

Pilgrim's Progress - Part 5

by Alfred P. Gibbs

The sermon explores the trials and triumphs of Christian and Faithful as they navigate the challenges of their pilgrimage, emphasizing the dangers of pride and the importance of steadfast faith amidst worldly temptations and persecution.

Duration: 58:36

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:11

Topics: "Pilgrim's Progress"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher recounts the journey of a man named Christian who is on a quest to reach heaven. Along the way, Christian encounters various challenges and temptations that test his faith and commitment to God. Despite facing persecution and ridicule, Christian remains steadfast in his belief and refuses to compromise his values. The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying true to one's faith and resisting worldly temptations in order to attain eternal salvation.

Transcript

is the message of the Son of God. That fight with Apollyon illustrates the devil's temptation. This experience illustrates God's testing of his people.

And the Christian that goes through an experience like this emerges from that experience with spiritual strength and with the knowledge of God he could not possibly have acquired apart from such an experience. And now a Christian came to a little hill called Mount Comfort, from the top of which he saw ahead of him a man whom he'd been told was walking ahead, the man whom he'd heard singing in the valley whose name was Faithful. And when Christian saw Faithful he was glad and shouted, Faithful! Faithful! Wait a minute till I catch up to you.

But Faithful not recognizing Christian and thinking this was some device on the part of Satan to hinder him, quickened his footsteps saying as he did I must go on the avenger of blood is behind me. This rather nettled Christian so he shouted again, Faithful! Faithful! Wait a minute till I catch up with you. This time Faithful broke into a run saying as he did I must run with patience the race that is set before me, looking at Jesus the author and the finisher of faith.

And as Faithful began to run Christian became quite annoyed thought he, huh so you think you can run, eh? I assure you that maybe I can run as fast as you and maybe a bit faster. And so Christian began to

run after Faithful and Christian being in good trim, very soon caught up with Faithful and not content with catching up with him, vaingloriously decided he'd leave Faithful far behind and so with his nose well elevated and with vainglorious thoughts filling his mind Christian passed Faithful but what Christian didn't notice was this at this particular spot there was a big ditch that ran right across the king's highway and alongside of this ditch there was a stone he caught his foot on that stone and the next thing he knew he was lying upside down in that ditch and worse still he couldn't lift himself up and there he lay, feeling very very unnecessary. But when Faithful caught up to him, what did Faithful do? Did he say well, that's what you get for beating me.

Now you lie there now and I'll beat you. Of course not. Faithful remembered that scripture which said, brethren if one of you be overtaken in a fault let him that is spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

And so Faithful gave his hand to Christian and said, my dear brother take my hand and I'll help you up. Very shamefacedly Christian gave his hand to Faithful who was lifted up and then apologized to Faithful for what he had done and then these two walked on very lovingly together. Now what was it that caused Christian's fall? In one word, it was pride.

Pride goeth before destruction, the bible says, and a haughty spirit precedes a fall. Oh, how often we have done the same thing. Our foolish hearts lifted up with pride thinking ourselves to be something when we are nothing priding ourselves upon our attainments pride of face pride of race pride of place pride of grace how God hates pride and as sure as our hearts are lifted up with pride we shall fall.

That's what Paul meant when he wrote to Timothy and said don't set a novice in the place of oversight in an assembly of the Lord's people lest his heart be lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. And so many and many a Christian who has been lifted up with pride has been made to realize he's not so wonderful after all he that thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing deceiveth himself he that thinketh he knoweth anything knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know and it is the fall that brings to us the consciousness of the fact we weren't so wonderful after all and so these two walked on very lovingly together Then Christian inquired of Faithful who did you meet on your way?

What adventures do you have? Faithful replied as I was about to leave the city of destruction a woman named Wanton came to me and she tempted me not to go on that journey she offered me money all the pleasures I could desire any position I had a desire to attain would be given me, she promised if I would stay in the city of destruction and not go on the pilgrim journey and what did you do? inquired Christian Faithful answered I remembered that scripture which said her feet take hold upon hell and lest I should be bewitched by her looks I turned from her and said no for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul I must go on, who else did you meet?

