

“The Pilgrims Progress”
Faithful Unto Death

Introduction:

1. Two Weeks Ago:
 - In Our Series Through:
 - The Pilgrims Progress:
 - We Left Christian & His Friend Faithful:
 - At Vanity Fair!
 - Where - Because Of The Great Difference:
 - Between Themselves And:
 - The Residents Of The Town:
 - They Were Arrested:
 - Thrown Into Iron Cages:
 - And Waited For Their Day In Court!
2. Well - Tonight:
 - That Day Comes:
 - And - Starting *Page 57, Paragraph 1:*
 - We Read About:
 - The Trial Of Faithful - *“Then A Convenient Time Being Appointed, They Brought Them Forth To Their Trial, In Order To Their Condemnation!”*
 - Read Through:
 - Page 60, Paragraph 5:
 - *“This Hopeful Also Told Christian, That There Were Many More Of The Men In The Fair, That Would Take Their Time And Follow After!”*
3. The Trial Of Faithful:
 - Sounds A Lot Like:
 - The Sham Trial:
 - Of Our Lord Jesus:
 - Which Led To Him Being Executed:
 - On The Cross Of Calvary!
 - The Accusations Against Him:
 - Were Fabricated - And:
 - The Accusers Against Him:
 - Were False!
 - As Mark Tells Us:
 - In Mark 14:56 - *“For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together!”*
3. But - In Spite Of:
 - The Unwarranted Accusations Against Him:
 - Faithful Undertook To Defend Himself:
 - In The Way We Looked At:
 - Even This Morning:
 - From Romans 12:21!
 - Faithful Sought To:
 - *“Overcome Evil With Good!”*
 - So - It Wasn’t:
 - Retaliation:
 - He Was After!
 - It Wasn’t:
 - Retribution:
 - He Was After!
 - It Was A Further Revelation:
 - Of The Truth:
 - About Vanity Fair And Its Leaders!
 - *“That The Prince Of This Town, With All The Rabblement [And] His Attendants . . . Are More Fit For A Being In Hell, Than In This Town And Country! And So, The Lord Have Mercy Upon Me!”*
4. Of Course:

- It Didn't Take Long After That:
 - For Faithful To Be:
 - Convicted & Condemned:
 - To "Be Put To The Most Cruel Death That Could Be Invented!"
 - And So It Was:
 - Until Bunyan Writes:
 - "Thus Came Faithful To His End!"
- Of Course - The Martyrdom Of Faithful:
 - Is A Work Of Fiction:
 - But It Was Not Just A Work:
 - Of Bunyan's Imagination!
 - Because He Had Many Centuries Worth Of Examples To Draw From:
 - As He Wrote These Sobering Paragraphs!

5. It Was A Little More Than:
- A Hundred Years Earlier:
 - When A Fellow Englishman:
 - By The Name Of:
 - John Foxe Wrote His Famous Work:
 - Which We Now Call:
 - "Foxes Book Of Martyrs!"
 - The Original Title Was:
 - "Acts And Monuments Of These Latter And Perilous Days: Touching Matters Of The Church!"
 - First Published In 1563:
 - It Covered The Reported Martyrdoms:
 - From The Early Church:
 - Up Until His Own Time!
 - And So - John Bunyan:
 - Would Have Been Very Well Acquainted With:
 - John Foxe's Work!

6. And - I'm Sure - As He Was Writing These Words:
- The Words Of Christ:
 - From Revelation 2 Must Have Been Ringing In His Ears!
 - Because In Revelation 2:8-11:
 - Jesus Speaks To The Persecuted Church:
 - In The City Of Smyrna:
 - Which Today Is The Modern City Of Izmir In Turkey!
 - Let's Turn To & Read Those Verses Together:
 - "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; / I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. / Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. / He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death!"
 - These Words Of Jesus:
 - Are Not Just Words Of Prophecy:
 - For The Church In Smyrna:
 - But Are For The Church:
 - Of All Time!
 - Believers In Christ:
 - Of Every Age:
 - May Be:
 - Cast Into Prison:
 - As Faithful Was!
 - Or Be:
 - Tried:
 - As Faithful Was!
 - And Have:

- Tribulation:
 - As Faithful Had!
- 7. But - Jesus Tells All Of Us:
 - In 2:10 - To Be:
 - “Faithful Unto Death!”
 - And That Was True Of Our Faithful!
 - He Was Faithful - In Name & Nature:
 - To His Lord:
 - Even Unto Death!
 - But Just What Is It:
 - That Enables Christians:
 - From All Ages & From All Backgrounds:
 - To Be “Faithful Unto Death?”
 - Look At Two Things:
 - From Revelation 2!

* First:

1. *Courage From Christ:*

- Enables Us To Be:
 - “Faithful Unto Death!”
 - Whether That Death Is:
 - A Natural One - Or:
 - An Unnatural & Violent One!
 - Our Courage - Like Faithful’s Courage:
 - Can Only Come:
 - Because Of His Great Character!
 - In 2:8 - Jesus Identifies Himself To The Church As:
 - “The First And The Last!”
 - This Is Also How He Identified Himself:
 - To John In 1:18!
 - But - This Reveals To Us That:
 - Even When The “End” Seems Near to Us:
 - There Is Someone:
 - Who Will Outlast Everything!
 - After All - He Is Also The One:
 - Who “Was Dead, And Is Alive!”
 - Also Found In 1:18!
 - This Means That:
 - Jesus Faced What We Face:
 - And Died!
 - But That Wasn’t The End Of His Story!
 - As Jesus Said In John 11:25 - “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!”
 - Christians Can Take Courage In Christ!
 - Because Of His Character!
 - So - “Be Faithful Unto Death!”
 - Also:
 - Because Of His Great Comprehension!
 - In 2:9 - Jesus Says This About:
 - The Church’s “Works & Tribulation & Poverty!”
 - He Says - “I Know!”
 - The Knowledge Of Christ:
 - Is A Clear Perception!
 - Nothing Hazy Or Foggy!
 - And He Knows:
 - Everything About The Persecuted!
 - He Knows Their Pursuits!
 - Their “Works” – For Him!

- After All, Those “Works” Are The Very Reasons Why Christians Face Persecution In The First Place!
- He Knows Their Pressures!
 - Their “Tribulation!”
 - But Listen To These Words Of Comfort:
 - From John 16:33 - “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!”
- He Knows Their Poverty!
 - Their Destitution!
 - Imagine What It Must Have Felt Like:
 - To Lose Everything!
 - But - In Reality:
 - They Were & We Are:
 - Rich! With - As Peter Describes It In 1 Peter 1:4 - “An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you!!”
- So, Don't Be Fearful!
 - Take Courage In Christ - And:
 - “Be Faithful Unto Death!”
 - Also:
- Because Of His Great Control!
 - In Revelation 2:10 - Jesus Goes On:
 - To Describe What The Church In Smyrna:
 - Will Face In The Future!
 - How Does He Know?
 - Because He's God - And Because:
 - He's In Complete Control!
 - And We Can See His Control:
 - In How He Sets The Limits:
 - Even In Our Periods Of Persecution!
 - He Tells Them:
 - “And Ye Shall Have Tribulation Ten Days!”
 - So - Even Though Suffering For Christ:
 - May Be Intense:
 - It Will Be Limited!
 - But - As Psalm 30:5 Reminds Us:
 - “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning!!”
- So - We Can Take Courage In Christ!
 - Because Of:
 - His Great Character!
 - His Great Comprehension! And:
 - His Great Control!
 - Take Courage In Christ!
 - And - “Be Faithful Unto Death!”
- Even As A Man By The Name Of Polycarp:
 - Who Served As A Pastor:
 - Of The Same Church In Smyrna:
 - Around The Time This Letter:
 - In Revelation Was Written!
 - His Death By Wild Beasts:
 - In A Roman Amphitheater:
 - Was The Most Significant Martyrdom Of 2nd Century!
 - When Polycarp Was Urged:
 - To Deny The Lord:
 - By Saying “Caesar Is Lord!”
 - He Replied - “For 86 Years Have I Served Him & He Never Did Me Any Injury: How Then Can I BlaspHEME My King & My Savior?”
- Polycarp Was:

- "Faithful Unto Death!"
 - And So - Was Given:
 - "A Crown Of Life!"
- So Now - In The Same Way:
 - With The Courage From Christ:
 - Let Us:

2. ***Continue In Christ!***

- And We Can Continue:
 - No Matter What Kind Of Trials & Tribulations Befall Us!
 - Why? Because Of What We Know!
 - We Know:
- There Is Relief:
 - From Trials & Persecution!
 - When Jesus Says:
 - "Be Faithful Unto Death!"
 - He Reveals That:
 - Physical Death Is The Absolute Worst Someone Can Do To You!
 - Someone May Be Able To:
 - "Kill The Body!"
 - But - They Will Never Be Able To:
 - "Kill The Soul!" (Matthew 10:28)
 - For The Christian:
 - Death Is The ***End:***
 - Of Suffering! Whereas:
 - For The Unbeliever:
 - Its Only The ***Beginning!***
 - We Also Know:
- There Is Reward!
 - For Your Trials & Persecution!
 - Even - "A Crown Of Life!"
 - Reserved For Those Who Are:
 - "Faithful Unto Death!"
 - Even As James Tells Us:
 - In James 1:12 - "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him!"
 - We Also Know:
- There Is Rejoicing:
 - After Our Trials & Percution!
 - As Jesus Says In:
 - Revelation 2:11b - "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death!"
- And With This Hope:
 - We Can Continue In Christ!
 - So - "Be Thou Faithful Unto Death!"
- Even As A Young Woman By The Name Of Perpetua:
 - Who Lived In The North African City Of Carthage:
 - Around The Turn Of The 3rd Century!
 - The Roman Emperor At The Time Was:
 - Septimius Severus!
 - And During His Reign:
 - Conversion To Christianity Was Illegal:
 - And Carried The Death Penalty!
 - However - If You Were Caught:
 - Like Perpetua Was:
 - Believing In & Following Christ:
 - You Could Be Spared If:
 - You Cursed The Name Of Jesus & Made A Sacrifice To The Roman Gods!

- Well - Perpetua Was Only 22 Years Old:
 - When She Was Arrested For Her Faith In Christ!
 - And She Was A Young Mother As Well!
 - In Prison - She Nursed Her Child:
 - And Was Urged - Even By Her Father - To Renounce Her Faith!
 - It Is Recorded That She Asked Her Father:
 - “Father, Do You See This Vessel Lying Here To Be A Little Pitcher, Or Something Else? And He Said, I See It To Be So. And I Replied To Him, Can It Be Called By Any Other Name Than What It Is? And He Said, No. Neither Can I Call Myself Anything Else Than What I Am, A Christian!”
- And In The Month Of March, 203 AD:
 - Perpetua Was Led To The Amphitheater:
 - To Be Executed By Wild Animals!
 - Her Last Words:
 - To Other Christians:
 - Who Were Awaiting Their Turn At Execution Were:
 - “Stand Fast In The Faith, And Love One Another, All Of You, And Be Not Offended At My Sufferings!”
- Perpetua Was:
 - “Faithful Unto Death!”
 - And So - Was Given:
 - “A Crown Of Life!”
- In The Same Way:
 - With Courage From Christ:
 - Let Us:
 - Continue In Christ:
 - And Be “Faithful Unto Death!”

Conclusion:

1. So - Even Though The Martyrdom Of Faithful:
 - In The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Is A Work Of Fiction:
 - The Martyrdom Of Faithful Christians:
 - Is Very Real!
 - Not Just In The Past:
 - But Even Now & Perhaps This Very Day!
2. Will We Face Something Like This?
 - Only Time Will Tell!
 - But - Through The Courage Of Christ:
 - Continue In Christ:
 - And “Be Faithful Unto Death!”
 - No Matter What Form:
 - Your Death May Take!

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
 4245 North 200 West
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140
 317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com