

Pilgrim's Progress - Part 4

by Alfred P. Gibbs

The sermon explores the transformative journey of Christian, emphasizing the importance of vigilance, true faith, and the challenges faced in the Christian life.

Duration: 58:20

Scripture: Psalm 50:5, Matthew 18:3, Matthew 18:20, John 3:3, Acts 2:44, Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Pilgrim's Progress"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the journey of a Christian pilgrim named Christian. Christian finds rest in a shady arbor built by the Lord of the hill, feeling refreshed and ready to continue his journey. Along the straight and narrow path, Christian encounters three men who are asleep and bound by chains placed by Satan. Instead of ignoring their plight, Christian is concerned for their salvation and tries to wake them up. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being born again, repenting, and accepting Jesus as the Lord of one's life in order to find the way to the celestial city.

Transcript

We now follow the adventures of the pilgrim whose name was changed from Graceless to Christian as he leaves the cross and makes his way toward the Castle Beautiful. In our last talk we showed how Graceless had his name changed to Christian. He came to the cross and when the Bible speaks of the word cross it doesn't mean a piece of wood shaped like a cross but rather the person who hung on that cross and the work he accomplished on the cross when the Son of God loved us and gave himself for us.

The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness to us which are saved it is the power of God. Only those who have come as sinners and had a personal dealing with the Christ who hung and suffered and bled and died and rose again are Christians. Let us make certain of this.

You recall as he stood before that cross three shining ones came to him. The first shining one said, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. The second one stripped him of the filthy garments of his own self-righteousness and clothed him with a garment of spotless purity which speaks of that righteousness of God which is given to all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

The righteousness of God which is unto all and upon all then to believe on his name. The third shining one put a seal upon his forehead speaking of the indwelling and the sealing of the Holy Spirit of God which takes place when a sinner trusts in God's beloved Son. Imparts to him a new nature in the strength and

power of which he can now live a life to the glory of the Lord Jesus.

And the third shining one also gave to him a roll, a piece of paper which speaks of the joy and the assurance of salvation. And then you recall his name was changed. Instead of Graceless, his name now is Christian.

And when Christian realized his blessedness he gave three leaps for joy And this is what he sang As Christian went on the straight and the narrow path he discovered on either side of that pathway there was a wall. The names of these walls were the walls of salvation. As he walked along singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord presently he saw three men lying alongside of the pathway fast asleep.

And while they slept Satan had come and placed chains around their legs and made them his prisoners. But of course they didn't know this they were fast asleep. When Christian realized their dreadful state what did he do? Did he say well thank God I'm a Christian and on my way to heaven and I'm not going to worry about anybody else going to a lost eternity? Why of course not.

When the love of Christ enters the heart that love goes out to all those for whom Christ died. And so when he saw those men in that perilous plight he shook them by the shoulders and shouted, wake up! Wake up! You are like men who sleep on the mast with a dead sea beneath you. Do you not realize that while you were sleeping Satan came and placed chains around your legs and made you his prisoners? Wake up! Wake up! And I'll help you off with your fetters.

The first man whose name was Simple awakened, stretched himself looked this way and that way and finally murmured I don't see any danger and he went to sleep again. The second man whose name was Slow gave a terrific yawn and then said I want a little more sleep and he went to sleep again. The third man whose name was Presumption got angry with Christian for having wakened him and he snarled What did you wake me up for? You mind your own business and I'll mind mine.

Every tub must stand on its own bottom and he went to sleep again. Were these men wise or foolish? Oh, you reply they were very foolish indeed. Indeed they were.

Do you think there are any people like this living in the world today? Yes. I wonder if any are in this room this very moment. We'll see.

The first man whose name was Simple said I don't see any danger and he thought because he didn't see any danger or feel any danger that he was in no danger. Many people are like that. They say but Mr. Preacher I don't see that I'm the lost and guilty sinner you try and make me out to be.

