

CONFIDENCE

Preacher: Darren Clarke

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: 1 John 5:13-20.

In verse 14 we see it speaks of having confidence in God. But how confident are we in Him? How confident are we when we pray? How confident are we that God hears and answers prayer? This is not confidence in our own eloquence, or how we structure our prayers or the content of our prayers. This is about whether we are assured about the outcomes of our prayers. We can be praying with our head believing one thing but there may be something else happening in our heart. We can be in the pit of despair wondering what will happen if the Lord does not answer as we hope He will. We say things to Him but are not sure about whether He will answer. We are double-minded, thinking two different things at once.

Prayer is an act of faith. It is our confidence in God. And we determine that we will not waver whatever the answer. Do we trust that God is absolutely sovereign? Do we believe it when we have lost our job, or are sick or some trouble has come?

God can give us such confidence. It is the same word in 1 John 3:21 and means boldness. There is an absence of fear, and we speak boldly to Him. It is not that we might see the outcome to our prayers. We may not live to see the answer. But we are assured the Judge of all the earth will do right. He will always do what is right in our lives. There is a sure knowledge as v13 tells us. This is what the confidence we have is based on. John writes in the first chapter of this letter about his being able to sit with, see and touch the Lord. This is the fellowship he had with Him and this fellowship we can also have with Him now. We have it through the Bible which is the living Word.

1. A confidence He hears us.

There is a readiness in God to hear our prayers (Psalm 17:6 & 138:3). He is attentive and He listens. The Psalmist knew that God would hear him. It is not our words but the readiness of God that makes the difference. We pray and the matter is already in His hand. We can come to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ who is interceding for us, and the Spirit also helps us in our prayers, speaking words on our behalf.

2. A confidence in the will of God.

We know He hears us when we pray according to His will. He will answer people differently if they do not pray according to His will. We learn to delight ourselves in the Lord and He will give us the desires of our heart. It is difficult to pray 'Not my will but yours be done'. But we should be confident that the Lord will always do according to His will. If we know that He loves us that is a source of confidence. The God who loves us is the God who has the rule over our lives. When we have stress at work and other griefs, we should hand them to Him. We do this 100% confident in the knowledge that His will will be done. We ask that the Lord would teach us His way and make us like Christ. This is to pray according to the will of God. We are right to pray for strength to mortify sin, to overcome our enemies, and to have our minds renewed.

In the past, too much preaching was about the love of God all the time. More is needed. We need to know the true God and understand what He has done for us in Jesus Christ. We should pray that our lives will be changed.

3. He will answer.

We can read James 4:1-3. We do not have because we do not ask. We should be confident and ask. Or then we ask amiss to spend on our lusts and wants, and so again we do not have. So we ask for those things that we know He wants to give and we are confident that He will answer us.

We need to live in this truth more than we currently do. We pray for other people in this way. It includes praying for those to be recovered who have not committed the sin unto death (vv 16-17). We believe that the Lord will freely give us all things along with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:32).

Do we believe the Lord will save people? We know that all the Lord's people will be gathered in. We should pray for converts to fill the pews of our churches. We want this because we want God to be glorified. The church will not die. People will continue to be saved. So why not in Crich? Why not in Jacksdale?