

The Pilgrim's Progress

HTPC Summer 2019
OPENING ASSEMBLY
Week 1

Hebrews 13:14

For here we have no
lasting city, but we seek
the city that is to come.

The Christian's Hope Can Never Fail

1. We travel through a barren land,
With dangers thick on every hand;
But Jesus guides us through the vale;
O, The Christian's hope can never fail.

2. Huge sorrows meet us as we go,
And devils aim to overthrow;
But vile infernals can't prevail;
O, The Christian's hope shall never fail.

3. Sometimes we're tempted to despair,
But Jesus makes us then His care;
Though numerous foes our souls assail;
O, The Christian's hope can never fail.

4. We trust upon the sacred word,
The oath and promise of the Lord;
And safely through each tempest sail;
O, The Christian's hope can never fail.

The Pilgrim's Progress

John Bunyan

- Who is John Bunyan?
- The Pilgrim Motif in Scripture
- What is an allegory and how should I read it?



John Bunyan
(1628-1688)

Bunyan's Early Life

- Born in 1628 in Elstow, Bedfordshire, England.
- Son of a tinker and not well-educated.
- Rebellious in early life:

“It was my delight to be taken captive by the devil at his will: being filled with all unrighteousness; that from a child I had but few equals, both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God.”

- At age 16, Bunyan's mother and sister died a month apart.

Bunyan's Conversion

- Bunyan married a God-fearing woman in 1648. Her dowry consisted of two books: Dent's *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and Bayly's *The Practice of Piety*. Bunyan read both books, was convicted of sin, and began attending a parish church.
- In 1651, Bunyan heard a sermon preached on Song of Solomon 4:1, and was led to faith and repentance by John Gifford, his pastor in Bedford.
- Bunyan's study of Galatians—alongside Luther's commentary on the book—brought him to profound delight in the revelation of Christ's righteousness:

“It was glorious to me to see His exaltation, and the worth and prelavency of all His benefits, and that because now I could look from myself to Him, and would 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 trunk at home! Oh, I saw that my gold was in my trunk at home! In Christ my Lord and Saviour! Now Christ was all.” – John Bunyan

Bunyan's Ministry

- In 1654, Bunyan became a member of Gifford's church in Bedford and was soon appointed a deacon. By the end of that year, Gifford died and Bunyan began preaching to various congregations in Bedford.
- Bunyan began publishing doctrinal books from 1655 to 1659.
- In 1660, Bunyan was arrested while preaching in a farmhouse on the charge of preaching without official rights from the king. Told that he would be freed if he no longer preached, Bunyan replied: "If I am freed today, I will preach tomorrow."

Bunyan's Ministry

- Bunyan remained imprisoned for 12 years (1660-1672). He continued to write extensively, voraciously reading and studying the Bible and reading *Foxe's Book of Martyr's* – his only books.
- Bunyan also carried on an active prison ministry from within his cell—firmly rooted in the Scriptures!

“I never had in all my life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now. These Scriptures, that I saw nothing in before, are made in this place to shine upon me. Jesus Christ also was never more real and apparent than now; for I have seen and felt him indeed.”

Bunyan's Ministry

- On January 21, 1672, the Bedford church (anticipating Bunyan's release from prison) appointed him their pastor. He was released in May 1672.
- In 1677, Bunyan was again arrested and remained imprisoned for six months—during which time he wrote Part 1 of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.
- John Owen, the renowned Puritan theologian, appealed to authorities in London on Bunyan's behalf and ultimately secured Bunyan's release from prison in June 1677.

Bunyan's Last Years

- From 1677 until his death in 1688, Bunyan continued to publish and preach—he wrote ten books in the last three years of his life.
- Bunyan died suddenly of a fever in 1688:

“Weep not for me, but for yourselves. I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will, no doubt, through the mediation of his blessed Son, receive me, though a sinner; where I hope we ere long shall meet, to sing the new song, and remain everlastingly happy, world without end ... Take me, for I come to Thee!”
- Bunyan is buried in Bunhill Fields, close to Thomas Goodwin and John Owen.

The Pilgrim Motif in Scripture

13 *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 *For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland*. 15 *If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.* 16 *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.* (Hebrews 11:13-16)*

“Thus God has prepared a city for these pilgrims in his eternal purpose, to bring them unto rest and glory.” – John Owen

The Pilgrim Motif in Scripture

14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:14)

“As God hath prepared a city of rest for us, so it is our duty continually to endeavor the attainment of it in the ways of his appointment ... The main business of believers in this world is diligently to seek after the city of God, or the attainment of eternal rest with him; and this is the character whereby they may be known.” – John Owen

Closing Assembly

He Who Would Valiant Be

1. He who would valiant be 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master.
There's no discouragement shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.

2. Who so beset him round with dismal stories
Do but themselves confound—his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might; though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right to be a pilgrim.

3. Since, Lord, Thou dost defend us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end, shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away! I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labor night and day to be a pilgrim.