

“The Pilgrims Progress”
Your Faith Groweth

Introduction:

1. As We Return To Our Sunday Night Series:
 - Through The Pilgrims Progress:
 - We Continue Eavesdropping:
 - On The Conversation Between:
 - Christian & Hopeful:
 - As They Think About & Talk About The Plight:
 - Of A Fellow Pilgrim, Whose Name Was Little-Faith!
2. If You Remember From Last Week:
 - After Making It Quite Far:
 - On The Same Path:
 - That Our Pilgrims Are On:
 - He Became “Weary With Well Doing” And Eventually Found:
 - A Dark Little Lane To Duck Into:
 - And Fell Asleep!
- What Little-Faith Did Not Know:
 - Was That The Lane Was Called:
 - “Dead Man’s Lane!”
 - And Though It Might Have Looked Like:
 - It Was A Dead End:
 - It Actually Led Directly To The Wide Gate That Entered Into The Broad Way That Jesus Himself Said:
 - “Leadeth To Destruction!”
3. In Other Words:
 - Little-Faith Sinned:
 - By Going To A Place:
 - That He Was Not Supposed To Go!
 - But - Even When - Like The Prodigal Son In Jesus’ Parable:
 - “He Came To Himself” And Started To Get Up:
 - In Order To Get Back On The Right Path:
 - Three Rogues Came Up To Him!
 - Their Names Were:
 - Faint-Heart, Mistrust, And Guilt:
 - And After They Stole His “Spending Money” They Wounded Him Severely:
 - Even To The Point That His Life Was Filled With “Doleful And Bitter Complaints” Until The Very End Of His Pilgrimage!
4. Sadly - Those Three Rogues:
 - Are Familiar To Us As Well - Aren’t They?
 - When We Finally “Come To Ourselves” After Spending Some Time In The Foreign Country Of Sin:
 - Faint-Heartedness, Mistrust, And Guilt:
 - Often Keep Us Back:
 - From Walking With The Lord:
 - In The Faith And Freedom:
 - That He Provides Through The Gospel!
 - But - As Christian Pointed Out To Hopeful:
 - Though Little-Faith:
 - Lost His Spiritual Spending-Money:
 - He Never Lost:
 - His Jewels!
5. This Is A Description:
 - That John Bunyan Used:
 - To Describe His Own Walk With The Lord!
 - “When Bunyan Came To Faith In Christ, He Knew Christ To Be Of All-Surpassing Worth And Glory!” (Ken Puls) - So He Wrote:
 - “It Was Glorious To Me To See His Exaltation, And The Worth And Prevalency Of All His Benefits, And That

Because Of This: Now I Could Look From Myself To Him, And Should Reckon That All Those Graces Of God That Now Were Green In Me, Were Yet But Like Those Cracked Groats And Fourpence-Halfpennies That Rich Men Carry In Their Purses, When Their Gold Is In Their Trunks At Home! Oh, I Saw My Gold Was In My Trunk At Home! In Christ, My Lord And Savior! Now Christ Was All; All My Wisdom, All My Righteousness, All My Sanctification, And All My Redemption!”

- So - Like Bunyan - Little-Faith’s Jewels & Treasure:
 - And The Salvation Of His Soul:
 - Was Safe In The Arms Of Jesus:
 - In Whom He Put His Faith And Trust!
 - Even Though That Faith Was Weak And Small!
- But His Spending Money:
 - And The Personal Comforts He Could Have Received From God’s Grace:
 - Were Stolen Away From Him:
 - Because Of Sin!

- I Like How Kenneth Puls Describes The Difference:

- Between Little-Faith’s Jewels & His Spending Money:
 - “In Regard To Both Security And Worth, There Is Great Difference Between The Jewels And The Coin Purse. The Coin Purse Can Be Increased Or Emptied. We Carry It With Us. It Represents Our Spiritual Comfort And Peace Of Mind. The Purse Is Filled When We Experience And Sense The Grace Of God At Work In Our Lives. It Is Plundered When We Fall Prey To Sin And Are Assaulted By Spiritual Weakness, Doubt, And Shame. But Our Jewels Are Secure. They Are Safe With Christ. They Represent Our Heavenly Reward And Our Inheritance In God’s Kingdom!”

6. Well - With This In Mind:

- Christian & Hopeful Continue Their Discussion:
 - About The Plight Of Little-Faith!
 - So - Starting On *Page 79, Paragraph 8*:
 - We Begin Tonight’s Reading - *“But It Is A Wonder That His Necessity Did Not Put Him Upon Selling Our Pawning Some Of His Jewels!”*
 - Read Through *Page 83, Paragraph 1*:
 - *“And Gets More Faith, Shall Then A Victor Be / Over Ten Thousand, Else Scarce Over Three!”*

7. Last Week:

- We Learned From Little-Faith:
 - The Importance Of:
 - Crying Out To The Lord:
 - To “Increase Our Faith!”
- This Week:
 - We Will Learn The Importance Of:
 - Growing In Our Personal Faith:
 - Using The Means God Has Provided To Us!
- In The Introduction Of Paul’s Second Letter:
 - To The Thessalonian Church:
 - He Wrote These Words - 1:1-3 - “Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: / Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. / We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth!”
- What A Testimony:
 - Not Only For Individual Christians:
 - But For An Entire Church!
 - For Paul To Commend Them:
 - By Saying - “Your Faith Groweth Exceedingly!”
 - But - How Does This Happen?
 - How Could This Have Taken Place:
 - In The Life Of Little-Faith?
 - And - How Can This Be Said:
 - Even Of Us?

