

**Sunday, January 24, 2010**

**Our Confidence**

We have some big goals this year as a church family. First, we want to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and walk in genuine relationship with him and one another. Secondly, we want to grow in number and effectiveness. Numbers alone will not do. We want to touch the people God loves with the Gospel, get them rooted and grounded in the church, and equipped for life through evangelism, fellowship, and training. Thirdly, we want a new facility to house the people who are coming; your friends, families, co-workers, neighbors, and those you meet along the way. Our present facility will not be able to facilitate sustainable growth. We can get them here but we won't be able to keep them. While we don't have the money to do this, we do worship Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord our Provider. Our goal must be bigger than we can accomplish without God. We must be reduced to faith, i.e. if he doesn't show up we're finished. That's a good place to be. Our confidence must be in Christ alone.

What is the basis of your confidence in God? When you face problems in your life that you've prayed about and things just don't seem to be getting better, where do your thoughts go? It's amazing how easily the enemy can try to come in and trip us up by getting us to look at things through a wrong mindset. We say that our trust is in Christ alone but when things don't go right we can look to ourselves for the remedy. We can get introspective on what will make God listen to us. Consider the Old Testament. It is three times as thick as the New Testament and was written as a directional sign for the coming Messiah. Paul writes in Colossians 2:17 when referring to different legal points of the law that distract us; *These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.* Then the writer to the Hebrews (10:1a) says, *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-- not the realities themselves.*

When we look to the shadow to give us the lion share of what to do in a given situation, we are in error. We don't look at the shadow when we have the reality in front of us. We don't keep looking at the sign when we've arrived at our destination. When we fall into sin, we need to repent, not come up with a game plan of how we'll do better the next time. **Romans 8:1-4** *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.* Life according to the Spirit means that we are in right relationship with Christ our Savior and Lord. A preoccupation with self will knock you out of the saddle every time. God just wants us to walk in relationship with him.

Our desire for our church to grow in every way and get a new building is not something we can accomplish in the natural at this time. It requires faith. We must walk in the confidence of knowing that he is directing our steps and that our faithful participation is pleasing to him. This life in the Spirit requires our purposeful participation. A casual approach allows too many things to slip through the cracks. We must live proactively. Like the computer's windows program, we need to allow the proactive participation program to continually run even when you have other programs running. When you're at work, when you're at play, when you're shopping, when you're relaxing, when you're out on a date, keep in tune with the Spirit of God who never leaves you and is always engaged in your best interest and everybody else you come in contact with. A proactive heart recognizes that God is always speaking and stays alert for incoming bulletins. Keep your finger on the pulse and be ready to respond at a moment's notice. Hearing the voice of God and obeying his promptings makes for a very exciting life. Just ask Jesus! He loved his life and wants us to experience the joy he had as he did what the Father told him to do and said what the Father told him to say.

There is a world around us waiting for us to become who we were always created to be. They're coming! Throngs of people that we touch with our faith in action. Get ready and expect divine appointments and divine set ups this week. Walk in confidence and pray for us to reach our goals. Ask the Lord to fill you with his Spirit and direct your steps and he will. If your natural inclination is to question your confidence, ask yourself if you are looking to the shadow or the reality.

Supporting Scriptures:

**Philippians 3:1-9; Hebrews 4:9-16; Hebrews 10:16-25; I John 3:16-24; I John 4:7-21; I John 5:14-15; Luke 10:1-9; Luke 10:16-17**