

Pilgrim's Progress - Part 3

by Alfred P. Gibbs

The sermon explores the journey of Graceless as he learns about salvation, the dangers of sin, and the importance of faith in Christ through the allegory of the Pilgrim's Progress.

Duration: 56:38

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 8:20, Isaiah 61:10, Matthew 6:33, Acts 13:38, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Pilgrim's Progress"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of having patience and putting faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. He emphasizes that salvation comes through God's grace and that believers are kept by God's power, enjoying spiritual pleasures as children of God. The preacher then shares a story about a man trying to put out a fire with buckets of water, but instead, the fire grows hotter and higher. The interpreter explains that the fire represents the burden of sin, and the man's futile attempts to put it out symbolize human efforts to overcome sin. The sermon concludes with a description of the pilgrim's progress, where the burden of sin is finally lifted, and the pilgrim looks forward to being with Christ.

Transcript

Tonight, we continue our talks on the Pilgrim's Progress, and we shall follow the adventures of the Pilgrim as he leaves the gate, makes his way through the Interpreter's House, and then comes to that wonderful place where he sees a sight that causes his heart to warm within him, and the burden which all his prayers and tears and good works had failed to dislodge rolls off his shoulders, and he sees it again, no more forever. Let us pay good heed to all we see and hear tonight, for this is the most important part of the Pilgrim's Progress. Last night, we saw Graceless coming to the gate, over which were written the words, Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

In response to his knock, a voice inquired, Who is there? Graceless answered, I am a poor burdened sinner from the city of destruction. My name is Graceless. The clothes of my own righteousnesses are of silty rag.

I have a great burden on my back, and I have been sent by evangelists who told me you would give me instructions as to how to get rid of this dreadful burden of my guilt. May I come in? And you will recall that a man named Goodwill came to the gate, and with a smile of welcome on his face, held out his hand and said, Welcome, Graceless, in the name of the Lord Jesus, him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. And as Graceless took Goodwill's hand in his, and was about to cross the threshold of that gate, you

recall Goodwill jerked him in, which caused Graceless to inquire, Why did you pull me in like that? And Goodwill told him that Satan had built a castle within bowshot of this gate, and whenever he saw a poor pilgrim about to escape from his clutches by crossing the threshold of this gate, he would send his evil servants to the top of that castle with their bows and arrows, if perchance they might kill the pilgrim before he could take that step and be delivered from their power.

And you recall that Graceless thanked God for his wonderful escape. We pointed out last night the three arrows that the devil uses to keep people from putting their trust in Christ. The first arrow was the arrow of laughter.

And oh, how many have lost their souls because they were afraid that if they came to Christ and trusted him as their Savior and confessed Christ as the Lord of their lives, their friends would laugh at them, and they'd lose their place in society, lose their popularity with the old gang. And oh, how many have lived eternally to regret that dreadful decision. The second arrow was the arrow of pleasure, a favorite arrow of the devil, who tries to make out that when a person becomes a Christian, he loses all the pleasure, all the joy of life.

Don't you ever believe it. For Christians have joy and pleasure. No unsaved person can possibly understand.

Godliness is profitable, having the promise of the life that now is, and the life that is to come. Don't allow the devil to cheat you out of your soul by suggesting that if you become a Christian, you won't have any more fun or pleasure, that life will be a miserable thing, nothing of the kind. And that third arrow, the arrow of plenty of time.

The devil will allow you to take your place as a lost and guilty sinner, allow you to believe that God loves you and that Christ died for you, but will assure you there's plenty of time to get saved. And so he will try to get you to put off the matter of your soul salvation to a more convenient season, which very often never arrives. And the soul dies in his sin and is lost forever.

Post not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest what a day may bring forth. Today is God's time of salvation. Do what graces did.

Take goodwill's hand in yours. Step through that threshold and be delivered from these devil's arrows. And now goodwill pointed out the way that led before him.

He said, this is the way, walk ye in it. You will notice, said goodwill, that the way is straight and narrow. It turns neither to the left nor to the right, but goes right on.

