



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – March 16, 2023

The Lord be with you.

People say that you got to have self-confidence... That it's all about self-confidence. That if you don't have self-confidence that you're going to be insecure, that you're going to stumble through life and fail. And so when I was a teenager, I wanted self-confidence, and so I read books and magazines on how to build my self-confidence... Well, it took some time, but over the years, I found something much more wonderful than self-confidence. I began to discover God confidence. And let me tell you that God confidence works so much better than self-confidence. God confidence makes life an adventure.

So today, I wanna share with you a couple of verses of Scripture in which the Apostle Paul talks about God confidence and how we might have it. How we can go through life with a sense of security, a sense of ability, the sense that we can handle whatever happens. That's God confidence. I'm looking at 2 Corinthians Chapter 3:4-6. After Paul has reflected on the successful ministry at Corinth, Paul writes, "such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God, not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us. Our competence is from God. Who has made us competent to be ministers of a New Covenant" Now I want to read that first line again, Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Paul does not want readers to think that the success of is a ministry at Corinth, that it had anything to do with Paul's self- confidence. Paul says, it was confidence through Christ. That's where his confidence comes, confidence through Christ. I can do all things to Christ who strengthens me, Paul says in Philippians 4:13. It is confidence through Christ toward God. It is a confidence that comes from relying completely on God. This is what gives us the strength to handle anything that comes our way. Someone has called this apostolic swagger. I like that. To think that you and I can go through life with apostolic swagger. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

Paul continuous verse 5, not that we are confident of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us our competence is from God. Let me read that again. Our competence is from God. As a minister, there have been so many times I have not felt confident for things I had to do. As a parent, a husband, a friend, so many times I have not failed and I have not been competent, and I come back to this verse and I charge ahead. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, our competence comes from God. Because you see, when God



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gives us something to do, God makes us confident to do it. That's God confidence, that's a lot better than flimsy self- confidence.

Now, if you read all of this book Second Corinthians, you can't miss that the apostle Paul, that he is well aware of his weaknesses, his vulnerabilities, for instance, you just turn over the page in chapter verse 7, Paul calls himself a clay pot, just a plain earthenware vessel that contains the glory of the good news of Jesus Christ, the clay pot. Then in chapter 12 of the same book, verse 9, Paul writes, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. That's apostolic swagger. From time to time on these Selah podcasts, you will hear me quote, The Christian writer Henri Nouwen, I like his works and I got to spend some time with a person who knew Henri Nouwen. The first thing she told me about Henri Nouwen and is that he was a person who was well aware of his weaknesses, so that he ministered not out of self-confidence, but he ministered out of God confidence.

Now, I wanna finish the scripture as Paul writes, our confidence is from God who has made us competent to be ministers of a New Covenant. So what Paul is saying of himself is true of all believers, God has made us competent to be ministers of a New Covenant of grace. Relying on God to do his work in us. You see, this isn't just for some special class of people, that it's true for all of us who would follow Jesus, relying on him to work through us, our ministry, whether it's caring for a sick neighbor, teaching a children's Sunday School class, or telling someone the good news of Jesus Christ, it is God working through us, rather than us serving him. That is our confidence, as God makes us totally competent to do whatever God calls us to do. Take my voice and let me sing always only for my king. Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.