

ANAHEIM COMMUNITY CONNECTION (ACC) for October 18, 2020

Our focus for worship today is: *Confidence in God*

I. OPENING PRAYER:

Pray for an unshakeable confidence in our unchanging God when facing changing circumstances and challenges of our lives

II. COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

Share how you were shaken/impacted by the pandemic or other stresses that you faced this year.

Share how your circumstances above affected your level of trust in God. Has it *deepened* it or *dampened* it?

III. CHRIST CONNECTION:

PSALM 37:34-40

A. I AM CONFIDENT IN GOD'S WORK THROUGH QUIET DEPENDENCE & ENDURING OBEDIENCE

³⁴ Wait for the LORD and keep His way, And He will exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

The concluding verses of Psalm 37 contain an encouraging promise: *He will exalt you*. God will lift you up from your low position into His promised place in Heaven. Although we are lowly and undeserving sinners, His Word assures us that God will finish His final work of salvation in us. It is His work and not our work. *He will exalt*. He is the author and finisher of our faith. We will move from justification, in sanctification and, finally, to glorification at the end. But how are we to live in the day to day? We wait and keep His way. *Waiting for the Lord* means to anticipate with dependence by putting our hope in Him. One practical way we wait is through prayer in the midst of trying circumstances (as seen in the preceding verses 32-33). The word *wait* paints a picture of an animal crouching to ambush and capture its prey eagerly anticipating capturing the prize. In that same manner, we wait with expectation of receiving. It is not a matter of *if*, but *when* the Lord will accomplish His work.

This verse pairs these two imperatives *wait* with *keep* for they are inseparable. We don't wait passively, but actively. We keep His way as we wait on Him. We wait on Him through keeping His way. *Keep His Way* means to conform one's action or practice to God's way. We watch our lives to make sure it aligns with His instructions and guidance as outlined in His word. As a child follows the teacher's guiding dotted lines in learning how to draw, so we too follow God's instruction in His Word. Any attitude or action that strays outside His Word, we move it back to align to His guiding line. In other words, we *wait* by *watching* how we live His way. It's a daily pattern and habit of life. It's not flashy, but rather a simple formula for life. Waiting in quiet dependence on God. Watching our lives to obey daily. In doing so, we are promised life eternally in the security of God's place. While those that reject God's way – the wicked—ensure that they will be separated forever in judgment. By living out our dependence and obedience, we show God's powerful work in our lives, which will come to completion when He exalts us into His presence on the last day.

- Why do we find it difficult to wait on God? What aspects of life are you quietly depending on God even when there is external and internal pressure to rush?

- Share an example of how you are waiting on Him through obedience. How does knowing the end result help you to have enduring obedience?

B. I AM CONFIDENT IN GOD'S FUTURE SEEN IN A LIFE OF TRUSTING PEACE

³⁵ I have seen a wicked, violent man Spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil. ³⁶ Then he passed away, and lo, he was no more; I sought for him, but he could not be found. ³⁷ Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright; For the man of peace will have a posterity. ³⁸ But transgressors will be altogether destroyed; The posterity of the wicked will be cut off.

David testifies to the truth that he just proclaimed in verse 34. He has witnessed God's promises personally seen in the life and abrupt end of particularly wicked man. We don't know the identity of this man, but we can identify his distinct characteristics. Towards God, this man is *wicked* as one who lives godless life without regard for God and relishes sin with impunity. Towards his fellow man, he is a powerful tyrant – striking fear into the hearts of those who cross his path. On earth, his successes and influence appeared to grow as a flourishing green tree with deep roots. From the external perspective, his potential and ambition seemed to be limitless. Despite all this momentum, it all stopped suddenly. His success was no more. His influence was no more. For the man was no more. No evidence of his existence any longer. He was cut off from life. For he will be cut off eternally.

