

**5/14/18**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

Having confidence in someone is a beautiful thing. At work when I have confidence in my fellow employees, I don't have to stress about deadlines. I don't worry about work falling through the cracks. Having trust in the people around me makes for a great working environment. Confidence in my spouse is even better. Not only do I trust my wife to be faithful to me, but we also work as a team on everything from raising our children to household chores to budgeting and planning for retirement. I thank God that our relationship continues to grow even after 41 years of marriage.

As the apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Rome, he identifies the ultimate type of confidence in a relationship. It is the trust and confidence that we can have in God. And God has worked hard throughout history to earn that trust. In a general way you can look at the Bible as God's resume' for why he can be trusted. Throughout history he showed his faithfulness to people like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David—as well as the entire nation of Israel.

God has proven himself trustworthy to you as well. Just look at the life of Jesus. He came into the world to be your Savior. He lived the life that God demands of you and then freely gave it on the cross to pay for your sin. He showed his power over death on Easter when he walked out of his grave as our champion. And he desires nothing more than a relationship with you that is based on trust and mutual love.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

Can you see how having a loving, trust-based relationship with God will result in joy and peace? The joy comes when we no longer have to live with guilt and shame over past transgressions. Instead we can live with a clear conscience looking to our future instead of our past. We also have peace in our relationship with God. With this newfound peace we see God as our ally, not our enemy. When

difficulties come in life, we don't run from God thinking he is punishing us, instead we run to him for protection, comfort and strength.

Working in the middle of all God's promises is the Holy Spirit. He works through God's Word and sacraments to do everything from convicting us of sin to comforting us with the gospel. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we recognize and trust Jesus as our Savior. It is also through Holy Spirit that we live in thanks for all that God has done for us.

One special gift that the Holy Spirit gives us is hope. This hope isn't just a feeling or expectation that something good might happen, but it is a confidence that an expected outcome will happen. We have a certain hope that Jesus will return sometime soon. We know that one day God will take us to be with him in heaven, just like he promised. We have hope as we lay hold of all of God's promises even when we experience pain and hurt and heartache.

I encourage you to make time each day to spend with God in his Word. It is in this personal devotion time that the Holy Spirit will continue to build your relationship with God and strengthen your faith in him. Find out for yourself the joy of living at peace with God with a certain hope for the future.

*Prayer: Dear Lord, I thank you that I can have complete trust in you. When difficulties and hardships come in my life, remind me to turn to you for all the help I need. Please continue to fill me with your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)*

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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