

*“The Pilgrims Progress”
Vanity Fair*

Introduction:

1. A Couple Of Weeks Ago:
 - At The Fair-Grounds In Greenfield:
 - There Was Held:
 - The Annual Hancock County 4-H Fair!
 - And - I Know That:
 - A Lot Of People Look Forward It:
 - Each And Every Year!
2. Well - After Tonight:
 - I Don't Think:
 - You'll Want To Have Anything To Do With The Fair:
 - Ever Again!
 - Because Of The Next Scene We Come To:
 - In The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Which Is The “Fair” That Both Our Pilgrims Will Travel To:
 - Called “Vanity Fair!”
3. Of Course:
 - I'm Kidding About Our Fair:
 - But - Maybe Only A Little?
 - Because - When John Bunyan Wrote His Book:
 - The English Country-Side Was Dotted With Fairs Every Summer:
 - Just Like In Indiana!
 - But - I Think Those Fairs:
 - Might Have Been A Bit More Extravagant:
 - Than Our Fairs!
 - Because - Another Puritan - By The Name Of John Brown - Once Described The Fair Of Sturbridge In This Way:
 - “When Business Was Over, It Was Succeeded By Pleasure!”
 - And Pleasure In The Most Sensual Of Ways!
 - Bunyan Might Have Attended This Fair:
 - A Time Or Two When He Was Younger:
 - And Might Have Even Had This Fair In Mind:
 - When He Wrote The Words:
 - That We Will Read Tonight!
4. So - Picking Up On:
 - *Page 54, Paragraph 2:*
 - We Read - *“Then I Saw In My Dream, That When They Were Got Out Of The Wilderness, They Presently Saw A Town Before Them, And The Name Of That Town Is Vanity!”*
 - Read Through - *Page 57, Line 3 - “Until They Should Be Otherwise Disposed Of!”*
5. So - After Reading All That:
 - Do You Still Want To Go To The Fair?
 - Of Course - The Fair In Our Story:
 - Represents The World As A Whole:
 - That Lives & Functions:
 - Apart From Its Creator!
 - George Cheever Once Described It As:
 - “The World In Miniature, With Its Various Temptations!”
 - **IE:** A Bit Like The “Epcot Center” At Disney World In Florida! Except - At Epcot - Disney Presents The **Best** The World Has To Offer - At Vanity Fair - The **Worst!**
 - In Fact - The Town Of Vanity:
 - Along With Its Fair:
 - Wasn't All That Different From:
 - The City Of Destruction:
 - Which Was The Original Home:
 - For Christian & Faithful!

- It Probably Was All-Too Familiar To Them:
 - In Its Sights & Sounds & Smells!
- But This Time:
 - Instead Of It Being:
 - Part Of Their Life:
 - We Find That It Became To Them - Because Of Their New Natures:

1. *New Distractions!*

- And - Temptations To Worldliness!
 - One Of The Scriptures That Bunyan Refers To:
 - In This Episode Is:
 - **1 Corinthians 5:9-10** - Where Paul Wrote:
 - "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: / Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world!"
 - This Further Reflects Jesus' Own Prayer:
 - In **John 17:14-16** - When Jesus Prayed:
 - To The Father - For His Disciples - "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. / I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. / They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world!"
 - So - This Is Why Bunyan:
 - Has His Pilgrims Making Their Way:
 - **To** The Celestial City:
 - **Through** Vanity Fair!
 - Because - As The Old Adage Goes:
 - Though We Are Not To Be **Of** The World:
 - Yet - We Still Have To Live:
 - **In** The World! And:
 - Though We Need To Be **Insulated**:
 - From The World - Yet We Can Never Truly Be:
 - **Isolated** From The World!
 - But - We Still Need To Recognize:
 - The Character Of This World!
 - Like Vanity Fair:
 - The World Will Often Seem To:
 - Delight You:
 - And Your Senses!
 - Barry Horner Describes The Carnal World As:
 - "Satan's Theme-Park And World Of Carnal Dreams!"
 - This Is What The Devil Used:
 - When He Tempted Jesus!
 - And - This Is What We Will Often Struggle With:
 - As Well - Because Of The Strong Pull Of:
 - Our Own Lusts & Desires:
 - Of The Flesh & Of The Eyes!
 - We Also Need To Recognize That:
 - Like Vanity Fair:
 - The World Will All-Too-Often:
 - Distract You!
 - Even With Things That Aren't:
 - In And Of Themselves - Wrong & Sinful!
 - Like - In The List Of The Merchandise Of The Fair:
 - There Was Included - "Houses, Lands, Trades, And Places!"
 - All Of Which Are Necessary For Life:
 - Yet - Even Those Good Things:
 - Can Distract You From:
 - Seeking First The Kingdom Of God! (Matthew 6:33)

