

# KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

## ONLINE NOTICE BOARD – 59a

Paul had an unshakable confidence as he faced the future. Of course he had no more idea than you or I about what the future might bring. If he was to go by his past he might have every reason to worry or even despair. Remember what he tells us he'd suffered in the past: he'd been put in prison, flogged, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, often hungry and thirsty, cold and homeless. But none of these things unsettled his confidence as he faced the future.

His unshakable confidence was not *self*-confidence. He is quite clear about what he thinks of himself. He knew that when he wanted to do good he didn't; and when he tried not to do wrong, he often failed. He knew he was weak in himself. In fact he goes so far as to call himself the 'chief of sinners' and 'less than the least of all saints'. Whatever confidence he had it wasn't in himself!

But despite his past and despite having no confidence in himself he tells us that he has this unshakeable confidence, come what may, that not only deals with his self-doubts but also fills him with joy and peace. He often uses the word 'persuaded'. He is *persuaded* that the one in whom he has put his trust is able to guard what he has entrusted to him until the day of the Lord (2 Timothy 1.12); he is fully *persuaded* that what the Lord had promised he would also perform (Romans 4.21); he says, I am *persuaded* that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8.38-39).

This was Paul's confidence about his future. But as well as this confidence about his own future, he also has a confidence about the future of all those who, like him, have trusted themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. He encourages them time and time again with reassuring words: my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4.19); but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2.4-7). And that just about says it all!

Paul knew this unshakable confidence would carry him through the trials and tribulations he would face. He knew God would keep his promises. He

knew Christ had saved him. He knew the Holy Spirit would carry him through and never abandon him. He knew all this because he knew 'whom he had believed' (2 Timothy 1.12). This confidence can be ours. It comes by 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith'. Looking to him, trusting him, relying on him – because faith is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. (Hebrews 11.1) The word, *looking*, actually means 'looking away'. Not, of course, looking *away* from Jesus, but looking away from our troubles and cares and looking *to* Jesus! Remember Peter walking on the Sea of Galilee? Safe as long as he looked away from the waves and fixed his eyes on Jesus! And that is faith – looking to Jesus with trust and reliance, and putting no confidence in what we are or what we have done or what we may do in the future. That is faith.

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.