Well replied Faithful I shall never forget when I came to that place called Calvary and when by faith I saw hanging on that cross the holy, blessed, sinless Son of God bearing my sins in his own body on the tree I shall never forget when I realized that all my sins were laid on Jesus, that Jesus bore them on the tree and that God who knew them laid them on him that through believing I might be free I opened my heart I trusted in the Lord Jesus I accepted him as my Saviour, I owned him as the Lord of my life and that great big burden of my guilt went rolling down the hill into the open sepulcher where I saw it again no more forever What else did you experience?

Ah, said Faithful, as I walked along the valley of humiliation man by the name of shame came sneaking up behind me walking on tiptoe and whispering things into my ears he tried to make me ashamed of being a Christian ashamed of witnessing for Christ before others ashamed of giving out gospel tracts ashamed of saying no to the world and to worldly pleasures and said Faithful I felt the flush of shame coming over my cheek when suddenly I remembered that shame was of the devil so I turned to him and said, get thee behind me Satan for thou savest not the things of thee of God but the things of thee of man I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth my Lord was not ashamed of me he endured the cross and despised the shame he

allowed men to abuse him to spit in his face to hurl blasphemies at him but because of his love for me he bore the shame he took my place and died to me and now I belong to him I'm not going to be ashamed of my Lord nor of his testimony and said Faithful with these words shame left me yes, you'll find shame will come to you in school at work wherever your love is cast the offense of the cross is not ceased now as Christian and Faithful went on personally Faithful saw someone coming toward them and said to Christian, look, that's Evangelist no it can't be replied Christian but I think it is and sure enough as the man came closer both recognized him as Evangelist the one who had pointed them from the city of destruction to the gate and from the gate to the cross and as Evangelist met the

two pilgrims he said, welcome dear brethren for I'm glad am I to see that you are still walking on the narrow upward homeward heavenward way and when they told him their adventures their joys and sorrows their victories and their defeats Evangelist answered I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth but continued Evangelist I've come to warn you warn you of a danger that faces you as you walk along this pathway you will come to a great city called Vanity and through that city you must go or else you're out of the world in that city you'll be tempted you'll be ill treated in that city one of you will be put to death I will not say which one it is said Evangelist but as I will say that the one who lays down his life for the testimony of Christ will be soonest with

Christ which is very far better and now brethren I commend you to the word of the Lord and to the power of the blessed spirit of God who will enable you to quit you like men and be strong and witness a good confession both of the saving and the keeping and the satisfying power of the Son of God remember, love not the world neither the things that are in the world if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him for all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world brethren, fare ye well and then they kneeled down in the king's highway and Evangelist commended Christian and faithful as they were about to go through the city of vanity presently sure enough, ahead of them Christian and

faithful saw the great city that Evangelist had spoken of the straight and the narrow path led right through that city so they had to go right through it now the history of this city is as follows when Satan saw that the way to the celestial city lay right through this valley what did he do but build his city right across the straight and narrow pathway so that every child of God had to go through his city or else go out of the world what Satan then did was to organize a fair called Vanity Fair and in that fair he caused to be exposed for sale all those things which he knew would appeal to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life that was part of the flesh the nature that every child of God still has his object was to get Christians so occupied with his

vanities that they would forget that there were strangers and pilgrims in the world but not of the world and settle down in his city and thus lose the joy of their salvation their enjoyment of communion and fellowship

with God and their usefulness in his service and alas alas how successful the devil has been in this the city received its name because the wisest and the richest of natural men Solomon by name who spent a great deal of his lifetime in that city sampling its vanities as he left it for eternity he cried despairingly vanity of vanities or emptiness of emptiness all is vanity and vexation of spirit this then is the world not the world of nature the rivers and the flowers and the mountains and the skies what do we mean by the word world in this sense those persons those

