

***“The Pilgrims Progress”
What Shall A Man Give?***

Introduction:

1. As We Continue On Our Journey Tonight:
 - Through The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Our Two Pilgrims:
 - Will Meet Two New Characters:
 - On Their Quest To:
 - The Celestial City!
 - One Of Those Characters:
 - They Had Been Already Warned Against:
 - By The Shepherds:
 - When They Were With Them:
 - In The Delectable Mountains:
 - Just A Day Or So Before:
 - As We Will See From Our Reading Tonight!
 - But The Other Character:
 - Will Take Them A Bit By Surprise!
 - Those Characters Are:
 - The Flatterer & The Atheist!
2. Now - As We Read About The Flatterer Tonight:
 - The Way Bunyan Describes Him:
 - May Be A Bit Shocking To Our Modern Sensitivities!
 - But - We Still Need To Remember That:
 - Bunyan Was Writing As A Man:
 - Of His Time!
 - And - I Believe:
 - Was Not Writing Or Even Thinking In Racial Terms:
 - But In Biblical Terms!
3. So - To Begin:
 - We Will Start Reading From:
 - Page 83, Paragraph 2:
 - *“So they went on, and Ignorance followed!”*
 - Read Through:
 - Page 85, Paragraph 5:
 - *“So they turned away from the man; and he, laughing at them, went his way!”*
4. Now - If It Seems Like:
 - Christian Continues To Get Himself Into Trouble:
 - In This Book - That’s For Good Reason!
 - Because He Does!
 - And That’s Bunyan’s Point!
 - Because - So Did He - And:
 - So Do We!
 - And - If Its Not One Thing:
 - That Causes Us To Wander Off The Track:
 - It’s Another!
 - So - As Christian & Hopeful Struggled With:
 - Challenges To Their Faith:
 - When They Left The Shepherds In Those Delectable Hills:
 - Now - They Are Struggling:
 - With Challenges To The Truth:
 - Through Their Encounters With The Flatterer & The Atheist!
4. But - One Thing That We Need To Remember:
 - From The Last Time We Were Together:
 - Is That - When Christian & Hopeful:
 - Were Discussing The Plight Of:
 - The Man Known As Little-Faith:

- I Think They Both Thought Themselves To Be Of Much Stronger Constitution:
- Than That Man - And Of Much Stronger Faith!

- Because - As They Spent Some Time:
 - Discussing The “Finer Points” Of Faith:
 - It Seemed Like A Subtle Pride:
 - Crept Into Their Faith!
 - And That Pride:
 - Prepared Them:
 - To Be Easily Snared By:
 - The Errors & Traps Of The Flatterer!

5. And So - In The Time We Have Left Tonight:

- I Want Us To Think About:
 - Some Of Those Things That Our Pilgrims Faced:
 - That May Also Turn Us Away:
 - From Our Intended Destination:
 - Even If It Is - At It Was For Them:
 - Slowly - And “By Degrees!”

6. In Mark 8:34-37 - We Find These Words From Christ Himself:

- “And when he had called the people [unto him] with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. / For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. / For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? / Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- There Are A Lot Of Things:
 - That Are Vying For:
 - Your Soul!
 - In This Part Of The Story:
 - We Find 3 Things:
 - That Could Sway You:
 - From The Path Of The Truth:
 - If You Let Them!
 - And As We Revisit Them:
 - You Need To Answer This Question In Your Own Heart:
 - How Will You Respond To Them:
 - When You Face Them:
 - Along Your Path?
 - Remember Jesus’ Question:
 - “What Shall A Man Give In Exchange For His Soul?”

* The First Thing Christian & Hopeful Faced Was:

1. The Power Of Man:

- Which Is Just Assumed By:
 - The Name Of The First Character They Met With:
 - Flatterer!
 - We Don’t Know Much About What He Said To Them:
 - But It Was Enough For Them To Follow Him:
 - Without Hardly Giving It A Second Thought!
- All He Said To Them In The Story Was:
 - “Follow Me!”
 - The Very Words Of Jesus To His Disciples!
 - And They Followed:
 - Not The Path Blazed By The Lord:
 - But The Slowly-Turning Trail Blazed By This Man!
- The Power Of Man:
 - Is A Subtle Temptation To Us All:
 - When It Comes To Spiritual Things!
 - The Powers Of Persuasion:
 - Abilities & Gifts:

- And Even Numbers Of Followers:
 - Seem To Indicate God's Blessing:
 - On A Spiritual Leader!
- And When Christian & Hopeful Were Asked Why They Followed Him:
 - By The Shining One:
 - They Answered That He Was:
 - "A Fine Spoken Man!"
- But - If That Is Our Focus:
 - We Can Be Easily Deceived:
 - Into Following - Not The Lord:
 - But Man!
- Its True - In 1 Corinthians 11:1:
 - The Apostle Paul Says:
 - "Be Ye Followers Of Me!"
 - But He Didn't Stop There!
 - He Added - "Even As I Also Am Of Christ!"
- So - Is It Worth It:
 - For Your Soul:
 - To Follow After Mere Men:
 - Even Though They May Seem Powerful & Persuasive?
 - Don't Fall For This Deceptive Snare!