The future of the wicked is contrasted with that of the righteous. The *blameless* and *upright* have a future – posterity – that will last eternally. Everything in the life of the wicked will be destroyed and driven away. Their future is one who is cut off and banished in judgment for all eternity. Still, we must recall that the righteous man is made *blameless* and *upright* not by His own works, but by the work of the Lord. For the righteous man is a man of peace - with *peace* (shalom) speaking of harmony and wholeness. This peace isn't only with man but is primarily with God. He is a

man of peace for God is no longer at war with Him. God has made a way for peace through Christ's work on the cross. One who accepts the Prince of Peace becomes a man of peace. He is now a man displaying this peace in the midst of turmoil. He knows God will exalt him in the end and thus continues to wait on the Lord and keep His way. He looks beyond the temporal into the eternal abundance that awaits him in Heaven. Knowing he has peace with God, he lives not disturbed or perturbed by the temporal successes of the wicked on earth. Rather, he is at peace with his temporal situation, knowing he has ultimate peace with God. The psalmist calls us to *Mark and Behold!* Watch carefully and understand this type of life! Note the stark difference between the two lives and their corresponding futures. One life with burgeoning temporal prosperity but reaches a sudden and hopeless end. While the other life is waiting and living obediently for a peace that is experienced on earth and experienced fully in his eternal future.

- Share an example of someone (in life or in death) who reminded you of the fleeting nature of worldly successes.
- Are you a man/woman of peace? How should knowing your abundant eternal future impact the manner in which you deal with conflicts and disagreements in your daily life? Share a tangible way you can be at peace even in turmoil.

C. I AM CONFIDENT IN GOD'S SALVATION BY HIDING IN HIM

³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in time of trouble. ⁴⁰ The LORD helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, Because they take refuge in Him.

While the wicked will be cut off, the righteous will be saved. As indicated in verse 39, salvation is not earned but given. It is not *from us*, but *from the Lord*. He is the source and sovereign agent of salvation. For the righteous, the Lord doesn't just give us salvation, but is our salvation. In the time of adversity and oppression, the Lord is the stronghold of protection. Burdened by the attacks of the wicked, the Lord is our help and our deliverance. How are we saved? Is it by our courage, strength or faithfulness? No, we are saved by surrendering. It is realizing our true helpless state and clinging to our only strength, help and deliverer. As defenseless sheep, we must completely depend on the Lord as our salvation. Thus we take the simple step of surrender by taking shelter in the Lord. Covered by His person. Covered by His wounded hands and pierced body. Covered by His sanctifying blood. Covered in His perfect righteousness. Covered by the Lord. Covered in the Lord. In doing so, we are saved. Saved from the wicked and the attacks of the Wicked One. Saved from our own wickedness. Saved in His strength. Saved in our Savior. Saved and safe in Him forever.

- Why do you have confidence in your salvation? What does it look like when an individual accepts that their salvation from the Lord versus one who sees salvation depending on themselves?
- In what ways are you vulnerable to attack from the enemy? How are you taking refuge in Christ on a daily basis?

1 CORINTHIANS 7:17-24

When we say we are confident in God, it is also saying we trust that His will and assignment for us is good and glorifying to Him. To live in our current station (*married, single, widowed, divorced, mixed faith*) we must keep watch on our lives by aligning to the guidelines of His word in 1 Corinthians. We are reminded that we must maintain our undivided devotion to the Lord in whatever circumstance God has placed us. Further, the priority of our devotion must be clear in our relationships. Thus, we wait on Him in eager expectation that He will be glorified as we are obedient to His ways in our specific relationships.

- What are the obstacles to maintaining undivided devotion to the Lord in your current station in life?
- Share the preoccupations and obligations in your heart that compete with your devotion to Christ.

IV. CARE CONNECTION:

Spend time praying for:

- Confidence in God's work, promised future and salvation by showing it in our daily relationships
- Unity in the church
- Care needs / concerns
- Unbelieving friends & family
- All affected by COVID virus & illnesses
- Welcome Ministry