

Pilgrim's Progress - What We Learn From It

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon explores the profound lessons from Pilgrim's Progress, emphasizing the journey of faith, the burden of sin, and the importance of the Holy Spirit in understanding salvation.

Duration: 1:58:55

Scripture: Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 13:20, Matthew 7:13-14, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Christian Living", "Persevering Faith"

Description

This sermon reflects on the timeless wisdom found in the Christian classic 'Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan, highlighting the author's humility and God's honor upon his work. It emphasizes the importance of genuine fellowship with like-minded believers, the dangers of pride and taking shortcuts in the Christian journey, and the ultimate reward of enduring faith until the end to receive the crown of life.

Transcript

One of the most popular Christian books that have ever been published is a book called Pilgrim's Progress. I think it's been translated into over 200 languages and next to the Bible is probably the most widely circulated Christian book. And I want to tell you a little bit about the author.

The reason why God allowed this book to remain for 350 years and to be so widely circulated was because God honored this man who wrote it. God sees where someone has known him and has written something that's really valuable. He makes sure it's circulated widely.

So his name was John Bunyan and even though he wrote a book which was the most widely circulated, he never made money from it. That's the best part of it. I don't know whether all of you realize that authors who write books get money for the books they write from their publishers.

Of course, CFC is different. We don't get anything. But almost all Christian authors, 99% of them, receive money and many of them become millionaires.

Many of the songs you sing here are written by Christian songwriters who have become millionaires just by selling those songs. And through my 55 years of being a Christian, I found that the best books are written by those who didn't make money from it. John Bunyan, Watchman Nee, A.W. Tozer, people like that.

And the best songs are written by those who didn't make money from it. Like Fanny Crosby, Charles Wesley and all the others. It's God and money that's always in competition with each other.

We are living in a world today where in Christianity people are trying to make money. And that's why I like to read those books written by people who wrote because they loved God, not because they wanted to make money. Who wrote songs because they loved God, not because they wanted to make money.

Now many of you probably don't have that discernment, but I do. And I know the songs I love to sing. Those which come from my heart who loved God because I'm not interested in the tune, I'm interested in the words.

In the same way in a book, I don't look at the cover. To look at the tune of a song is like looking at the cover of a book. The content.

And so here was a man and he was poor. It was not that he had so much money that he could live on. He was a poor man.

His job was repairing pots and pans in people's kitchens. He'd go house to house and repair pots and pans. That was his job.

He was a very poor man. His wife died when he was 30 years old, leaving four children, one of whom was blind. And he had this little meeting in a house, John Bunyan, where he would meet with people.

And in those days, the law in England was that if you're not ordained by a bishop of the Church of England, you cannot preach. And if you preach, you'll be imprisoned. That was the king's law.

And so you'd be in prison for three months, provided you don't preach again. So they imprisoned John Bunyan for three months. But he said, I'm going to preach.

As soon as you let me out, I'll preach again. So they locked him up. He was married a second time, and his poor wife was left outside with four children, one of them blind.

So poor that other believers had to give her money to support herself. This is the type of man who wrote this book. A man who suffered, and he ultimately stayed nearly 12 years in jail, in prison, just because he said, I want to preach the gospel.

And if you don't let me preach the gospel, you can lock me up. But, you know, here's another man who wrote something wonderful and didn't make money. The Apostle Paul, like all the other apostles.

Most widely circulated literature. The Bible is the most widely circulated book in the world, and these authors never made any money from it. Paul was locked up in prison, and that's why he wrote a number of his letters.

And John Bunyan was locked up in prison, and he wrote, more than once, he was in prison. And in one of those imprisonments, he wrote Pilgrim's Progress. And it's been such a challenge to people throughout all these years.

Finally, after 12 years, the king let him go. So, let's turn to the first slide which begins the story. Here is a man with a Bible in his hand, with a burden on his back, and a Bible in his hand.

His name is Pilgrim. He read the Bible, and he felt the burden of his sin. Now, a lot of people don't feel the burden of their sin, even though they read the Bible.

Actually, we can feel the burden of our sin just with our conscience. So, he felt the burden of our sin, and how heavy that burden is depends on how sensitive your conscience is. If your conscience is not very sensitive, it's a little, small little bag on your back.

But this man's conscience was so sensitive that it was like a big burden he wanted to get rid of. Do you find a small sin like that, like a big burden? Then you're a true Christian. So, here was one, he had not yet become a Christian, but he had this tremendous burden of sin from his conscience, and he knew that the judgment of God would come upon sin.

That's the other thing people need to recognize, which they don't realize often. And he did not know how to escape. He did not know the Gospel.

So, when he heard this, he's the first people he wanted to save, warn rather, his own family. So, he goes home, and he tells his wife and children about this tremendous judgment of God that's going to come on sin, but they don't have a burden, as you can see. And they just laugh at him and mock him, just like a lot of people do today.

Even our relatives, when we tell them about the burden of sin, they can't understand it. And so, he couldn't do much more for them, but he was afraid. And so, one day when he was out in the field, a preacher called Evangelist came, and he asked him, what must I do to be saved? And Evangelist told him, you must repent, turn from your sin, believe in Jesus, and thus you can escape the judgment of God.

So, this man accepted this advice, and the preacher told him, pointed out a gate to him, there's a small gate there, that's a gate, you've got to go through that, and you will come to a place of salvation. So, he started walking towards it, and as he did that, his relatives and friends and neighbors and all tried to call him back, what's wrong with you, why are you running away, don't be so crazy, don't listen to all these preachers. And so, what did he do? He put his hands over his ears, so that he wouldn't hear them, and he ignored their mocking and their threats, and ran away, because he was determined to be saved.

Jesus said, it's those who are violent against all opposition, who will possess the kingdom of God. And remember, very often, it's our relatives and friends, who try to hinder us from following in the footsteps of Jesus. So, as he was going towards this narrow gate, he found two of his friends from the town, who followed after him, and said, hey, we want to talk to you, why are you going away from us, we are good friends, we are in the same town.

And John Bunyan used words to represent these people, and that's in the English of the 17th century, so I want to use words that are more understood today. The name, their names, the name of one was Stubborn, and the name of the other was Compromiser. Two of his friends who tried to pull him back, they tried to stop Pilgrim from going forward, and Stubborn tried, tried, tried his best, as you can see at the back, and he gave up, and he went back.

But Compromiser said, okay, I'll come along with you, let's see, I'd like this salvation too. And so, Compromiser continued the journey with Pilgrim to find salvation, and as the two of them walked, Pilgrim explained to them how judgment of God is very serious, and Compromiser said, hey, let's walk fast then, and Pilgrim said, I can't walk fast, the burden on my back is so heavy. See, Compromisers don't carry a

burden of sin, I mean, they like to go to heaven, everybody likes to go to heaven, but they don't have a burden of sin, and they don't think of salvation as a very serious thing, and that's because they don't have a conscience really.

So, as they went along, they came to a mire, a mire is like a lake full of mud in which you can sink, a deep pit of sinking mud, and it was called the Swamp of Discouragement, and Compromiser fell into it along with Pilgrim, and as they were walking, you know, they were looking at each other, they were careless about where they were going, and he said, oh, if this is how I have to get salvation, I'm going to give up, he couldn't stand the discouragement, he just scrambled out of the mire and turned back, and cursed Pilgrim, and went back home. See, Compromisers will come along for a while, but when they find things get a bit difficult, or some problem arises, then they say, no, this is not for us. But Pilgrim didn't get discouraged, he says, the burden on my back is so great, and I'm afraid of the judgment of God, and I want to be completely free.

And as he cried out for help, suddenly a person whose name was Help, came to his rescue, and stretched out his hand, and pulled him out. In Hebrews 4.16, it says, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we can find grace to help us in our time of need. And Help pulled him out of the swamp, this pit, and encouraged him to press on.

Okay, then we find that he was walking along, and as he walked along, he saw a man sitting on a bench. And you can see this stylish man, his name was Worldly Wise Man, the people who are wise according to the world, and who have their own ideas of how to be saved, and how to be accepted by God. The world is full of many religious type of people, who are very wealthy, and comfortable, they don't want any disturbance in their life.

So he told Pilgrim, listen, if you want to be saved, I'll tell you, go to a town called Morality. Morality means living a good life in one's own strength. He says, go there, and that's the day you will learn how to be saved.

