



Humble confidence.

That sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? You would expect to find 'humble confidence' alongside oxymoronic sayings such as 'actively dying,' 'only choice,' and 'friendly fire.'

There are other combinations that seem to make more sense: Audacious confidence, self-confidence, or even arrogant confidence. But humble confidence?!? Those two words seem like oil and water, north and south, hot and cold.

If we dig a little deeper into the origins of these words, however, we find that they are more compatible than we may initially think. The word 'humble' comes from Latin. It is built upon the Latin word 'humus,' which means 'ground' or 'soil.' (This is also where the word 'human' comes from). To be humble is to be grounded or down to earth. The opposite of humility is to be puffed up or above others.

The word 'confidence' also comes to us by way of Latin. This word is built on the Latin word 'fidere,' which means to trust. Confidence literally means, 'with trust' or 'to have trust.'

So, putting this all back together, we find that humble confidence means to be grounded with trust. Humble confidence is to be rooted with certainty or planted on a solid foundation.

Humble confidence, therefore, contains a question: What grounds your trust? Where is your trust rooted? Who do you trust?

Psalms 49:12-13a warns against trusting ultimately in ourselves: "Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the path of those who have foolish confidence..." When we trust in our own acumen, accomplishments, or abilities, we are bound to be disappointed. We were not made to be our own confidence. Trying to be both the source and the subject of our own trust leads us to exhaustion, anxiety, and doubt.

Psalms 146:3 warns against trusting ultimately in celebrities, rulers, and leaders: "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish." While God's Word invites us to imitate those who imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1), it can be a dangerous thing when our confidence rests solely on another human being. People fail us. Rulers can lead people to ruin.

Hebrews 13:6 offers us a solid foundation upon which we can trust: "So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" When we ground our lives on the Lord, we can have confidence. When our solid foundation is Jesus – the One who humbled himself to be born into the world, besmirched on the cross, and buried in the tomb – then we know that our confidence is in the right place. Because although humility drove Jesus to the cross and the tomb, the power of God vindicated him in victory on the third day!

Jesus is our humble confidence. Trust in Him because the Lord is your helper. Trust in Him and be set free from fear. Trust in Jesus and rejoice in His humble confidence.