

Abundant Confidence

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[0 : 00] Let me ask you a question. Are you a diary calendar person or a digital calendar person, a physical diary?

I used to be that physical diary calendar person because you could use all the post-it notes, all the highlighters, all the lovely coloured pens. You could feel the pages and the texture.

But there is a downside, isn't there? Often you'll write down the event or the to-do list and you'll never revisit the book. However, a digital calendar, although it doesn't have the nice gravitas or cool look to have a diary with you, it has the functionality that you can put hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of notifications for an event, a deadline, a to-do list, because your physical diary can't ring a bell or let you know that something is coming up unless you look at it.

But the digital calendar gives me regular notifications and it makes you confident of a reality that that event you're looking forward to is actually coming up.

It actually is happening. That there is a deadline to a task. That each notification, each reminder, it shapes your heart for a reality.

[1 : 22] It could be a new job, a doctor's appointment, a party, a funeral. Today's passage does exactly that.

John brings all the threads, the signs, the notifications of the entire Gospel of John together and all these little notifications, all these signs point to a reality.

In last week's passage, it said in John chapter 20, verse 30 to 31, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The reality that John wants every person who reads and encounters this book is the reality he wants you to be confident is that Jesus is God.

[2 : 25] What we see in this epilogue is that he wants us to be confident in three things. Number one, confident in Christ. Number two, confident in grace.

And lastly, confident in life. So let's pray. Kind Heavenly Father, we ask that you might help us as we see these threads and signs woven together in this passage, that you might give us confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ, the one from whom we have received grace and life.

Amen. So keep your Bibles open at John 21. We're going to dive straight into verse 1. It says, Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee.

It happened this way. Simon, Peter, Thomas, also known as Didymus, Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. I'm going out to fish, Simon Peter told them.

And they said, We'll go with you. So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. This is the third time that the disciples encountered Jesus since his resurrection.

[3 : 42] And the disciples in this passage are going late at night for fishing. And that's customary because they can then sell the fresh fish the next day in the market. But that doesn't happen, does it?

No fish are caught. And that has this feeling of sense of depletion, and it'd probably be disappointing. But look at the contrast that we see in the next section in verse 4.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. He called out to them, Friends, haven't you any fish?

No, they answered. He said, Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Suddenly, the means of catching fish is purely from the fact that it comes from the instruction of Christ. But Jesus offers something better than catching the fish.

[4 : 43] And you would expect the disciples to go, Oh, wow, look at the amount of fish we've got. Thank you, person, who can have x-ray vision into the water, who can be an expert fisherman. Because the whole purpose of them to be out there is to fish.

And their response doesn't align with that. Verse 7. Then the disciples whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord.

As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, It is the Lord, he wrapped his outer garment around him, for he had taken it off and jumped into the water.

It is the Lord. I remember reading this, sitting down and being so in awe with that term, Lord.

Because generally, as Australians and other cultures, we have an interesting relationship with authority figures.

Either we joke about them or we have some inordinate fear about them. And I just sat there and imagined the deep affection that the disciples had to Jesus to exclaim, Lord, with that excitement.

[5 : 55] Because what kind of Lord or master beckons not only obedience, but love and relationship?

Because the fish miracle is simply a sign. It's a reminder. That's what stands out for the disciples. Because in this section already, we see little speckles of notifications that Jesus gives to the disciples of the reality that he is the Lord.

It says, When they see Jesus from the distance of water, they think of the man who walked on water and called them not to be afraid. When Jesus calls out the fishermen in verse 5 from the distance and says, Put your net on the other side of the boat.

And they catch 153 fish. They see the Lord who initiated the discipleship relationship with them from their boats in the very beginning. When Jesus launches into breakfast, he breaks bread like the time when Jesus broke the bread at the last supper.

He then shares around the fish as if to trigger this memory when the Lord fed the 5,000. Because each moment is like this notification that reaffirms this reality in their brains that, yes, he is the risen Lord Jesus.

[7 : 19] The Lord who heals. The Lord who saves. The Lord who provides. But then, it's undeniable. Jesus is who he says he is.

And all throughout the Gospels, Matthew to John are speckled with those signs. That similarly point to the glory of Jesus, his divinity, his character, and his grace.

