

Lesson Twelve

THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE #4 - Passion and Patience

We begin tonight in our study of Pilgrim's Progress where we left off last week in the House of the Interpreter. It is this segment of our study in which we are dealing with this particular subject. We have come to find that the House of the Interpreter means the illuminating work or the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. What Christian is encountering in this particular house is that he is being led from one room into another and being shown or taught different things in that room. As new converts, there are several things that are important to learn so that we may be given an understanding of what it means to be a Christian and how to live a Christian life. It is not an easy thing to live a Christian life. It is a very difficult thing. It takes real determination to be able to live the life patterned after the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Remember what Pilate said about Him, "**Behold the Man.**" (John 19:5).

We found that in the first room, Christian was introduced to a Picture on the Wall of an individual. That picture represented the nature of a true minister of the gospel. This taught this young Christian how to discern who was a true preacher and who was a false preacher. Also, he was given some instructions here to be able to watch for this individual and to submit himself unto the teachings of this individual lest he be led astray somewhere on his path.

Then last week we went into another room where we found a Parlour of Dust. The dust was settled on the floor, but when an individual came in and began to sweep the room, the dust flew about until the individuals became choked with the dust. Then another individual came and sprinkled water in the room settling the dust and cleansing it. We found this represents the relationship of the law to the gospel. That when the law of God is preached, it awakens the sinner's conscience and begins to make him aware of his lost condition. However, the law can never save, it can only arouse one's conscience and then he is pointed to the gospel, which was represented by the water being sprinkled throughout the room indicating that by faith in the gospel the man is put right with God. So this room represents the harmony between the law and the gospel.

Tonight we are going into a third room in the House of the Interpreter. I will read to you from the book Bunyan's explanation from the book as to what is taking place in this

particular room. Listen carefully.

I saw moreover in my dream, that the Interpreter took him by the hand, and had him into a little room, where sat two little children, each one in his chair. The name of the eldest was Passion, and the name of the other Patience. Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet.

Then Christian asked, "What is the reason of the discontent of Passion?"

The Interpreter answered, "The governor of them would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of the next year; but he will have all now. But Patience is willing to wait."

Then I saw that one came to Passion, and brought him a bag of treasure, and poured it down at his feet: the which he took up, and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld but a while, and he had lavished all away, and had nothing left him but rags.

Then said Christian to the Interpreter, "Expound this matter more fully to me."

So he said, "These two lads are figures, Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of that which is to come; for, as here thou seest, Passion will have all now, this year, that is to say, in this world; so are the men of this world: they must have all their good things now; they cannot stay till the next year, that is, until the next world, for their portion of good. That proverb, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' is of more authority with them, than are all the divine testimonies of the good of the world to come. But as thou sawest that he had quickly lavished all away, and had presently left him nothing but rags; so will it be with all such men at the end of this world.

Then said Christian, "Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that upon many accounts. 1. Because he stays for the best things. 2. And also because he will have the glory of his, when the other has nothing but rags."

Interpreter, "Nay, you may add another, to wit, the glory of the next world will never wear out; but these are suddenly gone. Therefore Passion had not so much reason to laugh at Patience, because he had his good things first, as Patience will have to laugh at Passion,

because he had his best things last; for first must give place to last, because last must have his time to come: but last gives place to nothing, for there is not another to succeed. He, therefore, that hath his portion first, must needs have a time to spend it; but he that hath his portion last, must have it lastingly; therefore it is said of Dives, 'In thy life-time thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

Christian, "Then I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come."

Interpreter, "You say truth, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. But though this be so, yet since things present and our fleshly appetite are such near neighbors one to another; and again, because things to come and carnal sense are such strangers one to another; therefore it is, that the first of these so suddenly fall into amity, and that distance is so continued between the second."

Now having read this portion of the account of the third room in the Interpreter's house, let's proceed to see what this room teaches in relation to the Christian experience. Upon entering the room, the Christian sees two small children. They are given two names. One of them is named Passion, who is the older one, and the name of the other one is named Patience. What do these two individuals represent? The Interpreter gives us the answers for this, that Passion is the man of this world and Patience is the man of the next world. By that, he is setting forth that we come in contact with two different characters that are prevalent in the world. The one lives for that which is temporal, and the other lives in the light of eternity. So I want us to examine these two characters tonight to see which character we ourselves might have been made partakers of, whether or not we would fall under the category of the individual, who is described as Passion, or whether we would fall under the individual named Patience.

