



Herman Melville, author of the classic *Moby-Dick*, wrote a lesser-known novel in 1857 entitled 'The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade.' The book tells the story of a group of passengers aboard a boat traveling down the Mississippi River toward New Orleans. Along the way, each passenger aboard the boat encounters the enigmatic figure that is known as the confidence man.

Everyone who encounters the confidence man is posed with the same question: Should I trust him or not? The confidence man tries to borrow money from some people. He tells tall tales to others. He even puts on disguises and assumes different identities. Little by little, it becomes clear that this confidence man is devoid of truth and honesty, integrity and humility. Instead, he has nothing but confidence in himself and his ability to dupe others for his own gain.

Melville's confidence man is the antithesis of God's confidence man, Christ Jesus.

- Instead of possessing an independent confidence in himself, Jesus located his confidence in God the Father saying, "...not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:42)
- Rather than being full of falsehood and lies, Jesus showed and said that he was "...the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)
- Jesus, full of humble confidence, served others for their gain like when he washed the feet of his disciples: "He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him." (John 13:4-5)

Jesus humbled himself by entering into a creation which he himself made in the beginning. God incarnate, Jesus emptied himself of glory and majesty for a time so that in the fullness of time God's plan of salvation could be accomplished (Galatians 4:4-5). The humility of Jesus was seen all throughout his public ministry: He approached those who society had deemed unapproachable. Jesus loved the supposedly unlovable. He invested in the lowly and spoke the truth to the proud and arrogant.

Yet, Jesus had more than just humility. He also had confidence. The confidence of Jesus was located in God the Father and the Word of God. Jesus invited his followers to place their trust and confidence in the Father: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." (John 15:10) Jesus also trusted in God's Word like when he went toe-to-toe with Satan in the wilderness temptation.

Jesus is worthy of our worship and trust. And, through faith in the humbly confident Christ, we have a rock-solid foundation for our own humble confidence in him. Unlike Melville's confidence-man, heaven's humbly confident man – Christ Jesus – is good and true, merciful and kind. And, as we hear in Luther's Small Catechism, Jesus offers all this so that you "may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity."