



- That Everyone Goes Through:
    - In Their Lives!
  - Family Issues!
    - Financial Needs!
      - Future Concerns!
        - Even This Pandemic We've Been Living Through:
          - Is A Tribulation To Us!
- It Can Also Refer To:
  - The Spiritual Challenges:
    - That Comes About When:
      - A "New Creature" In Christ:
        - Is Attacked By:
          - The Old Man, The Old World, And The Old Serpent Himself!
4. In The Pilgrim's Progress:
  - John Bunyan Describes This Kind Of Tribulation:
    - As "The Hill Of Difficulty!"
      - And - As It Was For Christian:
        - It Is A Hill That:
          - Every Christian Must Climb:
            - On Their Pilgrimage To The Celestial City!
  - And It May Even Be A Hill:
    - That You Have To Scale:
      - More Than Once!
5. And So - As We Head Back To:
  - Our Story - We Find Christian:
    - After His "Reality Check" - Which Came About:
      - When He Met Up With:
        - Those Five Men - With The Names:
          - Simple, Sloth, & Presumption, As Well As Formality & Hypocrisy!
  - He Comes Up To:
    - One Of Those Hills:
      - That Jesus Himself Said He Would:
        - And We Would Face!
    - So - Starting On Page 22, Last Paragraph:
      - We Read - *"I Beheld, Then, That They All Went On Till Thy Came To The Foot Of The Hill Difficulty!"*
        - Continue To Page 23, Paragraph 3:
          - *"And With That Christian Suddenly Started Up, And Sped Him On His Way, And Went Apace, Till He Came To The Top Of The Hill!"*
6. So - Even Though:
  - Three Men Arrived At:
    - "The Foot Of The Hill" - As We Just Read:
      - Only One - Christian:
        - "Came To The Top!"
  - And The Reason For This Is:
    - Noone Likes Difficulty In Their Lives!
      - Noone Looks Forward To Tribulation:
        - In Any Way!
          - Whether That Be Physical Or Mental Or Emotional Or Natural Or Spiritual Problems & Afflictions!
    - Noone Wants To:
      - Hear That They Have Been Diagnosed:
        - With An Incurable Disease!
    - Noone Looks Forward To:
      - Hearing That Their Son Or Daughter:
        - Was Killed In Their Workplace:
          - By A Gunman!
    - Noone Wants To:

- Open Up Their Mail - Only To Find:
    - Another Medical Bill - To The Tune Of:
      - Thousands Of Dollars:
        - Which They Still Can't Pay!
7. Noone Wants To Climb:
- The Hill Of Difficulty!
    - Perhaps This Is One Of The Reasons Why:
      - Nathaniel Hawthorne:
        - The Same Author Who Wrote:
          - That Story Beloved By All High-School Students Who Were Forced To Read It:
            - "The Scarlet Letter!"
  - He Also Wrote A Parody:
    - Of The Pilgrim's Progress Titled:
      - "The Celestial Railroad!"
        - Which Has Christian:
          - Instead Of Climbing Up & Over This Hill:
            - It Has Him Riding A Train Through A Tunnel Bored Straight Through It!
8. Noone Wants To:
- Climb The Hill Of Difficulty!
    - But All Of Us Have To!
      - And So - God Has Given His People:
        - A Very Special Word Of Comfort & Promise!
  - Also Found In:
    - John 16:33 - Where Jesus Adds:
      - "But Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World!"
9. And So - As We Reflect On:
- The Words Of Jesus - That Are:
    - Illustrated For Us By This Hill Of Difficulty:
      - There Are Four Things That:
        - By God's Grace:
          - We Need To Keep Doing:
            - So That We Too Can Make It "To The Top Of The Hill!"

\* First:

**1. *Keep Preparing!***

- Keep Preparing For The Hill Of Difficulty!
  - After Formality & Hypocrisy:
    - Went Off In Different Directions:
      - In Order To Avoid This Hill:
        - Christian Stood Alone:
          - At The Bottom!
- But - He Was Ready! Why?
  - Because - Did You Notice?
    - There Was A "Spring" There!
      - And - He Alone:
        - "Drank Thereof, To Refresh Himself!"
- And It Was The Water:
  - From That Spring:
    - That Prepared Him To Face:
      - That Hill Of Difficulty:
        - With Strength & Vitality From The Lord!
- What Was In That Water?
  - Electrolytes? Minerals? Caffeine?
    - No! In That Water:
      - There Were Reminders:
        - Of God's Grace To Help In Time Of Need!