First let's look at Passion and see something about his character. We notice that he is very discontented and not happy. He is very restless and not contented with the things he has in this life. He is always looking for something new to indulge his lust therein. He is never satisfied with what life has given him. He is an individual which the Bible describes as the natural man. He is interested in the things which are of contemporary concern, that which he can get right now. He couldn't care less about what is going to take place down

the road as long as he is happy right now, and as long as everything is going his way. As a result, he is never contented, but very discontented. You can see this in his very character. Even in our diagram here, you can see that he is not a very happy person to be around. Now why is he this way? Because his governor or his master, probably his parents in the illustration here, would have him to wait until later in order for him to receive some of the things that are coming to him. However, he would hear none of that. He wants what is coming to him right now.

Does that not remind you of the story in the Bible of the Prodigal son? Instead of waiting for his father to die when he would receive his inheritance, the Prodigal son went to his father and said,

"Father, give me now that which is

coming to me." (Luke 15:11). That is the type of the natural man of the world. He wants that which he feels the world owes him and what he has coming to him. He wants it now and is not content to wait until the providence of God bestows the goods which are to be given to him. But on the other hand, Patience is willing to wait. While Passion is sitting here in the room, someone comes and pours out a great big bag of treasures at his feet. Passion jumps in the middle of it just like a child does in the midst of the packages under a Christmas tree. When he begins to be exposed to something that he is interested in and will make him happy, he just goes to town enjoying his pleasure.

The pleasures of this world can blind the eyes of individuals to the realities of God and spiritual things so they cannot see the eternal values of the world beyond.

There are so many things this world has to offer, this could be true of you. The pleasures of this world can blind the eyes of individuals to the realities of God and spiritual things so they cannot see the eternal values of the world beyond. All they are interested in is the temporal, that which they can get their hands on now and that which will give them satisfaction when they are in the possession of it. Passion is living it up, having his hey-day down in the far country. Like the Prodigal, he is eating, drinking, having his women, and enjoying his good time. At the same time Patience is doing that, we read that he laughed Patience to scorn. While the other individual is sitting here waiting patiently until his Lord comes and gives him that which will belong to him, Passion is laughing at him and making fun of him. How true this is. That is, those who want the temporal things of life are so

prone to laugh at and scorn those who would take life seriously about the life beyond. Now this is particularly true of you young people who are going to church, reading your Bible, and trying to live a Christian life. Watch how the other young people in the community begin to view you. They will view you as somewhat foolish. They say that you are taking things too seriously, and they say, "Don't you know you only go around once in life? Don't you know you will only be young once? Don't you know you are wasting your own life? So all the time that Passion is busily indulging himself in the affairs of this world, he is ridiculing and making fun of those who are serious minded about another life after this life.

While Passion is laughing Patience to scorn, Christian is observing something. The longer he watches Passion, he soon realizes that after a while all the things that Passion has accumulated has vanished. It goes away, and he is left with nothing but rags. Again, we see the likeness of the Prodigal Son. The things that are temporal pass away, whether they be good health, whether they be a family, whether they be a job, whatever they be, they will soon pass away. And if one is wrapped up in the things which are temporal, they will soon end up before God in rags. They will have nothing, because the temporal shall be removed from them.

So Christian says to the Interpreter, "Explain this more fully to me. I understand a little, but explain more fully now what these two individuals represent." So the Holy Spirit says,

"These two lads are figures, Passion of the men of this world, and Patience of the men of the world to come: for Passion will have all right now, this year, that is to say, in this world; so are the men of this world, they must have all their good things now; they cannot wait till the next year."

The Interpreter says that their philosophy on life is this: ***"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."*** Now what does that mean? How does Passion apply that to himself? He reasons, "if I can have a good time, I'd better have it now because who knows whether there is an eternity or not, and I may go through this whole life and miss out on all the fun. So if I've got the 'bird' in my hand now, it is better to have that than to take a chance that there will be no next life."

