Greek Word Studies:

Confidence (3954) (parrhesia/parresia from pás = all + rhesis = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely. It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate) means in essence the freedom to say all. Greeks used parrhesia of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Speaking with plainness, openness and confidence (Acts 2:29). Speaking publicly or in the open (Jn 7:13, 11:54, 18:20) and then something done in public (Jn 7:26, Col 2:15-note)

Wiersbe...

When you are free to speak, then there is no fear and you have confidence. A believer can come with boldness (same word as "confidence") to the throne of grace (He 4:16) with openness and freedom and not be afraid. We have this boldness because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (He 10:19-note). Therefore, we should not cast away our confidence, no matter what the circumstances might be. We should not have confidence in ourselves, because we are too prone to fail; but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ who never fails. (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor or Logos)

Wuest says parrhesia is...

freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance...free and bold speaking; speaking out every word. Its dominant idea is boldness, confidence, as opposed to fear, ambiguity, or reserve. The idea of publicity is sometimes attached to it, but as secondary.

Boldness - fearlessness in the face of danger, with daring or courage.

Candor - unreserved expression

Confidence - mean a state of mind or a manner marked by easy coolness and freedom from uncertainty, diffidence, or embarrassment. You can always be sure of the mood of a human leader, but you can always be sure of God's loving welcome.

Adam Clarke adds that parrhesia modifying draw near means to do so...

with freedom, confidence, liberty of speech, in opposition to the fear and trembling of the Jewish high priest. Here, nothing is to be feared, provided the heart be right with God, truly sincere, and trusting alone in the sacrificial blood.

Parrhesia originally meant frankness, freedom in speaking or fearless candor but came to denote boldness, confidence or openness in action. Stresses faith in oneself and oneâ€™s powers without any suggestion of conceit or arrogance

Parrhesia originally referred to a manner of speaking that neither concealed nor omitted anything, and thus conveyed the meanings of frankness, plainness, or openness. For example in the Gospel of John the disciples told Jesus that instead of speaking in enigmatic figures of speech, He was now speaking plainly (parrhesia) (Jn 16:29) The sense of openness sometimes conveyed the meaning of speaking openly in public or publicly (Jn 7:26, Acts 28:31) referring respectively to the boldness of Jesus and Paul in public or open teaching. Parrhesia in some contexts conveyed the sense of courage, confidence (Acts 4:13, 1Jn 3:21) or boldness (Ep 6:19, "fearlessly" in Ep 6:19NIV-note). Openness of speech in Christianity evolved to mean confidence before man and before God, in God's case this openness made possible because He graciously accepts those who come to Him through His Son, the Great High Priest.

In classical writings slaves did not have the privilege of bold speech before the master. Or consider the movies you've seen of egocentric, self-consumed tyrants like Henry the VIII of England, where not only did the servants not speak before this king, neither did high officials unless beckoned by him to do so. How different is the speech of believers, who are bondservants of Christ, servants of the Most High God, and yet with all the privileges of a son or daughter of God, so that they can openly speak endearments such as “Abba”!

Christianity, far from constraining believers, liberated them and enabled them to speak openly and with complete confidence before God because of their exalted, eternal position in Christ, God's beloved Son (cp 2Co
Pulpit Commentary writes parrhesia denotes “the entire freedom with which we unburden, in the presence of an intimate friend, all which can weigh upon our heart.”

Vine...

(parrhesia) primarily means liberty of speaking boldly, but has the general meaning of confidence.

McGee...

Parrhesia denotes the freedom of speech which the Athenians prized so highly. They were perhaps the first to feel that the average citizen should have freedom to speak.

Bullinger mentions the relationship of eleutheria and parrhesia writing that...

eleutheria... (and) eleutherios, (refers to) speaking or acting like a free man, frank. The figure is so called, because the speaker or writer, without intending offence, speaks with perfect freedom and boldness. Eleutheria is therefore the bold reprehension of free speech. It is called parrhesia, free spokenness, openness, boldness, frankness. (Bullinger, E. W. Figures of Speech Used in the Bible)

BDAG...