pleasures those pursuits and those places from which God is left out every Christian therefore though he is in the world he is not of the world and if he would maintain his testimony and live to the glory of the Lord Jesus he must resolutely deny all the vanities of this world love not the world any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him and now they came to the gate of that city the streets were crowded with people speaking about politics, about sport about amusements about the weather any subject and every subject except the most important subject their relationship to God and to Christ and the word of God and spiritual realities and as Christian and faithful saw the people given wholly over to idolatry once again they fell down upon their knees and they asked God's

guidance and for strength and for wisdom as they trod the streets of that city then they stepped into the city no sooner had they stepped in than a company of women came to Christian and said Christian, come and dance with us what did Christian reply he answered no how can I dance with you and lose my testimony of being of a worldly faith then some folks who were gambling said to faithful come and gamble with us faithful replied how can I be faithful to my lord and my master by indulging in that kind of thing just then a man outside a show house spies Christian and faithful to say you two fellows garbed in that strange apparel sticking to that straight and narrow path listen, I've got a good proposition we've got a wonderful show about to start won't cost you very much that will make you

forget your misery come on, come to the show come to the show what did Christian say to faithful come on faithful let's go to the show tonight no he said lord turn away our eyes from beholding vanity and they pursued their journey and the people of the city of vanity perceived three things about Christian and faithful first they noted that their apparel their clothing was different clothing speaks of character second they noted that their language was different they spoke in the language of Canaan they spoke of spiritual things which a natural man understands not and third they set very light upon their vanities they paid no attention to all the vanities being offered to them those were the three things that characterized Christian and faithful so they went on presently a man came forward

who had a tray of printlets in front of him and as he pushed his way impudently through the crowd he addressed Christian and faithful and said what do you want to buy they answered we buy the truth and sell it not oh so that's what you want yes that's all we want the man picked up a handful of mud and threw it at Christian and faithful that was the signal for the rest of the mob to join in persecuting Christian and faithful and they belabored them with mud and with blows presently Beelzebub who was the king of that city hearing of Christian and faithful and the fact that they refused to have anything to do with their vanities gave orders for the police arrest those men put them in irons and beat them and then put them into the cage in the middle of the market square and leave them there

to attend the mercies of our people and so accordingly Christian and faithful were arrested placed in irons beaten but to all the ill treatment accorded them Christian and faithful replied with not a word of abuse they told the very people who were persecuting them of the love of God in the gift of his son and they testified to the peace and the joy which he gave them even in the midst of tribulation then they were placed in that

iron cage right in the middle of the market square and there they were left to the people of vanity to do with them exactly what they wished some would take a sharp pointed instrument and thrust it into their bodies saying as they did what does your Jesus do for you now and Christian and faithful replied they enable us to bless those who persecute us he gives us

peace and joy in the midst of tribulation others as they spat in their faces said and what do you think of Christianity now Christian and faithful replied you know not what you do and then they preached the gospel of the grace of God to those very people who persecuted them they so lived for Christ in that cage so witnessed for him that presently some of the people of the city said to themselves my they must have something we don't have if we were treated like that we retaliate in kind what is it you have that we don't have they inquired Christian and faithful replied we have the Lord Jesus not only as our savior not only as the Lord of our life but our guide and constant companion who has promised I will never leave thee I will never forsake thee so that thou may boldly say the Lord is

my helper what can man do unto thee my thought they we wish we had a life like that and so gradually a little company was formed in the city of vanity who secretly took sides with Christian and faithful presently when some strangers arrived and began to persecute the pilgrims their secret friend said look here don't you touch those men why not because they're good men who's going to stop us touching them they said we will and so when the people tried to persecute them their friends took their side and presently as you see in the picture there was a great fight on the outside of that cage and when Beelzebub heard that some of his own subjects because of the godly life and the preaching of the gospel on the part of those pilgrims were thinking of becoming pilgrims themselves his anger knew

no bounds he said bring those men before the lord chief justice of this city lord hate good have them tried and then sentence them to death put away with them put away with them so accordingly Christian and faithful were brought before the lord chief justice lord hate good there were four witnesses for the prosecution Mr.