I remember a man I worked with in electronics in Los Angeles, California, who I was

Mr. Passion has no time or appetite for the things of God or for serious reflection on death, the judgment, sin and righteousness. So in order to keep his mind off of these things, he has to wrap himself up in things of the world.

talking with about the gospel. He said, "Now Jim, don't bother me with these things. When I die, I am going to die just like a dog, and they will probably just throw me in a ditch somewhere and that will be all there is to it." That is an example of Mr. Passion. He reminded me of the beer commercial on TV that says,

"Get all the gusto out of life you can, you only go around one time." Mr. Passion has no time or appetite for the things of God or for serious reflection on death, the judgment, sin and righteousness. So in order to keep his mind off of these things, he has to wrap himself up in things of the world. That is, if you take away from Mr. Passion all of the comforts of the world, then his mind has to reflect upon the seriousness of God. But in order to salve his conscience of the things of God, he immediately indulges himself in all types of comforts of this world, which take his mind off of God. That is why you will not see Mr. Passion sitting down and reading the Bible, because that causes him to think seriously. Instead, he will find a dozen other things to do to keep his mind off of God. You won't find Mr. Passion praying. You won't find him telling others about the things of God and the spiritual things of the life beyond. He is a man for the now and no more.

I heard of a true illustration that I will share with you about how these two individuals are set forth. A man said he had two neighbors, and one of them was Mr. Passion, who never had time for the things of God. He never read the Bible or had time for prayer, or to discuss the things of the Lord. Right down the street there lived a good Christian man named Mr. Patience. Mr. Patience tried to witness to Mr. Passion quite often but he could never get the job done very well. All Mr. Passion wanted to think about would be anything temporal. So one of Mr. Passion's best friends died suddenly with a heart attack. Mr. Patience thought this would be a good time to witness to Mr. Passion, so he went over there. Since Mr. Passion's friend had died suddenly, he thought he would confront him with the seriousness of life, and how quickly life can end. So he knocked on the door and was invited in. He said, "I understand that your friend died very suddenly," and Mr. Passion said "Yes." Mr. Patience was then going to ask something like, "Don't you think this should cause you to think of eternity?" But before he could get the question out,

Mr. Passion said, "now that just goes to show you that you'd better get all of life you can, because it goes by so quick." In other words, "you'd better live it up right now, because you don't know that you are going be here tomorrow."

That is the attitude that Mr. Passion has toward the things of God. He has no interest or appetite in these things, and you probably know someone like him. I imagine, if I asked for a show of hands here tonight, probably nearly everyone of us could think of someone who would qualify as Mr. Passion. These people want nothing to do with the things of the Bible. They would rather talk about the weather, Viet Nam, the world situation, inflation, or anything in the world except the Bible and the things of God. This is an individual who is wrapped up in the present and not in the world to come.

Then said Christian, "Now I see that Patience has the best wisdom, and that upon many accounts." I see that he is the wiser of the two. "1. Because he waits for the best things." That is, he sees that the best things do not always come first. This is true in life, and it is also true in the life to come. "2. And also because he will have the glory of his, when the other has nothing but rags." Then the Holy Spirit interprets it like this. Yes, and there is one other thing about Patience, "The glory of the next world will never wear out."

I am reminded of two sisters in the Bible who invited Jesus to come to their house one day. Do you remember the account of Mary and Martha? One of them was very busy in the kitchen cooking dinner. Also, she was upset with

When we reflect upon how short our life is here and now, compared with the life of eternity, we see that eternity is by far the more valuable time of our existence.

everybody. You talk about "Passion!" If you find a women who is behind schedule when company is coming, you will see this set forth. So, here is one sister who is upset in the kitchen and the other sister is sitting in the other room of the home and is listening to Jesus teach. The first sister gets so upset that she finally comes in and says, "Jesus, why don't you tell my sister to come in and help me?" Jesus rebuked her and says, "No, no, your sister has chosen the good part." That is, sitting at my feet and listening to what I have to say. ***"Thou art careful and troubled about many things But one thing is needful:***

and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

(Luke 10:38-42). You see, when we reflect upon how short our life is here and now, compared with the life of eternity, we see that eternity is by far the more valuable time of our existence. When most of our existence is going to be spent, not here, but in the eternal state, then it is encumbered upon us that we be prepared to enter into that eternal state, by sitting at the feet of Christ and learning of Him. So help us that we may not be cumbered about with many things and troubled in all of our activities so as to miss the next state.

"Therefore, Passion had not so much reason to laugh at Patience, because he had his good things first, as Patience will have to laugh at Passion."

