we react to uncertainty, if our mind starts racing away all we have to do is deploy our mind, get ready for action and say, "You know something God, this is hard, but I'm going to bring my actions in line with my faith, why? Because of the hope that I have in the grace of Jesus Christ."

God has a plan; He wants us to have a confident life in uncertain times.