Enby, Mr. Superstition Mr. Parasite Mr. Religion there were the members of the jury Mr. Blind Man Mr. Hate the Light Mr. Live Loose Mr. High Mind Mr. Heady, Mr. Cruelty Mr. Courageousness Mr. Fornication Mr.

Idolatry and others without being allowed a single witness for their defense Christian and faithful were savagely condemned by lord hate good who addressed himself to the jury and said good men and true you've heard what these witnesses have testified against these accused what say you with one consent they yelled they're guilty what shall be done to them let them die the death so accordingly lord hate good pronounced a sentence of death against both Christian and faithful he said you'll be taken from here dragged at the back of a cart to the market square where a stake has been erected and there you'll be burned to death like all heretics and traitors and rogues like you should be burned take them away for some reason the sentence was not carried out in the case of Christian but faithful

was dragged at the back of a cart the following day beaten as he was dragged through the streets of the city of vanity people spat upon him and cursed him but to all the cursing and the spitting and the beating faithful replied with not a word of abuse but told them the old old story of Jesus and his love presently they came to the market square there was a stake at the foot of which a great pile of kindling wood and faithful was fastened to that stake as they still jeered at him faithful with his last breath preached the glorious gospel of the grace of God and testified to the peace of God that passive all understanding fulfilled his

heart and his mind through Christ Jesus then a man came forward and applied a torch to the kindling wood and soon the body of faithful was enveloped with

flames Christian as he stood by looking at this dreadful sight was very sad but suddenly he looked up and he saw something that none of this blaspheming mob could see only he had eyes for this he saw a golden gate opening in heaven and through that golden gate there came a chariot drawn by two white horses driven by an angel in whose hand there was a crown as he watched he saw that chariot come closer and closer to the foot of the stake to which faithful had been fastened presently as gracious watched he saw the poor charred lifeless form of faithful fall on the chain that bound it to the stake he saw the spirit of faithful that which the fires of men's persecution could not destroy fear not them which destroy the body but fear him which could destroy body and soul in hell as Christian

watched he saw the spirit of faithful step into that chariot he saw the angel place upon his head a crown saying as he did thou hast been faithful unto death behold I give thee a crown of life and as he watched he saw that chariot together with faithful and the angel ascending higher and higher until the golden gate came to view once more and as that golden gate opened to allow the chariot to enter a stream of glory came out that shone upon the upturned face of Christian and that gleam of glory John Bunyan observes made Christian homesick for heaven ever afterwards and then the gate closed and faithful was at home with his lord thus became one of the great army of martyrs those that loved not their lives unto death those who had a purpose firm and dared to make that purpose known cost

what it may I wonder who was the most fortunate faithful who went to be with Christ or the people who persecuted him ah faithful is now at home with the lord ample compensation for all the toil and the suffering he endured for the sake of Christ and the gospel and remember this when you become a Christian the world will hate you it hated Christ Jesus said they hated me without a cause the servant is not greater than his lord if they hated me they hate you if they persecuted me they'll persecute you don't expect popularity and praise from the world because of your Christian testimony every Christian is a witness against the world for the lord Jesus the one whom the world cast out and crucified and would not have him to reign over them so like Christian and faithful let us Christians take a

bold stand for the lord Jesus and cost what it may let us witness a good confession and back up that confession with a light live to the glory of the lord Jesus even though perhaps we may have to go the same route as the faithful in the long ago the lord bless his word to each one of our hearts help us Christians to be faithful unto death knowing in so doing we shall then receive the crown of life may he grant it for his namesake set the company of the lord's people who meet together in the name of the lord Jesus each child of god should associate himself in happy church fellowship so they may enjoy the privilege of meeting with those who have been redeemed by the precious blood who have exercised the same precious faith in the lord Jesus who loved them and who gave himself for them but

