

HTPC Sunday School

Opening Assembly

October 13, 2019

Memory Verse: Psalm 121:1-2

Recite these verses from memory.

Memory Verse: Psalm 121:1-2

1. I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
2. My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

NEW: Psalm 121:3-4

3. He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.

4. Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

I Lift My Eyes and See the Hills

1. I lift my eyes and see the hills;
From where will come my aid?

My help comes only from the LORD
Who heav'n and earth has made.

2. He'll not allow your foot to slip,
Nor rest while you He keeps.

The One preserving Israel,
He slumbers not, nor sleeps.

I Lift My Eyes and See the Hills (cont.)

3. The LORD will keep you, He's your shade;
The LORD stands at your right.
The sun will do no harm to you,
Nor will the moon at night.

4. The LORD will keep you from all harm;
He'll keep your life secure.
Your going out and coming in
The LORD keeps evermore.

Children's Classes Dismissal

The Pilgrim's Progress

part 2

Materials

- Books available on Amazon – *The Pilgrim's Progress* by Cheryl V. Ford
- Reading schedules for the class are also available today by front door

Review

“Part II [of *Pilgrim’s Progress*], which appeared in 1684, is much more than a mere sequel to or repetition of the earlier volume. It clarifies and reinforces and justifies the story of Part I. The beam of Bunyan's spotlight is broadened to include Christian's family and other men, women, and children; the incidents and accidents of everyday life are more numerous, the joys of the pilgrimage tend to outweigh the hardships; and to the faith and hope of Part I is added in abundant measure that greatest of virtues, charity. The two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in reality, constitute a whole, and the whole is, without doubt, the most influential religious book ever written in the English language.”

Alexander M. Witherspoon, Preface to *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1957)

Review

- Christiana, Mercy and the boys have arrived at the Gatekeeper's House. Not without opposition and trial.
- The House: a picture of the faithful Church of Jesus Christ
- Like the biblical Church, the House is a place of
 - Rest and refreshment (A night's bedrest);
 - Fellowship with God (Mercy's dreams);
 - Teaching from *Prudence, Piety, and Charity*
 - Catechizing and admonishing of the young (Prudence quizzes Christiana's sons: Matthew, James, Joseph, and Samuel)

Chapter 25: Mr. Brisk Courts Mercy

- Mr. Brisk:
 - a “culturally sophisticated man who professed faith but who also stayed closely attached to the world.” 2 Tim. 3:5
- Mercy:
 - A lovely young woman,
 - Always busy doing things for others (e.g., making clothing)
 - Prudent – (1) took counsel, (2) true to Christ, (3) the Word be both her filter and guide. 1 Tim. 6:18
- Mercy avoids the snare into which her sister Bountiful fell.
- Mercy and Biblical teaching on marriage: the good (marriage), and the better (undivided loyalty to God) (1 Cor. 7:33-39).

Matthew's Sickness

- Christiana's oldest son becomes seriously ill with stomach pains
- Dr. Skill, a physician, diagnoses poisoning by the Fruit of Beelzebub's Orchard.
 - Matthew's direct coveting, theft, and disobedience are sin.
 - Christana's careless inattention – responsibility of parents.
- The Treatment: a “purgative” *ex carne et sanguine Christi*.
 - In pill form, taken three at a time,
 - With a promise or two, and
 - Proportional amount of salt,
 - In a cup of the tears of repentance

Matthew's Sickness (continued)

- Be on guard against the fruit of Beelzebub's orchard.
- Matthew's illness and cure: sin, repentance, faith and restoration from sinful lusts.
- Sin, pain, and sorrow are inseparable.
- The burdened conscience of a sinning Christian: purged by (1) repentance from sin and dead works, and (2) cleansing by faith in the atoning body and blood of Christ.
- **Dr. Skill: "But, Christiana, you must take these pills only as I describe them. If you don't take them this way, they will do you no good at all." Why?**
- Matthew's questions to Prudence: the effect of the Word on the heart and mind.