And so I want to affirm and remind you of Steve's encouragement to check out the Gospels last week if you haven't. And so I want to ask, we've been in John for this whole term.

How have you been constantly reminded to be confident that Jesus is your personal Lord?

Not a Lord or someone else's Lord or even the Lord of the world, but your Lord. The second reality that we are going to be called to have confidence in this passage is grace by the very story of Peter.

[8 : 27] Peter, if you've forgotten, is the one who rejects any knowledge or association with Jesus in chapter 18. And ironically, Jesus actually predicts five chapters later, before, that Peter will reject him.

And Peter says, no, no, no, no, no, no. I will lay down my life for you. But here, Peter denies Jesus three times.

And the questions that he's even asked is not even by any means close to having his life threatened. So imagine having breakfast with a close friend.

And you've done the most awful thing behind their back. And they know. Wouldn't you expect a rebuke or a cold shoulder?

Or maybe here's what you can do to repay your debt to me. But Jesus doesn't even force a to-do list of things to make up for his denials. Verse 15.

[9 : 29] When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? Yes, Lord, he said.

You know that I love you. Jesus said. Feed my lambs. Again, Jesus said. Simon, son of John, do you love me? He answered. Yes, Lord.

You know that I love you. Jesus said. Take care of my sheep. The third time he said to him. Simon, son of John, do you love me?

Jesus asks him three times, do you love me? Do you love me? That's the question he asks.

In fact, the first question is, do you love me more than these? It's no coincidence that I think that there are other disciples here for breakfast. And Peter, previously, rashly and impulsively, was so bold in saying that he would sacrifice his life for Jesus.

[10:30] But now, after knowing that Christ died for his sins and sacrificed his own life, and also that he's done just a colossal failure of rejecting Jesus, he cannot boast and claim no success, but humble himself and offer his life to his Lord.

That is grace. Grace is the benefit you receive from God without deserving or earning it. And even when Jesus gives Peter the command of following him by leading and loving his people, it's secondary to the primary issue of love.

It's not, do you have a degree in sheep herding? Or have you ticked off the key competencies of being a Jesus follower? It's love.

That's why when we're looking for Christian leaders for kids, youth and community groups, teams, my question is never, tell me how good you are at hanging with kids or what an amazing Canva presentation you can make.

Show me how skilled you are. It's tell me when you started to love Jesus. Tell me about you and the gospel.

[12:02] Tell me when you first understood grace. Church, do we love Jesus? Do we love his grace?

Often we read passages like this or even the last few weeks in the crucifixion and resurrection and think, oh, forgiveness and grace, it just makes sense.

It seems normal. It seems like the fair response. God's a loving God. Well, everyone deserves it. But I don't think that's the case.

Grace that is as wide and open as Jesus' grace is a scandal. We live in a cancel culture. And once you've been canceled, the path to redemption is irredeemable.

Grace and forgiveness are not common concepts for us. And I wonder if that breeds even into our everyday relationships.

[13:04] Don't get me wrong. We do need to call out sin. God is a just God. But we hold on to grudges and resentments and find it harder to forgive.

God is a just God and he will judge all people. But in this air that we breathe, it begs the question that something you say or do or something that other people won't like, will I be forgiven by my friends?

Will I be rejected by my colleagues? Am I too far from change? And maybe in the society that we live in, that might be the case. But that's not the economy of the gospel.

That's not the economy of grace. Peter, well knowing of what was sin, still chooses to reject Jesus three times. But the disease of sin was not just the action he took, but was in his very will and mind to deny Christ.

He had a heart of rejection of someone who he knew. He was two-faced. He denied ever knowing Jesus. He was deceitful. He was ashamed to associate with his Lord.

[14:20] Three times does Peter sin. But Jesus, three times does he allow Peter to realign his heart and love with his Lord.

Friend, you might hear the words of Jesus on the cross. Yet you might doubt the finished work of Christ. The countless times of your transgressions, your multitudes of sins are covered by the one action of Christ, crucified.

Church, you are Peter. Grace for the Christian is not foreign. If you believe in Jesus wholeheartedly that you put no confidence in your works, cling nothing to nothing else but Jesus as your saving grace.