* The Second Thing Christian & Hopeful Faced Was:

2. ***The Punishment Of God:***

- Which Came As A Result Of Them:
 - Following After The Flatterer - And:
 - Falling Into The Snare:
 - Of His Errors - Whatever They May Have Been!
 - But - Even Though Their Chastening:
 - Sounded A Bit Harsh:
 - As We Read It - We Need To Remember:
 - How Many Times Christian Could Have Been & Even Should Have Been:
 - Disciplined With That Rod!
 - Instead - All Throughout His Pilgrimage:
 - The Character Of The Lord Shines Through!
 - That He Is - In The Words Of:
 - Psalm 145:8 - "Gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy!"
- And So - When The Shining One Came:
 - As The Minister Of God:
 - To Rescue Christian & Hopeful:
 - The Whip He Carried:
 - Was One Of "Small Cords!"
 - It Was Meant To:
 - Help The Pilgrims:
 - Not Just To Hurt Them!
- But - Sadly - All Too Often:
 - We Forget The Purpose Of:
 - The Punishments & Discipline Of The Lord:
 - And - If We Do Not Respond Properly:
 - It Can Keep Us From Growing In His Grace & Faith & Truth!
 - And What Is His Purpose?
 - In Hebrews 12:5-13 - The Writer Expounds The Point Drawn From Proverbs 3:
 - "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: / 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. / 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? / 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

/ 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? / 10 For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness. / 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. / 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; / 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed!"

- So - When It Comes:

- Let The Chastening Of The Lord:

- Do Its Work In Your Life!

- After All:

- Is It Worth It:

- For Your Soul:

- To Resist His Efforts:

- To Chasten & Correct You & Put You Back On The Right Path?

- Remember The Words Of Our Lord:

- Revelation 3:19 - "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent!"

- Of Course - This Is How Christian & Hopeful Responded:

- To Their Discipline!

- And My Favorite Part Of This Part Of The Story:

- Is Their Meek & Honest Responses:

- To The Questions Of The Shining One!

- Almost Childlike! Which Was Appropriate - Since They Had Acted As Spiritual Children!

- He Asked Them:

- Where Did You Lie Last Night?

- They Said, With The Shepherds, Upon the Delectable Mountains.

- He Asked Them Then:

- If They Had Not Of Those Shepherds A Note Of Direction For The Way.

- They Answered Yes.

- But Did You, Said He:

- When You Were At A Stand Pluck Out And Read Your Note?

- They Answered, Now.

- He Asked Them:

- Why?

- They Said, They Forgot.

- But Then - After Their Discipline:

- They "Thanked Him For His Kindness!"

- And - "Went Softly Along The Right Way, Singing!"

- Do Not Be Discouraged:

- When You Experience The Chastening Hand Of God!

- For It Is Nothing Less Than:

- His Kindness At Work In Your Life!

* But Then - The Third Thing Christian & Hopeful Faced Was:

3. ***The Persecution Of Man:***

- Through The Ridicule Of A Man Named:

- Atheist!

- Who Even Said:

- He Once Believed As They Did - And:

- Had Traveled Further On The Path Than They Had!

- Even For 20 Years!

- But - Since He Saw Nothing Of Which He Heard:

- He Turned Back:

- Telling Them & Likely Everyone Else He Came In Contact With That:

- There Is "No Such Place As You Dream Of In All This World!"

- And - In That Point:

- He Was Right!
- Christian Expressed His Faith:
 - When He Answered:
 - “But There Is In The World To Come!”
- But At That:
 - Atheist:
 - Ridiculed & Laughed:
 - At The Simple & Naive Notions:
 - Of Christian & Faithful!
 - And - Sadly:
 - This Is What We Will Face:
 - More & More:
 - In This Increasingly Atheistic World In Which We Live!
 - And - If You Haven’t Experienced It Already:
 - More & More You Will Face:
 - Ridicule & Even Outright Laughter:
 - For Your Faith:
 - In A God!
 - In The Bible!
 - In The Gospel!
 - In Heaven! And Even:
 - In Sin Itself!
- But - How Were We Called:
 - To Walk This Christian Path?
 - In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 - The Apostle Paul Wrote:
 - “Therefore [we are] always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: / (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) / We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord!”
 - In These Verses Alone:
 - Paul Expressed Great Confidence:
 - In The Existence Of God!
 - The Promises Of His Word!
 - The Power Of The Gospel! And Even:
 - The Hope Of Heaven!
 - And His Confidence:
 - Was Grounded In Faith:
 - Not Merely In:
 - His Own, Limited Sight & Personal Experiences!
 - And This Is How:
 - We Must Continue To Walk:
 - “By Faith & Not By Sight!”
- After All:
 - Is It Worth It:
 - For Your Soul:
 - To Be Swayed By The Ridicule & Persecution:
 - Of Someone Who Hasn’t Even “Tasted The Good Word Of God!”

Conclusion:

1. These Three Things:
 - Have Often Been A Snare To Christian Pilgrims!
 - The Powers Of Men!
 - The Punishment Of God! And:
 - The Persecution Of Men!
 - But - Is It Worth Your Soul:
 - To Be Drawn Off The Path By These Things?
 - “What Shall A Man Give For His Soul?”
 - Your Soul Is A Precious Thing!
 - This Is, After All, Why The Lord Does, At Times, Chasten Us!

2. So - We Need To Ask The Lord For His Help:
 - When We Face & Experience These Things:
 - And Then Resolve - As Christian & Hopeful Did:
 - “Let Thee And I Go On, Knowing That We Have Belief In The Truth!”

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