This is the path that your savior spoke of when he said, enter ye in at the straight gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be which go in there at. But straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

And continued goodwill, as you walk along this pathway, you will come to a great castle owned by the interpreter. Knock at his door. Tell him who you are and why you have come.

And he will take of the faith of Christ and reveal them unto you. Pay good heed to all you see and all you hear in the interpreter's house, for those sights will stand you in good stead for the remainder of your journey to the celestial city. But what about the burden of my sin? Inquired graceless.

Goodwill with a smile replied, be content to bear it until you will come to a place where, after seeing a wonderful sight, your burden will fall from your shoulders and you'll never see it again. In the meanwhile, pay particular attention to all the interpreter shows you in his wonderful castle. Then goodwill bade him good Godspeed and graceless went on his way.

Presently, ahead of him, he saw the lovely castle that goodwill had spoken about. This castle had many doors. Going to one of these doors, graceless knocked.

A voice inquired, who is there? Graceless answered, my name is graceless. I'm a sinner from the city of destruction, the place of all evil. I was sent from thence by evangelists to the gate and from the gate by goodwill, who told me, sir, you would take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto me.

May I come in? The door opened and the interpreter himself appeared, smiled a welcome and said, come in, thou blessed of the Lord. I have no greater delight than to take of the things of Christ and reveal them unto pilgrims such as you. Come in.

And graceless entered the interpreter's house. Before we enter with him, let us explain of whom the interpreter is a picture. The interpreter is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God, whom our Lord Jesus said he would send after he had returned back to heaven.

Answered our Lord concerning the Holy Spirit, when he has come, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on me, of righteousness because I go to my father, of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.

He shall glorify me. And so on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the third person in the divine trinity, equal with the father and with the son, came into this world. What to do? To show to unsaved people their true condition in the sight of God.

To convince them of their sin and need. To show them that apart from God's redeeming grace, they are helpless, hopeless, hell-deserving sinners. And then, to point them to Christ, who loved them, who bore their sin, whose death upon the cross has satisfied all the claims of divine justice, and whose resurrection and high priestly ministry makes it possible for every sinner trusting Christ that moment to be saved eternally.

And then when a sinner trusts in Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells that believer, heals him unto the day of redemption, imparts to him a divine nature in the strength of which he can live to the glory of God and do those things that are pleasing to him. He loves to take of the word of God, and from that word make it clear and living and powerful in our experience. And so, as we go through the Interpreter's house, let us ever remember of whom the Interpreter is a picture and pay good heed to all this holy heavenly guest seeks to impress upon our hearts and upon our minds.

The first thing the Interpreter did was to take Jesus into a room where there was a picture. A veil was across this picture. The Interpreter ordered one of his servants to light a candle and remove the veil.

And as that veil was removed from the picture, Jesus was asked to describe what he saw. Jesus answered, I see a man standing with his eyes to heaven. The world is behind his back.

The best of books, the Bible, is clasped fondly to his bosom. He stands as though he pled with men, and a crown is above his head. You have correctly described the picture, said the Interpreter.

Then Gracious said, Sir, will you please tell me what this means? Yes, said the Interpreter, I will. This is a picture of a true Christian, and you can always tell whether a person is a that you have seen in that picture. Inasmuch as you see that man's eyes toward heaven, so a true Christian is distinguished by the fact he is heavenly minded.

He is more interested in spiritual and heavenly realities than he is in the things of earth. Sexual affection on things above, not on the things on the earth. Inasmuch as you see that the world is behind his back, so each child of God has turned his back upon the world that crucified his Lord.

I can say with the Apostle Paul, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Inasmuch as the Bible, the best of all books, is clasped fondly to his bosom, so every Christian is distinguished by the fact he loves the word of God. He can say with David, O how love I thy law! It is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my pathway. Inasmuch as he stands as though he pled with men, so the greatest delight of the child of God is to witness to the saving and keeping power of his Lord and Savior, and to lead other souls to put their trust in him. That crown of gold over his head signifies that every child of God is looking forward with eager anticipation to the coming of the Lord Jesus, who promised, if I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.

