

# Confident Fellowship

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[ 0 : 00 ] your exams. If you're finishing college, are you confident that you're going to get a job? Are you sure? What about if you're single? How confident are you of finding the right person to get married to? How confident are you of staying healthy and living a long life?

Are you sure you will be okay? What about this question? How confident are you of eternal life? Are you sure you have eternal life? You see, this is something wonderful because God has promised us this life. Have a look at verse 11. It's just a couple of verses before the reading. This is what it says, and this is the testimony. God has given us eternal life.

And look where that life is to be found. Eternal life, this life is in his Son. We don't find life in ourselves or in other things or in other people. We find life in the person of Jesus.

That doesn't mean to say that we kind of get a little model or a little life, a little model or a statue of Jesus and put him in our pocket and go, oh, I have Jesus. No, it means to trust him with your life, to place all your confidence in him. So look at verse 12. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. So he has promised us life and that life is in his Son Jesus. But here's another question. What happens when we sin and turn away from Jesus? When I sin, do I still have eternal life? When I mess up and fail, will God still accept me?

Now, I know that I've chosen to sin this week. In fact, there are some things that I have said and done that I am far too embarrassed and ashamed to tell anybody here in this room.

[ 2 : 48 ] I have done things that are very wrong this week. And I'm sure I'm not alone in that. So can we still be confident of eternal life, even when we mess up and fail and go off the rails?

Well, look what the writer tells us in verse 13. He says this, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know, so that you have confidence that you have eternal life. Isn't that wonderful? We can have absolute confidence and total assurance that we have eternal life. Now, look who that confidence is for. Look at verse 13 again. He writes these things to who? To you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

The confidence we have is not based on who I am or how good I am or my ability or my performance. My confidence is based on who Jesus is. You see, if our confidence is in Jesus, then that means whatever my sin, whatever my failures, whatever my struggles in life, I can be confident, 100% assured that I have eternal life.

Now, I think that's incredible. Absolutely sure. No doubts that I have confidence of eternal life.

So let's look at the confidence that we have if our trust is in Jesus. Four things we're going to notice. If our trust is in Jesus, we have four confidences. Don't know if that's a word, is it? We'll make it up. It is now. That's right.

[ 4 : 57 ] So, four confidences that we have if we trust in Jesus. First, we have confidence that God hears us. Look at verse 14.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. What an amazing privilege that we can approach God.

We actually have access to God. We've been accepted by him. The access to God is not because of us, but because of his love for us.

Let's have a flick back to chapter 3, verse 1. Just turn the page, perhaps, to chapter 3, verse 1. Here it reminds us why we have access to God.

Some great verses. Chapter 3, verse 1. How great is the love the Father, that is, the Father God, has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God.

[ 6 : 08 ] And that is what we are. We have become children of God because of God's love, and therefore we have access to God. We are accepted by God.

Now, baby Emma, who we had introduced to us just a moment ago, has a unique relationship with Connor and Sarah. Because she is their child, she can call out to her parents, knowing that they will listen and they will answer, whatever the time of day or night.

Another child may be crying in the corner, but they don't necessarily respond. Emma has that unique privilege, and she can continue to call out to her parents because she is their child.

Now, because of God's love to us, because God has removed the barrier of sin, he has made us children of God so that we too have a unique relationship with him.

And we can talk to our Father in heaven anytime, anywhere, about anything. We have been accepted by him through our faith.

[ 7 : 22 ] Have a look at verse 15. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know we have what we asked of him.

Do you see what it says there? We can ask God for anything, and we have confidence that he will give it to us. Ask him for anything, and we have confidence that he will give it to us.

If, underline, if it's according to his will. Look at the end of verse 14 again. We need to read it carefully.

That it says, if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Our children ask us for all kinds of things. New phones, new clothes. Can I stay up late? They even have the cheek of asking us for lunch and dinner.

[ 8 : 30 ] Now, we don't give them everything they ask for. We do feed them, by the way, just in case you're not sure. But we only give to them what we think is best and right.

What's going to benefit their life. The same as Emma. She asks her mum and dad, they will only give to her what is going to be good for her life. In the same way, God doesn't give us everything we ask for, but only what is according to his will.

In other words, what is best and right for the children of God. He is a generous father who gives good gifts to his children so that we can live in a good relationship and right relationship with him.

So first, if our trust is in Jesus, we have confidence that God hears us. Here's the second one. If our trust is in Jesus, we have confidence that God forgives us.

Look at verse 16. Here we are given an example of what to ask God for when we should pray. It's a hard one. What should I pray for? Well, he goes on to tell us in verse 16.

[ 9 : 42 ] If anyone sees his brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life.

So, through prayer, we should ask God for forgiveness. But, not everyone can experience forgiveness.