I'm not afraid of death. I'm not afraid of eternity. I don't see any danger and these people foolishly imagine because they do not see or feel their danger that there is no danger.

What a mistake that is. I had a little friend some years ago only five years of age. He was playing tag with some of his little companions around an open well a ground around which was loose and treacherous.

This little fellow not realizing his danger went too close to the edge of that well. The ground broke underneath him. He fell into that well and before he could be taken out he was drowned.

Did that little boy see his danger? Feel his danger? As he played around the edge of that open well? No. Was he in danger? Indeed he was. The fact he didn't see it or feel it was just too bad.

It didn't save him. He was lost. We are told the God of this age the devil has blinded the minds of them to believe not.

Lest they should believe and the light of the gospel should shine unto them. And the devil's great object is to blind people's minds to the truth of their real condition in the sight of God as being lost and ruined and guilty sinners and to keep them in a state of false peace to amuse them so that they will not think upon eternal realities. And thus he rocks them to sleep for we are told the whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one.

The second man named Sloth said I want a little more sleep. He was enjoying that sleep of his. Just as people do today.

If they were quite honest they'd sometimes say Mr. Preacher I appreciate very much you coming along and waking me up but you know I love my sins. I love the sinful pleasures of this world. And if you don't mind I'd enjoy them a little bit longer.

Come along sometime later on and wake me up. But just now I want a little more sleep. The third man, Presumption was the most foolish of all.

He got angry with Christian for having wakened him. I hope none of you will get angry with me for having wakened you up. For the fact remains if you're not yet saved you are asleep.

Sleep in the arms of the wicked one. And when a person is asleep his eyes are shut to his privileges to his responsibilities and to any danger that threatens. Our purpose in these meetings is to very kindly but faithfully take you by the shoulder and say to you as Christian said to those three men Wake up! Wake up! Wake up! But Presumption got angry with Christian.

He said in effect You mind your own business and I'll mind mine. I'll take my chance with the rest. I've got my own ideas and I don't relish you interfering with my affairs.

He went to sleep again. I wonder if there's anyone like that in this meeting who resists the truth of God being preached in such a way as to wake him up to a sense of his need and to a sense of his danger. The tragedy is this.

Christian had to leave those three men lying there fast asleep with the chains which the devil had placed around their legs still there. What a dreadful awakening will be theirs. As Christian continued his journey he heard someone climbing up from the other side of the wall Looking back to his astonishment he saw two men climbing up from the other side until they reached the top of that wall and then they jumped down into the narrow path and started to follow Christian.

Christian inquired Excuse me Who are you? Where are you from? And where do you think you're going? They replied Our names are Formalist and Hypocrisy We've come from the city of vainglory and we hope like everybody else we're on our way to the celestial city. Well, replied Christian one thing is certain and that is this You'll never get there the way you've started out. Why, what do you mean? The only way to enter the straight and the narrow path and make sure that you'll end in the celestial city is to come in through the gate that lies at the beginning of the way and that gate is the Lord Jesus who said I am the door by me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture He also said he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold but climbeth up some other way the same as a thief and a robber They looked at him incredulously What? You mean to say we've got to go all the way round to that

teeny weeny bit of a door that lies at the beginning of the way? Nothing doing.

All the people that come from our city take a short cut across the field and climb over the wall saves them the trouble of going all the way round to that little door and they added no doubt such a time honored custom will be honored by the Lord of the celestial city Christian replied not by the word of God stands for the word of God distinctly declares there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death My advice to you is to climb back over that wall enter in by the straight and the narrow gate that lies at the beginning of this pathway and then you'll have the assurance from the word of God that you will end in the celestial city to this good advice they replied with just a loud contemptuous laugh and then inquired are you on the narrow path? yes