Because there, there's a man whose name is Legalist, a scholar, who really knows the Bible also, and he will explain to you how you can be saved, how you can keep the laws of God, and as you keep all God's laws of being kind to one another, and being good, and keeping yourself pure, you'll be saved. But the law is actually like a maze. You see all those caves, where you know what a maze is, you go in and you don't know how to exit.

So imagine going into a maze like this of caves, where there are so many laws, and you can never get out of it. You're trapped in it for life. So the law is like that.

You can never be saved by good works, you can never be saved by the law, but there are Legalists in the world who teach that you can make it to heaven by good works. The Bible says your good works are like filthy rags in God's eyes. So imagine how much worse our bad works are.

So, if you go into that maze of the law, you'll get lost, and sometimes you'll never be able to find your way out. So, that was the law. Then, as Pilgrim went on, you know, just because he listened to all these suggestions of the law, suddenly he found himself near a mountain which was on fire, which is a picture of Mount Sinai, where God gave this law to Moses, and there were such flashes of fire, and immediately the law, you know, he was listening to the law, believing he'd be saved by that, he suddenly realized, this is not going to save me.

This will only burn me up. And it's very important to recognize, you know, particularly in a church like ours where we preach that we must take up the cross and follow Jesus, and that the Holy Spirit helps us to deny ourselves, it's very easy to imagine that forgiveness of sins comes through self-denial and good works. It's important to distinguish between the foundation and the superstructure.

The foundation of the Christian life is not good works. No works. You're saved by grace through faith, and trying to be saved by the law will lead you into the fire of God.

So, that's what he discovered. So, he immediately discovered this is the wrong way, so he turned back, and once again he met the preacher, evangelist, who gave him the gospel first, and the evangelist rebuked him. Hey, didn't I tell you to look for that small gate through which you must go? Why do you listen to all these fellows on the way? Why did you listen to worldly wise men? Why did you even think about trying to be saved by keeping the law? And he said, you're wasting your time.

You should be going quickly. It's getting dark. And give up all these legalistic ideas of becoming holy.

And he told him, the righteous will live by faith, and not by keeping the law. And then evangelist told him, listen, I want to tell you something. There is no shortcut to the kingdom of God.

You must listen to God's word, live by faith, and not by the advice of legalistic preachers who say, do this, and do this, and don't do this, and don't do that. That's not the way to be saved. Anyway, he listened to evangelist now, and he was thankful for the rebuke.

Thank God for preachers who rebuke you to save you. And then he found this narrow gate. And as he came there, you see from the left, Satan, Beelzebul, is firing arrows at him to try and knock him down before he reaches the gate.

And just as he came there, the watchman inside pulled him inside immediately. When he knocked at the door, he opened, and he opened, and went inside, and pulled him inside quickly by the arrows. Satan is always trying to prevent people from finding this narrow gate.

Jesus said there's a narrow gate and a narrow way that leads to life. And Pilgrim's Progress is basically about showing us the narrow gate and the narrow way, exactly what we preach in the church, as opposed to the broad way which leads to the destruction, which is the law as well. And then he went through the gate, and he came to a house.

And this is called the house of the interpreter. Interpreter means someone who interprets a language. You know, like if you want to understand another language which you don't know and you want to understand it in English, somebody has to interpret that language from Russian or Chinese into English.

It's called an interpreter. Now many of us don't realize that the Bible also has got a language that needs to be interpreted to us. If it's not interpreted to us by the Holy Spirit, we won't understand it.

Remember the Pharisees studied the same Bible, 39 books, of the Old Testament, and because they didn't get the interpretation from the Holy Spirit, they thought Jesus was the devil. They called him Beelzebul. But Peter, who did not know so much of the scripture, because he got the interpretation of the Holy Spirit, he said, no, this is not the devil, this is the Son of God.

You see the difference? It's between darkness and light. You can read the Bible and be as dark and blind as the Pharisees, or you can have light like Peter. You've got to allow the interpreter.

So this is the house of the interpreter, who's the Holy Spirit, who would teach pilgrims some excellent lessons that would help him understand the scriptures. Jesus always taught by parables. So first, he showed him the picture of a serious looking man holding a Bible with a crown over his head symbolizing God's blessing and the anointing of the Spirit.

And a big globe, you see that circle behind his back is a picture of the world which is behind him. And this represents anointed teachers of the Word of God who understand the Bible but the Bible says that Christ has appointed teachers in the church to teach us. So interpreters told him you've got to listen to anointed teachers of the Word.

And the one way you can know that is they are totally free from the spirit of the world. See the world is behind them. That's one way you can know an anointed preacher.

That he's got no interest in preaching. It's all behind him. That's the way to know an anointed preacher of the Word.

And you will be able to sense that the blessing of God is upon this man. That's the crown upon his head and he'll be preaching only from the Bible. So he was told him to listen to such preachers.

And then the interpreter took him to another room where there were two rooms full of angry. His name is Passion. Anger.

Full of anger. Stamping his feet and waving his hands and yelling and screaming. And there was another boy whose name was Patience.

Anger or Passion is a picture of the people of the world. Always upset when they don't get what they want. Impatient.

We are all born. All of us are born as Passion. Anger.

Every child you see angry and stubborn is exactly what you and I were when we were small. Remember that. Whenever you look at a child remember you and I were like that when we were small.

But we got converted and we must see this picture very clearly. The Holy Spirit is trying to show us if you are still like the person on the left then the spirit of the world is not you have not been delivered from it fully. If you can come to rest.

The Bible says that there is a Sabbath rest for God's people. Jesus said come to me and I will give you rest. So being at rest in Christ is a very very important part of our salvation.

So that is what the Holy Spirit was trying to teach through these two pictures. Please keep that in mind all the time. And then in the next room the Holy Spirit showed him something else.

The devil there trying to pour water to quench the fire of God. God wants us to be flaming full of love for him and love for others. Fire is a picture of fervent love for Jesus Christ and a fervent love for others.

The word fervent itself is from fire and the devil is always pouring water to quench it to make you bitter and angry and unforgiving and that's the water he keeps pouring to have resentment against others and all that. But the fire is not being quenched. Fire is still burning.

Still loving Christ with all my heart and still one of the buckets of water he pours is persecution. Doesn't make a difference. There's another person pouring oil into the fire and the oil is keeping the fire burning and the water cannot quench that fire.

So that's a picture of how the Holy Spirit the power of the Holy Spirit comes and keeps on renewing us as the only way to prevent dying out and becoming cold. That's why we keep emphasizing we must be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time. Jesus Christ renews us with the Holy Spirit who gives us grace all the time and we need to continually have this supply every day because the devil is out to pour water on the fire every day.

So we need the oil to be supplied to us continuously in our heart every day. Otherwise we cool off in our devotion to Christ and if you find any of you have cooled off in your fervent devotion to Christ and the world has become more attractive to you or you lost that inner rest you had once and you're now very passionate and angry well you know the reason is the devil's water has been quenching your fire and the fire is dying out. You better hurry up and seek God for the oil to be poured in continuously.

The Holy Spirit is teaching all this to pilgrims. And in the next picture the name is despair. Despair means one who's given up on life.

Sitting in a prison. This is a picture of a backslider who has so hardened his heart that means he kept on hardening. Proverbs 29.1 says a man who keeps on being hardened despite continuous rebuke there'll be no hope for him.

In Hebrews 10 also it says that if you keep on sinning willfully not to be just sin once but if you keep on sinning willfully and ignore the pleadings of the Holy Spirit ignore the voice of our conscience and treat the blood of Christ like some cheap tap water that I can always use to cleanse my sin then the danger is you can come to the place where there's no more sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10 verse 26 to 29 and this man has come to that place. It's a terrible thing to be fed up in.

I think there are few people who come to that place. How to know whether you have come into that prison or not? Do you have a desire to repent and turn to Christ and you want to do it? Then you're not in that prison. Then the Holy Spirit is still pleading with you.

So don't condemn yourself saying oh I sinned so much probably I'm already in that prison. No, if you're in that prison you'll have no more desire to live a life like that. Who could sin and had no conviction about it and no conscience.

It's a very dangerous thing when you lose sensitivity to sin. It's the beginning of leprosy when you lose sensitivity in your body. So when you find that for example all of you can examine yourself can you think of some sin that really disturbed you few years ago when you were first converted maybe a few years ago you'd never watch a filthy movie but now you're happy to see some I don't mean pornography I mean even some ordinary movies which have got a lot of filth in them.

You're quite comfortable seeing it. I only want to warn you you're moving in that direction. Just be careful because the devil's aim is quench the fire and finally lock you up in this prison.