Read on in verse 16. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

Are you confused there with that statement? Because I was for a long time as I was reading it.

What's all this about this leads to death and something that does not lead to death?

Well, I think there's two things here. There's the prayer of the believer. First, we have the sin that does not lead to death. Verse 16.

[ 10 : 41 ] Again, let's read it. If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. So, there's a promise there that for the believer, the person who trusts in Jesus, when we pray in repentance with each other and for each other, he will forgive us.

We are assured of eternal life. We are assured of forgiveness. Keep your finger there and just flick back to chapter 1 of 1 John.

Look at this wonderful promise that we have in chapter 1, verse 9. Maybe you're thinking, maybe there are sins that God cannot forgive or that God will not forgive.

Well, look at this in chapter 1, verse 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.

And the reason he will forgive us, if we look at chapter 2, verse 2, a couple of lines down, he, that's Jesus, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.

[ 12 : 03 ] Jesus died on the cross taking the blame for all the things that we have done wrong so that we can be forgiven. So, let's put this into practice.

If I commit a sin, if you see me drunk one night, or if you hear me speaking unkindly to someone, rather than look down on me and go, isn't that terrible, and start gossiping, you should get alongside

me as it says, if you see your brother commit a sin, you should pray for him. Pray with him that we would receive God's forgiveness. So, we have confidence that God forgives us.

We can pray and he will forgive. But that was just one side of the prayer. Have a look back at 1 John chapter 5, verse 16. So, we've looked at the sin that does not lead to death, whereby we receive forgiveness, assurance of life, but then we have the sin that does lead to death.

Do you see it there at the end of verse 16? He said, there is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. You see, for the person who does not believe, there is no promise of forgiveness because they have rejected the very one who makes forgiveness possible.

[13:38] If Jesus is the person who is the one who deals with our sin, but if I reject him and turn against him and say, I want nothing to do with Jesus, then how could I possibly be forgiven?

If I reject Jesus, I cannot be forgiven. All we face is death.

That's what it means, the sin that leads to death. To refuse Jesus means an eternal separation from God. It is the fearful reality of hell itself.

There is no assurance of life for those who turn against Jesus. But for the believer, even when we do sin, even when we mess up and fail, we can be confident that our sins are forgiven.

Every single one of them can be forgiven because of our trust in Jesus. So if you see another believer who has fallen, don't gossip about them, don't look down at them and criticise them, get alongside them, pray with them and for them in repentance and confession that we might be forgiven.

[15:01] So we have confidence that God hears us and that God forgives us. Here's the third one, we have confidence because God keeps us.

If our trust is in Jesus, we have confidence that God will keep us. You see, the promise of eternal life isn't just a gift from God saying, here you are, but you better hold on to it.

No, it is something that God holds on to for us. Remember the illustration at the beginning?

Whether you're tickled or punched, life will be held on to by God.

Look at verse 18. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. You know, when Emma was born, she received two things from her parents.

She received natural, physical life and she received something of the nature of her parents. Now, I'll let you decide if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

[16:07] Hmm? I'm sure it's a good thing. She's received life from her parents and she received something of the nature of her parents. So because Emma has simply been born of Connor and Sarah, as she grows up, she will begin to look like them.

And you'll even discover that she will develop behaviours like them. Now, that's a sign that Emma is a child of Connor and Sarah.

That's what makes her unique. That's what makes her different to every other child. Now, when we are born of God, not only do we receive eternal life from God, but we begin to reflect something of God's nature and character.

We begin to behave like God. And the sign that we are born of God, the sign that we are God's children is our attitude to sin. Look again at verse 18.

He says, we know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. Now, that's a problem because I know that I continue to sin. Do you? No nods.

[17:15] You can nod away. It's alright. We do continue to sin. So, does that mean we're not meant to sin at all? Well, he's just told us, didn't he, in verse 16 that we should pray for forgiveness.

So, it can't possibly mean sinless perfection. What it does mean, this not continue to sin, is our whole attitude towards sin.

Rather than tolerate sin, I now hate my sin. Instead of hiding my sin, I now confess my sin as a sign of the life that God has given me.

I have been born of God. I have been given life and now I have a new way to live. And that life is kept by God.

Look at the rest of verse 18. We'll read 18 again. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin. The one who was born of God, so it's changed there, I want you to notice that.

[18:13] So, the first one, we know that anyone born of God, that's people like us who trust in Jesus, do not continue to sin. The one who was born of God, that's now referring to Jesus, keeps him safe and the evil one cannot harm him.