- But - We Must Never Forget That:
 - The Goal Of The World - Like Vanity Fair:
 - Is To:
- Deceive You!
 - Which It Can Easily Do:
 - If You Let It!
 - There's Probably No Greater Illustration Of This Than:
 - The World's Obsession With Alcohol!
 - Its An Obsession:
 - That - Sadly - Has Distracted Christians & Churches To The Point:
 - That It Has Even Deceived Them:
 - About The Purpose Of:
 - "Christian Liberty!"
 - Because - As We Are Clearly Told In:
 - Proverbs 20:1 - "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!"
- Christians Need To Follow The Example Of Christ:
 - When It Comes To The Deceptive & Distracting:
 - So-Called Delights:
 - Of This Fallen World!
 - As Bunyan Wrote - Jesus - The "Prince Of Princes" - Paid "No Mind To The Merchandise" Of Vanity Fair!
 - And - "Left The Town Without Laying Out So Much As One Farthing Upon Those Vanities!"
 - And - The Reason We Have For Denying Those Worldly Delights & Distractions & Deceptions - Like Christian & Pilgrim:
 - Is Because Of Our:

2. *New Differences!*

- Or - As Bunyan Put It:
 - Our Pilgrims "Trade And Traffic" Was Now:
 - "In Heaven!"
 - And - The Differences Between Them:
 - And The Rest In That Town:
 - Was Stark!
 - There Was:
 - A Difference In Their Clothing - Their Raiment!
 - In **Romans 13:14** - Paul Tells Us:
 - "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof!"
 - The Righteous & Holy & Pure Nature Of Jesus Christ:
 - Is Pictured Here As:
 - The Clothes Christians Are To Put On!
 - And - That Kind Of Spiritual Clothing:
 - Is So Different:
 - It Will Cause Many In The World:
 - To Despise It & The Ones Wearing It!
 - There Was Also:
 - A Difference In Their Conversation - Their Speech!
 - In **Colossians 4:6** - We Are Told:
 - "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man!"
 - Christian & Faithful:
 - Spoke - As Bunyan Describes It:
 - "The Language Of Canaan!"
 - Even To The Point That:
 - They "Seemed Barbarians Each To The Other!"
 - There Was Also:
 - A Difference In Their Creed - Their Outlook!

- They Didn't Look At:
 - The Merchandise Of The Fair!
 - Instead - They Kept Their Gaze:
 - Upwards!
- And All Of These Differences:
 - Brought More & More Mocking!
 - And Taunting & Reproaching & Eventually:
 - Even Smiting!
- And Yet - Does The World See:
 - These Kinds Of Differences In Us?
 - Do They Even Notice That:
 - Our "Trade And Traffic" Is Primarily In Heaven:
 - Instead Of Here In This World?
 - George Cheever - Described His Own Time:
 - In America In The Late 1800's - When He Wrote:
 - "There Is Not Such A Marked And Manifest Distinction between The Church And The World As Their Should Be! Their Habits, Maxims, Opinions, Pursuits, Amusements, Whole Manner Of Life, Are Too Much The Same!"
 - If That Was True Then:
 - How Much More Is This True Today?
 - Have We Forgotten:
 - The Key Word In The Command:
 - That We Looked At:
 - Back In Romans 12:2?
 - The Word "**Not!**"
 - "And Be **Not** Conformed To This World!"
 - But - Instead, What Are To Many Christians Trying To Do?
 - To Conform Themselves To The Culture & Customs Of The World!
 - Including Its Clothing & Conversation & Creeds:
 - Both Figuratively & Literally!
 - In Order, They Say, To Try To Win The World!
 - Perhaps We Do This - Because We Are Afraid:
 - That What Happened To:
 - Christian & Faithful:
 - Might Happen To Us!
 - And - What Happened To Them? There Was A:

3. ***New Danger!***

- The People Of Vanity Fair:
 - Were Offended By & Felt Threatened By:
 - These Two Pilgrims:
 - Who Were Just Trying To Get Through The Town:
 - Without Any Fanfare!
 - Instead - Because Of Their Differences:
 - Like Paul & The Other Apostles:
 - They Were "Made A Spectacle Unto The World!" (1 Corinthians 4:10)
 - This Threat Of Christian Pilgrims Led To:
 - Persecution!
 - Even As Jesus Says In:
 - **John 15:18-20** - "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. / If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. / Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also!"
 - And This Is What Happened:
 - To Our Pilgrims!
 - They Were Taken:
 - And Beaten:

- And “Besmeared With Dirt!”
- In Other Words, Their Good Was Evil Spoken Of, But In A Slandorous Way!
 - They Were Then:
 - Put In Cages:
 - And Were Ridiculed!
 - But - How Did Christian & Faithful Respond?
- As Pilgrims!
 - Just Like The Men & Women Of Faith:
 - In Hebrews 11 - They Continued To Confess:
 - That They Were “Strangers And Pilgrims On The Earth!”
 - And That They Were Just:
 - “A Passing Through!”
 - On The Way To The “Heavenly Jerusalem!”
 - And So - They Also Responded:
- In Patience!
 - And Followed Christ’s Example:
 - Even As Peter Tells Us In 1 Peter 3:9:
 - “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing!
 - And They Also Responded:
- With Prudence!
 - Through It All - They Tried To Act:
 - “More Wisely!”
- And That Enraged The People The Town:
 - All The More!
 - To The Point That They Even Resolved:
 - “To Kill Them!”
 - But Why?
 - “For The Abuse They Had Done, And For Deluding the Men Of The Fair!”
 - What Abuse?
 - What Delusion?
 - Their Only Crime Was:
 - Threatening:
 - The Established Worldly Order:
 - Of Vanity Fair!
 - And This Got Me To Thinking:
 - Where Is Our Difference:
 - In This World?
 - How Are We A Danger:
 - To This World?
 - Is There **Any**:
 - Difference?
 - Are We **Any** Kind
 - Of Threat:
 - To This World?
 - Well - Christian & Faithful:
 - Clearly Were!
 - And Yet - The Danger They Now Faced:
 - Gave Them A:

4. ***New Determination!***

- Which Is Seen In:
 - The Four “C’s” That Bunyan Describes For Us:
 - Even While They Were Waiting:
 - To Be Tried For Crimes:
 - That Were Never Committed!
- They, First, ***Called***:
 - “Again To Mind” - The Prophecy Of Evangelist:
 - That One Or Both Of Them:

- Might Have To Die:
 - Earlier Rather Than Later:
 - In Their Journey!
- And - We Too - When Faced With New Dangers:
 - Need To “Call Again To Mind” The Words Of Our Savior!
 - **John 16:1-4** - “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. / They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. / And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. / But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you!”
- They, Second, Confirmed:
 - Themselves “In Their Way And Sufferings!”
 - That Is - They Were Determined:
 - To Follow The Lord:
 - To The End!
- They, Third, Comforted:
 - Each Other!
 - Even While - They Each:
 - “Secretly Wished That He Might Have That Preferment!”
 - Echoing Paul’s Own Wishes:
 - Philippians 1:23 - “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better!”
 - And Then:
- They, Fourth, Committed:
 - “Themselves To The All-Wise Disposal Of Him That Ruleth All Things!”

Conclusion:

1. This Is How We Need To Respond:
 - To The Threats Of Vanity Fair:
 - When Vanity Fair:
 - Becomes Threatened By Us!
2. But - Do We Even See:
 - This World:
 - As A Distraction?
 - And - Does This World:
 - Even See Us:
 - As A Danger?
3. They Will:
 - When We Are Determined:
 - To “**Not** Be Conformed To This World” - And:
 - Let Our Differences:
 - “So Shine Before Men!”
4. Do Not Fall For:
 - The Deceptive Delights:
 - Of The Vanity Fair:
 - In Which We Live:
 - Even Today!

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