replied Christian thank God I am well they said so are we you came in by the way you thought best we came in by the way that we thought best and after all it doesn't matter what a man believes providing he's sincere in his belief doubtless he'll get to heaven the same as everybody else not while the word of God lasts replied Christian and with this he had to leave both formalist and hypocrisy formalist represents those people today who instead of trusting in the Lord Jesus as their savior and his finished work as the alone foundation of their hopes of heaven trust in some form or ceremony performed upon them by somebody else such as baptism confirmation taking communion church membership there are literally thousands of men and women today who if you were to ask are you a Christian would

reply yes I hope so what makes you hope so? well I was baptized confirmed I joined a church and take communion regularly and these people vainly imagine that this will take the place of personal faith and trust in the Lord Jesus what a mistake hypocrisy represents those who make a mere empty profession but there's no reality to it they pretend to be what they do not intend to be on Sunday they attend divine service to look at them you would imagine they were Christians but on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday their lives deny what their lips profess and God says the hope of the hypocrite shall perish let each person here ask himself seriously the question am I a real, genuine, born again Christian or am I merely trusting in some outward form or ceremony

or trusting in a mere empty profession that lacks reality let the fate of these two men which we shall see later on be a warning make sure that you are really saved that you've come in by the door for only those that come in at the door shall end in the celestial city as Christian travelled along presently he came to a great hill very steep indeed called the hill of difficulty he noticed that the straight and the narrow path led right up that hill and so first refreshing himself at a spring which the Lord had provided at the foot of that hill Christian started to climb that steep pathway when formalist and hypocrisy came along and saw the straight and narrow path leading right up that hill and saw Christian climbing up that rugged pathway they looked at one another and laughed ha! if that

fellow had any sense he'd hunt around for a nice shortcut to avoid those difficult things let's hunt around and presently hypocrisy found a little pathway leading to the left called danger which he thought went all around the base of the hill of difficulty and left the road in the valley on the other side and thus he'd be able to avoid climbing that very steep hill of difficulty look said hypocrisy I found a road here called danger I found a road called destruction replied formalist doubtless this leads around the other side of the hill and meets the straight and narrow path in the valley beyond hypocrisy you take the road called danger I'll take the road called destruction and we'll wait for each other at the intersection of the narrow way what do you say? good! well goodbye hypocrisy

goodbye formalist and so they started on their several ways but instead of the road danger leading around the foot of the hill into the valley and meeting the narrow path beyond this pathway called danger led into a great plain filled with dark mountains where hypocrisy was miserably lost and after wandering to and fro trying to find but in vain the way back he fell a victim to his own bad folly and died in that great plain of dark mountains formalist on the contrary took the road to the right instead of that track leading around the foot of the hill into the valley beyond it led him into a great forest where very soon he lost the track and he too wandered around for several days with nothing to eat until at last he too died a victim of his mad folly and thus shall every mere hypocrite

and formalist perish for remember Jesus said to one of the most religious and moral of men verily verily I say unto thee except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God ye must be born again except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish only those who have come to Christ only those who have received Him by faith as their Saviour and rely upon His finished work only those that own Christ as the Lord of their lives shall find their way through the pearly gates of the glorious celestial city take warning from these two men and remember there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death but Christian found that hill very difficult indeed

first running then walking until by and by the path became so difficult all he could do was to clamber up on his hands and knees now the hill of difficulty as its name indicates illustrates those difficulties in the Christian life which the child of God must face don't ever get the idea that becoming a Christian is an end to all difficulty the Christian life is not an easy life Christian pathway is not a nice smooth level even pathway it leads uphill and those difficulties will appear as formidable as did that hill of difficulty to Christians but what is the child of God to do under those circumstances go right ahead for in climbing the hill of difficulty in facing the difficulties of the Christian life the child of God develops spiritual muscle which will stand him in good stead for the