And every faithful child of God is looking forward with glad anticipation to that day when he shall receive a crown of righteousness that the Lord shall give to all who love him, who serve him, and who wait for his appeal. Now as we look at this picture, let us ask ourselves the question, does this picture represent me? Am I a true child of God, interested in heavenly reality, having turned my back upon the world and its folly, its pomp, its popularity, and its power? Do I love the word of God, love to study its pages, and seek to obey its precepts? Do I love to witness to my Lord and Master, and seek to win souls for him? Am I looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus? You will recall that the interpreter caused a candle to be lighted. That candle, of course, illustrates the word of God, which the Spirit of God himself inspired holy men to write.

The Spirit of God only uses the word of God to impress upon our hearts the lessons he would have us learn. These are the days when men and women are rising up and saying they have a new revelation from God. But remember what the Bible says, to the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.

The Holy Spirit will never contradict himself. The Holy Spirit only uses what he has already caused to be divinely inspired and written in the word of God, to teach the people of God the lessons that they must learn. The interpreter then took Gracious into a room, the filthiest room Gracious had ever seen.

Dirt lay inches thick on the floor, so much so that Gracious wrinkled his nose in disgust and said, my, what a filthy room this is. And no wonder, replied the interpreter, from the time this room was built, it has never been cleansed. Can it not be cleansed? Look, said Gracious, there is a man standing with a broom in his hand, whose name is Law.

Could he not cleanse this room? We will see, replied the interpreter. So he called to this man and said, Law, come in with your broom and see if you can clean this room. In came Mr. Law, and immediately he began to sweep violently up and down that filthy room with that large broom of his.

Did he clean it? Of course not. All he did was to cause the dirt that lay inches thick on the floor to rise in great big clouds, so that Gracious was almost choked by reason of the dust raised by that man's violent sweeping. Please tell that man to stop sweeping, urged Gracious.

I'll be choked in this dust. The interpreter, with a smile, said to the man, stop sweeping. And presently the dust subsided to the floor, and the room was just as filthy as it had been before.

Only Gracious had been made to realize how exceedingly filthy that room was because of the violent sweeping of Mr. Law's broom. He then inquired, is there no other way of cleaning the room than this? The interpreter answered, that way, that method, could never clean this room. There's only one way by which this room can be cleaned.

And then he called a woman whose name was Grace. She had a bowl of water in her arm. He said, will you come and clean this room? In came Grace.

First thing she did was to sprinkle with the water the floor of that room, and then she took a broom, and she was able to clean that room so that not one spot or speck remained. It became a fit habitation for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And when the room had been perfectly swept and perfectly clean, Gracious inquired, sir, will you tell me what does all this mean? Yes to the interpreter, I will.

This room is a picture of the heart of every unsaved person. And all that dirt illustrates the sins which that person has committed, which has made his heart exceedingly wicked and sinful and filthy. Inasmuch as this room was never cleansed from the day it was built, so man's heart is not cleansed from birth, and it is cleansed by the gospel of the grace of God.

The man with a broom illustrates the Ten Commandments or the law. And all the law can do is to stir up the dirt that is within. And through the law makes sin exceedingly sinful.

Many a person, in a vain effort to cleanse his own life, tries to keep the Ten Commandments. But the more he tries to keep those Ten Commandments, the more he realizes how lost and guilty and helpless he is to cleanse himself. Paul said, I had not known sin except the Lord said thou shalt not covet.

So that the law made sin exceedingly sinful to me. It stirred up within me all those latent evil lusts and desires. And the more I tried to keep the law, the more I realized how utterly impossible it was that God demanded what I could not possibly give.

That's what the Bible means when it says, by the law is the knowledge of sin. No person could ever be saved by keeping the law. For in the first place, not one of us has ever kept the law.

And the breaking of that law makes us sinners and criminals in the sight of God. And all our future good conduct can never atone for the many, many times in which we have broken the holy law of God. But said the interpreter, the woman with the water illustrates the gospel of the grace of God.