- That Water Helped Christian:
- Remember God's Providence!
- Bunyan Uses This Spring:
  - To Remind Us Of What The Lord Says About His People:
    - In Isaiah 49:10 - "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them!"
- The Spring Of God's Grace:
  - Is An Infinite Spring:
    - Which Will Prepare Us To Face:
      - Any Hill:
        - Of Difficulty!
      - As Well As Any:
        - Meadow Of Peace!
- We Need To Remember:
  - That Everything We Face In This World:
    - Is In The Palm Of God's Hand!
    - And He Is The One:
      - Who Will Help You Through!
- That Water Also Helped Christian:
- Remember God's Promises!
  - Exceeding Great And Precious Promises:
    - Like The Promise We Find In:
      - Isaiah 43 - "I Will Be With Thee!"
    - Isaiah 43:1-3 - "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. / When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. / For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour!"
      - And - I Think We Can Add To this:
        - When You Climb The Hill Of Difficulty!
- So - Keep Preparing:
  - For The Hill Of Difficulty!
    - You May Not See One Yet - Or:
      - Maybe You Are On One - But:
        - There's A Bigger One To Come!
  - Keep Preparing For It:
    - By Drinking From The Spring Of Living Water!
      - Keep Trusting In:
        - God's Sovereign Control:
          - In Your Life - And:
        - Keep Feeding On:
          - God's Precious Promises!
    - You Will Need Them Soon Enough!
      - And - God Is Gracious:
        - To Provide Them To You!

\* Second:

**2. *Keep Plodding!***

- Keep Plodding On - When You Reach The Hill Of Difficulty!
  - Even Though We Are Told That:
    - Christian Started Running Up That Hill:
      - What Soon Happened?
        - "He Fell From Running To Going, And From Going To Clambering Upon His Hands And Knees, Because Of The Steepness Of The Place!"
  - The Truth Is - The Christian Life:
    - Is Not Easy!
      - The Christian Road:

- Is Often Very, Very Hard!
- A Few Years Back - I Remember The Ladies:
  - Singing A Song Titled:
    - "Its Not An Easy Road!"
    - "It's Not An Easy Road We Are Travelling To Heaven / For Many Are The Thorns On The Way. / Its Not An Easy Road, But The Savior Is With Us, / His Presence Gives Us Joy Every Day!" (John Peterson)
- So Often We Think Of Verses:
  - Like Isaiah 40:31:
    - "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles!"
    - But - If You Go On In The Verse:
      - Isaiah Seems To Recognize The Tendency To Slow Down & Struggle As Well!
  - Because - Even Though You May Start Up The Hill Of Difficulty:
    - "With Wings As Eagles!"
    - But Then - You Might Fall From The Sky:
      - And Have To Run On Your Feet!
      - And Even Then, You Might Be Forced To A Walk & Then To A Crawl!
  - But - The Promise To Those Who Know:
    - The Lord - And Are Trusting In Jesus:
      - Is That Even If They:
        - Run -They Do Not Need To Be Weary!
      - And If They:
        - Walk - They Do Not Need To Faint!
    - Because The "Lord Shall Renew Their Strength!"
- And How Did The Lord:
  - Renew Christian's Strength:
    - On That Hill Of Difficulty?
      - Bunyan Tells Us That - "About Midway To The Top Of The Hill Was a Pleasant Arbour, Made By The Lord Of The Hill For The Refreshing Of Weary Travellers!"
- When You Find Yourself:
  - Slowing Down From:
    - Flying Up The Mountain - To:
      - Running Up It - To:
        - Walking & Then Even:
          - Crawling!
  - Be Patient & Keep Plodding!
    - Because There Are Places - Even On That Hill:
      - Where You Can Find Rest & Refreshment:
        - From The Lord!
- Now - Some People:
  - Don't Rest Enough:
    - In What God - In His Grace - Has Given To Them:
      - To Refresh Their Souls!
  - Like His Special Son!
    - Matthew 11:28 - "Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"
  - Also: His Special Word!
    - His Special Day!
      - His Special People!
  - Even In The Hill Of Difficulty:
    - You Need To Take Time To:
      - "Be Still And Know That I Am God!"
        - But Don't Be Too Still!
          - Because That Can Be A Problem Too! It Was A Problem Christian Faced!