So before it's too late God is not going to stop us if we want to continually go in the wrong direction. He's given you a free will and you can choose. This man kept on taking advantage of the grace of God finally he's locked up in a prison and he cannot escape.

Okay. So after receiving all these instructions from the Holy Spirit Pilgrim continued on his way and there was a wall on either side fenced on either side so nobody could come in and that wall is called the wall of salvation and he was walking along this highway towards the future and finally he came to the cross.

This path led straight to the cross on a hill and this is where he gets saved and as he came near the cross you see his burden rolling down you see it rolling down in the center of that slide you can see it rolling down there's a grave there that's the grave where Jesus was buried and the burden rolls into that our sins are buried and he never saw it again and this is how the Lord deals with our sins he says I will not remember your sins anymore when you come to the cross and say Lord there's a song which says my hands are not clean you know if you come to the cross with some of your good works which will also make God accept you then your hands are not empty when you come to the cross you have to say Lord there's nothing I can bring not I'm from a good family or I've sometimes asked

people when did you become a Christian and they've said well I was always a Christian I was born in a Christian family then I know these guys are not saved they're different people of different religions we're all sinners I remember once telling a Christian Jesus did not die for Christians did you know that he died for sinners I said the trouble with you is you're coming to Christ as a Christian that's why you're not saved till today come to him as a sinner and you'll be saved immediately so nothing in my hands I bring his hands are empty simply to thy cross I cling it's that sense of emptiness I can offer nothing for all the wicked things I've done in my life just like the prodigal son came back empty handed nothing to recommend him that's the person who gets the joy of salvation

immediately anybody who says but you got to do this you got to do that you got to keep the Sabbath you got to do this in order to be saved and as he was kneeling there three angels came to him as his burden was rolled away and greeted him saying peace be to you and the first angel said your sins are forgiven and the second angel took off his ragged clothes and put on a beautiful dress of righteousness the righteousness of Christ the robe of Christ and the third angel put a seal on his forehead a passport to enter heaven or a certificate that his sins are forgiven and he qualifies to enter into the kingdom of God and he would have to give this certificate or passport or scroll at the gate of heaven when he reaches there so he says you got to hold on to it he told him be careful and that's

called the assurance of our salvation it's important not only to be forgiven but to be sure that we are forgiven that assurance I got a certificate you know like you work hard and get a degree and then you get a certificate and say here is the certificate I got my degree it's like that the assurance of salvation yes I came to the cross I asked Jesus to come to my heart I remember in my life it took many years to be sure of my salvation but my spiritual progress started only when I became sure that Christ was living in my heart my sins are forgiven and if any of you don't have that ask God to give it to you don't get it from a man a man's words are worth nothing I got it from God that's why I've never lost that assurance of salvation for 56 years not even for a second and God gives it to

you it's permanent it's been saved and when he got this his name was changed from pilgrim to Christian Acts 11.26 says the disciples were called Christians today all types of people are called Christians but in the beginning only disciples were called Christians and he was named Christian he got this and he jumped

for joy and he went on his way singing because he was born again he'd become a real Christian now but that was only the beginning soon Christian came across three men who were fast asleep you know these people have come past the cross and all that they are fast asleep with chains on their legs their names were easily deceived the name of the second one was laziness and the third name was presuming that everything is alright so those are three attitudes that Christians can have

easily deceived that means you just believe everybody you believe every preacher just because he does a few miracles or something like a magic show you believe him easily deceived a lot of that going on these days and all lazy indisciplined that means you have accepted Christ now I can relax and sit back those are the people who end up sleeping with chains tied up and all presuming that everything is okay if there's any wicked way in me don't let me assume that everything is okay so many times you can be in a good church and you can assume everything is okay with me you'll end up like this with chains on your legs and Christian woke them up and we must do that too if you see somebody like that easily deceived or lazy or presuming everything shake them up and say with the word of God warn

them about the dangers and they woke up listen to it forget it and they went back to sleep again just like so many people and this is a picture of many who ignore God's warnings and continue to live without taking their Christian life seriously there's never a single day that we must stop taking our Christian life seriously every single day we have to take our Christian life seriously and as Christian moved forward he saw two people climbing over a wall people who don't want to come via the cross humbling themselves nothing in their hands or brain they want to climb over a wall and escape all that humiliation and humbling and try to find shortcut into God's kingdom they jumped into the way without going via the cross and they don't have a certificate they can go all their life and at the

end of their life when they reach the gates they have to come to the cross first to get your sins forgiven they can go along for a long way a lot of people sit in churches who never came to the cross first they climbed over the wall and came and sat in CFC yes if you haven't gone to the cross remember you may look like all the others walking along the way but one day when you stand at the gates of heaven you'll discover you're denied entry because you don't have a passport you're denied now and then as he went along further pilgrim Christian his name is Christian now met two people actually these two people were the ones who jumped over the wall the name of one was formal religion and you know Christendom is full of 95% of so-called Christians have got a formal religion they go to church

they sing songs they got Christian names they get their children sprinkled and do many Christian things but they climbed over the wall they didn't humble themselves and repent as broken sinners the name of the other was hypocrisy wherever there's hypocrisy hypocrisy was a sin that Jesus condemned most of all and wherever people are hypocrites there's no salvation for them those are people who climb over the wall and they came from a town called empty glory which means they glory in the things of the world which are all empty and they are humbling themselves at the cross now when are the three of them that is now these two people joined Christian you know and walked along saying they assumed that they were also disciples like Christian but their true nature got exposed when they came to a

big hill along the way called the hill of difficulty when some real problems arise because we are Christians and some opposition or difficulty or trial comes then the true nature of formal religion and hypocrisy was discovered they turned away from the hill one went towards danger and the other went towards destruction roads on the side but Christian also was tired he said how will I ever climb this hill but he discovered that see what God had provided you see him kneeling down there in the middle there's a

spring of water flowing from a rock and so Christian refreshed himself taking from the rock the power of the Holy Spirit so that he could climb the way we need that all the time and then as Christian climbed the hill he felt tired and you can see there on the right sitting down on a

bench because he was exhausted and he read the scroll the certificate and he felt happy about it and then he looked at his new dress and he felt so proud about what he had got and what happens is you fall asleep spiritually when you're always admiring yourself and think what a wonderful Christian you are and say like the Pharisee Lord I thank you that I'm not like other brothers and sisters in the church I'm so much better than them you get all those ideas what happens is you fall asleep spiritually be careful there's a lesson in all these slides you fall asleep spiritually and see what happened that certificate that he had in his hand and think you're better than others you lose the assurance of your salvation the scroll has fallen down and he didn't even realize it sometimes we don't

realize that we've lost the assurance of salvation for some time and suddenly he woke up and started walking again and came to the top of the hill and there were two men who were running back their names were fearful and doubting fearful means and doubting they were running in fear crying out in fear and they said we are running away from the lions there are lions in the way ahead of us we are running from them and Christian he never knew there are lions on the way he also got scared and so he said okay let me find some comfort from my certificate my scroll but he looked for it, it wasn't there see when we get afraid the assurance the Lord has given us that we belong to him the certificate is an assurance my child you belong to me I will be a wall of fire around about you I'll protect you

but he had lost that certificate because he was asleep at that bench so he couldn't find it and he said where and he walked back where did I drop it somewhere and he walked all the way back he ran back to the bench and there he found it under the bench where he was sitting the assurance of salvation all the time if you lose it you will join other Christians running back in fear and in doubt so never never lose it always be assured that Christ has accepted you John 6.37 was the verse that blessed me 56 years ago Jesus said him that cometh to me I'll never cast out and I said Lord I've come to you I've probably come to you a hundred times he said I didn't cast you out I've come to you he asked God to forgive him for his carelessness in losing that assurance of salvation of falling asleep

now he regained the joy of salvation salvation also always brings a joy he regained that joy of salvation and he continued to go along the way and after slowly becoming dark and he became aware of the dangers along the way but he was encouraged called beautiful he said oh I must get there and he wanted to get there before it became night it's not heaven it's a palace along the way and he hurried to reach there and as he was hurrying he saw the lions which these people had warned about he suddenly saw these lions very close to the gate of this palace and this is the devil and he got scared but the doorkeeper which in the middle you can't see that doorkeeper is a little further away he shouted out don't be afraid look carefully the lions are chained they are chained they can only come to