1) a use of speech that conceals nothing and passes over nothing, outspokenness, frankness, plainness

2) openness in public (Acts 28:31)

3) a state of boldness and confidence, courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, esp. in the presence of persons of high rank....before humans (Acts 4:13, Philemon 1:8, Ep 6:19)...before God (Ep 3:12, 1Ti 3:13, He 10:35, 3:6, 4:16, 10:19, 1Jn 2:28)

TLNT...

In Greek literature, the first meaning of parrhesia is political: the right to make one’s thoughts known, to say what one will. It is a citizen’s privilege, the sign of his political liberty, characterizing the democratic regime of the polis (city). The citizen has the right to express his opinions freely in the marketplace. This freedom of speech implies the truth of what is said, so that parrhesia means â€œcandor, straightforwardnessâ€...To speak candidly, proclaim the truth, and eschew evasions and lies exposes a person to danger (Josephus, Ant. 16.377) and presupposes the overcoming of obstacles; hence the third nuance of parrhesia: â€œhardiness, courage, audacity, confidence.â€ According to Wis 5:1, â€œThe righteous person stands boldly (en parrhÃ“sia) before those who have tormented himâ€.

This freedom of language, synonymous with candor (Aristotle, Eth. Nic. 4.3) is sometimes contrasted with timidity or self-consciousness, sometimes with flattery (Dio Chrysostom 32.26â€“27). It is practiced between friends who are not afraid to blame each other as well as toward superiors, even tyrants, with whom one must guard oneâ€™s freedom of speech: â€œBoldness (eutolmia) and freedom of speech (parrhesia) are admirable virtues when they are addressed opportunistically to superiorsâ€ (Philos...). Even the servant, if he knows that he has committed no offense, retains this freedom of speech toward his master (Heir 6); â€œFamous people grant the humble free speechâ€ (Spec. Laws 4.74); â€œThe man who does not allow anyone in his household to speak freely is a petty tyrantâ€ (Spec. Laws 3.138). ParrhÃ“sia does not fear the widest publicity; it proclaims its convictions: â€œWisdom raises her voice publicly in the streetsâ€ (Prov 1:20); â€œLet whose actions benefit all use full freedom of expression; let them go out in public and converse with large crowdsâ€ (Philos, Spec. Laws 1.321; Plutarch, De exil. 16). (Spicq, C., & Ernest, J. D. Theological Lexicon of the New Testament 3:57. Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson)

NIDNTT...

Since in practice this freedom of speech encountered opposition from time to time, parrhesia acquired the further meaning of fearlessness, frankness. A negative overtone is also perceptible in some instances where
freedom of speech has been misused to the point of bluntness and shamelessness. In an extended sense parrhesia can mean confidence and joyfulness. The corresponding verb parrhesiazomai means to speak openly or boldly, and to have confidence.

The word group which is first found in Euripides and Aristophanes belonged originally to the sphere of politics. It signifies the democratic right of a full citizen of a Greek city-state (but not that of a slave or foreigner; Foreign): in the public assembly of the people one may speak out freely one’s opinion (cf. Polyb., 2, 38, 6). This right is the characteristic of a democracy, but there is the danger of misuse, as Plato shows (Rep. 8, 557b). Parrhesia played an important role in private affairs, where in the context of teaching on philia (love) it denoted the openness with which one met a friend (cf. Aristot., Eth.Nic. 9, 2). In the course of history a more moral concept evolved out of the originally political one which was of central importance in Cynic philosophy as the correlative to eleutheria, freedom (H. Schlier, TDNT V 874). Here parrhesia is no longer a civil right but the mark of someone who is morally free and who does not shun public attention.

parrhesia contains the ideas of â€œtrust in God, certainty of salvation, the conquest of the consciousness of sin, sanction and power to pray, and expectation of the futureâ€ (Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan or Computer version)

Maclaren...