\* And So - Not Only Do You Need To Keep Patiently Plodding - You Also Need To:

**3. Keep Pressing!**

- As Paul Puts It In:
  - Philippians 3:14 - Keep Pressing:
    - “Toward The Mark For The Prize Of The High Calling Of God In Christ Jesus!”
- Like Christian:
  - One Of The Things We Often Forget:
    - Is That There Is A Summit:
      - On Those Hills Of Difficulty:
        - That We Face!
  - And So - You Must Not:
    - Let Your Guard Down:
      - When God Graciously Provides:
        - Refreshment To Your:
          - Weary Soul!
  - As John Kelman Once Wrote:
    - Sometimes - “It Is Easy To Rest Too Long And Too Deeply!”
- So Keep Pressing On!
  - There Is A Top To The Hill!
    - There Is An End To Tribulation!
      - There Is Even An Escape:
        - To The Temptations You Face In Your Life!
  - Even As The Apostle Paul Tells Us:
    - In 1 Corinthians 10:12 - “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it!”
- But - Even When We Do:
  - Fall “Into A Slumber” - God Is Still Gracious:
    - To Chasten Us!
      - To Wake Us Up! And:
        - To Remind Us Of His Truth!
  - Christian Heard The Words Of:
    - Proverbs 6:6 - “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise!”
    - “And With That” - Bunyan Writes - “Christian Suddenly Started Up, And Sped Him On His Way, And Went Apace, Till He Came To The Top Of The Hill!”
- But - As We Will Discover Next Week:
  - He Is Not Quite Done:
    - With That Hill Of Difficulty!
      - Because He Lost Something:
        - Very Special & Very Important:
          - When He Was Asleep In That Arbor!

\* And That Is Why - Even When The Hill Of Difficulty Seems To Be Past - We Need To Continue To:

**4. Keep Patrolling!**

- Keep Patrolling Your Heart!
  - Proverbs 4:23 - “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life!”
- Keep Patrolling Your Heart!
  - Because How Many Times:
    - Have People Fallen:
      - When Things Seemed To Get Easier - Or:
        - When The End Of A Trial:
          - Was In Sight!
  - They Let Their Guard Down!
    - **IE:** Sometimes This Happens In A Race! A Runner Slows Down, Only To Be Passed At The Last Second! A Driver Takes His Foot Of The Gas, Only To Find Another Driver Taking The Checkered Flag!
- Isn't This What Happened:
  - In The Life Of King David?

- After Years Of Battle:
  - He Found Time & Place For Ease:
    - In The Palace He Had Built For Himself:
      - In Jerusalem!
- And So - As We Are Familiarly Told:
  - In 2 Samuel 11:1 - “At The Time When Kings Go Forth To Battle – David Tarried Still At Jerusalem!”
    - He Stopped Patrolling & Guarding His Heart!
      - And So - He Sinned Against The Lord - And Lost Something:
        - Very Special & Very Important:
          - On That Hill Of Difficulty Called Temptation!

**Conclusion:**

1. So - What Will You Do:
  - When You Are Confronted With:
    - The Next Hill Of Difficulty:
      - That You Must Climb?
        - Keep These Lessons:
          - From Our Pilgrim In Your Mind!
  - Keep Preparing!
    - Go To The Spring Of God’s Word:
      - Early & Often!
  - Keep Plodding!
    - By Relying On The Lord & His Strength!
      - Hebrew 4:16 - “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!”
  - Keep Pressing On!
    - 2 Thessalonians 3:13 - “Be Not Weary In Well Doing!”
      - And:
  - And Keep Patrolling:
    - Your Heart!
2. And - You Can Do So:
  - With A Smile In Your Heart!
    - Because - As Jesus Said:
      - In John 16:33 - “In The World Ye Shall Have Tribulation / Affliction! But Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World!”

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