

“The Pilgrims Progress”
“Sweet Beulah Land”
(Isaiah 62:4)

Introduction:

1. We Just Sang About:
 - “Sweet Beulah Land!”
 - But - I Wonder - Do You Know:
 - What Beulah Land Is - And Even:
 - Where Beulah Land Is?
 - Listen To Some Of The Lyrics:
 - Of Beautiful Hymn Once Again:
 - I’ve reached the land of corn and wine,
And all its riches freely mine;
Here shines undimmed one blissful day,
For all my night has passed away!
 - Now At First - This Sounds Like Heaven:
 - Doesn’t It?
 - But Then Again - Listen To The Chorus:
 - That Edgar Page Stites Wrote:
 - O Beulah Land, sweet Beulah Land,
As on thy highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore,
My Heav’n, my home forevermore!
2. From The Chorus:
 - We See That For The Author:
 - Beulah Land Was **Not** Heaven!
 - Rather - It Was Across The Sea From Heaven:
 - And It Was A Place Where He Could Look Over To Heaven!
 - And - In Many Ways:
 - It Was A Taste Of Heaven:
 - While Still On Earth!
 - I Believe That Either Before Or While:
 - Edgar Stites Penned These Words:
 - He Must Have Been Meditating On The Passage We Come To Next:
 - In The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Which - According To Many:
 - Is One Of The Most Beautiful & Descriptive Passages:
 - Bunyan Ever Wrote!
 - So - Let’s Look Together At:
 - What This Beulah Land Meant:
 - To Both The Hymn Writer & The Story Writer:
 - As We Turn Back To:
 - *Page 97, Where We Will Start Reading At The Last Paragraph:*
 - *“Now I Saw In My Dream, That By This Time The Pilgrims Were Got Over The Enchanted Ground!”*
 - Read Through: *Page 99, Paragraph 1:*
 - *“So I Saw In My Dream That They Went On Together, Until They Came In Sight Of The Gate!”*
3. Now - As We Just Read:
 - There Are Two Main Passages:
 - That John Bunyan Used:
 - To Describe This Place:
 - He Called “The Country Of Beulah!”
 - First - He Draws From Isaiah 62:
 - Which Is A Description Of:
 - The Future Home Of God’s People:

- Zion!

- Let's Read Through This Chapter:

- Trying To Pick Up Some Of The References:

- Bunyan Used In His Story!

- 62:4-12 - "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. / For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. / I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, / And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. / The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: / But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness. / Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. / Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. / And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken!"

- Here - The Land Called "Beulah" Is The Land Of God's People:

- And It Means "Married!"

- Which Describes The Relationship That God Himself Will Have With His People:

- Forever!

- The Second Passage Bunyan Draws From Is Song Of Solomon 2:

- Which Describes The Tenderness:

- Of Pure, Marital Love!

- And In 2:10-12 - It Is Pictured As:

- Springtime In The Heart! "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. / For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; / The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land!"

4. Whatever & Wherever This Beulah Land Is:

- It Sounds Exquisitely Beautiful & Restful!

- And Yet - From Bunyan's Perspective:

- Its Not Quite Heaven!

- So - Just What Is This Place?

- It's A Place Exclusively For Christians:

- Who Are Ready For:

- Such An Experience!

- And - You Can Only Know What It Is:

- When You Experience It For Yourself!

- George Cheever Describes It This Way:

- Beulah Land Is:

- An "Advanced Stage" Of Our Pilgrimage - And:

- Is "A Very Near, Deep, Blissful Communion With God!"

- He Also Calls It:

- "Heaven In The Soul!"

- Perhaps We Can Call It:

- A Glimpse Of Glory:

- From An Earthy Suburb:

- Of The Heavenly City!

- And - It Was An Experience:

- That Seems To Have Been Often Talked About:

- In Puritan Circles:

- As They Were Preparing Themselves:

- To Cross Over The River Of Death!

- And As Such - It Is:

1. *A Place Of Looking!*

- Of Looking With:
 - Clear Spiritual Vision:
 - At The Things Of The Lord!
 - Much Of What Christian & Hopeful Experienced:
 - Was A Feast For Their Eyes!
- They Saw:
 - Flowers:
 - That Appeared Every Day!
- They Saw:
 - The Sun:
 - Shining Both Night And Day!
- They Saw:
 - The City:
 - Made Up Of:
 - Pearls & Precious Stones & Gold!
- And Even Though They Experienced:
 - For Most Of Their Pilgrimage:
 - What We Are Told In:
 - 1 Corinthians 13:12 - "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known!"
- Yet - At This Stage:
 - Of Their Christian Journey:
 - The Glass Isn't As Dark:
 - As It Once Was!
 - But - How Can This Be?
 - Because They Are Seeing Things:
 - Not With Their:
 - Eyes Flesh!
 - But With Their:
 - Eyes Of Faith!
- And The Stronger & Deeper Your Faith:
 - The More You Will See:
 - Of Your Heavenly Home:
 - Even Though You May Still Be:
 - On This Side Of The River Of Death!
- But - Not Only Is It:
 - A Place Of Looking!
 - It Is Also:

2. *A Place Of Listening!*

- All Of Their Senses Were Stimulated:
 - In This Beautiful Country Of Beulah!
 - They Heard:
 - Continual Sing Of Birds:
 - Including The Peaceful Coo:
 - Of The Turtle Dove!
 - They Heard:
 - Voices Of Encouragement:
 - As We Read From Isaiah:
 - "Thy Salvation Cometh!"
 - Can There Be Any Greater Sound:
 - To A Weary Christian Pilgrim:
 - Who Is Almost To The End:
 - Of Their Journey?
- Of Course - In Bunyan's Story:
 - The Sounds Christian & Hopeful Hear:
 - Are Spiritual Sounds!

That Resonate With:

- Hearts That Are In Tune:
- With Their Truth!

- And Those Sounds:

- Prepare You To Hear:
- The Voice Of Your Savior:
- When You Finally Reach:
- The Opposite Shore!

- Beulah Land Is:

- A Place Of Looking & Listening:
- And - It Is Also:

3. *A Place Of Liberty!*

- Up Until This Place:

- Christian & Hopeful:
- Were Continuously Bombarded With:
- Trials - To Test Their Faith:
- And Temptations:
- To Leave Their Faith!

- But - Here We Are Told That:

- Not Only Are They:
- Far Beyond:
- The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death!

- They Also:

- Have No More Reason To Fear:
- Giant Despair:
- Because - They Can't Even See:
- Doubting Castle Anymore!

- I Don't Think John Bunyan:

- Is Talking About:
- Sinless Perfection:
- After The Later Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition!

- But - I Do Think He Believes:

- That As Many Christians:
- Draw Closer & Closer:
- To Their Home-Going:
- God Gives Them Dying Grace:
- So That Their Greatest Fears May Be Overcome By Their Faith:
- In The Lord!

- In Philippians 1:23:

- Paul Wrote:
- "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better!"

- Paul Could Honestly Say This:

- Because God Had Convinced Him Of:
- No Guilt In Life, No Fear In Death!
- This Is The Power Of Christ In Me!
- From Life's First Cry To Final Breath,
- Jesus Commands My Destiny!

- And He Was Given Liberty:

- From The Spiritual Trials & Temptations:
- That So Often Afflict Our Faith!

- What A Special Place:

- This Beulah Land Is!
- A Place Of Looking & Listening & Liberty:
- But It Is Also:

4. *A Place Of Longing!*

- Remember How Christian & Hopeful Responded:
 - To All Of This Overwhelming Beauty & Grace?
 - They “Fell Sick” - Bunyan Tells Us!
 - “With Desire!”
 - Desire For What?
 - For The Full Experience:
 - Of Heaven Itself!
 - If A Christian Can:
 - Get A “Taste” Of It On Earth:
 - Imagine What:
 - The Full Meal:
 - Will Be Like! And:
 - If A Christian Can:
 - Get A “Glimpse” Of It On Earth:
 - Imagine What:
 - The Full Glory:
 - Will Be Like!
 - As We Read In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10:
 - Though - “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him!”
 - Yet - “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit!”
 - All Throughout His Writings:
 - The Apostle Paul:
 - Had His Sights On Heaven!
 - Perhaps There Were Many Times:
 - When He Had This Kind Of “Beulah Land” Experience!
 - Only To Be Restored To Service In This Life!
 - But - He Still Longed For Heaven!
 - And - With Every Passing Day:
 - He Could Sense Heaven:
 - Drawing Closer To Him!

Conclusion:

1. In The Pilgrims Progress - Beulah Land:
 - Stands For The Place Where:
 - Christians Can Enjoy:
 - Fellowship With Christ:
 - In The Closest Way Possible:
 - This Side Of Heaven!
 - Again - As Edgar Stites Put It In:
 - My Savior comes and walks with me,
And sweet communion here have we;
He gently leads me by His hand,
For this is Heaven’s borderland!
2. And Though:
 - You Can Experience This:
 - At Any Time:
 - During Your Christian Pilgrimage!
 - It Seems Like:
 - God’s Grace Shines More Brightly:
 - On Those Pilgrims:
 - That Are Just A Short Distance:
 - From The River Of Death!
 - And So - Beulah Land:
 - Is The Kind Of Place:
 - Where - You Will Know It:
 - Only When You See It!
3. I Like How Ken Puls Puts It:

- "While This Is A Land That Pilgrims Can Visit At Various Seasons Of Life, It Is Especially The Dwelling Place Of Older Saints - Seasoned Believers Whose Days In Life Are Drawing To An End! The World No Longer Enthralls Them! Doubt And Despair No Longer Trouble Them! Trials Are Momentary! Eternity Looms Large In Their Thinking! We Hear The Desire Of Their Hearts In The Closing Words Of Scripture:"

- "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!"

- "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. / The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!"

4. May The Lord:

- In His Grace:

- Give Each One Of Us:

- A Taste Of Beulah Land:

- Before We Reach The River Of Death!

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