For the good news that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And when a poor, lost, and guilty sinner

believes the good news that Christ on that cross, the holy, sinless Son of God, bore his sins and took his place and died in his stead, and received him by faith as his Savior, that moment his heart is cleansed from sin and becomes the fit habitation for the Lord of life and glory, who now dwells in the heart by faith. Thus, in this picture we see the difference between law and grace.

The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law can never save any man, however hard he tries, however good he may imagine himself to be. But any poor, lost, and guilty sinner, believing the good news of God's salvation, and trusting Christ as Savior, and resting in his finished work, is saved by God's grace.

For by grace are you saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law makes nothing perfect, but when the soul receives the Son of God, that moment his sins are gone.

He is at peace with God. He is the possessor of eternal life, not on the basis of his own good works, but on the basis of God's infinite, marvelous grace. And now, graces was taken into a room.

In this room there were two boys, one named Passion, the other named Patience. Passion was discontented, restless, grumbling. Every now and then he would say, petulantly, give me mine now.

I don't want to wait till next year. I want my treasure now. Give it to me now.

Give it to me now. Patience, on the contrary, sat quite quietly and contentedly. Graces inquired of the interpreter, why is that boy so restless and discontented, and the other boy so quiet and so content? The interpreter replied, the master of the house has promised each of those two boys a wonderful treasure next year.

But Passion doesn't want to wait for his treasure next year. He wants his now. That's why he's discontented.

That's why he's so grumbling. But Patience is content to wait until the good pleasure of the master of the house. As Graces watched, he saw three men staggering under the weight of sacks which they held on their shoulders.

When they came to where Passion was seated, they poured out at his feet the contents of these sacks. Gold, silver, precious stones, popularity, power, all those things which the natural man imagines will give him complete satisfaction. And as Passion saw all this display of wealth, he clapped his hands with joy, picked up the silver coins and the golden coins, allowed them to fall from his hands.

Every now and then he would sneer at Patience and say, why don't you get while the getting's good? A short life and a merry one, that's my motto. Make hay while the sun shines, never eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. But Patience replied, I'm quite content to wait until the good pleasure of the master of this house.

And then a strange thing happened. As Graces watched, in a moment, without any warning whatever, all this treasure that so delighted the heart of Passion turned into a great heap of rust and dust and rags and ashes. And as Graces watched, he saw angels were comforting Patience and assuring him of treasure in heaven that would never fade away.

Graces inquired, oh sir, will you tell me what this means? The interpreter answered, these two boys illustrate two kinds of men and women that live on the world today. Passion illustrates that person who has no time for God, no time for Christ, no time for the Holy Spirit, no time for the Word of God, no time for thought about his soul's salvation. All he wants is a good time, the pleasures of this world, its pomp and popularity and power, and all its wealth.

He gives no thought to death and to eternity. All he's concerned with is enjoying to the full extent all the evil desires of his own heart of rebellion against God. Inasmuch as you saw that in a moment of time, all those riches turned to rust and dust and rags and ashes, so when death comes in, the man of the world will have to leave it all behind.

All that which he lived for will turn into a heap of worthless junk. He'll go out into a Christless eternity to weep and wail and gnash his teeth for his abysmal folly. He gained the world, but he lost his own soul.

Patience, however, illustrates a child of God who, having trusted Christ as his savior and owned him as the Lord of his life, seeks to lay up for himself pleasure in heaven, where the moth and the rust do not corrupt and where the thief does not break through and steal. And while the man of the world is in a lost eternity, the child of God is in the presence of the Lord Jesus, which is far better. Enjoying the riches of God's grace, enjoying the presence of the Savior who loved him and gave himself for him.

Now, look at those two boys and be honest with yourself. Ask yourself the question, which of those two boys represents me? Am I like passion, living only for the things of this life? The best definition of a fool I ever heard was this. A fool is a person whose plans all end in this life.

