

MESSAGE OUTLINE—TRUE JOY: CONFIDENCE
Philippians 3:1-14 (NIV)

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

⁴ If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

True Joy comes from Confidence...

1. In Christ _____.

...who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh...

"If all I had was Christ // I'd have nothing to gain // All I have is Christ // And I have everything" —We The Kingdom, If All I Had Was Christ

2. Through _____ in Christ.

...and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **Romans 5:8 (NIV)**

3. In the _____ of Christ.

I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

^{1:6} For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...
^{4:7} I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness...

2 Timothy 1:6–9, 4:7–8 (NIV)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
WEEK OF OCTOBER 4, 2020—TRUE JOY: CONFIDENCE

CONNECT:

- If there was one thing you wish you were really good at, what would it be?

Pick one question to share with the group:

- Where did you see God's presence in September?
- What have you learned in the last 30 days?
- What is one thing you're looking forward to in October?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:

St. Patrick wrote this in the early 400's after sensing a call to leave Scotland to share the love of Christ with the people of Ireland, where he was once held captive as a slave. It is one of many prayers credited to him. This one is adapted into morning prayer by the Northumbria Community.

Listen: You can either read this prayer aloud or listen to John Michael Talbot sing it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5-eSHI7zfg>. (For Zoom, the host can open it in a window, then use "share screen" to play it, or someone can open it on a phone and play into the computer microphone.)

Individual Reflection: Amid all the concerns on your mind and heart right now, respond to each sentence with what you need, hope for, or desire.

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me.

Christ, as a shield overshadow me.

Christ under me; Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.

This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.

This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Christ as a light; Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.

Debrief: Share any insight you had while making these simple words your prayer today. In what way does this liturgical prayer give you confidence?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

- Read Philippians 3:1-14 aloud. What is God saying to you through this week's passage or message?
- What might be the false ideas that Paul wants to expose or change? What implications does this have on their unity? On the spread of the gospel?
- What religious activities might Christians today be tempted to put their confidence in for their righteousness before God? How do we safeguard against this?
- What does Paul say about knowing Christ? What attitude would help us continually grow in our experience of trusting God?
- When did you first seek to know Jesus Christ? What made you decide to follow Jesus?
- What has been stripped away during this time which in the past gave us confidence? What does it mean to be "found in Christ," putting our full confidence in him right now?
- Can you think of times when being preoccupied with your own accomplishments or status, even spiritual, has hindered your spiritual growth? How might it hinder another person's spiritual growth?
- What did Paul do to move from confidence in his performance to confidence in a Person, from practicing a religion to investing in a relationship? How can we do the same?

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION:

Praying for one another: Looking toward the week ahead, how would you like to pray?

Closing prayer: Ask everyone, except one, to mute their microphone. Ask the one person to pray St Patrick's prayer aloud while others pray aloud in their own space.

Benediction: *Let us make these simple words our prayer today. May we know Christ's presence in our daily lives, Christ's closeness in every moment of this day, guiding us to welcome his presence with an open heart tomorrow. Amen.*

DAILY PRACTICE: Continue to spend time with God daily in Solitude, Scripture, and Prayer (download Reading Plan and Playlist from website to guide you). Ask God to guide you to connect with someone who might feel disconnected. Keep a journal of your prayers and any insights you receive in your time alone with God.