the edge of the narrow way they cannot come into the narrow way they can roar and frighten you but they cannot come in they can get you but as long as you are walking along the narrow way let the devil roar as much as he likes he cannot touch you so it's very important for us to recognize that that we live without fear that the devil cannot touch us these are pictures that you must bear in mind always when you hear something frightening some circumstance remember in the middle of the narrow way there is a verse in Isaiah 35 it says no lion will walk there and you are quite safe there finally he arrived at the palace and the doorkeeper welcomed him and invited him to come and stay there for the night the house was maintained

by a very serious looking sister named Wisdom see all these

people represent certain virtues or bad characters or good so here is one of those good characters Wisdom Wisdom is the one who runs God's house or the church we can say she received Christian and took him into the palace and there she introduced him to three other serious looking sisters the name of the one was Godliness and the name of the other sister was Carefulness and the third was Divine Love Wisdom was in charge of the home and these were the other three sisters Carefulness and Divine Love all these are characteristics that we need Wisdom very very important Godliness Carefulness being very careful in this evil world that we don't pollute ourselves and Divine Love the love of God towards Jesus and towards one another and these people shared many truths with Christian and he learnt

a lot from them think of this palace beautiful like the church and in the church we get teaching on Wisdom Godliness, Carefulness, Contentment Divine Love etc and these truths are what strengthen us to walk further along the way and these sisters told Christian that the prince of the heavenly city has established this palace here for all travelers to encourage them to go to the church that Christ has established in different parts of the earth where you can hear these truths that lead you encourage you to walk the narrow way and then since he was tired they showed him a room in which he could rest and the room is called Peace you know we must always go to bed at night with peace in our heart the Bible says don't let the sun set on your anger during the day maybe accidentally you lost your

temper sometime during the day ask God to forgive you but by the time you go to bed at night it must be peaceful don't go to bed with unrest in your heart anytime unrest against anybody in the world or unrest concerning some situation cast your burden upon the Lord cast your anxiety upon him tell him your problems don't forget to thank him because when we thank him it says the peace of God will guard our hearts if you only tell your problems to God and don't thank him Philippians 4, 6 and 7 then the peace of God will not be there very often we tell our problems to God but we don't thank him but if we do thank him we live in this room peace and we sleep peacefully the best pillow you can ever have is a good conscience always have that pillow when you sleep at night so the next day the

sisters took him to the armory the armory is where you have all the weapons to fight against the devil sword, shield, helmet, breastplate and shoes that never wear out shoes that never wear out and he said you need all of these if you read Ephesians 6, verse 12 to 18 you know what the sword is the sword of the spirit the shield of faith the breastplate of righteousness the helmet of salvation and the shoes of peace the gospel of peace so all these things are required if you want to fight against Satan and he showed him all that and then they took him to the top of the house and showed him all the beautiful mountains in the distance and he saw a very pleasant vineyards, fruits of all kinds and flowers very beautiful to the eyes and the sisters told him that is called Emmanuel's land just

before you enter the heavenly city you'll be passing through that area called Emmanuel's land so let that encourage you as you walk this way then they took him back into the armory and fitted him from head to foot with all this armor and those iron shoes so that he wouldn't be shot in the feet either he had a breastplate and to defend himself against all the enemy's attacks and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God and thus he'd be equipped to fight the devil and that's what we do in the church remember the palace is a picture of the church in the church we seek to equip people with strength and faith and the word of God and righteousness to prepare everyone to face the devil during the week and every day of their life and now then we find Christian went forward continued

towards a valley called the valley of humiliation and problems and there he could face many many problems and many dangers very soon he saw the devil coming to him his name was Apollyon coming to fight with him because he had never fought battle before and then he shook off his fears and took out his sword you know the way to attack the devil is with the sword the sword is the word of God when the devil came to Jesus and tempted him Jesus only used the sword of the spirit it is written man shall not live by bread alone it is written you shall not tempt the Lord your God it is written you shall worship only the Lord your God every time the devil ran away because Jesus used the word of God there is an example for us don't try and argue with Satan that's what Eve did and she fell just quote

God's word God's word says all authority in heaven and earth belongs to my savior God's word says my sins and iniquities he will not remember anymore God's word says he will forsake me and we won't fear God's word that's the thing that we that's why it's very important to memorize these wonderful promises in God's word and the commands in God's word when the devil tempts you to tell a lie God's word says all liars will go to hell and your yes must be yes and your no must be no always there is a word that the Holy Spirit will remind you use the shield of faith that's the important thing when the devil fires dots of unbelief like God doesn't love you you got to have the shield of faith of course God loves me he loves me enough to send his son to die for me what greater love can there be and

many other weapons you know it's going to go badly with you you're going to get cancer you're going to have an accident you're going to die shield of faith but God cares for me and so but he was still slightly wounded sometimes it does happen slip up a little so Christian was a little wounded the fight with the demon lasted for six hours and Christian was quite exhausted but finally he cried out in all things I am more than a conqueror through Christ who loves me Romans 8 37 and as soon as the devil heard this word you see him running he's going to run that's how the devil runs away with all his might the Bible says resist the devil and he will not walk away from you he will flee from you flee is more than run he's going to run for his life if you stand against him with the word of God I

hope you'll have this picture in your mind always sword of the spirit will make the devil run away from you with all his might and then Christian rejoiced and gave thanks to God with leaves from the tree of life which bring healing and Christian took those it's like a comfort that God gives and our sins are forgiven once again you know when we slip up we ask God to forgive me Lord I'm sorry I got a little anxious there I was a little afraid there please forgive me anxiety and fear are sins we must confess it Lord please forgive me and on his journey happy that he had won one battle with Satan there are many more battles but he had won one battle every battle makes us stronger in faith for the next battle and now Christian is approaching a very dangerous area and he again saw two men

running back you always see backsliders in the Christian life along this way they'll always be backsliders some people who are good friends of yours you don't see them they've disappeared you thought maybe they'll come next Sunday no they've gone forever they've turned back and gone they'll always be there running back saying go back go back they said there are many dangers in front but you know he had already experienced the danger of the chained lions and the danger of the devil so he's not going to listen to them anymore it's wonderful when we have a few experiences of victory fighting a battle we just press on he has to walk now there's a steep cliff on either side one side there's a deep ditch many thousands of feet down and the other side is a muddy mire which is like mud in which

you sink if you fall and he had to walk this path very carefully the Christian life is one way you've got to be very careful you can go to one extreme or the other extreme you've got to walk and then he also suddenly

found flames coming from hell with a lot of smoke and terrible noises and he found that see there was not devil there these were other things there were little demons there above the fire and he found his sword was not enough he needed something more than the sword so he decided to pray it's not only the word of God we also need to pray to overcome so one is the word of God which we quote to Satan and the other is all prayer that's also part of the weapons in Ephesians 6 18 all prayer that means praying at all times and with that prayer he knelt down and then he got up and

said Psalm 71 16 I will walk in the strength of the Lord my God that's the verse that's helped me when I'm physically sick or weak Psalm 71 16 I will walk in the strength of the Lord my God many a time when I'm exhausted and I get up and preach I say I will walk in the strength of the Lord my God it's amazing what happens when you confess God's word and when you pray and ask God for help and as he was going along you see two invisible demons coming and whisper all types of evil suggestions to defile him and thoughts of discouragement to weaken him thoughts of unbelief to frighten him thoughts of bitterness to defile him and thoughts of discouragement to weaken him sometimes you hear things in your mind which are not from the Holy Spirit to give you a wrong attitude towards somebody to

unnecessarily make you suspicious of someone a bad reason for the reason why somebody said something you know our human nature is always to attribute a bad motive and a bad reason instead of a good motive and a good reason for others next time that happens to you remember this picture somebody is whispering into your mind are you going to listen to them? a lot of conflicts that happen between husband and wife at home happen like this there are two devils whispering into the ears of the other person and they are both listening like stupid people the husband and wife are listening to what the devil is whispering in their ear and they get at each other instead of fighting the devil they fight each other I hope this picture will always be in your mind the whisperings of Satan whenever you

hear something that is contrary to the law of love for Jesus Christ or love for other people you can be absolutely sure but at the same time he heard the whispers of the Holy Spirit in his heart that's a wonderful thing and he responded to that and confessed the word of God and encouraged himself and he overcame and went on suddenly the darkness turned into light and he looked back he said wow you mean I walked all this way and I didn't slip up it must be Jesus who kept me from falling do not take the credit for not falling don't say I walked that way and I got victory no the Lord Jesus kept me from falling to the left and kept me from falling to the right how he protected me these are the you know when you look back over your life I believe many times we should look back over our life

and look back at the different times in our past life from accidents on the road from calamities from missing the truth from being led astray by some false teaching these are all the dangers you know and you look back over your life this is something we must do frequently here's another picture that must be in your mind when you look back frequently this is the way you led me Lord thank you so much and he he knew there'd be even greater dangers ahead but he got encouragement you know the wonderful thing about looking back in our past is like we sing in that song his love in time past prevents me from thinking that he will leave me at last to sink in trouble his love in time past forbids me to think he will leave me at last in trouble to sink each sweet Ebenezer we have in review confirms

his good pleasure to carry us through in the Old Testament Samuel put a stone sometimes called it Ebenezer which means the Lord has helped us so far that's a great thing to say the Lord has helped me so far that's the meaning of Ebenezer and he will help me in the future too that's the advantage of looking back in thankfulness which will give us faith for the future and the Christian got up and said by the light of

the Lord I will go through the darkness then he entered a cave this is a giant of giants one was a giant called false religions the rulers of false religions who persecuted Christians you know the Roman Empire and all that and many many non-Christian religions that kill Christians and the other giant was a Christian, so called Christian church who also persecuted Christians the

