

***“The Pilgrims Progress”***  
***Increase Our Faith!***

**Introduction:**

1. To Begin Our Next Instalment:
  - In Our Journey Through The Pilgrims Progress:
    - I'd Like For Us To Open Our Bibles Together:
      - To Luke 17 - Where:
        - The Lord Jesus Gave His Disciples:
          - A Very Faith-Stretching Command!
  - In 17:3-4 - Which Brother Art Spoke On A Few Weeks Ago:
    - In Our Wednesday Night Series Through:
      - The Parables Of Christ!
        - And The Command Was This:
          - “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. / And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him!”
2. Now - That Kind Of Forgiveness:
  - Would Be A Stretch:
    - For Even The Most Naturally Patient Person Among Us!
      - And Jesus' Disciples:
        - Who Probably *Weren't*:
          - Naturally Disposed To Patience & Forbearance:
            - Recognized This!
  - And So - They Cried Out To The Lord:
    - 17:5 - “Increase Our Faith!”
      - Because - They Knew That:
        - In Order To Be:
          - What Christ Called Them To Be:
        - And - In Order To Do:
          - What Christ Called Them To Do:
        - They Needed:
          - A Growing Faith - And:
            - A Stronger Faith!
3. Well - This Needs To Be:
  - Our Constant Prayer & Cry:
    - To The Lord As Well:
      - Because Of What We Will Read About Tonight:
        - In The Pilgrims Progress!
  - Because - After Christian & Hopeful's Brief But Refreshing Stay:
    - In The Delectable Mountains:
      - The Good Shepherds Sent Them Off Again:
        - On The King's Highway:
          - Where They Were About To Meet Some:
            - Whose “Faith” - If They Had Any:
              - Was Only A Surface Faith - Or Even - Just An Apparent Faith!
4. So - Starting At The Top Of:
  - Page 77 - Line 3 - We Will Begin Our Reading:
    - *“And I slept, and dreamed again – Which May Mean That Bunyan Was Arrested Again For Preaching The Gospel Without Approval From The Authorities – and saw the same two Pilgrims going down the mountains along the highway towards the city our faith!”*
  - Read Through Page 79, Paragraph 7:
    - *“I was told that he scattered almost all the rest of the way with nothing but doleful and bitter complaints; telling also to all that overtook him, or that he overtook in the way as he went, where he was robbed, and how; who they were that did it, and what he lost; how he was wounded, and that he hardly escaped with his life!”*

- 5. What John Bunyan Points Out:
  - In The Pages We Just Read:
    - Is What Can Happen To You:
      - If Your Faith:
        - Is Stagnant & Dormant:
          - And Does Not Increase!
  - There Are Two Individuals:
    - Christian & Hopeful Meet On Their Pathway:
      - And Another Man:
        - Whose Story Christian Remembers:
          - And Then Relates To Hopeful!
  - But Each Character:
    - Reveals The Danger:
      - Of A Faith:
        - That Does Not Or Desires Not:
          - To Increase!

\* First - Through Their Run-In With The Man Named Ignorance - We Discover The Danger Of:

**1. A Proud Faith:**

- Which Is - In Reality - An Oxymoron:
  - And Is No Faith At All!
    - In Ecclesiastes 10:1-3 - The Preacher Tells Us:
      - “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: [so doth] a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom [and] honour. / A wise man’s heart [is] at his right hand; but a fool’s heart at his left. / Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth [him], and he saith to every one [that] he [is] a fool!”
  - And So It Was:
    - For This Man Named Ignorance:
      - Who Came From His Own Country:
        - The Country Of Conceit:
          - From A “Little Crooked Lane” On The Left!
    - And - He Had Heard:
      - Some Good Things:
        - About The Celestial City:
          - To Which Christian & Hopeful Were Headed:
            - And He Wanted All Those Good Things For Himself!
      - And So - As The “Very Brisk Lad” That:
        - Bunyan Describes Him To Be:
          - He Tried To Get There:
            - In His Own Way & According To His Own Terms!
          - He Was Trying To Get There:
      - According To His Own Pace!
        - He Was “Double-Timing” His Way:
          - Probably Hoping To Get There:
            - Before The Sun Set!
              - He Was Looking For A Quick & Easy Path:
                - Without Any Burden & Without Any Cross!
          - He Was Also Trying To Get To The Celestial City:
        - According To His Own Practice!
          - He Thought He Was A “Good Liver!”
            - Good Enough That:
              - When He Reached The Gate Of The City:
                - The Gatekeeper Would Be Impressed Enough With His Efforts:
                  - That He Would Be Let In Without A Second Thought!
          - And Yet - Ultimately:
            - Ignorance Was Trying To Get There:
          - According To His Own Pride!
            - And When Christian Called Him Out On This:

- By Informing Him:
  - That He Did Not Come “At The Wicket Gate” - Which Is The Narrow Door:
    - Of Faith In Christ:
      - Ignorance Wanted To Hear Nothing More About It!
- And This Is Why He Was Given The Name:
  - Ignorance!
    - Because - As John Kelman Once Put It:
      - “Conceit And Ignorance Go As Inevitably Together As Humility And Wisdom!”
  - And Even Though Jesus Said:
    - In John 14:6 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me!”
      - Ignorance Thought He Knew More About The Way To Paradise:
        - Then Jesus Himself - Who Came From Paradise!
  - This Was Even The Experience Of John Bunyan:
    - Before He Knocked At The Wicket Gate!
      - He Once Wrote - “I Thought I Kept This Or That Commandment, Or Did, By Word Or Deed, Anything That I Thought Was Good, And I Had Great Peace In My Conscience; And Should Think With Myself, God Cannot Choose But Be Now Pleased With Me; Yea, to Relate It In Mine Own Way, I Thought No Man In England Could Please God Better Than I! But Poor Wretch I Was, I Was All This While Ignorant Of Jesus Christ!”
  - And So - The Faith Of Ignorance:
    - Turned Out To Be:
      - A Faith In Himself:
        - And His Own Works!
      - Instead Of A Faith:
        - In Christ Alone:
          - And His Work & Nature Of Righteousness!
  - We Need To Keep Praying To The Lord To:
    - “Increase Our Faith” - Otherwise:
      - It May Reveal Itself To Be:
        - A Selfish Faith:
          - Instead Of A Saving Faith!
    - Because - “Christ Will Be An Only Savior, Or None At All!” (George Cheever)

\* The Next Character Christian & Hopeful See Is The Man Named Turn-Away - And Through Him - We Learn More About The Danger Of:

## 2. ***A Presumptuous Faith:***

- Which Is A Faith Designed:
  - More For The Eyes Of Man:
    - Than The Eyes Of God!
  - In 2 Corinthians 13:5-6 - The Apostle Paul Writes:
    - Some Sobering Words - “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? / But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates!”
  - A “Reprobate” Is Someone:
    - Who “Turns Away” From:
      - The Faith They At One Time:
        - Made A Profession Of & An Allegiance To!
  - At One Time:
    - He May Have Been Convinced:
      - In His Own Mind:
        - That His Faith Was Real!
    - He May Have Also Been:
      - Very Convincing:
        - To Others Who Were Walking With Him:
          - On The Same Path!
  - But - Over Time:
    - The True Nature Of His Faithlessness:
      - Came Out!
        - And It All Likely Started Through:

- A Carelessness:
  - About The Faith!
    - In The Words Of 2 Corinthians 13:5:
      - He Stopped “Examining Himself, Whether He Be In The Faith!”
  - He Started To Live Presumptuously:
    - As Jude Describes It In:
      - Jude 4 - “Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ!”
  - And This Carelessness:
    - About The Truth & Righteousness & Goodness Of Christ Eventually Demonstrated:
- A Christlessness:
  - Even As The Apostle John Describes:
    - In 1 John 2:19 - “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us!”
  - Just Like A Proud Faith:
    - A Presumptuous Faith:
      - Is Not True Faith Either!
      - And Before Long:
        - The Apostate’s True Nature Will Be Revealed Through:
- A Captivity:
  - That He Cannot Escape!
    - Bunyan Uses, In Part, Proverbs 5:22 To Describe Turn-Away’s Captivity:
      - “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins!”
  - And This Is Why:
    - Turn-Away Was Carried Back:
      - By Those Seven Devils:
        - All The Way Back To The “By-Way To Hell!”
- And This Too Is Why We Should Desire The Lord:
  - To “Increase Our Faith!”
    - Otherwise - It Too May Prove Itself To Be:
      - A Presumptuous Faith:
        - That Will Eventually Reveal The True Country To Which We Belong!
  - Even As Turn-Away Came From:
    - The Town Of Apostasy!

\* But - Christian & Hopeful’s Contact With These Two Men Reminded Christian Of Another Character - With The Name “Little-Faith” - And Through Him We Can Discover The Danger Of

### 3. *A Prodigal Faith:*

- Which - Even Though It May Be A Weak Faith:
  - Is Still A True Faith!
    - This Is The Kind Of Faith That We Find:
      - In Jesus’ Parable Of The Prodigal Son - Or Better - The Loving Father!
  - And I Think This Is The Kind Of Person:
    - Bunyan Had In Mind When Writing About:
      - “Little-Faith” - Because Of The Phrase That He Uses:
        - When He Starts To Get Up After Being Assaulted In “Dead Man’s Lane!”
        - Bunyan Wrote - “He Came to Himself!”
  - And Isn’t This What We Find Taking Place:
    - In Luke 15:11-20a - “And he said, A certain man had two sons: / And the younger of them said to [his] father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth [to me]. And he divided unto them [his] living. / And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. / And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. / And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. / And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. / And when *he came to himself*, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! / I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father,