If all your plans for your life end at death, you are very foolish indeed. But if your plans for your life link you with Christ in heaven for all eternity, then you are wise. If thou shalt be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself.

If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Make sure that you are like patience, that you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus and that you are saved by God's grace, kept by God's power, in the enjoyment of all those spiritual pleasures that belong to the child of God. And then you can look forward with glad anticipation to the coming of the Lord Jesus or at death to going to be with Christ, which is very far better.

Now, Gracious was taken into a room and in that room there was a fire burning against the wall. A man was standing alongside of that fire pouring bucket after bucket of water on it with a view to putting it out. But the strange thing was, instead of that fire being put out by those buckets of water, the fire rose higher and higher and became hotter and hotter.

This moved Gracious to inquire, Sir, how is it that fire is not put out in spite of the attempts of that man to do so with those buckets of water? Come with me, answered the interpreter, and I'll show you the reason why. And now the interpreter showed Gracious that that fire went right through the wall. And on the other side of that wall, unseen to him at first, he saw a man standing with a pitcher of oil.

And from that pitcher there flowed a continual flow of oil, which not only prevented that fire from going out, but which kept that fire rising higher and higher and becoming hotter and hotter. Gracious inquired, please tell me what this means. The interpreter replied, that fire is the fire of salvation, which God kindles in the heart of each sinner the moment he trusts Christ as his Savior.

But no sooner is that fire kindled, than along comes this man, who represents the devil, being put out by those buckets of water. The fire rose higher and higher and became hotter and hotter. This moved Gracious to inquire, Sir, how is it that fire is not put out in spite of the attempts of that man to do so with those buckets of water? Come with me, answered the interpreter, and I'll show you the reason why.

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Gracious inquired, please tell me what this means. The interpreter replied, that fire is the fire of salvation, which God kindles in the heart of each sinner the moment he trusts Christ as his Savior. But no sooner is that fire kindled, than along comes this man, who represents the devil.

Ah, said the devil, I'll put out that fire of salvation in that child of God's heart. I'll pour a bucketful of difficulties on that child of God and make the Christian life so difficult for him, he'll only be too glad to give it up and come back again and become my servant. And so he pours bucket after bucket of difficulties on the life of that child of God.

Does that put out the fire of salvation? No indeed. I'll try a bucketful of temptations, says the devil. And so he pours bucket after bucket of temptations on the life of that child of God.

Does that put out the fire? No indeed. I'll try a bucketful of doubts. And so he tries to becloud the child of God with doubts.

Doubt of the word of God, doubt of the deity of Christ, doubt of the love of God, and so on. Does that put out the fire of salvation? No. Why not? Because, said the interpreter, that man on the other side of the wall, unseen to you at first, illustrates the work that the Lord Jesus is doing behind the veil of heaven, on behalf of all those who put their faith and their trust in him.

Behind the veil of heaven, the Lord Jesus ceaselessly intercedes on behalf of all who know him as their savior. Can a child of God sin? Yes, alas. What happens when a child of God sins? Is he lost again? Does he have to be saved all over again? No.

The Bible says if any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The Lord Jesus is our advocate. He takes our part.

And by his ceaseless intercession in heaven, maintains the work he has begun. He that has begun a good work in you, will continue it, will perform it, will complete it in the day of Christ. This illustrates that glorious truth of the eternal security of every believer in the Lord Jesus.

That fire of salvation will never be put out, because we read, wherefore he, Christ, is able to save them to the uttermost, that cometh to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. And so through the ceaseless intercession of the Lord Jesus, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, every child of God is kept by the power of God, through faith, unto that salvation which shall one day be revealed, when our Lord Jesus Christ himself shall come, or the believer goes to be with Christ, which is very far better. Let this picture encourage any here, who are afraid that if they trust Christ as their savior, they won't be able to hold on.

And by and by they'll give him up, and become worse than they were before. Remember, when you trust Christ as your savior, he lights that fire, and never allows that fire of salvation to die down. So take courage from this, and remember that Christ is not only able to save, but is able to keep, able to go on, able to keep the child of God growing in his grace, and in his knowledge, until traveling days are done.