Roman Catholic Church persecuted Protestants quite a lot in the 1500s, 1600s they killed other Christians for not being part of that church people in one church take other Christians to court and trouble them, harass them there's so many ways in which non-Christians trouble Christians that's one, believers that's one type of giant and the other is so called Christians who persecute Christians also both of these are heathen one is a non-Christian heathen the other Christian heathen they don't know the Lord they don't know the big bishop but they persecute Christians and he was saying to him you got to be burned then only you learn a lesson you fellows never seem to learn to come back to us and you go around and all these people who belong to Babylonian denominations burned many true

believers through the years and killed them for preaching the gospel John Bunyan himself suffered so much for such people he quietly ignores him and he was not hurt because God protected him and as he was walking he suddenly saw another person ahead of him you know when he left the palace beautiful and he had asked the watchman there did any other pilgrim go this way he said yeah there was another guy who went this way ahead of you so he was looking for that person ahead of him his name was Faithful Faithful another pilgrim traveling to the heavenly city so Christian asked him slow down hey hang on let me catch up with you Faithful said I'm not going to slow down for anybody that's a good answer to give when people try to drag you back to not press on following the Lord don't go be so

zealous for the Lord you say listen you're not going to get me to cool off I'm going to press on if you want to catch up with me catch up with me but I'm not going to go at your pace I'm going to go at my pace I hope all of you will say that that you will not slow down your pace to the level of half-hearted Christians but you will keep your pace and get those fellows to catch up with you so Faithful said to Christian if you want to join me you better run Christian put all his strength into it and ran then what happened Christian ran and overtook Faithful and he became proud I have gone ahead of this brother spiritually and what happens when you become proud even in the world there is a proverb it says pride goes before a fall he fell down pride will always make you fall down and then the

brother whom you despised you were more spiritual he has to come and pick you up Faithful came and helped him you know we must be thankful to God whenever we find even one like-minded brother with whom we can fellowship after this there was fellowship they could go together and share their experiences with each other it's a wonderful thing when we fellowship with each other God led us because that can encourage them instead of talking all the useless gossip that people talk about let's give our testimony you know in heaven we are all going to give our testimony to thousands of believers it's going to be a wonderful time but here on earth let's share our testimony so Faithful began to give his testimony to Christian and part of his testimony was this this is Faithful telling his story well

when I walked along the way I saw a woman who came from behind a tree her name was Lustful and she flattered me and fluttered her eyes at me and tried to tempt me in so many ways but I just turned away and ran I didn't stay there to discuss with her even for one second whenever you see a woman who is not pure and you'll be able to see that in her dress and in the way she dresses and even the way she walks and talks you can sense maybe in your office or some place maybe a relative sometimes sometimes someone known to you someone who lives near you and you see this is this girl this woman doesn't have a pure

spirit run let her get offended shout at her don't you have any grace or civilization or culture he didn't care what she said he just ran for his life that's the only way you'll protect

yourself many people who have not done that have ruined their lives then he was still continuing his testimony he said then I went from there and I met an old man his name was the old Adam the old Adam and he said why don't you come to my house I've got three beautiful daughters there called lust of the flesh lust of the eyes and the pride of life they're really lovely faithful come and stay with me they'll be very free with you and again you know faithful we don't even care if somebody is old if somebody old man tells me you got to just say sorry sorry sir maybe call him sir sorry sir I'm not going to come with you I'm not going to allow you to tempt me to go away from you know the ways in which so many ways the devil uses sometimes it's your friends sometimes it's an old father or uncle

or somebody who maybe you respect but he's leading you into the lust of the flesh the lust of the eyes and the pride of life from there he went but you know because he was listening to Adam for some time he didn't go away immediately immediately Moses comes up the law and saying why did you listen to that man you should have resisted him immediately I saw you there talking around with him and discussing whether you should go to his house you know even that slight inclination that faithful had he didn't go to the house that slight inclination towards the lust of the flesh towards the lust of the eyes towards the pride of life was enough for the law of God to come down strongly saying even that is wrong there you see Moses the law of God coming and condemning him for that slight inclination

and Moses buffeted him but the Lord Jesus came saved him from there okay we'll forgive him this time for condemning him so remember the slight inclination towards these things is sin after that faithful says he's still giving his testimony to Christian he said I met another man called discontent discontent means one who is never happy with anything he's always got something to grumble and murmur about have you met people like that grumblers I mean they always find something discontent who told him listen I'm fed up of walking this way with all the temptations and narrowness of the way I'm going back to the city of destruction that's the name of the home they came from city of destruction because I've got a lot of friends there called pride and arrogance and worldly glory I'm missing those

friends I want to go back faithful said you can say what you like and go what you like but you must resist them don't let your friendship with them make you go with them to some place where you will sin you have to just be willing to break a friendship or offend people if you want to follow the Lord that's the only way especially in the world in which we live and then he went on faithful is still giving his testimony he's telling Christian then I met another guy he wanted to go to heaven he wanted to walk the narrow way but if somebody asked him hey are you a Christian well well well he would say and try to hide the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus that can happen in your office I'm not saying that you just go to your office and shout to everybody I'm a Christian but when they see

your way of life is different from them and you don't laugh at their dirty jokes and you're upright and you don't cheat like they do and they ask you why don't you do that don't just say oh I don't feel like doing it you're ashamed to confess Christ say I'm a Christian not a Christian like many others you've seen I've received Jesus Christ into my life that's the opportunity don't be ashamed I remember when I was in the Navy and many times I said Lord I always used to think of this I'm not ashamed to hang wearing an underwear on the cross you only had an underwear there imagine hanging with an underwear being laughed at mocked at for my sake he was not ashamed to die for me that's the picture I always had Lord Jesus if you're not ashamed to die for me I'm not going to be ashamed of you

anywhere I'm going to make it clear wherever I am senior officers junior officers I'm going to let them know when they ask me I'm a Christian I have a glass of orange juice and people would come to me and ask me why aren't you drinking I said okay you asked for it right I'm going to tell you right now why I'm not drinking and I give them the gospel I mean they asked for it I'm not going preaching to them they asked me I said I'll tell you the reason I give them the full gospel so many opportunities you get like this you don't have to preach if you're different they'll come and ask you what are you doing Jesus we got to preserve ourselves also and preserve our dignity I said I don't want any dignity on this earth my savior had no dignity he was despised and rejected of all men and that's

the way I want to go I'm not ashamed to confess him so he did not succeed finally faithful just shook him off and from there he went on and there as he went on he met another person now they were going together his testimony is over the faithful and Christian are going together now here is a person that all of us will meet it could be a man it could be a woman you know what the name is talkative have you heard people like that once they open their mouth it's very difficult to get them to shut it you will not even be able to get a word in talk talk talk talk talk and it's not always useless talk but it's not talk that leads to godliness even if they talk about Christianity it's all about the arguments about this thing and that thing why does it say there is a little contradiction in

the bible here so many things why is it like that why did god command the Israelites to kill all the Canaanites all types of things talk talk talk talk talk and talk about all types of things this is in the news the only thing they don't talk about is how to live a godly life be careful about such people some of these talkative people I tell you and Christian immediately recognized this man comes from the town of foolish talk so this man showed these pilgrims one thing how foolish the people of the world are in the things that they always talk about that's a good education to learn the bible says let your speech always be with grace that you may know how to answer every man Colossians 4.6 our words must bless people that doesn't mean you can't joke sometimes we joke and that joke