you will recall before Christian entered that castle he faced those two lions which apparently barred the way and these two lions as we explained represent perhaps the world and the devil both of whom will combine to hinder the child of god from associating himself with the scripturally gathered company of god's people but Christian had his eyes open to the fact that attached to each of these lions was a good strong chain which prevented them from harming any pilgrim providing he kept in the middle of the king's highway in that path of obedience to god's will and to god's word and to the worship of the lord Jesus thus Christian was enabled by god's grace to enter into that beautiful castle and there enjoy the fellowship of the people of god who met together in the name of the lord Jesus

in order to praise and worship and adore his name then you remember the four sisters warned Christian of an enemy awaiting him outside and in order that he might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil for that was the enemy he must be clothed with all the armor of god so they conducted Christian into the armory and there Christian placed upon himself all that armor described for us in the sixth chapter of Ephesians he placed upon himself the belt of truth speaking of the necessity for Christian to be truthful in their words he placed upon himself the breastplate of righteousness which speaks of a righteous honest godly life which Christian should live before the world then he put upon him the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace so that everywhere he went he told the

good news of the savior's dying love of his risen power of his coming glory 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 will turn aside those deadly darts by which satan seeks to defeat the child of god then upon his head he placed the helmet of salvation which guarded the most delicate part of his being the mind and we pointed out how needful it was for the child of god through the study of the word of god to fill his mind with right thoughts as to the deity of the lord jesus as to the inspiration and integrity of the holy scriptures as to the person and work of the holy spirit of god as to regeneration redemption and all these other fundamental truths of our most holy

faith these are the days when wrong doctrines are being taught on every hand and unless the child of god is forearmed against these errors he will form an easy prey to these wrong doctrines taught by false teachers then he took the sword of the spirit which is the word of god how needful for the child of god to become expert in the use of the divinely inspired holy scriptures it was this weapon that our savior used against satan when during those forty days he was tempted in the wilderness and last but by no means least he placed upon himself that invisible weapon that is mighty through god to the pulling down of the strongholds of satan that weapon of prayer thus christian is armored with the armor of god and we pointed out if you recall that god provides the armor but the christian

himself must appropriate that armor he must put it on for himself after christian had armored himself the four sisters conducted him down the hill on which the castle was built into a valley called the valley of humiliation and in going down into that valley christian slipped quite a good deal found it very difficult in fact he remarked to the sisters I find it more difficult to go down into this valley of humiliation than I did to climb up the hill of difficulty the sisters smiled and said yes and another christian had discovered the same thing but this is the path of true usefulness in this valley your savior lived and wrought and taught and died he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross and he has left his disciples an example that they should follow

his steps so the word of god enjoins each christian to humble himself before the mighty hand of god that he may be exalted in new time and our savior said he that humbles himself shall be exalted but he that exalts himself shall be debased and by this time they had reached the foot of that hill and before they parted from him the sisters said now christian remember you have on you the whole armor of god more is he that is in you than all the forces that can be arrayed against you use the armor that god has provided for you fight the good fight of faith they hold upon that life which is life indeed as you go along heavens highway witness the good confession to the saving and keeping power of the lord jesus and then they commended him to the word of the lord that he might sustain him keep

him going on growing in his grace and in his knowledge then the four sisters departed and christian pursued his journey alone he had not gone very far however before he saw coming toward him a dreadful

looking apparition this hideous looking object had wings like a dragon a head like a lion feet like a bear scales like a serpent while from his mouth came flame and smoke in one hand he held a bundle of flaming darts in the other a great javelin as christian saw him approach he said this must be apollyon the enemy of all christians who has come to withstand me against whom i was warned by those sisters so not having any armor for his back he faced the foe and stood in the middle of the king's highway and awaited the onslaught presently presently apollyon came right up to where christian was