And now, Graces was brought into a dark room. In that dark room there was a cage. In that cage was a man, upon whose face despair had indelibly imprinted itself.

As Graces saw him, he shrank back in horror, and then inquired, Who are you? And what are you doing in that iron cage of despair? The man replied in hollow tones, I am now, what I once was not. Why, what were you, and what are you now? And how do you come to be in that cage? And the man answered, I was, once was a fair and flourishing professor of religion, both in my own eyes, and in the eyes of my neighbors. But when through the faithful preaching of the gospel, I discovered I was nothing but a poor, guilty, lost sinner, needing to be born again, instead of owning that fact, instead of coming as a sinner, and putting my faith and trust in Christ, my proud heart refused to bend.

I would not take my place as lost and guilty in the sight of God. I would not receive Christ as my Savior, and rely wholly and entirely upon what Christ did upon that cross, when he bore our sins, and took our place, and died in our stead. I hardened my heart against the Holy Spirit's convicting power.

And as the years went on, through my hardening of heart, through my rejection of Christ, my heart became harder, and harder, and harder, until now it seems I cannot repent. Here I am, shut up in this iron cage of despair. And then the poor man groaned, wrung his hands in despair, and cried bitterly, O eternity, eternity, how shall I grapple with the miseries that I must meet with in eternity? Oh, if I only had trusted Christ when I had my opportunity.

But now my heart is cold and silent. The Savior's pleadings have ceased, and I am doomed, doomed to enter into that dreadful blackness of darkness forever, to weep and wail in torment. Christian said, O my friend, it is not too late.

Christ, the Son of God, is merciful. If you call upon Him, He will save you. No, said the man, it's too late, it's too late.

It might have been once, but now it's too late, too late. And graceless, I can leave that man in the iron cage of despair. What does this mean? Just this, the Holy Spirit of God, through the preaching of the gospel, will convince those who hear of their need of God's saving grace, their need of the new birth, their need of being saved.

But if a person continually and willfully hardened his heart against the appeals of the Spirit of God, then through sin, his heart will be hardened, and by and by, he will no longer hear the knock of the Savior at his heart's door saying, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and sup with him, and he with me. Slowly as the years go by, his heart becomes harder and colder and more silent, and it seems as though this person has gone beyond the pale of God's salvation.

The same sun that shines upon ice and melts it, shines upon clay and hardens it. The same heart, when young and tender, will respond and be moved by the Savior's appeal as he tenderly and lovingly knocks at the door of our heart, will, if resisted continually, cause our hearts to be hardened through the

deceitfulness of sin. Oh, do not reject, do not despise, do not neglect this matter of your soul's salvation, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Beware lest this man's doom be yours.

Just now, your doubtings give o'er. Just now, reject Christ no more. Just now, open the door and let Jesus come into your heart.

And now, Graces was taken into a room. A man was rising from his bed, his hands shaking like an aspen leaf, his face betoken in terror, so much so that Graces inquired, What's the matter? Why are you so afraid? The man replied, I've just awakened from a dreadful dream. What did you dream? I dreamed the last day had come.

I was on earth, and the clouds were moving to and fro in a most peculiar manner. As I watched, I saw those clouds opening, and through the opening I saw a cloud of glory, and which was seated the Lord Jesus, accompanied by all his holy angels. As I watched, I saw those angels take trumpets.

I saw them blow upon those trumpets, and this was the sound I heard, Arise ye dead, and come to judgment. As I watched, I saw the graves opening. I saw the dead who had died without Christ, who had died in their sins, rising from those graves with bodies fitted for eternal destruction.

As I watched, I saw the sea opening up its depths, and those who had died in the sea came forth. As I watched, I saw the Lord Jesus take his seat upon a great white throne, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before that great white throne to be judged for their sins. I saw the angels bringing out books.

In those books were the records of all the thoughts and the words and the deeds of those who stood before the great tribunal. As I watched, I heard them say, Rocks, hills, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. But no rocks, no hills moved.

