

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: Confidence In God: Revelation 15:1-4

The word "confidence" literally means "freedom of speech, openness." When you are free to speak, then there is no fear and you have confidence. A believer can come with boldness (same word as "confidence") to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) with openness and freedom and not be afraid. We have this boldness because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19). Therefore, we should not cast away our confidence, no matter what the circumstances might be. We should not have confidence in ourselves, because we are too prone to fail but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ who never fails.

Because of this confidence in Christ and this confession of Christ, we can experience joy and hope (Hebrews 3:6). The writer exhorted these suffering saints to enjoy their spiritual experience and not simply endure it. Jesus Christ is the beloved Son over His house, and He will care for each member of the family. He is the faithful High Priest who provides all the grace we need for each demand of life. As the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:19-20), Jesus Christ is using the experiences in His people's lives to equip them for service that will glorify His name.

In other words, those who have trusted Christ prove this confession by their steadfastness, confidence, and joyful hope. They are not burdened by the past or threatened by the present, but are "living in the future tense" as they await the "blessed hope" of their Lord's return. It is this "heavenly calling" that motivates the believers to keep on living for the Saviour even when the going is tough.

The wandering of Israel in the wilderness is a major topic in this section. Two men in that nation - Caleb and Joshua - illustrate the attitude described in Hebrews 3:6. Everybody else in Israel over the age of twenty was to die in the wilderness and never enter the Promised Land (see Numbers 14:26-38). But Caleb and Joshua believed God and God honored their faith. For forty years, Caleb and Joshua watched their friends and relatives die; but those two men of faith had confidence in God's Word that they would one day enter Canaan. While others were experiencing sorrow and death, Caleb and Joshua rejoiced in confident hope. As believers, we know that God is taking us to heaven, and we should reveal the same kind of joyful confidence and hope.

Ephesians 5:15-17- Walk in Wisdom

Circumspect comes from two Latin words which mean "looking around." The Greek word carries the idea of precision and accuracy. "See that you walk carefully, with exactness" is the meaning. The opposite would be walking carelessly and without proper guidance and forethought. We cannot leave the Christian life to chance. We must make wise decisions and seek to do the will of God.

Ephesians 5:14-15 are related. Paul appeared to be saying, "Don't walk in your sleep! Wake up! Open your eyes! Make the most of the day!" It is sad to see many professed Christians "drift" through life, like sleepwalkers, who never really make the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him. Paul presented several reasons why we should be accurate and careful in our walk.

It is a mark of wisdom (v. 15). Only a fool drifts with the wind and fade. A wise man marks out his course, sets his sails, and guides the rudder until he reaches his destination. When a man wants to build a house, he first draws his plans so he knows what he is doing. Yet, how many Christians plan their days so that they use their opportunities wisely? True, we cannot know what a day may bring forth (James 4:13-17). But it is also true that a planned life can better deal with unexpected events. Someone said, "When the pilot does not know what port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind."

Life is short (v. 16 a). "Buying up the opportunity - taking advantage of it." An old Chinese adage says, "Opportunity has a forelock so you can seize it when you meet it. Once it is past, you cannot seize it again." Our English word opportunity comes from the Latin and means "toward the port." It suggests a slip taking advantage of the wind and tide to arrive safely in the harbor. The brevity of life is a strong argument for making the best use of the opportunities God gives us.

The days are evil (v. 16 b). In Paul's time, this meant that Roman persecution was on the way (1 Peter 4:12-19). How foolish to waste opportunities to win the lost when soon those opportunities might be taken away by the advances of sin in society! If the days were evil when Paul wrote this letter, what must be their condition today?

God has given us a mind (v. 17 a). "Understanding" suggests using our minds to discover and do the will of God. Too many Christians have the idea that discovering God's will is a mystical experience that rules out clear thinking. But this idea is wrong - and dangerous. We discover the will of God as He transforms the mind (Romans 12:1-2); and this transformation is the result of the Word of God, prayer, meditation, and worship. If God gave you a mind, then He expects you to use it. This means that learning His will involves gathering facts, examining them, weighing them, and praying for His wisdom (James 1:5). God does not want us simply to know His will; He wants us to understand His will.

God has a plan for our lives (v. 17 b). Paul alluded to this plan (Ephesians 2:10). If God saved me, He has a purpose for my life, and I should discover that purpose and then guide my life accordingly. He reveals His plan through His Word (Colossians 1:9-10), His Spirit in our hearts (Colossians 3:15), and the working of circumstances (Romans 8:28). The Christian can 'walk carefully and accurately because he knows what God wants him to do. Like the builder following the blueprint, he accomplishes what the architect planned.

RULES FOR ENDING BAD HABITS

A first step to changing habits is to realize that all behavior is partly unconscious and mechanical. We are creatures of habit. This is why behavior and thought patterns are not easy to change. The unconscious component can be very deep and very old.