The word (parrhesia) literally means speaking everything. You can easily understand how naturally that becomes an expression for the unembarrassed, unrestrained full out-pouring of a heart. You cannot pour out your heart in the fullest confidence to a person you do not respect, but if you get with some one you entirely trust, how swiftly the words flow, and how very easy it is to tell out the whole heart. Just so with this great word of the writer of this Epistle, descriptive of the temper and disposition with which men are to go to God â€œ with confidence, full, cheerful, and unembarrassed, and which expresses itself in full trust, exactly as one of the old Psalms says â€œ Ye people, pour out your heart before Him.â€ (Ps 62:8-note) Yes, let it all flow out, just as you would do to husband or wife, or lover, or friend (Ed: That is what is meant by bold speech!)

Under the Old Covenant when the high priest entered the Holy of holies and the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, he entered with trepidation and fear (including fear of death), lest possibly all the conditions for entrance had not been fulfilled. In the New Covenant, because of the finished work of our better High Priest, all the Jewish saints, were encouraged to come before the Lord at any time, especially the time of need. Only Christianity provides such boldness by sinful men before a holy God, and that boldness is only possible because of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Mark 8:32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Comment from Expositor’s Greek Testament: He (Jesus) spoke the word plainly, unmistakably. This remark was rendered almost necessary by the choice of the word didaskein (didasko = to teach) in Mk 8:31. This word in ordinary Greek usage means frank, unreserved speech, as opposed to partial or total silence. Here, as in Jn 11:14, 16:25, 29, it means plain speech as opposed to hints or veiled allusions, such as Jesus had previously given as in Mk 2:20 (bridegroom taken away).

John 7:4 "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

Comment: One source says that â€œPublicâ€ was considered anything in the presence of ten Israelites.

John 7:13 Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

John 7:26 "Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?"

John 10:24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

John 11:14 So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,
Comment: Here the idea of parrhesia is openly, without figurative language so that it could not be misunderstood.

John 11:54 Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.

John 16:25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father.

John 16:29 His disciples said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech.

John 18:20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

Acts 2:29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Acts 4:13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Comment: They spoke with freedom of speech, liberty of language, the courageous and unhindered freedom of speech in proclaiming the word about Jesus. Here of the confidence and forthrightness with which the apostles spoke under the prompting of the Holy Spirit (Bruce).

Acts 4:29 "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 28:31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

2 Corinthians 3:12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

2 Corinthians 7:4 Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

Ephesians 3:12-note in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Ephesians 6:19-note and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel

Expositor's Bible Commentary: Parrhesia is a favorite word of Paul, meaning frankness and uninhibited openness of speech (TDNT, 5:883). No doubt the apostle is thinking especially of his appearance before the imperial authoritiesâ€”perhaps even the emperor himselfâ€”when he would have the opportunity to reveal the secret of the gospel. He had been chosen to carry the name of Jesus "before the Gentiles and their kings" (Acts 9:15) and this was to be the climax of his distinctive ministry. Meanwhile, as he awaited his trial, he wanted to make the most of every occasion that could be capitalized in the interests of the kingdom (cf. Acts 28:31).

Philippians 1:20-note according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Comment: Parrhesia here is speaking all things, forthrightness of speech; then more broadly, boldness, especially the courage appropriate to the free man, which acts openly even in a hostile atmosphere.