still further difficulties that lie ahead fight manfully onward dark passions subdue look ever to Jesus he'll carry you through and so the child of God goes onward and upward in the strength of the Lord God seeking by God's grace to grow in his knowledge and to appreciate his love as he makes his upward, homeward and heavenward way halfway up this hill of difficulty Christian noticed an arbor or shady resting place in that arbor there was a bench and he seated himself on that bench this shady arbor had been built by the Lord of the hill for the refreshment of weary pilgrims for their light refreshment so that they could start on their way again Christian entered very thankful indeed to be able to sit down on that bench and rest from his weary labors by and by he felt quite refreshed

thought to himself well it's time I started on my way again but you know that bench felt just as comfortable as that bed of yours feels early in the morning when mother tells you it's time to get up I know I should be starting on my way said Christian but I think I'll just sit here a little longer I think I'll look at my robe realize afresh the assurance of my salvation I'll examine my robe and see it in it my perfect standing in Christ Jesus and as Christian became occupied both with his robe and with his robe a spirit of drowsiness came over him he became so occupied with his believing he forgot about his behaving so occupied with his standing he neglected his state so occupied with his position in Christ which was perfect he forgot all about his condition and before he realized what

was happening he soon fell fast asleep and as he slept his robe, picture of the joy and the assurance of his salvation fell from his nerveless fingers to the ground and of course Christian didn't realize this he was

fast asleep and there he slept for several hours until presently he was awakened by a voice which said go to the ant thou sluggard consider her ways and be wise that startled him another voice said it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed rubbing his eyes he jumped up and another voice said awake thou that sleepest and arise from amongst the dead and Christ shall give thee light and now thoroughly alarmed and realizing he'd wasted many precious hours in that harbor which was only intended for the light refreshment of weary

pilgrims Christian rushed up the remainder of that hill as hard as his legs could carry him he had almost reached the top to his astonishment he saw two men wild eyed and fearful running down the hill as hard as they could go Christian inquired who are you where have you come from and why are you running in the wrong direction they replied we're running in the right direction if you had only seen what we have seen you'd be joining us going down this hill what are your names our names are Timorous and Mistrust what are you looking so frightened about they replied as we reached the top of this hill away in the distance we saw a castle a beautiful castle and as we approached closer suddenly to our dismay right in the middle of the road were two huge lions and when these lions saw us they

lifted up their voices and they opened their mouths and they gave a terrific roar we thought our last moment had come and without waiting to investigate any further we turned tail and ran and we intend to keep on running till we get back again to the good old city of destruction Christian answered you talk like men who climbed over the wall not like people who came in through the gate at the beginning of the way that may be as you wish they replied this we know the further we go on this journey the more the dangers increase we're going home and they ran down that hill and left Christian alone now I can assure you Christian didn't feel very pleased at the prospect of meeting two lions so in order to comfort himself he felt in his pocket for his role but alas it wasn't there he felt in

other pockets it wasn't there my role is gone well poor Christian I've lost my role I can't go one step without that role oh what shall I do oh what shall I do I've lost the joy and the assurance of my salvation what's the best thing for any Christian to do who loses the joy and the assurance of salvation well you should do what Christian did and what's that Christian got down on his knees in the middle of the king's highway and he prayed the same prayer that David prayed when he lost his role about this same spot many years before he said oh Lord I've been a lazy good for nothing Christian in that arbor only intended for the light refreshment of weary pilgrims I slothfully wasted many hours of precious time and now my role is gone and I cannot walk this path without that role oh God

restore unto me I beg of you that role restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee and then what did he do after he confessed his sin did he sit down and wait for that role to jump back again into his pocket no indeed he retraced his steps and as he walked down the pathway feet upon his breast crying sadly I am now made to walk with sorrow where I might have trodden with joy oh wretched good for nothing lazy Christian that I am to lose my role oh what shall I do what shall I do Lord restore unto me I beg of you that role his search brought him back again to the arbor where he had so slothfully slept and as he looked in to his surprise and great joy there he saw the role just