In other words, "he that laughs last, laughs the best." Let Mr. Passion (the world) laugh at the Christian. Let him mock and make fun of him. He is having his time and his reward right now. But Christian there is coming a time in which the tables are going to be reversed, in which Mr. Patience is going to receive his just reward. Then the tables will be turned entirely. Then the Interpreter gives the illustration in the Bible of Lazarus and the rich man. ***"therefore it is said of Dives, "in thy life-time thou receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."*** This is regarding the account in chapter 16 of the gospel of Luke of the story of two individuals. There was a very poor man who had to eat bread that was left over from the rich man's table, and was thrown out to the dogs. The rich man fared sumptuously every day and had everything he would want. Then it came time for both of them to die. The rich man went into his eternal state apart from God. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, or into a state of glory. The rich man was asking for a drop of water to cool his torment that he was in, and the answer was given, "Son, remember that in thy lifetime that you lived here on earth, you had good things. You lived it up, you laughed, you had no time to even help the poor man out. You had no interest in the things of God. Likewise, Lazarus was burdened with evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." So Bunyan is using this illustration here. The first boy, Mr. Passion, wants everything now at the expense of eternity, and Mr. Patience is willing to do without now in order that he might enjoy the blessings of God throughout all eternity. That is, he will not allow anything to come into his life which would interfere with his love of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are not talking about having to live in poverty, and we are not

talking about having to do without good friends and families, but we are talking about allowing those things to come in between us and our love of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

So Christian then says, ***"Then I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come."*** Oh, how we need to have patience! I think that probably the virtue of patience is one of the most lacking virtues that most individuals have. The Interpreter replies to Christian: ***"You say the truth, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."*** Now I invite your attention in the Bible to II Corinthians 4. In writing to the Church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul bears out this same teaching. He was explaining all the different things that he had to suffer and to be afflicted with because of his relationship with Christ in the gospel. In verse 17 he puts it in this perspective: ***"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*** Now, how do you tell the difference between a man of this world and a man of the next world? The man of the next world lives by faith. The man of this world lives only for the temporal time that is allotted him in this life, and everything in his life revolves around the things which can be seen. That is, he is not interested in the spiritual things of God. He is not interested in the next life, but he is interested only in that which is temporal, that which is fleshly, that which he can see and understand. This involves such things as his job, his home, his family, his occupation, his automobile, and his possessions. These are the things for which this man lives, and he accumulates all of his wealth in this life. He is like the man described in the Bible as stating ***"I will pull down my barns and build greater barns."*** (Luke 12:18-20). All he looked for was a temporal increase in material items, but the answer that was given to him was, ***"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."*** The question is then asked ***"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*** (Mark 8:36). What if Mr. Passion gains everything now and then loses his own soul, what has he profited? If you are a rational businessman created in the image of God, then God says, "Come now let us reason together, what if you gained wealth, fame, and everything out of life that you could possibly want only to lose your eternal existence with God, what have you gained?" Put it on the

scales, weigh it, and see if it comes out as a logical thing for you to have everything now for the temporal at the expense of the eternal.

The Apostle says, "We do not look at things which are seen, because the things which are seen are temporary, but we look at the things which are not seen." For another passage of Scripture, let's go to the book of Hebrews. Here we have an example of a wealthy individual who had fame, power and authority, but when he saw that these things were going to stand between him and his knowledge of God, then we read this of Moses. Hebrews 11:24-26 - ***"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."*** In other words, Moses forsook the temporal in order to gain the eternal. He weighed the throne in Egypt and all the authority that he could have had there on that throne on the scales, and then he weighed eternity in light of that and said, "No, I'm going to identify with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a temporal season." If we could call Moses on the witness stand, and he could come here this evening and give us a testimony, do you think Moses would be sorry for the decision which he made? Do you think Moses would say, "Oh, if I had it to over again, I would have taken the throne of Egypt." No, my friend, if he came back today, he would exalt the riches of eternity over the temporal things of this life.

So, I ask this question to those of us here this evening, are we temporal people who are living for just what we can get out of the time we are allotted, or are we eternal people? Are our goals set beyond this vale of tears, beyond the horizon where the sun sets into that eternal domain wherein dwells righteousness? You may ask, "Pastor, why do so many seek for the temporal at the expense of the eternal? The Holy Spirit explains it this way. ***"But though this be so, yet since things present and our fleshly appetite are such near neighbors one to another . . ."*** That is, we are a people in the flesh, people who are natural. When people live close to each other, they are usually good neighbors, and we have a natural appetite which is to eat or take that in which is the closest to us. That is why we put off things to the last minute. I imagine that everyone of us are guilty of that. We have something that needs to be done, that there are some things you need to do right now