also blesses people provided we don't make fun of other people if you want to crack a joke make fun of yourself but never make fun of other people in any joke or community of people we never do that from there Christian went on and faithful they met evangelist met them and they told him all their experiences how the Lord had led them and protected them and evangelist encouraged them to continue to be faithful in their walk and pointed them to the city you see that city there you're going to pass through that city that's a dangerous city you have the way to the heavenly city goes through that city and be very careful it's good that God warns us sometimes in advance hey you're going into a dangerous area now and there'll be many many dangers that you face there and evangelist prophetically

warned him that's one of the blessings of being in church every Sunday where the word that you hear sometimes even on a Wednesday can prophetically prepare you for some danger that's coming up in the next few days in your life that's happened many many times to CFC believers who come regularly to Sunday services that they hear a word that prophetically prepares them for dangers that lie in the future and the town which they entered they walked into that town they had to go through this town it's a picture of the Christian having to live in this world you can't escape from the world we don't live in a community with our only believers no God allows us to live where we are surrounded by unbelievers that's the picture of the city the name of the city was Vanity Vanity means an empty pride in

something worthless an empty pride in something that has no value everything on earth has got no value in eternity money, honor, sexual pleasure no value in eternity but a lot of people in the world are very

proud and satisfied with these things we got money, we got honor, etc there's a perfect description of worldly people empty pride in something worthless and you're walking through this in your colleges, in schools, in your office with your relatives you're walking through this town and in this town there's a fair you know what a fair is where they have all these giant wheels and all that type of stuff an entertainment fair that's going on throughout the year that's why it's called Vanity Fair entertainment remember that the entertainment in this world is controlled by the devil he's

the prince of the world he controls Hollywood and Bollywood and every other word there is through the different things they have now Tollywood and Collywood and I don't know what all there are he controls all of them he controls how to influence people even these books like Harry Potter and things like that that train people to get familiar with the devil and evil spirits preparing a generation not to come closer to God but to become friendly with Satan and say you don't have to be afraid of Satan he's sort of friendly you know and people don't have wisdom it's controlled by the devil and as they walk through this city pilgrim that is Christian and faithful they discovered that their dress itself is completely different from the way other people dress I tell you when you sisters dress in

a modest way completely different from those in your college and from those around you and all the worldly people who follow the cinema stars and the worldly models and you're dressed differently that's a testimony for Christ when you don't wear those tight fitting clothes that reveal the shape of your body whether the upper part or the lower part and when you are modest you know that's the way even the village women in India dress modestly but I'm sorry to say a lot of Christian girls have started following the tight fitting dresses of the world today and their parents don't have the wisdom to correct them be careful when you walk through the city your way of dressing even your conversation is different you don't talk about the useless things that others in your college or office speak

about your dress is different you don't expose parts of your body more and more like people do nowadays these women in the world as we call it the latest styles and so the people in the world look at them in a funny way and others will look at you in a funny way why are you always dressed in this crazy 18th century style I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ and I don't believe in unnecessarily tempting men by the way I dress it's a good testament don't be ashamed of him remember he was not ashamed to die for you so then the people began to criticize them that's what happens gradually all of them gang up against you in your school or college and say you're like this you're different but be proud of that time because Jesus was like that in school and we must encourage our children say be bold

don't worry if everybody is against you don't worry if you don't talk about the useless things they talk about Jesus will be with you it's better to have Jesus with you than all those worldly friends remember that and not only criticize them they finally caught them and brought them before the authorities to be questioned and they said these people must be either mad or they must have come here to this town and so they took them and put them into a cage in the middle of the town there you see the legs of these faithful and Christian put in a cage so that other people could come around and laugh at them and make fun of them you know some people some worldly people get a lot of pleasure out of making fun of Christians I faced a lot of it they called me all types of names like Holy Joe and

different things like that it's okay so they took them to court and faithful was very strong in defending himself the name of the judge was hate good hate the good and then three evil men came and gave a false witness false witness against faithful the names of these three false witnesses were jealousy superstition and filthy talk many times people of the world will be jealous of you they have a lot of

superstition which they call their religion you got the true faith and they make fun of you and filthy talk these are the people of the world but faithful defended himself against all those false witnesses saying we never harmed anybody we are trying to live our own lives we are not interfering with anybody else but the judge you know is on the side of evil people you will find that very

often that the people of the world side with those who are evil against Christians so in those days the judge had what is called a jury they still have that in America where the judge does not take the final decision he makes a number of people who are citizens of that country say you have heard all this I will guide you but you take the decision so they had a jury there and here are the beautiful faces of the jury their names are Mr.

No Good Mr. Hatred Mr. Lustful Mr. Liar Mr. Cruelty and Mr.

Irreconcilable that means you cannot I will not agree with anybody and they were all agents of Satan and they all agreed with the judge even though there was no charge against him that can happen many Christians just like Jesus was declared guilty in the court many Christians through the years have faced guilty verdict in the court just because they were Christians they never got justice so the judge said okay you must record guilty against him and so faithful was beaten with rods poked with knives and tied to a wooden pole to burn him so here they tied him to this wooden pole and you see the bottom of the fire burning the body of faithful and the very moment that he died the chariot from heaven came, picked up his soul and took him straight up to the heavenly city that's what happens be

faithful unto death he would not compromise and you know God worked in a wonderful way that one person who saw faithful dying his name was hopeful he got converted that often happens that when somebody sees a Christian standing true to the Lord bold one person in the crowd comes out and says I want to be a Christian I heard stories that in the big Roman amphitheaters in the middle of the ground they would throw the Christians and the lions would come out and eat them and these Christians would be singing hymns of praise kneeling down and praying while the lions jumped on them one person in this big audience of thousands of people would be so convicted this must be the truth my Roman gods are all false and he would stand up and say I'm also a Christian it's a wonderful thing to stand true

to the Lord and so this one man called hopeful got converted and he joined the Christian you know God always wants to give us fellowship you lose one brother you'll get another if you're really wholehearted God will always give you fellowship and he made a brotherly covenant and they went together and as they went along they met another man I'll explain what his name means using Christianity for personal profit using Christianity to gain something for myself coming to a church to get something for myself something worldly maybe some money maybe some help maybe some food maybe something using Christianity for personal gain and profit could be a preacher using Christianity for personal gain to make money so here's a man like that and the man told the Christians I'm also a Christian man but

I'm so rich and I made a lot of money what's wrong with that and the pilgrims were not interested in this conversation and he had other friends there who were worldly people and the pilgrim said we're not interested in all this and left him and pressed on in their journey Satan will send many many people across your path to hinder you from following the Lord mostly people at your place of work or friends etc just be careful and as they looked back you know they walked past him and looked back and they saw this man bowing down to three other friends and the other man was love of money and save everything for yourself save all the money you can for yourself then they knew that this man called using Christianity for profit

was friends with all these other people hold the world and love of

money and save everything for yourself and they knew that he was an agent of Satan so they moved on and soon one of those men one of those three who were there on the other side came after the pilgrims and said hey listen let me ask you something what is wrong in using my Christian context in the church to expand my business and to make more money for myself what's wrong in that what's wrong in my joining a church because there are some rich people there and I can do get some business from them and make some profit yeah I'm also attending church singing the same songs and all but in a church you know people join Christianity just for some personal gain and Christian gave him such a strong rebuke that he just left him and went away it's no use arguing with such people because their whole

mind is set on money honor, profit, etc and they'll use everything possible we've seen people come to CFC for personal gain they got to be very very careful something for themselves and then after that they became merciful and the way went through an easy plane called easy way and that's also true that God does not allow us to face pressure and trial all the time we all know that God knows how to reduce the pressure and to give us comfort along the narrow way but as we have all discovered that is only for a very short time so it's a very short distance that goes through this easy way most of the time it's tough so it was a very short time but they were thankful for that for that short time and as they went further along they saw a hill called money imagine John Bunyan had such discernment

on these things that we are preaching today in the church 350 years ago it shows that when a man knows God God gives him discernment on everything whichever century you live in and standing by that hill was a man whose name was Demas you know who Demas was?