I saw the dead judged according to the record found in those books, and I heard the voice of him who sat upon that throne saying, Be gone from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. Prepare for the devil and his angels. And as I watched, the eyes of the Son of God came in my direction.

I tried to hide, but I couldn't. Those eyes pierced me to my inmost soul, and all my sins, long forgotten, crowded back again into my memory, and then they became a chain that bound me hand and foot. And then at my feet, a great pit opened up, and I fell into that pit, down, down, down to the dreadful eternity I knew I deserved to be in.

And then, thank God, I awakened and discovered it was but a dream. But what made you afraid? urged Graceless. Note the man's reply.

He said, What made me afraid was this. I knew when I faced the Lord Jesus on that great white throne, I faced him not as my Savior, but as my Judge. Mark this.

Those who die in their sins must meet Christ. Christ is the unescapable Son of God. And those that refuse to face him on earth, refuse to come and own their need to him, and trust him as their Savior, and rest in his finished work, must, if they despise, or reject, or neglect him, face him in the coming eternity, when the day of mercy is over forever.

And everyone will be judged then according to their works, and all those sins will receive in full the wages due to them. Don't let that day find you unprepared. Come to Christ now.

Listen to his voice as he says, Come unto me, all ye that labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Flee to those loving arms that were pierced for you upon the cross. Say to him, Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. Naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die.

And Christ will then save you, pardon you, cleanse you, and relieve you. He will become your Savior, your Lord, your friend, your guide, and your satisfying portion. And you'll never have to stand before that great white throne.

For Jesus himself said, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death unto life. Be warned by this man's dream, which will be the awful reality of those who die in their sins. And now graceless began to be concerned himself, and he turned to the interpreter and said, Sir, I realize now as never before how much I need to be delivered from this burden by guilt.

Can you tell me how I can get rid of this burden? Yes, said the interpreter with a smile, as he took him to one of the other doors of the castle. And opening that door, he pointed out to graceless the straight and the narrow path that led right from that door, and said, Walk along that narrow path until you come to a place where that burden will fall off your shoulders, and you'll see it again no more forever. What have you learned as I've taken you through this castle? Graceless answered, I have learned, O interpreter, there is only one thing worth living for in this life, and that is to be ready for eternity that is to come.

That's a lesson that I trust each one will learn who has been with graceless through the interpreter's house. And now graceless made his way from the interpreter's house down that narrow path until presently ahead of him he saw a hill, a hill lone and gray, and on that hill he saw a cross. Ah, thought graceless, this must be the place where they crucified the Lord of Glory.

This must be the place where they led him as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer is done, so he opened not his mouth. This is where they crucified the holy, sinless Son of God. I wonder why Jesus allowed himself to be taken by wicked men and nailed to that cross, and thinking about these things he presently found himself at the foot of that cross, and as he looked up by faith, not by his natural eyes, but by the eye of faith guided by the Word of God, he saw the Lord Jesus hanging on that cross in agony and blood, rejected by men and forsaken of his God, and as he looked he saw something on the Son of God that made his own heart warm within him, and what do you think it was? He saw that Christ was bearing on that cross.

Graceless saw that the Lord Jesus was bearing his burden of sin, and that when Christ, the sinless Son of God, went to that cross he knew all about graceless, and in wonderful love allowed God to take all graceless sins and put them on him, knowing that when he did this he must pay the penalty for the sins of graceless, he must die, he must shed his precious blood in order that graceless might be free, and when graceless realized that fact he said, Lord Jesus, I see it now. All my tears, all my prayers, all my good works, all my own good resolutions, my own efforts to rid myself of this burden have been in vain. I see now that on that cross thou didst bear my sins, in thine own body on that tree, and thou didst shed thy blood for my redemption.

I see, Lord Jesus, thou didst love me, thou didst give thyself for me. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for bearing my sins. Thank you for taking my place.

Thank you for dying in my stead. Thank you for paying my debt. Thank you for doing all the work needed for my salvation.