that you have been putting off because you just haven't got around to it? Why haven't you? It is because there is a distance between what you want to do and what is important to be done. This is why it couldn't make any difference to so many people in the world about what lies ahead so long as they are happy right now. They live by this, "I've got my bird in my hand. I'm happy right now and I don't care what is going happen tomorrow." Do you qualify for that? Is that your character? I'm not asking if you have that desire just once in awhile. I am asking if that is your character of life. Is that the way you live all the time? If you had what you wanted to do, would you live for this present temporal life and get all the gusto out of it you could? If you knew you could get by with it, is that what you would do? Or would you live and serve your God who loved you and gave Himself for you? Are you Mr. Passion, or are you Mr. Patience? You are one of these and you know in your heart which one you are.

If Jesus asked you these questions, what would your answer be? "If you love Me do you love My commandments? If you love Me, do you think on Me? Do you meditate on Me? Do you pray? Do you commune with the Holy Spirit?" Or, if you had your choice, would those be the last things you would ever think on, because they only make you get uneasy, and you would just as soon not even talk about these things. I went into a barber shop one time and sat down. There was a man in a chair, and we started carrying on a conversation. He said "what do you do?" I said, "I'm a preacher." He said, "Oh, don't say any more - there are two things I don't talk about and they are politics and religion. We didn't have anything else to talk about. If you are around me very long, you are going to talk about religion before you get away. If you don't like to talk about that, then you are Mr. Passion. That is, if we could sit down and talk with you about the weather, we could probably have a good conversation. If I came into your home, and we started talking about inflation, that would probably interest you. If I came into your house or met you on the street, and we started talking about the weather condition and what is going on with the drought and so forth, it would probably interest you. But if I tried to bring the conversation around to spiritual things, I'll watch you start hopping like a grasshopper to get out of the picture. Do you think I don't know you? I know you because I used to be one of you. That is, I used to be one who tried to get away from the spiritual things of God because that wasn't my nature. I didn't like it and didn't want anything to do with it. Friend, don't deceive yourself that everything is alright between you and eternity just because you have your name on a

church role. ***"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."*** (Proverbs 23:7). Mr. Passion would have everything now. Mr. Patience would have it in eternity.

I don't know if this experiment is the truth, and don't you dare go out and try it. I have been told that you can take a frog and put it in a pan of hot water, and supposedly it will hop right back out. But you can also put that same frog in a pan of water which is its body temperature, put it on the stove and slowly bring it to boiling, the frog will set right there until it has boiled to death. Why? Because the temperature change is so gradual that it is lulled right to death. Ladies and gentlemen and young people, the things of this world are like that. Can you think of a time in the past when there was a death of a good friend or relative that suddenly hit you and you went to the funeral. When you viewed the body, did you think that one of these days you were going to be there, and you thought seriously for a moment. Then you left and like the frog, you get back into the routine of life and are just lulled to sleep. You come here tonight, you have heard a sermon on the difference between time and eternity. Maybe even right now you are beginning to think seriously on that. But I hope you won't be like the frog. You will probably leave here in another thirty minutes, go back to school tomorrow or to your job, and soon those thoughts will be gone, because the things of this life have a numbing effect on the spirituality of an individual. I trust this evening that you know the Lord. If you don't, continue to think seriously on the things of eternity. As you are enjoying the comforts and delights of this life, the good health, the family, the job, the mother and dad, the brother and sister, the children, these things can take your eye off of eternity and so rob you of your eternal state. May the Holy Spirit impress upon you as a new convert the difference between time and eternity and to live your life in the light of eternity and not just for the temporal.

Shall we pray,

Father in heaven, we ask that you might impart to us the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make what has been presented this evening of lasting value. We know that water soon runs off and that which we see flowing by in the river, we may never see again, but Father we recognize that we cannot call back the minutes that we have just spent here together. We cannot have this service re-run and played over again, but we do ask that what has been presented tonight might not be like pouring water on the feathers of a duck which soon runs off and is forgotten, but we pray what has been presented might strike home in

some person's heart, that they might think seriously on the matters of eternity, and of living in a right relationship justified before Thee. We ask that this be done that it might honor Your name, not that it would just enhance our name or the name of this church, but that it might glorify the name of Your Son who loved us and gave Himself on our behalf. Set our affections on things above. Take our minds off of the temporal and wean us from this life because we are soon going to leave it. And Father we ask that in view of what we have heard this evening, that we might think seriously and meditate seriously upon our relationship to Thee, for we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.