standing and eyeing him with hatred inquired who are you where are you going christian replied my name is christian i am from the city of destruction the place of all evil i am on my way to the celestial city ah shrieked apollyon if you have come from the city of destruction you belong to me for i am the prince of that city i am the god of this age and all its subjects are my servants i used to be your servant retorted christian but thank god i am your servant no longer i have sworn allegiance to another whom i love and i hate you come now come now replied apollyon apollyon changing his tactics i didn't mean to hurt your feelings look i'll tell you what i'll do if you promise to go back again to the city of destruction and once again become my servant i'll give you everything your heart

can desire i'll give you all the money you want all the power and the popularity you want whatever position you desire shall be yours if you go back again to that city and once more become my servant no retorted christian i discover that your service is bad and your wages worse for the wages of sin is death i have sworn allegiance to another and my desire is to please him think what lies ahead of you ahead of you there is nakedness and peril and the sword men will say all manner of evil against you falsely for the sake of that one to whom you've sworn allegiance men will persecute you yea they will kill you thinking in so doing they are performing the service of god ahead of you there lies peril and nakedness and the sword and death that does not scare me retorted christian for me sudden

death is sudden glory yea i have a desire to depart and to be with christ which is very far better apollyon sneered look what kind of a man you are look what happened when you were walking with privy you fell into the bog recall what took place on the hill of difficulty you went to sleep and you lost your role again remember how frightened you were of those lions not only so but you're full of vain glorious thoughts yes reply christian all you say is true apollyon and a great deal more than i can tell you but you forget one thing what that you forget that the blood of jesus christ god's son cleansed us from all sin and when christian uttered those words the face of apollyon grew livid with anger and hatred and malice and cruelty and he shrieked i hate that name and i hate the mention of

his blood go back or i'll kill you where you stand no replied christian i'd rather die than go back one inch for you then die shrieked apollyon and he took one of those fiery darts and threw it right at the heart of christian but what did christian do did it kill him no indeed christian put up the shield of faith which turned aside the fiery darts of the wicked and then that dreadful fight began amidst the cries and the groans and the tears and the prayers of christian and the threatenings and the yellings and the cursings of apollyon that fight began in spite of christian's defense in spite of his armor presently he was wounded in the head and in the hand and in the foot and began to lose considerable blood and apollyon spying his opportunity seeing christian was becoming weaker by

reason of his loss of blood suddenly unexpectedly he threw his arms around him and began to wrestle with him for we read in the bible we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickednesses in high places and as they wrestled over that highway presently with a dexterous movement apollyon threw christian to the ground and as christian fell to the ground his sword fell to his hand and there he was

apparently helpless in the face of his adversary ah shrieks apollyon i've got you now just where i want you and taking that javelin he was about to thrust it into the body of christian and end the unequal combat when suddenly christian reached nimbly for his sword and as he took that sword he said rejoice not oh mine enemy against me for when i fall i shall rise again and with

this he thrust the sword into the body of apollyon and apollyon gave back with a scream of agony for if there is wanting to love anything else that the devil fears and hates it is the sword of the spirit which is the word of god and christian seeing the good work the sword had accomplished took it again this time saying nay apollyon in all these things i am more than a conqueror to him that loved me for i am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of god which is in christ jesus my lord and with this he plunged his sword into the body of apollyon again apollyon gave a dreadful scream of mortal agony and then lifting up his

wings he flew away leaving christian the conqueror in that dreadful fight christian was weak and faint by reason of his many wounds but as he looked around to his surprise and great joy he discovered that the lord in view of this conflict which he knew would take place had provided at this particular spot spiritual refreshment christian ate of that provision of god and as he did so he was strengthened with might by gods spirit in the inner man and then he discovered quite close to the scene of conflict a tree growing placing some of the leaves of that tree upon his wounds he discovered that his wounds were immediately healed and then getting down upon his knees in the middle of the kings highway christian gave thanks to god who had enabled him to be more than a conqueror to him who loved

him now do you think that satan looks like these pictures no indeed then why does john bunyan represent apollyon as this horrible looking creature well the story as you know is a parable it's an allegory an earthly story with a spiritual meaning the devil is likened in the bible to a lion so john bunyan gave this creature the head of a lion the devil is likened to a bear for ferocity or i said bunyan i give this creature the feet of a bear the devil is likened to a serpent, that old serpent of the devil so john bunyan gave the body of a serpent the wings of a dragon or is described in the bible as a dragon for power so all these various features of satan are combined in apollyon no satan doesn't look like this if satan looked like this and came into this room right now he would scare

