

“Confident!” A sermon by Lee Ireland
Cathedral City Community Presbyterian Church
June 17, 2018
2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17

Let us pray: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

Confident. Paul is confident. Paul’s confidence comes from his belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that Jesus died and was raised to new life by God to show to all the world the love of God. Paul says: **For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all.**

Paul is confident in his belief, so confident that even though he was tortured, whipped, jailed, and stoned, he kept on proclaiming Christ – as he does in today’s reading from his letter to the church at Corinth. He was confident in his faith in Jesus Christ.

Not everyone is nearly as confident as Paul is about his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Paul knows this for he says that: **we walk by faith, not by sight.** In other words, Paul has faith that Jesus is the Son of God. He doesn’t want us to be concerned about what the world may think or ‘see’.

When I read these words about walking by faith and not by sight, I’m reminded that we all do this in our lives all the time. For example, if I get up in the middle of the night, I don’t turn on any lights because I don’t want to wake up Linda. I don’t need to turn on any lights because I know the house well enough to walk in the dark without bumping into anything. That takes faith.

Do you walk by faith or by sight? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and was raised from the dead to show God’s love for you and me? For some people, it’s a fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Their faith, like Paul’s, is based on this information. For others, they believe what is a fact for many is not a fact for them. Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is a myth, a story that’s not true.

Which camp do you fall into – belief that Jesus died and was raised from the dead or that the story is a myth?

For Paul, Jesus’ death meant that Jesus ultimately took on our death when he died and when Jesus was raised from the dead, Jesus gave us new life as well. That new life is how Paul ends today’s verses: **So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!**

Paul became a new creation when he heard the voice of Jesus on the road to Damascus where Paul had a faith conversion. Prior to accepting that Jesus was the Son of God, Paul did everything he could to punish and discourage those who were Christ-followers. He sent them to prison. He had them tortured. He was out to destroy those who followed and believed that Christ was the Son of God.

Once Paul accepted Jesus as the Son of God, Paul became a new creation. He did a total turn around. He stopped persecuting Christians and started preaching Christ. Paul had an unstoppable faith in Jesus Christ. He was motivated to tell others the story

of Christ's life, death and resurrection. As I read, Paul says **the love of Christ urges us on.**

Paul is confident. Paul is motivated. Paul saw his life and other people differently because of his faith. What about you?

We may be intimidated by Paul's life and faith, his commitment to Christ. Rather than compare ourselves to Paul, remember that Jesus says we need the faith of a child. Children don't need facts and figures, they simply accept and believe. Once you accept and believe that Jesus ultimately took on your death when he died and was raised from the dead to give you new life, you have faith. It's that simple.

Just believe it and you will become a new creation. You will see things differently.