where it had fallen from his hands as he slept quicker than he takes to tell he retrieved his role placed it back again in his pocket and then fell down upon his knees and thanked God for having restored to him the role picture of the joy and the assurance of his salvation now what does all this mean did Christian lose his salvation in that arbor by going to sleep of course not no person can lose his salvation why not

because a Christian salvation is in a person and that person is the Lord Jesus who lives in the power of an endless life who is the same yesterday and today and forever the Christian's joy the Christian's peace, the Christian's hope the Christian's righteousness everything is in Christ and can never be lost what then did Christian lose, he lost the joy of that salvation he

lost the assurance of that salvation and many and many a Christian has done the same thing and under similar circumstances a Christian has gone to sleep on the job spirit of drowsiness has come over him, he has set his eyes to his responsibilities and to his privileges as a child of God, for when you become a Christian you have certain responsibilities did Christian lose his salvation in that arbor by going to sleep, of course not no person can lose his salvation, why not because a Christian's salvation is in a person and that person is the Lord Jesus who lives in the power of an endless life who is the same yesterday and today and forever the Christian's joy the Christian's peace, the Christian's hope the Christian's righteousness everything is in Christ and can never be lost what then

did Christian lose, he lost the joy of that salvation he lost the assurance of that salvation and many and many a Christian has done the same thing and under similar circumstances a Christian has gone to sleep on the job, spirit of drowsiness has come over him he has set his eyes to his responsibilities and to his privileges as a child of God for when you become a Christian you have certain responsibilities to serve the Lord Jesus to live for his glory to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly and righteously and godly in this present evil age, but many a child of God begins to go to sleep he fails to study his Bible, fails to keep in touch with God by prayer as he should, fails to witness to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus to others, fails to attend the

meetings provided by the assembly the prayer meeting and the Bible reading and the gospel meeting and the meeting for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus and the breaking of bread and the child of God shuts his eyes and soon is fast asleep to his privileges and responsibilities and it's during that period that very often the Christian loses both the joy and sometimes the assurance of his salvation two things we must ever keep distinct in our minds first, relationship second, fellowship never confound these two terms relationship depends on birth fellowship depends on behavior my relationship to God depends upon the new birth to as many as received him, Christ to them gave me the right, the power and the privilege to become the children of God even to such as believe on his name so it's one

thing to be a child of God and another thing to enjoy fellowship with God, for fellowship depends on my behavior my appreciation of this relationship and the discharging of my responsibilities that this relationship brings I am the child of my earthly father by a physical birth and nothing can alter the relationship of a boy to his father or mother, he's always the son of his father or mother, nothing can alter that relationship, but a great deal can alter his fellowship with his father and mother if a boy is disobedient in the home if he's got the kind of father and mother he ought to have, that father and mother will punish that boy chastise him and not until that boy apologizes to his father and mother and says he is sorry for what he has done can that fellowship once again be

restored, but the relationship has not been affected in the slightest degree relationship is forever fellowship depends on communion and the enjoyment of that relationship and our obedience to our heavenly father as we seek to live to his glory am I speaking to anyone here who has lost the joy and the assurance of salvation how can it be restored in the same way the Christian had his joy and the assurance of his salvation restored he went back to the place where he had lost his role, he confessed his sin, he judged his sin in the presence of God and then he had the role restored to him so as the Christian

confesses his sin to his father owns it to be what it is indeed and in truth, departure in heart from God turns from that sin with loathing and detestation then once again the joy of the