every unsaved person into the arms of the lord jesus unsaved people would say what? is that the being i must spend eternity with if i die in my sins i'm going to come to the lord jesus right now and trust him as my saviour and be saved from the possibility of spending eternity in the lake of fire with that dreadful looking creature no satan doesn't want to scare anyone into the arms of the lord jesus make no doubt about it the devil is a real person christ spoke of him he said when he speak of the lie he speaketh of his own for he is a liar and the father of it he was a murderer he abode not in the truth the devil is a real person though unseen to human eyes the devil has great power great subtlety, great wisdom he has had six thousand years of experience with human nature he knows just

what kind of temptations with which to trip up the child of god once that person is saved by god's grace satan knows he has lost him forever but what satan wants to do is to destroy if he possibly can the usefulness of that christian by tempting him and causing him to fall and bring shame and disgrace to the name of the lord jesus the devil we are told is transformed into an angel of light and his ministers are ministers of righteousness he'll come in all sorts of disguises to try to trip up the child of god therefore each christian must do what christian did clothe himself in the armor of god use the sword of the spirit

which is the word of god and in the strength of the lord god he can be more than conqueror through faith in the son of god who himself conquered satan if you are unsaved,

be sure of this satan will not trouble you he already has you in his power, for we are told the whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one reminds me of a story i heard years ago about a man who was seen one day walking down the street of a village and after him a lot of hogs were walking suddenly this man came to a building he opened the door and walked in and every one of these hogs followed that man into the building it was a slaughterhouse and the man had finished slaughtering these hogs which he had led into the slaughterhouse and came out a man who had watched this strange scene inquired how on earth did you get those hogs to follow you into a slaughterhouse i have seen hogs driven into a slaughterhouse dragged into a slaughterhouse but i have never seen hogs led into a

slaughterhouse how did you do it horrified the man with a smile i am well acquainted with hogs hogs love corn and whenever i take hogs to the slaughterhouse i always carry a sack of corn with me and as i walk along i drop a trail of corn and those hogs are so busily eating up that corn they do not notice where the trail is leading them until at last too late they realize they are in a slaughterhouse and they cannot escape satan does the same thing he knows the kind of pleasures the kind of amusements with which to blind his victims as he leads them downward along that broad pathway that ends in eternal destruction the only way to be delivered from his clutches is to come to the lord jesus trust him as your saviour and then clad in the armor of god fight the good fight of faith and now

christian came into another valley that led out from the valley of humiliation the name of this valley was the valley of the shadow of death darkness confusion seemed to reign in that valley but christian realized that the straight and the narrow path led right through that valley and so through that valley he prepared to go presently out from the darkness of that valley there rushed two men who said to christian go back, go back if you value your life this is the valley of the shadow of death the mouth of hell is here evil spirits haunt this place continually there are traps and snares on every hand go back if you value your life nor did i christian no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of god i must go on in spite of the darkness in spite of the

valley of the shadow of death these two men replied you can go on if you wish we're going home we've discovered the further we go on this journey the more the dangers increase and then these two men relatives of those who had brought an evil report of the land in the days of joshua fled and left christian to pursue his journey alone and as christian went on his way suddenly the sight was a fearful one as he approached that valley it grew darker and darker and darker and the hideous creatures of darkness seemed to find their habitation in this place presently he found himself on a very narrow pathway on either side of which was a great ditch into one ditch the blind had led the blind speaking of error in doctrine in the other ditch alas many a child of god had fallen into open sin