Demas was a close co-worker of the Apostle Paul who finally left Paul because he wanted to make money he knew that going around with Paul I can't make money preaching we've had people who were with us not here but in other places who were with CFC who left us only because they knew they couldn't make money for themselves as preachers in CFC so they left and went to a place where they could make as much money as they wanted and this is one of those people Demas so he invited these pilgrims hey listen okay before you and there's plenty of time to walk the narrow way why not meanwhile come here and dig for treasure with me there's a lot of gold here and I was also a disciple like you but I passed by this hill and I found a great opportunity to make a lot of money for myself and then continue

and Christian immediately recognized him this is the son of Judas Iscariot and he said I don't want your invitation thank you very much because he knows what happened to Judas Iscariot Jesus said it is better for that man that he was not even born because money was Judas' problem then they came and they walked to a monument of a woman made of salt and underneath were written remember Lot's wife you know what happened to Lot's wife God pulled Lot and his family out of Sodom and she looked back and said oh I left all my saris behind and all those nice garden and so many things I had in my cupboard and I have to leave it all and go and God said you want to go there and stay right here and it is a warning along the way don't look back when you are following Jesus then they came to a very

pleasant river called the river of the water of life and here they spent many days refreshing themselves with the water and the beautiful fruit that grew on the banks this is a picture of the comforting ministry of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement it gives us sometimes directly personally sometimes all by ourselves but that is part of our life along the way he always comforts you he is the God of all encouragement he will never leave you without encouragement so keep listening to him and he will take

you by the river of the water of life and after some time the highway led away from the banks of the river and it became very rough and steep and very painful for the feet and they were saying oh boy this is getting tough and I wish we could get a little relaxation you know when the

going gets a bit tough we can easily look for easy ways and compromises that is the time you got to be scared it is tough to be a Christian stand true to the Lord and that is what happened here they came to a little small little fence and a gate that they could jump over they didn't have to go that way the narrow way was this side of that stone wall but when they looked over the stone wall they saw such a nice grassy area a meadow and they said hey Christian said this looks like a shortcut to the heavenly city we don't have to go this long rough way so they decided to take a shortcut they didn't think evangelists had told them but they used their own mind lean not upon your own understanding trust in the Lord obey his word and they climbed over they thought we can reduce the time of our

travel sometimes the devil will tell you take the shortcut different different things but it is very dangerous when you avoid the narrow way the way of the cross and take shortcuts and when they went along there there was another guy there self confidence self confident people always become backsliders and he was walking ahead of them yeah yeah this is the way to the heavenly city this is the shortcut so be careful there could be other people who can bluff you and don't believe everyone follow the advice of the godly that will protect you and this man said come follow me and they foolishly followed him and suddenly in the darkness of night he fell right down there you see the cliff there and he went right down and all they could see was his hat or something and they quickly stayed away

from that without falling into the pit thank God they are protected and you know the ruler of this whole area was an evil man who had made this pit there for all those who trespass into his property to fall and die and suddenly there was a storm and darkness and the two pilgrims lost their way this is what happens when you try to take a shortcut when you follow the advice of worldly people and then they try to go back to that little fence over which they jumped and they couldn't find it and then they were so tired that they lay down and slept and when they woke up in the morning the giant his name was giant discouragement or giant despair he was the owner of all this land and he saw them and caught them and said why have you come into my territory they are caught in the grip of

discouragement he took them and locked them up in a dirty stinking dungeon in his castle and there they lay discouraged depressed for a long time without food or light for many days sometimes discouragement when it grips you can be like you are in a prison and here is something you can learn very often it is because you followed some worldly advice or you took a shortcut and avoided the way of the cross you thought that was difficult the end result is weeks of discouragement and and then the devil the giant discouragement he has got an equally wicked wife he asked her what shall we do with these prisoners and he said she told him take a big club you know a big stick and beat them without any mercy so he took a big club and went down and beat them up thoroughly discouragement is a terrific

evil thing that beats us and hammers us but they still did not give up their faith even though they were so discouraged so then giant discouragement tried another technique listen to this be careful many people fall for this he said why don't you commit suicide there are three ways you can commit suicide here I can give you a knife with which you can cut yourself or here is a bottle of poison that you can drink and kill yourself or here is a rope with which you can hang yourself which would you like and they said no thank you we don't want any of these we refuse to commit suicide because suicide is murder whether you murder somebody else or murder yourself is the same thing you are guilty you can't kill other people you

can't kill yourself just because we are discouraged okay we are

discouraged for a little while we will come out of it but if we commit suicide where will we end up so then the giant tried to scare them and he didn't succeed in making them commit suicide let me show you something he took him to the top of their castle and said you see all the bones of people down there at the bottom those are the prisoners whom I have killed and they took the shortcut avoided the way of the cross they couldn't escape from me I threw them down and they died there you see their skull and bones lying there and they brought them brought the prisoners back to the dungeon and in the dungeon they began to pray oh lord please deliver us this is the best thing you can do pray to god to deliver you from discouragement and if you have the gift of tongues keep using that

especially until the discouragement goes but whether you have the gift of tongues or not just keep praying to the lord lord deliver us from this I'm not going to allow the devil to get over me and then what happens when you pray suddenly Christian realized hey I've got a key in my pocket the name of the key is the promises of god's word and I know that this key can open every lock in this castle which is called doubting castle a castle where you are in doubt all the time discouraged all the time so he used that key and began to open the first prison door and the next prison door and finally the last gate at the end you see them right at the right side you see them opening the last gate at the end but as they opened that gate the gate made a loud creaking noise and giant despair or giant

discouragement was asleep suddenly woke up and he knew these fellows are escaping and ran after them but he got a paralysis in his legs how god protects his people and he fell down there and the pilgrims escaped this teaches us that discouragement does not have greater power than the promises of god there is a key the promises of god's word that can open every door of discouragement in doubting castle you need never be discouraged a single day of your life so the pilgrims escaped and came back on the king's highway the narrow way that leads to the city and as they climbed over that fence again they said hey we must put a warning here a warning notice to all other pilgrims don't try shortcuts this is dangerous so that we can warn other people and because they put that notice there many

other pilgrims did not take a shortcut and therefore did not get discouraged you see if we learn lessons from our failures listen to this you can warn others to be saved from the same failure you had that's one of the blessings of learning something through a failure so don't get discouraged over your failures you learn something which you can teach other people also then they went on pressed on with greater zeal towards the heavenly city and soon they were coming near the heavenly city they saw these beautiful mountains which they had seen earlier and when they came there they found some good shepherds godly men pictures of godly elders of churches who are there to guide us and to feed us and the elders gave them a warm welcome praise the Lord brothers I'm so happy to see you've come so

far without going back and backsliding and the names of these elders were knowledge knowledge of God experience watchful and sincere it's wonderful to have elders who have a knowledge of God who have an experience of walking with God who are watchful, watch over your souls and who are sincere characteristics that should be found in all leaders of God's people and the shepherds told them this land is called Emmanuel's land and from here you'll be able to see the heavenly city and this encouraged the pilgrims and they enjoyed the hospitality of these shepherds and they stayed with them for the night the next day the shepherds showed Christian and hopeful some signs he first took them to a top of a hill see the shepherds are showing the two pilgrims look down to the hill do you see some

people fallen down there dead bodies this hill is called Error error means false doctrine so you can have false doctrine even at this point after coming so far with CFC were so zealous suddenly they went off into some false doctrine and they missed it they missed the way what is the way, the way of the cross they said there's no need to take up the cross anymore wow, that's the error of false doctrine they don't realize that they've fallen over a cliff may they look healthy and all that anyway he warned them be careful of error going to wrong doctrines error is the main thing in the Christian life the whole purpose of salvation is to make us love Jesus more than everything on earth more than everyone, more than our property more than our money and to love one another no matter how they

behave towards us you get that focus away from your life you'll always go into error and there's a lot of deception in these last days with many false doctrines and it is always those who are proud the elders the people who fall away into false doctrine from CFC are those who are proud anyway then the shepherds took the pilgrims to the top of another mountain and called be careful that's the name of that mountain and there he saw many blind people roaming around the tombs in the cemetery they don't know where they're going see at the top Christian and hopeful and down in the valley you find these people in the cemetery finding their way around they don't know where to turn and then the shepherd said these are the pilgrims who were caught by giant discouragement who didn't kill them he

just blinded them he said okay I won't kill you I won't throw you over the cliff he just blinded you and their life was ruined like that discouragement is a terrible thing it happens so quickly then they saw a door going to hell so close to heaven is a door that goes to hell that means you can lose your salvation even after you come so far being faithful for so many years and right there it's amazing the discernment a man like John Bunyan had that you could go to hell from there if you're not careful and hypocrites who go this way a sincere person no matter how many weaknesses he has will not fall away but hypocrites people who pretend who try to act spiritual they are the ones who are in danger of falling away the Bible says in Hebrews 3.12 we become partakers of Christ if we hold fast

the beginning of our confidence that he who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death and the Lord will help us to hold fast that's a wonderful thing but we have to beware of pride pride is the one that can make a person lose his salvation then the shepherds took the pilgrims to the top of a high hill the name of the hill was called Clear Vision and gave them a telescope so you can see the heavenly city as we get closer to the end of our journey we sense the presence of God more we are more sure that there are angels around us I remember a godly old man whose wife had died and he was living all alone now his children are all grown up and married and he was living all alone in the house some brother asked him do you feel lonely there he said no there are so many angels in the house

from one room to the other I don't feel lonely at all isn't it wonderful to come to a place where you are so aware of heaven and angels and all these are reality to you as you walk so close to the heavenly city and then the shepherds showed them this heavenly city encouraged them to press on keep your vision on that heavenly home frequently I remember a young man whose name was ignorance imagine at this point also there are people backsliding there is no point from which you don't backslide you are almost up to heaven and you backslide from there you think they are crazy his name was ignorance who came from the country of pride he had come so far and now he was turning back ignorance means one who doesn't value the truth Jesus said you shall know the truth so always value the truth of