Understanding this helps you not to expect too much, too fast when attempting to change habits. It is a formidable task or there would be no need for most counseling centers, recovery programs. However, habits can change, as evidenced by thousands of people who quit smoking and drinking, quit eating junk food, improve their relationships, and more. So here are the rules:

RULE #1. DO NOT RATIONALIZE, DEFEND, JUSTIFY OR EXCUSE YOUR BAD HABITS - NO MATTER WHAT

This one hurts a lot! However, if you want to change a habit, you must not excuse the bad habit or tendency. Unfortunately, this is what many people do. The mind is very capable of twisting things to

make them more acceptable. It does this in dozens of ways that can all sound very sound and logical. Sometimes one's excuses are amazing to hear.

Excuses and justifications are really **hidden agendas** that people have, that often explain their bad habits. For instance, if you defend your alcohol-drinking or sugar-eating behavior, your hidden agenda is usually that you are addicted, but don't want to admit it. So people excuse or justify the behavior rather than expose the real truth or agenda.

Here are just a few examples of the way you may minimize, excuse, defend, justify or even encourage or allow yourself your bad habits. Note if you have ever used these excuses, as they will defeat you:

"We all are going to die anyway, so why not enjoy the bad habit?". "It's not that bad".

"Other people do it, so why should I worry about it." "I have many good habits, so a few bad ones are okay."

"Well, it is just the way it is", or "It's who I am, so leave me alone".

"I know very successful people with the same habit, so it must not be bad".

"I don't really want this habit, but since I have it, I won't worry about it as it bothers me to think about it too much".

"It really isn't that bad if I control it a little".

"Thinking about my habit makes me depressed, so I'd rather leave it alone".

"If I change, I might lose my friends, or my husband or wife, or my children".

"Quitting is scary, and I have a pretty good life right now."

Here are excuses people make to their friends and family:

"Everyone has some bad habits. These are just mine, so what is the problem".

"Don't bother me. You are not perfect, either. Who are you to tell me what to do or not to do".

"You are just jealous". "You just don't understand me very well, or you don't care about me".

"You obviously don't appreciate me very much".

"Why should I change, when you have not changed _____."

"Why not bother someone else for a change."

AND MANY OTHERS

All excuses for not changing behavior may make you feel better, but they all hold you back. Excuses are attempts to defend something for which there is no legitimate defense. To change any habit, give up your excuses. **Just give them up.** Stop using them and of course stop trying to come up with new ones. If you feel mentally weak or easily tempted, admit it. There is something refreshing about stating the truth.

Revelation 15:

At this point, John saw the seven angels holding the seven vials of God's wrath, poised for action. The wicked world is about to "drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Revelation 14:10); but before the angels pour out their judgments, there is an "interlude" of blessing. Before sending the "third woe" (Revelation 11:14), God once again reassures His faithful people.

John saw the believers from the Tribulation who had overcome "the beast" and his system. These are the people who "loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). Since they did not cooperate with the satanic system and receive the mark of "the beast," they were unable to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17). They were totally dependent on the Lord for their daily bread. Some of them were put into prison and some were slain (Revelation 13:10); but all of them practiced faith and patience.

This entire scene is significant of Israel following the Exodus. The nation had been delivered from Egypt by the blood of the lamb, and the Egyptian army had been destroyed at the Red Sea. In thankfulness to God, the Israelites stood by the sea and sang "the song of Moses."

The Tribulation saints whom John saw and heard were standing by the "sea of glass" in heaven (Revelation 4:6), just as the Israelites stood by the Red Sea. They were singing "the song of Moses" and also "the song of the Lamb." "The song of Moses" is recorded in Exodus 15, and its refrain is: "**The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation**" (Exodus 15:2). The 144,000 sang a song that nobody else could sing; but this is a song all saints can sing.

When Israel returned from Babylonian Captivity and reestablished their government and restored temple worship, they used this same refrain at the dedication services (Psalms 118; see especially v. 14).

In the future, when God shall call His people back to their land, Isaiah prophesied that they will sing this song again (Isaiah 11:15-12:6). "The song of Moses" is indeed an important song in the hymnal of the Jewish nation.

This scene would give great assurance and endurance to suffering saints in any age of the church. It is possible to be victorious over the world system! One does not have to yield to the "mark of the beast." Through the blood (of the Lamb, we have deliverance. Our Lord's work on the cross is a "spiritual exodus" accomplished by His blood. (Note Luke 9:31, where the word "decease" is exodus in the Greek.)

In their song, the Tribulation saints praise God's works as well as His ways. The earth dwellers certainly would not praise God for His works, and they would never understand His ways. God's works are great and marvelous, and His ways are just and true. There is no complaint here about the way God permitted these people to suffer! It would save us a great deal of sorrow if we would acknowledge God's sovereignty in this same way today! "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works" (Psalms 145:17).

The phrase "king of saints" can also be read "king of ages." God is the eternal King, but He is also in charge of history. Nothing happens by accident. The singers seek to glorify God and honor Him, the very praise the first angel proclaimed in Revelation 14:7. Antecedents of this song may be found in Psalms 86:9; 90:1-2; 92:5; 98:2; 111:9; and 145:17.

Revelation 15:4 is another anticipation of the kingdom, foretelling the time when all nations shall worship the Lamb and obey Him. This verse also announces that God's judgments are about to be manifested.