



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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“Maintaining Christ Confidence”

How does one maintain Christ confidence when what we believed did not happen in the way we thought it would happen? We ask, "Why?" even though that's not our best approach. A better way is to ask, "What happened?" We ask that, too.

As Christians, we pray, believing with all the faith we can muster and utilizing all we know to date. Some of us have been through many times of this and have been moved to trust in “the faith of Jesus.” Nevertheless, when everything that can be shaken starts to shake us to our foundation, we need to believe Jesus and enter the mind of Christ in order to believe what Jesus believes. With such shaking, our confidence may falter, not necessarily in Christ for our salvation, but as to having our prayers heard and answered. We know that salvation rests on the Covenant (the New Covenant in Christ's Blood) and not on anything in ourselves. It is by grace, and the New Covenant is a bond in blood that cannot be broken. Jesus is Surety of this Covenant and it is ratified and sealed/certified. Our security is not in our grip on Christ. Our security is in His grip on us.

No, this is more about 1 John 5:13-15:

These things have I written unto you believing [the believing that leads to/proceeds from God's inbirthing of faith] on the name of the Son of God; that you may know [oida] that you have eternal life, and that you may believe [commit oneself trustfully to] on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that whenever we ask/request anything according to His will/pleasure, He hears us: and whenever we know that He hears us, whenever/whatsoever we ask/request, we know [oida] that we have the petitions/requests that we ask/request of Him.

The Holy Spirit ratifies the New Covenant, bearing witness to our spirit that we are the children of God. (Romans 8) By God's grace, we believe. This believing is continual. We are to continually believe. But life and death, loss and disasters, betrayals and scandals, sin and God's “fatherly displeasure,” shake that to the point that we believe, but we need help to continue, to

persevere in the faith. God will meet us in our need, be it for grace and strength, or forgiveness and forgiving. (2 Timothy 2:1; 1 John)

Recently I found a little note I had made to myself. It was about confidence in the face of death.

Jesus' father dies and we never hear of him again. John the Baptist dies and we must think about Jesus' response to the news (which as God, He already knew). Lazarus dies and is resurrected.

We know nothing about Joseph's death. He was the husband of Mary, Jesus' mother, but not the biological father of Jesus. Joseph died, most likely before Jesus' public ministry began. Jesus is referred to as "the carpenter's son" but we don't hear about Joseph himself. What we know is that even at twelve, Jesus knew He had to be in His Father's house, and Mary and Joseph should have known that too. At twelve, Jesus became a Son of the Law. Jesus had an awareness of who He is and who His Father is, but the loss of an earthly father can, for us, be soul-shaking, causing us to lose our balance and our equilibrium. Jesus had the Holy Spirit without measure.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth...And of His fullness have all we received, and grace upon grace. (John 1:14, 16)

When Jesus was told by His disciples of John the Baptist's death (Matthew 14:1-14), He got in a boat and withdrew to a place of solitude, a desolate place. John died a terrible death, having been beheaded at the order of King Herod. Herod succumbed to the seductive wiles of Salome. We know that Jesus had the power to get His cousin out of jail, even to prevent the manner of John's death. We also know that Jesus and His Father are one; that Jesus was always in accord with His Father's will. We also know that He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But the old was passing away and the new had arrived.

Jesus wanted to be alone, in the Presence of His Father. But soon the crowds found Him, and Jesus saw the crowd and had compassion on them. He healed the sick. He ministered. He held to His mission, to the Plan.



When Lazarus lay dead in the tomb, Jesus is chided by Mary and Martha. He loved this family. If He had been there, Lazarus would not have died. That was their faith. And they believed in the resurrection as something in the future. Jesus wept. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, an event which triggered the religious/political upheaval which would culminate in the crowds crying, "Hosanna!" and then crying, "Crucify Him." Jesus entered Jerusalem as prince of peace, riding on a donkey. The crowd had wanted a man of war riding on a white horse to defeat the Romans and be their Deliverer.

I thought: How does one maintain confidence when what we believed did not happen in the way we thought it would happen? We know that God knows all things. We ask, "Why?" "What happened?"

For so it seemed good to Him...

Matthew 11:26 (eudokia); Psalm 119:67-71.

Many around the world have suffered extreme disasters and loss. Many are working through hard issues of faith and struggling to keep believing in such times of adversity. What helps us maintain confidence in the face of unexpected death and loss, betrayals and scandals, sin and failings? How do we hold to the faith?

1, We must trust in the goodness of God, in His wisdom to discern good and evil, that in Him is no evil. His love covers a multitude of sins. His love does no harm. Just as sin pervades and corrupts our human nature, the vastness of God's love must pervade our very being until perfect love casts out fear. We must both bow in His holy Presence and allow that Presence to envelop us as we move forward until we shall "see His face." Revelation 21:3-6; Revelation 22:1-5.

2, God is our Father, the Holy Spirit our Comforter, and Jesus, the Consolation of Israel. Let God reveal His love. Come alone, come apart, and come away. Mark 1:35. Be still, be quiet, listen, and seek the LORD. Isaiah 30:15; Zephaniah 3:16, 17; Psalm 46:10.

3. Jesus provides the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures. John 14:6; Romans 15:4

4. He carries us. Through the shadows of the valleys and the hollowness of death, He carries us. Through betrayals and scandals, He carries us. Through the days of our lives, He carries us. Proverbs 3:26; Philippians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:8.

5. The Word of God includes examples to encourage us, and also to warn us. Learn from the life of Paul (Philippians) and Peter (1 Peter) and others. Learn from Jesus who said that in this world we will have tribulation, but we are to cheer up because He has overcome the world. (John 16:33) Keep focused on Jesus: believe in Him, believe Him, and believe what He believes.

6. The atoning and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ took place once for all time, never needing to be repeated. It was both necessary and sufficient. We must know what Jesus accomplished. We must allow the Holy Spirit to apply to our lives what Jesus accomplished in our behalf for His glory. John 17:3. Know Him. To understand the ways of the LORD, we turn the focus to knowing God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

7. God's love envelops and sustains us, refreshes and restores us. So we keep believing in His Name, ministering in His Name. Psalm 62:5; Matthew 14:1-14.

Not long after my father died, I was asked to be the main speaker at a conference in the Bahamas. The conference was a week long. I was in no shape emotionally and arranged for a wonderful woman and speaker to fill the need. God "shelved" me for three years. Years later,

the LORD let me know that if in fact I had ministered in my pain, I myself would have been healed and ministered to. Jesus ministered in His pain, enveloped in His Father's love for Him. He knew. He entrusted Himself to His Father. Note well.

"The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind."
Mary Elizabeth Shipley 1873



Just the Messenger,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

You are good, and do good;
teach me your statutes...It is good for me that I have
been afflicted; that I might learn Your statutes.

Psalm 119:68, 71

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