8. Well - Tonight:

- I Just Want To Focus On:
 - Two Lessons That We Can Learn:
 - From This Conversation Between:
 - Christian & Pilgrim:
 - About Little-Faith!
- And How Someone With:
 - Little Faith - Can Become Someone:
 - With Great Faith & Grace:
 - Through The Lord!
- There Are Two Things That:
 - We Must Not Underestimate!

* First:

1. Do Not Underestimate The Trials Of Faith!

- This Was One Of The Problems & Errors:
 - Of Hopeful!
 - He Told Christian That He Thought:
 - Those Three Rogues Were Cowards!
 - And All Little-Faith Needed To Do Was “Pluck Up A Greater Heart!”
 - But How Did Christian Reply?
 - “That They Are Cowards, Many Have Said, But Few Have Found It So In The Time Of Trial!”
 - Faint-Heart, Mistrust, And Guilt:
 - Are Strong Enemies:
 - To Our Faith In Christ!
 - In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13:
 - We Find That The Scriptures Have Been Given To Us:
 - To Help Our Faith To Grow:
 - Even As We Face Trials & Temptations:
 - That Are Meant To:
 - Fight Against Our Faith!
 - Paul Writes - “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; / 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; / 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; / 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. / 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. / 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. / 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as [were] some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. / 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. / 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. / 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. / 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. / 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. / 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]!”
 - From These Verses We See What It Means:
 - To Not Underestimate The Trials Of Our Faith!
 - First:
 - Keep Pursuing Holiness In Those Trials!
 - Little-Faith’s Problems Began:
 - When He Fell Asleep:
 - In Dead-Man’s Lane!
 - When He Became “Weary In Well Doing” And Thought That:
 - He Could Rest From His Struggle Against Sin:
 - On Earth Instead Of Heaven!
 - This Is What May Of The Children Of Israel Did!
 - And We Need To Take Heed To Their Example:
 - Lest We Fall:
 - In The Same Ways!

- But Then - Second:
- Keep Pursuing Humility In Those Trials!
 - 10:12 - “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!”
 - To Underestimate:
 - The Power & Strength Of Trials & Temptations:
 - Is A Manifestation Of Pride!
 - And Proverbs 16:18 Tells Us What Happens Then:
 - “Pride [goeth] before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall!”
 - Even The Character With The Name:
 - “Great-Grace” - Who Was A Pilgrim:
 - *Strong* In Grace & Faith:
 - Could Fall Prey To:
 - Faint-Heartedness, Mistrust, And Guilt!
 - This Was True Of:
 - David, Hezekiah, And Peter:
 - And It Can Be True Even Of Us!
 - So We Must Continuously “Take Heed Lest We Fall!”
- So - For Your Faith To Grow:
 - You Must Not Underestimate:
 - The Trials Of Your Faith!
 - But Then - Second:

2. ***Do Not Underestimate The Triumph Of Grace!***

- In Ephesians 2:8 - We Are Told:
 - “For By Grace Ye Are Saved Through Faith!”
 - And - I Think We Can Even Add To This:
 - “For By Grace Ye Are Strengthened In Your Faith!”
 - It Is God’s Grace:
 - That Helps People:
 - With Little-Faith:
 - Become His Champions:
 - With Great-Grace!
 - But - The Problem With Little-Faith:
 - Is That He Neglected:
 - The Means Of Grace:
 - That God Had Already Provided Him & His Growth!
 - And So - To Not Underestimate The Triumph Of God’s Grace:
 - We Need To:
 - Keep Pursing & Utilizing The Means Of His Grace!
 - In Ephesians 6:10-18 - We Find:
 - The Armor Of God - With Which:
 - Christian & All Pilgrims:
 - Are Prepared & Equipped:
 - As They Embark On Their Pilgrimage!
 - “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. / 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. / 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]. / 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. / 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; / 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; / 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. / 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: / 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints!”
 - Not Only Is This The Armor Of God:
 - The Implements Described:
 - Are The Means Of God’s Grace:
 - To Strengthen Our Faith!

- But - How Did Little-Faith:
 - Wear His Armor?
 - Perhaps:
- His Helmet:
 - Was Not As Secure:
 - As The Promises Of His Salvation:
 - Could Make It!
 - He Continued To Struggle With Assurance!
- His Sword:
 - Was Likely Still In Its Sheath:
 - So That He Was Not Ready:
 - To Fight & Attack With God's Words:
 - At The Ready!
- His Breastplate:
 - Was Likely Full Of Slack:
 - Because He Did Not See The Necessity Of:
 - Pursuing Righteousness & Truth!
 - And So:
- His Shield:
 - Of Faith:
 - Was Little & Could Only Catch:
 - A Few Of The "Fiery Darts Of The Wicked!"
- And If This Is How We Wear:
 - The Armor Of God:
 - And Neglect The Means Of God's Grace:
 - Through His Word, Prayer, Fellowship:
 - It Will Affect Our Faith!
 - So - Do Not Underestimate:
 - The Means Of God's Grace:
 - And The Triumph Of His Grace:
 - To Increase Your Faith!

Conclusion:

1. When You Do Not Underestimate:
 - The Trials Of Your Faith:
 - And Keep Pursuing After Holiness & Humility! And:
 - When You Do Not Underestimate:
 - The Triumph Of God's Grace:
 - And Keep Pursuing After:
 - The Means Of His Grace!
 - You Can Be Sure:
 - That Your Faith Too:
 - Will Grow!
 - Your Faith

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