There's nothing left for me to do now but to trust you as my Savior, and, Lord Jesus, right here and now I trust you as my Savior. I rest in thy finished work for me. And what happened? Why, that burden that all his good works had failed to remove, rolled from his shoulders, rolled down that hill into an open grave, where he saw them again no more.

That's how he lost the burden of his sin, and that's how you may lose tonight the burden of your sins, by believing the good news of the gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried and rose again, and that the work of Christ, which he accomplished on that cross, satisfied every claim of a holy God against sin and the sinner. And God is now prepared, because his Son died and rose again, to save each believing sinner who will rest in Christ's finished work, and trust him as his Savior, and hold him as the Lord of his life. Will you do that? Do it right now.

From your heart say, Lord Jesus, just as I am without one plea, for that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. As he stood there, tears of joy rolling down his cheeks, three shining ones appeared to him. The first shining one said to him, Son, thy sins are all forgiven thee.

That's the first blessing a person gets when he comes to Christ. All his sins are forgiven. Why? Because Christ bore them in his own body on that tree.

Be it known unto you men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things. The second shining one stripped graceless of the filthy garments of his own self-righteousness, and clothed him with a garment of spotless purity, even the garments of righteousness and salvation. So that he could say now with Isaiah, I will greatly rejoice with the Lord before the Lord.

My soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness. The third shining one put a seal upon his forehead, an invisible seal, that marked him out as now belonging to Christ, which speaks, of course, of the sealing of the Spirit of God, by which every believer on receiving Christ as Savior is made and marked as the property of the Lord Jesus. The third shining one also gave him a robe, picture of the joy and the assurance of his salvation.

And then his name was changed. What is his name now? Christian. No longer is his name graceless.

He is now Christian. What made him a Christian? Was he doing the best he could? No. Saying his prayers? No.

Reading his Bible? No. Attending divine service? No. Resolving to live a better life in the future? No.

His good works? No. Baptism? No. Confirmation? No.

Church membership? No. What made him a Christian? Receiving the Lord Jesus as his own personal Savior and relying on Christ's work for him on Calvary made him a Christian. And that's the only way to

become a Christian.

No person is a Christian that has not had a dealing with the Lord Jesus for himself or herself. Oh that that day may dawn for you right here and right now. Do what graceless did.

Own yourself to be a poor, guilty, helpless, hell-deserving sinner and then rely on the work that Christ did for you on that cross as the alone foundation of your hopes of eternal blessedness. Trust him as your Savior and confess Christ as your Lord and then you'll be a Christian. Heaven-born, heaven-bound, and heaven-bent.

Here is the sinner's perfect plea. Here's a man who has found out what graceless discovered. He discovered himself to be what God had declared he was.

A sinner lost and guilty. Unable to do one thing to deserve God's mercy, pit only for eternal banishment from God's presence. But this man has a perfect plea as he comes to God through Christ.

And what is that plea? Just as I am. Without one plea, Lord Jesus, but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me or invitest me to come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. Will God save this man? Forgive him? Bestow upon him eternal life? Will he be born again? Yes indeed.

Soon as my all I ventured on Christ's atoning blood, God's Holy Spirit entered and I was born of God. Here is a decision, my decision. No one can make this decision for you.

You must make it for yourself. Note the wording of this petition and under many of these words you'll see a scriptural quotation which backs home the truth of what is stated above. Owning myself, not the other person, but myself, to be a guilty, lost, helpless, and hell-deserving sinner.

But believing that the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, there or carried my sins, took my place and died for me. Believing that, I now in simple faith receive him to be my own personal Savior and shall confess him as my Lord before the world. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Come to Christ now. Believe on him now. Trust him now.

Then confess him before others as the Lord of your life. Henceforth to live for the honor and the praise and the glory of that one who loved you, who died for you, and rose again. Then you'll be a Christian.

Then as a pilgrim you can make progress on heaven's highway until the celestial city is reached. May God grant it for his name's sake. Amen.

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