Lord shall be his strength and the assurance of salvation if he has lost that, shall be restored to him again and now Christian as he reached the top of that hill saw away in the distance the beautiful castle, the castle beautiful as John Bunyan calls it now this castle beautiful illustrates an assembly of the Lord's people that gathers together in the name of the Lord Jesus either for the remembrance of the Lord and the breaking of bread or for prayer or for the ministry of the word or whatever it may be God wants his people to link themselves in happy assembly fellowship with the company of born again believers gather my saints together unto me, says God those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is so much

the more as you see the day approaching the Lord Jesus said where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them they that believed were together God wants his people to meet together in church fellowship or assembly fellowship to meet in the name of the Lord Jesus with those of like mind and like heart and thus enjoy that strength and fellowship that comes through association with those who know the same Lord and Savior but as Christian approached this castle suddenly he saw right before him what had scared timorous and mistrust so much there standing in the middle of the king's highway barring his approach were two great big lions and as they glimpsed Christian they opened their mouths and they let out a terrifying roar which shook the earth and poor

Christian didn't know what to do he was scared stiff he didn't go forward for the lions seemed to block the path at the same time he didn't want to run away as timorous and mistrust had done for he knew it was God's will according to his word that he should meet with the people of God who gathered in the assembly fellowship in that castle and not knowing what to do he stood there presently the keeper of the castle a man named Watchful picture of a godly shepherd of souls seeing the dilemma of Christian shouted to him Christian, Christian is thy strength so small keep in the middle of the king's highway man the lions cannot harm you attached to the neck of each of those lions is a strong chain that allows them to go thus far and no further and providing you keep in the middle of the king's

highway the lions cannot harm you and now Christian's eyes were opened to notice what he hadn't previously seen a good strong chain was attached to the neck of each of these lions, fastened to a stake and believe me Christian kept right in the center of the king's highway and though the lions strained at their chains he felt their hot breath upon his cheeks he was unable to successfully pass between these lions when he reached the other side he inquired of Watchful to whom do these lions belong they replied these lions belong to the enemy of the lord of the castle then why does the lord of the castle allow those lions almost to scare pilgrims to death for a very good reason replied Watchful what's the reason Watchful replied those lions are allowed to remain there chained in order to test

the reality of the faith and the love and the obedience of all professing pilgrims some professing pilgrims the moment they see those lions turn and run away showing that they were not real pilgrims but only mere empty professors said Watchful two men came not long ago one named Timorous and the other named Mistrust and without waiting to investigate they turned and ran yes replied Christian I saw them and they were still running well doesn't that prove that those lions in that case served a good purpose it frightened away the mere empty professors but you when you saw those lions you didn't turn and run yet you didn't know what to do those lions then tested the reality of your faith and your love and your obedience oh I see replied Christian I see the purpose for those lions that God

uses the enemy to test his people Watchful said but you notice these lions are chained so that in them is fulfilled the promise of the word of God which reads there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man and God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to endure it then Christian said thank God for the lions so when a child of God seeks to associate himself with a scripturally gathered company of God's people he'll discover as Christian did there are lions barring the way one of those lions could represent the world the other could represent the devil and neither the world nor the devil have any desire whatever for a child of God to link himself with a scripturally

gathered company of God's people for the devil knows full well once a child of God gets into an assembly of that character he'll learn God's word he'll grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus he'll learn to worship and pray and serve as he should and consequently he will bring harm to the devil's cause and so both the world with its ridicule and the devil with his testings and temptations will seek to hinder the child of God but the true child of God in spite of the difficulty will by God's grace be enabled to successfully pass between those lions and thank God for the trial that tested the reality of his faith and now watchful took Christian to the gate of the castle rang a bell and a beautiful woman responded whose name was discretion or carefulness a great deal of care needs

to be exercised in admitting a person into an assembly of the Lord's people in other words that Christian who seeks the fellowship of God's people should be able to give a good reason for the hope that is within him and we in turn should be privileged to ask him questions so that we can find out for ourselves whether he is a real true believer or not so discretion began to talk with him, what is your name? he replied my name used to be graceless but it is now Christian and what do you desire?