Grace is available. Because Jesus is the means of this undeserved grace. You know that confidence that Thomas had after seeing the holes and the gaps in Jesus' hands and side, and also the confidence that those disciples earlier on had in Jesus' lordship after seeing the net full of fish? Jesus' offer of forgiveness to Peter is for you too. It's so that you can have confidence in grace. You can have confidence in forgiveness.

[15:46] He is asking you, do you love me? He has forgiven you. Loving him means you are a part of his family, his flock of sheep. Be confident about grace.

Be confident that your forgiveness and invitation to God's flock is not by anything that you have done or is in you. Your confidence is in the steadfast character of Christ's grace, forgiveness and

mercy, 100%.

No returns, no take backs, done and dusted. It's certain. However, if you put your hope, life or anything else but the finished work of Jesus, you cannot have that confidence.

If you are the finished work of Jesus and something else, person, then you cannot have that confidence.

In Galatians 1-2, Paul warns the Christian church that you cannot add to the gospel. You cannot add to God's grace. And I am warning you now, it cannot be Jesus and being a good person.

[17:04] Nor can it be Jesus and having perfect kids. Nor Jesus and a life I am proud of. Those things will never be enough for you.

And those things aren't enough for God. It didn't work for Peter because he couldn't attain perfect. And neither can you. Do you see the logic?

Whatever you add and try to top off on the finished works of Jesus is simply futile. Whenever you try to add to his grace, you negate his grace.

I'll say it again. Whenever you try to add to his grace, you negate his grace. And therefore, there is no confidence. There is no confidence in grace.

You cannot have this assurance of anything abundant that Jesus offers in the book of John if your confidence, hope, faith is in anything but solely Jesus.

[18:08] Put your confidence in Jesus and you have confidence in grace. That is grace. That's what it means to be confident in grace.

So what now? How does having confidence in Christ our Lord and grace, how does that change our life today? Well, we've been looking at John and if you've joined us for the first time, I hope the passage makes it really clear that Jesus is such a forgiving and gracious Lord and Saviour.

I hope that the confidence of this grace and this Lord is so mind-boggling that when you truly consider it, it becomes one of the most essential parts of your being.

But have a look at what it meant for Peter. Verse 20. Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. This was the one who had leaned his back against Jesus at the supper and had said, Lord, who is going to betray you?

When Peter saw him, he asked, Lord, what about him? It's almost like he's forgotten the reality of Jesus' offer of grace.

[19:21] Something else, someone else matters to him. In John, there's this sort of undercurrent of this rivalry between him and John, the beloved one. Peter earlier hears about his untimely, unpleasant death and he wants to compare with John.

But Peter wants to do something completely on the periphery. He focuses on that matter. And so what does Jesus say? He replies in verse 22, If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?

He completely shuts him down and says, it's none of your business. What does he say? He says, follow me. Peter, if I am your king, if I am the lord of your life, and even though you are awful, I still love you, focus on nothing but following me.

Follow me. I think there are three trajectories that Jesus calls people to follow him in this passage. I'm going to briefly mention the first two and then go in and zone in on one.

Feel free to come and grab me after if you want to ask more about the first two. Number one, following Jesus looks like leaning into community. There is a clear correlation that this passage connects between a follower of Christ and his community.

[20:48] And that's what we actually see earlier in Peter's restoration. Feed my sheep, feed my lamb, take care of my sheep. So the believer is to love and lean into relationship with other believers.

Number two, self-denial. In verse 18 to 19, Jesus prepares Peter for the ending that is about to unfold. And it's quite unpleasant.

And Jesus says to Peter that he will eventually stretch out his hands. And those who know what lies for Peter is that he dies on an upside-down cross, hands-wide.

Like it says in Luke 9 to 10, self-denial is the response as a follower of Jesus, taking up our cross. But the last one I think will shock you, and you might think it's really odd, but it's this.

Have breakfast. Do you remember Jesus' response when they realised it was him? It wasn't first, hey guys, I've just revealed myself to some of you.

[21 : 56] Why can't you tell it's me? This is, remember, the third time that he's appeared. Do you need to go to Specsavers? It wasn't a rebuke though either, was it?