Gifts for the Journey

- Unlike Christian, Christiana, Mercy and the boys do not receive armor and weapons for warfare. Why?
- Instead, they receive visual instruction:
 - Eve's Apple: resist personal autonomy and disobedient sin (Gen. 3:6)
 - Jacob's Ladder: in Christ, God is with us (Jn. 1:51).
 - A Golden Anchor: Christ is the firm anchor for our souls (Heb. 6:19)
 - Implements of Abraham's sacrifice: self-denial and sacrifice (Gen. 22)
- The Return of Great-Heart: provision for the way ahead.

Chapter 26: Lessons in the Valley of Humiliation

- Great-Heart says to Christiana, Mercy, and Christiana as they enter the Valley of Humiliation:

“We do not need to be afraid of this Valley, for there is nothing here that can hurt us, unless we invite it. It is true that Christian met Apollyon here and had a grievous battle, but that fight was the consequence of slips he had made on his way down the Hill. This Valley has been given a bad name because of this fact...In truth, it is because of what they [the average person] have done that such things befall them. This Valley of Humiliation is, in and of itself, as fruitful a place as any that the birds fly over.” [My emphasis]

- What does the above tell us about Christian’s personal walk with Christ as he entered the Valley clad in full armor? See also pg. 287

Lessons in the Valley of Humiliation (continued)

- Mercy finds the Valley very pleasant. Why?
- “The humble man is contented; if his estate be low, his heart is lower still. He that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled at being little in the eyes of others.” Thomas Watson.
- Great-Heart: **“I have been through this Valley many times, and have never been better off than when I was here. I have also been a guide to many pilgrims and they have confessed the same experience. This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Citing Isa. 66:2)**
- What does this mean for our own walk in the Valley of Humiliation?
- The Monument in the Valley: even those who suffer slips and falls in faith and life may yet give notable service to their Lord.

Into the Valley of the Shadow of Death

Comparison of Christian's to Christiana & Company's Experience:

Trial	Christian	Christiana & Co.
Visibility	Pitch Darkness	Daylight/mist and darkness at Pit of Hell/restored light
Terrain	Ditch, quagmire, Pit of Hell, flames	Pit of Hell, ditch, snares, stench
Creatures	Unseen fiends, hobgoblins, satyrs, dragons, Giants Pope and Pagan	Vanishing fiend Stalking lion Giant Maul

Into the Valley of the Shadow of Death (continued)

- Christian's experience overall was threatening.
- Christian's experience overall was fearsome.
- Trials in the Valley differ (see 1 Cor. 10:13), but the solution is the same:
- Great Heart:

“[L]et him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God [Isa. 50:10].’ As for me, as I have already told you, I have gone through this Valley often and have been much more hard-pressed than this. As you can see, I am still alive. I have nothing to boast in since I am not my own savior, but I do trust that we will be safely delivered.”

The Battle with Giant Maul

- Maul (noun): “a tool with a heavy head and a handle, used for tasks such as ramming, crushing, and driving wedges....”
- Giant Maul is a powerful adversary –
 - Uses deceptive arguments and reason to deceive pilgrims
 - His master argument (and Satan’s): “you are a horrible sinner, a hypocrite, one who has a profane heart, and an utter stranger to any work of grace.”
- He lives in the place where Pope and Pagan used to reside,
- Some commentators suggest portrays government power to require submission to a corrupt state religion (like the Established Church in the 1600s). The club = legal power.

Discussion Questions

- 1. In the story of Mercy's courtship by Mr. Brisk, why is Mercy able to face the possibility of remaining unmarried without fear? How can we apply her attitude to our own pilgrim journey?**
- 2. Henry Forster Burder (1783–1864), an English nonconformist minister, said that the story of young Matthew's illness and the nature of his cure "may be justly esteemed among the finest passages of this work." Why? Hint: Read Jn. 6:54-57.**
- 3. Discuss your own experiences in both the Valley of Humiliation and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. How are your experiences the same as or different from those of Christian and Christiana, Mercy and the boys?**

Reminder For Next Week:

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