God's word never be ignorant of the truths of God's word it's when you are ignorant of the truths of God's word that backsliding can happen at any time so Christian and hopeful urged him don't go back man turn

we got to urge every backslider but he was stubborn he said you guys are crazy I know you know I sometimes think I know the truth they think they know more than the Bible but they are just pretty crazy there are believers like that who live in a good way for many years and then become proud always it is pride that makes a man go astray finally end up in hell then as they passed by a very dark lane they saw a man being carried away by seven demons you know Jesus said about a man from whose heart a demon had been cast out and so that demon went and called seven other demons and they

possessed him this man's name was turning away from the faith and he dwelt in a town called falling away it's possible to turn away from the Lord even towards the end of our life let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall how shall we escape all this humility humility humility he was also a pilgrim but he fell asleep in a lane called dead man's lane you see here was a person with very little faith he was sincere but he went to sleep spiritually asleep and while he was asleep in dead man's lane three wicked men gangsters came the three wicked men were faint heart mistrust and guilt came and robbed him of his money knocked him out with a club and this teaches us that we cannot afford to fall asleep spiritually on the narrow way we may be sincere we cannot afford to fall asleep but

they ran away these three men because great grace came to help this man because he was sincere because he was not an evil man he was not a crook he was not that they are not evil they don't love money they are not proud they are very sincere but they have very little faith we must seek to strengthen our faith otherwise we will go to sleep and these robbers will come and rob us spiritually but anyway grace came and helped him because he was sincere it's a wonderful thing to be sincere till the end of your life this teaches us that anytime you are under pressure Lord give me grace help me now and then the dangers are not all over they came to a fork in the road left and right which way shall I take this looks right and that looks right and there was a man there with a white dress and

whenever you see a man with a white dress you think oh there is a good believer let me listen to him but his name was Flatterer Flatterer and he stood there and he said take the left road this is the right way it was not the right way you got to be careful and he was like an angel of light coming to deceive them and suddenly they found themselves trapped in a net Proverbs 29 verse 5 says a man who flatters you is spreading a net for your feet that is how Satan traps many believers never listen to somebody who flatters you he is spreading Satan's net to tie you down it is much better to listen to a man who rebukes you in love rather than someone who flatters you but you know how worldly people like to be flattered now the pilgrims are entangled in this in this net and they did not know how

to escape and the flatterer now you see he has thrown away his white robe and you see what he is really now on the right side an angel of light was actually the devil and the pilgrim saw he was actually an agent of Satan so we have to be careful of deceivers right until the last moment till we reach the gate of heaven and then a shining person came with a whip you have to be disciplined he took a stray took a whip and disciplined them for ignoring the advice you know the godly shepherds whom they had met earlier in Emmanuel's land had told them be careful of dangers even now don't think because you have come so far you will be ok he who thinks he stands will still fall away God disciplines us to show us the good way and discipline prevents us from falling away in future thank God for the

disciplines anyway the shining one then released them from the net and told them to go on the way but be very careful to follow the advice that the godly shepherds and elders have given you don't think too much of yourself they thanked him for saving them from going astray then they went on the way singing and praising the Lord we must be extremely thankful for those who correct us and now they met a man can

you believe it whose name is Atheist Atheist means one who doesn't believe in God can you imagine coming all this way in the Christian life and then beginning to question is there a God at all you know there are people who have been Christians for many many years and then when things get difficult and they don't get their answers is this really the truth I am believing John the

Baptist when he was imprisoned and Jesus did not deliver him from prison he began to doubt oh Jesus are you really the Messiah is this really the truth that can happen anytime we have to hold on to the word of God here is a man who became an Atheist after coming so far and to be tempted this is a warning that we will be tempted till the end of our life by anything and you will feel sleepy because they were on a ground called enchanted ground which the shepherds had warned them there is one more dangerous area that is called enchanted ground there are no lions there there are no devil firing arrows at you but you will feel sleepy and what is this sleepiness this sleepiness is that which comes with after so many years you look back to the Lord you look back in pride over your

accomplishments I am not a new believer I am a senior believer I have done so much everybody respects me I have accomplished so much for the Lord in my life and they become sleepy it is very easy to become spiritually drowsy and sleepy with pride in our accomplishments and then you can lose the anointing of God to save others from spiritual death to share the wonderful message of victory over sin that Jesus can keep us from falling and we can walk in his footsteps we lose the passion to draw others to this message all these are indications that we have become drowsy and sleepy we are on enchanted ground we are just satisfied we are coming to church we have got a good testimony everybody respects us everything is going well I am earning enough I have got plenty of earthly goods now and I

am perfectly okay and you become drowsy and sleepy and the passion is gone beware of that older brothers and older sisters who become proud of your accomplishments proud of how faithful you have been proud of how much people respect you those are the ones who become drowsy and sleepy spiritually they don't fall into any great sin but the passion is gone passion to live for God fervent love for Jesus is gone the passion to serve Jesus till the end of your life is gone the passion to bring others to hear the gospel to share something with them has that happened to you? you are on enchanted ground be careful stay awake because you are in a really godly church where we stir one another up to press on then finally they came to a land called Beulah which means married the land of the bride of

Christ this is a beautiful land from which they could sense in their spirits that they were very close to heaven sense in their spirits like I said that the angels of heaven are nearby and as they drew close now they could see the heavenly city as they drew close to the heavenly city they were encouraged they are reaching the end of the journey now but now one last thing between them and the heavenly city was this deep river and there was no bridge across it and the river was deep and that's the river of death of falling asleep in Christ and as you near death some people can get a bit afraid when they are on their death bed and as Christian and faithful entered this river at the same time Christian began to sink in discouragement you know that happens to some people they live a faithful

life overcome so many things at the last moment Lord I'm really going to be with you and faithful was there to encourage him it's a wonderful thing fellowship right till the end of our life hopeful encouraged him hey come on press on they encouraged one another helped one another it's good to have brothers in the church who encourage us all through life and especially when we come to the end of our earthly pilgrimage in a world of discouragement and evil what a wonderful thing it is to have fellowship and not to be travelling alone especially when we are travelling with godly brothers and sisters I feel sorry for all

these people in dead churches who don't have godly brothers and sisters to constantly encourage them along the narrow way take up the cross today take it up it will be worth

it all and finally they crossed the river and reached the other side they reached the heavenly city both of them had faithfully walked the narrow way all through their lives they had been faithful unto death and then they reached the gate of the city and the person at the door said show me your passport show me your certificate and both of them had the scroll of the scriptures of salvation and they gave it to him and the king said open the door, open the gate and as soon as they entered in through the gates they were changed into the likeness of Jesus and they were given a beautiful dress to put on that shone like gold and as soon as they came in the gates were shut again and you know the other guy called ignorance whom he met away he decided to turn back and come he hadn't gone to the

cross that's why he was ignorant and he was turned away and this is where we have to end our Christian lives and like the old song says it will be worth it all when we see Jesus life's trials will seem so small when we see him one look from his dear face all sorrows will erase yes it will be worth it all when we see Jesus and so the challenge comes to us brothers and sisters the Lord says he who endures to the end will be saved be faithful unto death and I'll give you the crown of life Amen that's the end of this beautiful story we praise God that God gave such wisdom to a man 350 years ago to write something that is so relevant to us today he who has years to hear let's pray

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