Colossians 2:15-note When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great
Confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Philemon 1:8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper,

Hebrews 3:6-note but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house-- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Comment: Its (parrhesia) dominant idea is one of the boldness and confidence which are exhibited in freedom of speech, the unreserved, unfettered flow of language which is opposed to fear, ambiguity, and reserve. This confidence or boldness would characterize the speech and behavior of the Jew who was actually a possessor of salvation and not merely a professor of the same, but would soon disappear in the case of a mere professor should he turn away from Messiah back to the sacrifices. (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans or Logos)

Hebrews 4:16-note Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 10:19-note Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

Hebrews 10:35-note Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

Comment: The word (parrhesia) means "freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance." The writer exhorts the Jewish recipients of this letter not to throw away that cheerful courage, that boldness, that free and fearless confidence which they were displaying while they were enduring this persecution referred to in He 10:32, 33, 34. (Ibid)

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

Comment: Parrhesia in this context "speaks of the heart attitude of a saint who lives so close to the Lord Jesus that there is nothing between him and his Lord when He comes, nothing of known sin in his life when the Rapture occurs. This is the kind of saint that keeps a daily check-up on himself as to sin in his life. He maintains a constant yieldedness to and dependence upon the Holy Spirit to show him sin in his life and give him the grace to judge it and put it out." (Ibid)

Marvin Vincent's note on parrhesia...

It is opposed, as here, to aschunomai to be ashamed, in Pr. 13:5, where the Septuagint reads â€œa wicked man is ashamed (aischunetai) and shall not have boldness (parrhesian). Also in Philip. 1:20. Compare 2Cor. 3:12. The idea of free, open speech lies at the bottom of the word: coming before Godâ€™s bar with nothing to conceal. The thought is embodied in the general confession of the Book of Common Prayer:

â€œThat we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our Heavenly Father, but confess them.â€

So John Wesleyâ€™s Hymn:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
â€™Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am, â€”
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

Comment: Note the repetition of the phrase (or similar phrase) have confidence or boldness in 1John (1Jn 2:28,
3:21, 4:17, 5:14)

1 John 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Comment: This is not primarily God's love for us or our love for Him, but the love which God is in His nature, produced in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The saint who in the future Rapture of the Church will approach the Judgment Seat of Christ with boldness (parresia, freedom of speech) is the saint who in his earthly life has had the love that God is in His nature brought to its full capacity of operation by the Holy Spirit in his life. That fullness of love results in a life devoted entirely to the Lord Jesus. The word speaks of unreservedness of speech, a free and fearless confidence, with nothing to hide or be ashamed of. In that kind of life, the saint has nothing of which to be ashamed at the judgment of his works. That kind of life is a Christ-like life, and that makes the saint as he dwells in the midst of a world of sinful people, like Christ. And the Lord Jesus will not at the Judgment Seat of Christ condemn those who while they lived on earth, were like Him. (Ibid)

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Parrhesia - 6 uses in the Septuagint - Lev 26:13; Esth 8:12; Prov 1:20; 10:10; 13:5; Job 27:10

Proverbs 1:20 (NAS) Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square;
Proverbs 1:20 (Lxx translation) Wisdom sings aloud in passages, and in the broad places speaks boldly.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede;
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead:
His blood atoned for all our race,
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.
Arise, My Soul, Arise
by Charles Wesley

Throne of grace - To the lost sinner, God's throne is a throne of judgment, but to the believer, it is a throne of grace, to which he or she can come for help with all our burdens and needs.

Throne (2362) (thronos) is a relatively large and elaborate seat upon which ruler sits on official occasions. Figuratively throne speaks of authority and power, while grace conveys the idea of sympathy and understanding, and our great High Priest Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment of these traits. Jesus Christ fully God and fully Man, but a Man of infinite power on one hand and a Man with complete and utter sympathy toward mere men! After the resurrection, Jesus encouraged His disciples with the emboldening truth that...

All power is given to Me, in heaven and in on earth (Matthew 28:18)

Of grace - This construction is referred to as a genitive of quality, i.e., a Θεόθρονος characterized by grace.Θεοθρονος

Come forward to God's throne, where there is grace. (TEV)

Wiersbe makes the point that...

The mercy seat on the ark of the covenant was God's throne in Israel (Ex 25:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22), but it could never be called "a throne of grace." Grace does not veil itself from the people. Grace does not hide itself in a tent. (Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor or Logos)