I desire to enter your castle to enjoy fellowship with the people of God in this place to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread to meet together with the people of God for the ministry of the word of God and for prayer may I come in? are you a true Christian? yes thank God I am how do you know? inquired discretion Christian answered as a poor lost and guilty sinner I came to the Lord Jesus the son of God who loved me and bore my sins and died to me to receiving him by faith as my saviour and owning him as the Lord of my life, the word of God assures me that I am now saved by his grace, born again by his spirit and cleansed by his precious blood and when discretion saw he was indeed a true Christian she extended to him the right hand of fellowship, then she rang a bell and in response

to that bell down the steps of the castle came quite a number of the inmates, old and young, rich and poor for they were all equal in this castle and my what a warm welcome they gave to Christian, they said Christian we are so glad you have come we are so glad you have seen from the word of God that this is your place of meeting simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, welcome welcome to our castle and they overcame him with a warmth of their welcome this is what reception into a scripturally gathered company of God's people really means as we realize that this person or that person is indeed a child of God, sound in life and doctrine, we should extend to him warmly the right hand of our fellowship, make him feel at home that he is a member of the family alas in some cases this is not so

instead of being warmly welcomed a believer who seeks fellowship in such a place instead of being received is viewed with suspicion and made to feel very much not at home while supper was being prepared the three sisters of discretion prudence piety and charity or love had a very interesting conversation with Christian, we won't go into that conversation now but you may read it for yourself in the Pilgrim's Progress I hope you all read that wonderful allegory, read it again and again and again until the

lessons that John Bunyan sought to implant upon the hearts of his readers really becomes part and parcel of your whole being here then we see Christian with those three sisters now the four sisters discretion, prudence piety and love illustrate four graces four virtues that ought to be

seen in every scripturally gathered company of God's people first there should be carefulness second there should be prudence or common sense third there should be piety or godliness and fourth there should be love any assembly that has these four things in good measure is an assembly to which God will add many of his blood-bought people for he knows in that atmosphere they will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus supper was announced and John Bunyan beautifully observes at this supper I perceived that all the conversation was of the Lord of the castle and by their conversation I perceived he was a mighty man of valor this of course illustrates the Lord's Supper instituted by the Lord Jesus on the eve of his betrayal he gathered his weak potter and disciples around him he

took the bread gave them the cup and said this is my body this is my blood which is shed for you this do for a remembrance of me and so each Lord's day the Lord's people meet together in the Lord's name and in the Lord's own appointed way remember the Lord Jesus and show forth the Lord's death until the Lord comes back again there is no greener spot this side of heaven than each Lord's day to meet together with the people of God and thus take that bread symbol of his body given the cup symbol of that precious blood by which our redemption was secured as we sit there in his presence to muse upon the Lord Jesus and then to lift up our hearts and our voices to him in thanksgiving and praise and worship for all that he is, for all that he has done, for all that he is doing, for all that one

day he will yet accomplish when he comes to call his people home to be with him forever then Christian was shown to his room, a chamber called Peace where he slept peacefully early the next morning he was awakened with the singing of the birds as he rose he read a portion from the word of God for that's how the Lord speaks to his people as we study the word he communes with us through the divinely inspired record and then Christian got down on his knees and with worship and praise and prayer and supplication enjoyed communion with God and then he went to the window, look out through that window and there a wonderful vista spread before his gaze way in the far distance he could see the delectable mountains and between those mountains and the castle all sorts of olive yards, vineyards

gardens the melody of birds and the fragrance of flowers filling the air and as Christian saw this beautiful sight again he praised God this is what Bible study will do for the child of God it will unfold to him the eternal riches of those marvelous counsels of God and let the child of God enter the secret of that which God has been pleased to reveal through the pages of his holy words following day the sister said to him would you like to see some of the rarities of this place indeed I would so they took him into the museum showed him some of the curiosities of the place, they showed him for instance the sling and the stone by which David stunned that giant and then slew the giant with a giant's own sword they showed him the hammer and the nail by which Dael slew Sisera they showed him