He didn't smack the back of their heads. He says in verse 12, They knew it was the Lord Jesus, not just because of the signs, but because this is the Lord who engages with them by inviting them into relationship.

There's something that we as the reader, excuse me, has to see that the image and symbol of their relationship being breakfast. Why is it breakfast? Why is it bread?

This is a culture where hospitality are about feasting. It's like the Prime Minister inviting you to his house for a bowl of oats every day.

Breakfast is ordinary and regular, but the extraordinary fact is that you're having porridge with someone who matters.

[23 : 04] Have confidence. Have confidence that following Jesus starts and continues by having breakfast with Jesus, remembering that his bread, his body was broken for you.

And it continues that way. It started by you loving him and having a relationship with him, and it doesn't stop. It's the regular rhythms of a relationship with the extraordinary one, the creator of the earth and the heavens.

Jesus Christ, who is the saying yesterday, today, and tomorrow, is people who can follow the whims and ways of our world and our own voices.

What we need is a regular digital reminder, not just a one-time diary entry. I want to specifically talk to the one who has been listening to sermon after sermon, who reads the Bible and is tired.

You know John 3.16. You know that eternal life is for the one who believes, but you really aren't feeling it. You feel like your relationship with Jesus is a little dry, so you've stopped valuing the Bible, church is just optional, rather than essential.

[24 : 29] This is for you. The measure of your feelings, nor how tight you grasp onto Christ, is not what keeps you in Christ, but by his measure of endless love and abundant grace, and how he has grasped hold of you.

Don't let those feelings or doubts define your relationship with Jesus. Your part is to simply not let go, to follow him.

Follow me, he says. Sometimes we doubt the means because we have no zeal. Reading the Bible today, it didn't feel like much. This passage is saying, zero in.

Don't doubt what's keeping you, continuing with Jesus. Your will, your affections, your heart, your mind, all of it will come in alignment with Jesus as you continue to seek his grace.

Don't doubt the means of preaching the gospel to yourself daily. Don't give up gathering with his people. Seeing Christ's character in a passage that you read, you know, the next steps that we keep mentioning about aren't for you to tick a to-do list box so that you can earn your way to Jesus.

[25 : 51] They are there to encourage you to position your life in a way that helps you build confidence in the grace that you have already received in Jesus.

It's a means of grace to see the signs of Jesus again, to see his character, his promises. This is the regular notifications versus the one look diary.

Be regularly notified to be confident of life and grace in Christ. This is how David Mathis puts it in his book, Habits of Grace.

I can flip a switch, but I don't provide the electricity. I can turn on a faucet, but I don't make the water flow. There will be no light and no liquid refreshment without someone else providing it.

And so it is for the Christian with the ongoing grace of God. His grace is essential for our spiritual lives, but we don't control the supply.

[26 : 54] We can't make the favour of God flow, but he has given us circuits to connect and pipes to open expectantly. Our God is lavish in his grace.

He is free to liberally dispense his goodness without even the least bit of cooperation and preparation on our part. And often he does.

But he also has his regular channels, and we can routinely avail ourselves to these revealed paths of blessing or neglect them to our detriment.

Reading the Bible is not just about consuming the knowledge but hearing the words from whom you have received grace. Confession comes not from a place of guilt and penance, but confidence that because of God's grace, he will forgive.

Gathering with his people on Sunday or with your community group is not your weekly social club, but the flock of broken people who regularly share the news of grace.

[28 : 03] You know that frozen yogurt place? They have yogurt on tap, and all you want to do is rest your head under that tap, mouth wide open. Grace is on tap.

Jesus is inviting you to do what seems impossible. It's having frozen yogurt for breakfast, mouth right under the tap. Friends, we've had a whole turn of John, and I want to ask you this.

What has it been in this series that has grown your confidence about Jesus? What has made you more confident that he is God, he is your Lord and your Saviour?

What has made you more confident about the grace that Jesus offers? What has made you more confident about living a life with and for Jesus?

What has made you more confident than the eight years he willrando has good news. So in Sinarsi your life we've had this beginning how many questionsution and ■■■sten are left up what has made you more confident for her life and LYMART once again I want you to see what his head partner along■■■ for his job in the Dr knocks in the industr