Jesus keeps us safe. You see, the only one that can keep us from receiving life, the only one that can stop us from enjoying eternal life, is the evil one or Satan himself. But, verse 18 tells us, he can do nothing to take away that life. The reason is, in chapter 3, verse 8, we read this, The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. Through his death on the cross, Jesus defeated our enemy, the devil, Satan himself. He rescued us from a life of death and he now keeps us secure in eternal life. So, not even Satan can take away what God has given to us. It is like God writes his name on the palm of his hand and closes it.

[ 19 : 36 ] Nothing can ever take away the name from us, from God, if we are trusting in him. Verse 19 reads, We know or we have this confidence that we are children of God and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Yes, we live in a world where it is difficult to be a Christian. We will struggle with our sin every day. We will battle with our temptation every day.

But just as God has given us the gift of eternal life, he will keep us in that eternal life. That is the promise of God.

The fourth and the last one. If our trust is in Jesus, we have confidence because God is in us. Eternal life with God isn't just something in the future to look forward to. It is something that we experience every single day as we walk our life with him.

[ 20 : 40 ] Not just an eternal idea, but a today idea. God lives in us.

Look at verse 20. Chapter 5, verse 20. We know, again it's that word confidence again, we have this confidence that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true.

God is the one who opens up our minds to understand who Jesus is. Not just intellectually with our minds, but experientially with our hearts.

It tells us there in verse 20, so that we may know him who's true. That know is not just I know he exists, an intellectual knowledge, but I know him in a relational, experiential way.

I know him. And the reason why we know him is because God is in us by his spirit. have a look back at chapter 4 verse 13.

[ 21 : 51 ] Read this with me here. Chapter 4 verse 13. We know we have this life, we have this relationship because, look at verse 13, we know that we live in him and he lives in us because he has given us of his spirit.

Jump down to verse 15. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, and again that's if you trust in Jesus, God lives in him and he in God.

You see, the spirit of God not only helps us to understand Jesus, but he makes Jesus a living experience in our life so that we enjoy his life in us every day because he is with us.

But it's not just that God lives in us. Here's the other side of the coin. We live in God. Look at the rest of chapter 5, verse 20.

So God lives in us, but we also live in God. Let's read the end of verse 20. And we are in him who is true, even in his son Jesus Christ.

[ 23 : 21 ] We are in him. This is the deep personal and intimate joy that we have with God. He is not just a far out existing God who is away out there and who is uninterested and uncaring with our lives in this world.

He not only lives in us, but we get to live in him. That means we get to share in and join in the love that the father and the son have together, that intimate personal relationship.

We get to enjoy that with him. A love that's existed from eternity past, and a love that will exist for eternity to come. We share in that deep, intimate relationship.

This is where our searching for life ends. This is where we find life in all its fullness. People are on the search to find life, and this is where it is in Jesus Christ, the one who lives in us, and we live in him.

Look at the end verse 20. He is the true God and eternal life. So we can have confidence that God is in us.

[ 24 : 40 ] So the message is simply this as we come to a conclusion. Place your confidence in Jesus. You see, if I ever doubt I have life, if ever I am not sure that I have eternal life, do you know why I doubt or why my confidence goes?

It's because I begin to look at other things and other people instead of looking at the true and perfect life of Jesus Christ. That's why we have this final encouragement.

The very last verse, verse 21. Dear children, dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

You know what an idol is? It doesn't have to be a statue. An idol is a replacement for God. It can be anything that replaces God. So instead of looking to God and his son Jesus for confidence, we begin to look to other things.

We take God out and we replace him with someone else or something else. So he says to us, keep yourself from idols. Turn from trusting in your own life.

[ 25 : 53 ] Stop trusting in other things. Stop building your life on what's out there. and place all your confidence in the perfect and completed work of Jesus Christ.

In Jesus we are secure. Remember our illustration at the beginning. Can you take it out of my hand? And God says if you trust in me, I have you in my hand.

Nothing and no one can open it. No one and nothing can take away that life. You have it now and for all eternity. A life with the Father and with the Son.

A life where we find joy in all its fullness. We have confidence and it's because of Jesus Christ. Let's pray together.

Our Father God, we thank you so much for the wonderful gift of eternal life. We thank you that you have made that life known to us through your Son Jesus Christ.

[ 27 : 11 ] And we thank you too for that incredible promise that for all who believe in you and trust you they have confidence and assurance that that life will be kept forever and forever.

Thank you that you hear us. Thank you that you forgive us. Thank you that you keep us.

And thank you that you live in us. Thank you for all that we have because of Jesus for the life that you have come to give.

We praise you. Amen. We're going to sing together as we come to an end of this part of our gathering. We continue afterwards with lunch and you're all very very welcome to stay behind for that.

The song that we're going to sing when I was lost you came and rescued me reached down and lifted me oh Lord such love. This is the life the God who came to us and the life he gives the life he will keep for us.

[ 28 : 27 ] Let's stand together as we sing. first indebted 100% Oh Lord.