the jawbone of the ass with which Samson overcame the great army of the Philistines they showed him the pitchers and the lamps by which Gideon and his small army of 300 men overcame the great army of the Midianites they showed him many wonderful things what Christian was especially struck with was this God used small things to accomplish great ends and that encouraged Christian he realized he was only a small Christian only weak he didn't know very much but he said to himself by God's grace I let the Lord use me even as he used those small things and from his heart he said Lord Jesus take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee take my moment and my days and let them flow in ceaseless praise as thou

didst use David in his sling Gael and her hammer and nail Samson and the jawbone of

the ass and Gideon and his pitchers and lamps so take my life glorify thyself through me and use me to thy glory he learned that little is much when God is in it next day they took him to the top of the castle showed him some of the wonderful sights in that vicinity amongst other things they pointed out to him the delectable mountains and they said one of these days you'll see those mountains for yourself and not very far from those mountains is the gate of the celestial city and thus those four sisters encouraged Christian to go on for God as Christian would have left that day the sister said no Christian don't go yet you're not ready for your journey outside of this castle the enemy of your soul is waiting to attack you Satan and his host of wicked spirits are going to try and turn you

back if they possibly can therefore in order to stand against the wiles of the devil you must put on the whole armor of God so they took him into the armory there they showed him the various pieces of armor the belt of truth the breastplate of righteousness the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and that mighty unseen weapon called prayer and Christian took those pieces of armor placed them upon himself for we are told in the word of God put on the whole armor of God God will not put this armor on us we must place this armor on ourselves God provides the armor but we must appropriate that armor otherwise we shall be defeated in the fight that will ensue so first he placed upon himself

the belt of truth that speaks of the necessity for the Christian to be truthful in his words therefore putting away lying let every man speak truth with his neighbor Christians word should be his bond second he placed upon himself the breastplate of righteousness that was right in front where everybody could see it that speaks of a righteous life which a Christian must live if he is going to bring glory to Christ and stand against the wiles of the devil honesty morality purity all these form the breastplate of righteousness righteous deeds and a righteous life third he put on him the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace so that everywhere he went he carried the good news of a dying savior's love, a risen savior's power and a coming savior's glory how beautiful upon the

mountains are the feet of them that publish glad tidings of good things then he took the shield of faith wherewith the quench all the fiery darts of the devil faith in the word of God faith in the power of God, faith in the love of God these are the things that stand the child of God in good stead as he fights the good fight of faith this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith so we need to take the shield of faith behind which we can turn aside the fiery darts of the devil then he placed upon his head the helmet of salvation that guarded the most delicate part of his being the mind how necessary for the Christian to have right thoughts of the great fundamental doctrines of our most holy faith right thoughts as to the deity of Christ as to the inspiration and integrity of

the holy scriptures right thoughts as to regeneration and redemption the child of God therefore must store his mind with the word of God so when the devil comes in like a flood the spirit of the Lord can use that word to raise up a standard against him then he took that weapon the sword of the spirit the word of God our savior took that weapon when Satan tempted him in the wilderness to all Satan's temptations he replied it is written it is written and through the word of God he overcame his adversary so we too must use the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and lastly he took that great weapon unseen to human eyes but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan the weapon of prayer Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees so here are

the seven pieces of armor if you are a child of God see to it you put them on get into God's armory be pampered in the armor of God and then you can stand against the wiles of the devil and having done all you can stand having your loins girded up with truth the breastplate of righteousness the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and that mighty mighty weapon prayer but remember if you are not a Christian you cannot place this armor on you the armor is only for those who have been born again only for those who are truly saved by God's grace if you have never been truly saved by God's grace come to the Lord Jesus now in all your burden and rags and filth come to the Savior who loved you

who died for you who rose again to save you put your trust in Him take Him as your Savior now and be saved by His grace and then put on the whole armor of God and fight the good fight of faith and lay hold upon that life which is life indeed may He grant it for His name's sake

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