- I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, / And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. / And he arose, and came to his father!"
- Now - That Would Have Taken Faith!
    - Faith In The Love & Compassion & Forgiveness:
      - Of His Father!
        - But - As We Find Out In The Rest Of 15:20 - It Was A Well-Placed Faith!
          - "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him!"
  - Now - Its Obvious To Us:
    - Both In Jesus' Parable & In Christian's Story:
      - That The Prodigals Were Not Where They Were Supposed To Be!
    - Jesus' Prodigal:
      - Was In A "Far Country" Where He "Wasted His Substance With Riotous Living!"
    - Christian's Prodigal - Little-Faith:
      - Fell Asleep In "Dead Man's Lane!"
    - And - I Think Bunyan Intended For Christian To Remember This Story:
      - Because Of His Own Tendency:
        - To Fall Asleep On His Journey:
          - In The Wrong Places & At The Wrong Times!
  - But There's A Difference:
    - Between Jesus' Prodigal:
      - In His Parable - And In:
        - Bunyan's Prodigal:
          - In This Allegory!
  - When Jesus' Prodigal:
    - "Came To Himself" - According To Luke 15:20:
      - "He Arose, And Came To His Father!"
        - In Faith!
  - But When Bunyan's Prodigal:
    - "Came To Himself" - He Never Got Over:
      - The Wounds He Sustained:
        - When He Was Attacked By:
          - Those "Three Sturdy Rogues" Who Beat Him When He Was Asleep!
  - And The Wounds That Those Three Brothers:
    - Delivered - Are Still The Wounds:
      - That Often Keep Us:
        - In The Same Condition As "Little-Faith!"
          - Who Are These Rogues?
  - The Blow Of Faint-Heart:
    - "Takes Away Courage And Strength For The Truth, And Replaces Them With Timidity And Hesitancy!"
  - The Blow Of Mistrust:
    - "Takes Away Confidence And Assurance Of The Truth, And Replaces Them With Doubt And Suspicion!"
  - The Blow Of Guilt:
    - "Takes Away Peace And Rest, And Replaces Them With Fear And Agitation!" (Barry Horner)
  - And So - When You Finally:
    - "Come To Yourself" - When You've Gone Astray:
      - Instead Of - Like Jesus' Prodigal:
        - Getting Up & Going To Your Father:
          - In Faith Of His Character & His Compassion!
    - You Keep Licking Your Wounds:
      - Forgetting The Great Truths About God's Mercy & Grace!
        - Which Is Exactly Where:
          - The Devil Wants To Keep You!
  - And What Happened To Little-Faith?
    - Though He Was Able To Keep:
      - The Precious Jewels:
        - Of His Faith! And:
    - Though He Was Able To Hang On To:

- His Certificate Of Faith:
  - That Would Permit Him Entrance:
    - At The Gate Of The Celestial City!
- He Lost The Spiritual “Spending Money” That:
  - Was Given To Him:
    - To Be Useful & Fruitful:
      - In His Walk Of Faith!
- And He Continued On His Pilgrimage:
  - In Grief & With “Doleful And Bitter Complaints!”
    - Which Is Not Christ’s Way:
      - For His Pilgrims!

**Conclusion:**

1. Of Course - This Is What Sin Can Easily Do!
  - Sin Will Rob You:
    - Of Your Joy & Treasure!
      - And Then - The Spiritual Wounds Of:
        - Faint-Heart & Mistrust & Guilt:
          - Will Often Keep You From Enjoying The Free & Lavish Grace Of The Lord!
  - So That You End Up Focusing:
    - On Your Past:
      - Instead Of Your Pardon:
        - From The Lord!
    - On Your Failure:
      - Instead Of Your Future:
        - With The Lord! And:
    - On Your Self:
      - Instead Of Your Savior!
2. I Like How Barry Horner Describes:
  - What Little-Faith’s Life Became Like In Even More Detail:
    - “Little-Faith Pondered His Calamity More Than His Privileges! He Travels Ever Closer To The Glorious Celestial City, He Is Preserved By Grace In Trouble For Which He Is To Blame, He Has The Fellowship Of Other Pilgrims, He Has The Presence Of The Holy Spirit, He Has The Knowledge That He Is Secure Through The Sovereignty Of His Lord, Yet He Pushes This Aside And Concentrates Upon His Temporary Setback!”
3. Remember These Lessons:
  - On Faith - And The Dangers Of:
    - A Proud Faith!
    - A Presumptuous Faith! And Even:
    - A Prodigal Faith!
  - And Then - Pray The Prayer:
    - That Jesus’ Disciples Prayed To The Lord:
      - “Increase Our Faith!”
        - But Even Then - Keep Your Sights Set:
          - On The Person & The Promises Of Jesus Christ:
            - Who Said - “Him That Cometh To Me I Will In No Wise Cast Out!”  
(John 6:37)

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