besmirching not only his own character but the reputation of the lord jesus but christian remembered that scripture which said he will keep the feet of his saints so he prayed saying mine eyes are ever toward the lord he shall pluck my feet out of the net as he went on still further the light of day departed the only light was a dismal light that came from the drip of fires that were burning it seemed to christian as though the lord jesus withdrew from him the conscious sense of his presence in order to test the reality of his faith and love and obedience so i go on not knowing nor would i if i might i rather walk in the dark with god than go alone by sight on every hand there were snares there were traps there were pits and christian was much alert kept his eyes open as he watched

carefully treading along that dreadful valley of the shadow of death presently it seemed to him as though a company of demons came toward him and were about to tread him underfoot and as they came closer breathing out threatenings and slaughters christian moved forward saying with a bold voice i will walk in the strength of the lord god i will make mention of his righteousness even of his only and then those demons gave back and christian remember that scripture which said resist the devil and he will flee from you and so he went on his way presently christian began to have dreadful thoughts blasphemous thoughts which he verily thought proceeded from his own mind but looking back he perceived one of these evil spirits was whispering these things into his ear christian realized now that

the great weapon he must take was a weapon of prayer and so he lifted up his heart and his voice to god and he prayed oh deliver my soul i pray thee keep me o lord in the midst of this valley till i may go on for thee and as he prayed suddenly he heard someone singing ahead of him and this is what he heard him sing yea though i walk through death's dark veil yet will i fear none ill for thou art with me and by rod and staff may comfort still and when christian heard those words he realized he was not alone in the valley someone else was there and if that someone else could sing yea though i walk through the valley of the shadow of death i will fear no evil that he could do the same and so he walked on with confidence and now someone drew near to him someone who had said i will never leave

thee i will never forsake thee so that thou may boldly say the lord is my helper what can man do unto me oh how pleased christian was that the same one who drew near to those disciples on their way to Emmaus now drew near to him and communed with him and thus they walked together the savior and christian oh what fellowship what communion they enjoyed together as they trod the dismal valley of the shadow of death presently the sun rose dispelled the darkness and as christian looked back not with any desire to go through those experiences again he thanked god for the marvelous way in which the son of god had delivered him now the valley of the shadow of death experience is not the physical death bed of a christian it's an experience that god gives to some of his people not to all who is

among you that feareth the lord that obeys the voice of his servant that walketh in darkness and hath no light let him trust in the name of the lord and stay upon his god job went through the valley of the shadow of death when the devil was allowed to strip him of his property of his family and then of his health job didn't know why god had allowed these things to come upon him he didn't know that his soul had been made a battlefield between god and satan but in the midst of that valley in the midst of that dreadful experience in the midst of all those trials and tribulations he could say he knoweth the way that i take and when i am tried i shall come forth as gold abraham went through the valley of the shadow of death when he was called upon to offer up his son his only son isaac and as

abraham bound isaac and placed him on that altar and took the knife in his hand and was about to slay his son it was all dark as far as abraham was concerned but what did god do in the midst of that darkness god stayed the hand of abraham and said abraham abraham lay not thine hand upon the lad neither do thou any harm unto him for now i know that thou peerest god seeing thou hast not withheld thy son nor an only son from me and so abraham came forth out of that valley a stronger man spiritually than when he went in perhaps god is allowing you to go through the valley of the shadow he has allowed sickness to invade your home perhaps financial loss perhaps your friends misunderstand you and have turned against you you don't know why these things have been allowed to come take courage when

thou passest through the waters i will be with thee and the floods shall not overflow thee fear not is the message of the son of god that fight with apollyon illustrates the devil's temptation this experience

illustrates god's testing of his people and the christian that goes through an experience like this emerges from that experience with spiritual strength and with the knowledge of god he could not possibly have acquired apart from such an experience and now christian came to a little hill called mount comfort from the top of which he saw ahead of him a man whom he had been told was walking ahead the man whom he had heard singing in the valley whose name was faithful and when christian saw faithful he was glad and shouted faithful faithful wait a minute till i catch up to you but

faithful not recognizing christian and thinking this was some device on the part of satan to hinder him quickened his footsteps saying as he did i must go on the avenger of blood is behind me this was

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