

HTPC Sunday School

Opening Assembly

September 29, 2019

Memory Verse: Psalm 121:1-2

Is anyone able to 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 for this week: 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

Chapter 20

The Unauthorized Fruit

- Garden behind a wall along the road – same garden where the barking Dog had so terrified them
- Fruit tree branches hang over the wall into the roadway
- Christiana’s son “was attracted by the appearance of the trees and their fruit” and took some to eat
 - Note echo of **Gen. 3:6** “*the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes...*”
- Christiana rebukes him for stealing, but he does not listen at first
- Unware that the fruit belonged to “the enemy” – otherwise she would have been afraid

Spurgeon Comments

“God does not allow the feeble to be tempted to the same extent as the strong. They are not shot at with fiery arrows; a savage dog barks at them instead. When I am describing the sore temptations of certain Christians, some of you say within yourselves, “But we have never felt anything like that.” Now, do not be vexed with yourselves because you have not had so trying an experience, but be thankful for it. Rejoice that you got in, like Christiana and Mercy, with only a dog to bark at you. The arrows are not to be desired.All that devils, or men, can ever say against a soul that comes to Christ, and trusts in Him, is not a whit more to be feared than a dog’s bark. Therefore, I pray you, vex not your heart because of it. Say in your soul, “Christ bids me come, and I will not be kept back by a dog’s bark. Christ calls me; I hear God’s voice; I accept Heaven’s invitation; let the dogs bark till they are weary, if they will; such sweet music is sounding in my ear as drowns their howlings.””

Attack by Two Ill-Favored Ones

- Two men approach the women swiftly and attempt to embrace them - Christiana and Mercy rebuff them forcibly
- The men do not want money – rather “something else” – a vaguely and menacingly inappropriate reference
- Christiana declares herself ready to die on the spot rather than yield to their wicked designs
 - She declares the women will not “risk our eternal well-being”
- Finally, the women cry out for help – Bunyan notes that this puts them under the laws for the protection of women
 - [Deut. 22, 24](#): Laws punishing adultery – if attacked in the city, the woman was required to cry out for help, otherwise was presumed to have consented; if attacked in the country, no presumption of assent attached to the failure to cry out, since there was no one to hear anyway
- The women are then rescued by the Reliever, who chases the attackers away – they retreat over the wall where the Dog “becomes their protector”

Their Need of a Guide

- The Reliever marvels that the women had not asked for a guide and protector
- Christiana wonders why the Lord did not give them one anyway
- Reliever explains that something given without earnest petition is often not appreciated
- When we do not recognize our need, we do not value the gift appropriately
- But “all things work for our good” and we learn to value the Lord’s gifts
- He desires that we ask Him for what we need. Ezekiel 36:37
 - *“Thus says the Lord God: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. 38 Like the flock for sacrifices, [b] like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”*
- Christiana recalls her dream, in which two evil men stood over her complaining of her constant cries for forgiveness and worrying they would “lose her as we lost her husband”
- Nevertheless Mercy recalls Jer. 31:11
 - *“For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.”*

Chapter 21

Arrival at Interpreter's House

- Christiana overhears the occupants talking about news of her conversion
- Christiana acknowledges to Interpreter her early rejection of religion and her later sincere repentance
 - Prays that she may be found without stain or blemish, but holy and blameless at the end (Eph. 5:27)
- Greeted by Innocent, she, her four sons and Mercy are welcomed warmly
- They tour the house, seeing the allegorical representations of a type similar to what Christian had seen in Part I

The Man with the Rake

- The Interpreter then showed them new signs – a man who could look only downward
- Above him, someone was standing, offering him a celestial crown, but the man never looked up - only bent downwards and continued raking straw, sticks and dust
- Christiana understands immediately the depiction of a carnal minded man of this world
 - “Earthly things, when they are allowed to control peoples’ minds, have the power to carry their hearts completely away from God”
 - She prays “Oh, deliver me from this Rake!”

C.S. Lewis

“Our desires are not too strong, but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.

We are far too easily pleased.”

The Spider on the Wall

- Best room in the house – but it was empty except for a “very large spider on one of the walls”
- When they finally notice it, Interpreter asks “Is there only one Spider in all this spacious room?”
- Christiana perceives part of the meaning, and confesses that there are other “spiders” in the room as well, ones with far more venom
- Interpreter explains the lesson: no matter how full of venom you may be, yet by the arm of faith, you may lay hold of eternal life and dwell in the best room in the King’s House!
 - Prov. 30:24, 28 *Four things on earth are small, but they are exceedingly wise: ... the lizard you can take in your hands, yet it is in kings' palaces.*

The Hen and Her Chicks

- Every time the chick drank, it would raise its head and eyes upwards towards Heaven
 - Lesson: *Acknowledge the source of all your mercies by looking up to God as you receive them.*
- The four different types of calls used by the Hen, analogized to ways that God calls his people
 - Normal, everyday call – simply lets us know His presence
 - Special call – giving some new gift or insight
 - Brooding voice – to comfort Christians
 - Cry of alarm – to warn of approaching danger
- [Matt. 23:37](#) “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*”

The Compliant Sheep

- In a slaughterhouse, they see a sheep being butchered, yet it was quiet and accepted death patiently
- We must learn how to suffer and put up with injustice without grumbling and complaining.
 - [Isaiah 53:7](#) *“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”*
 - [James 5:10](#) *“As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.”*
 - [I Peter 2:22-23](#) *“He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”*
 - [I Peter 3:9](#) *“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.”*
 - [I Peter 4:19](#) *“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.”*

The Flowers in the Garden

- Christian saw how many different flowers of widely varying size, shape, beauty, quality, color and fragrance stood next to each other
- Interpreter points out that they stand happily where they were planted, neither competing with nor striving against one another

The Grain in the Field

- Corn and wheat had been sown in properly prepared soil
- All the grain had been cut off the head, and only bare stalks remained
- Interpreter explains that he had looked for fruit of the plants, but found none – it was therefore only good for burning or throwing out
- He noted: *Take heed that you do not condemn yourselves.*
 - **Matt. 3:10** “*Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*”
 - **Rom. 7:4** “*Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*”
 - **Matt. 3:12** “*His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*”
 - **John 15:2** “*Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*”

The Robin with the Spider

- They notice a beautiful robin with a huge ugly spider in its beak
- Christiana is disgusted by the sight of the ugly, wicked diet of this bird
- Interpreter explains this is a symbol for a false professor:
 - Looks good on the surface
 - Pretty, well-behaved and pleasant to listen to
 - Wants to associate with believers and be in their company
 - But when by themselves, they can change their diet and “*drink iniquity and swallow sin like water*”

The Interpreter's Proverbs

- “Easier to be a good night watchman for a night or two than stay responsible for an entire year....”
 - [Matt. 10:22](#) “...and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”
- “One leak can sink a ship....”
- “He who lives in sin and looks for happiness hereafter is like the man who sows weeds and hopes to harvest wheat”
 - [Gal. 6:7-8](#): “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”
- “If a person would live well, let him keep in mind his last day and clutch it to himself...”
- “If this present world is counted of such great value by men, think of what Heaven must be like, which God so highly regards!”
- “In Jesus Christ there is more justification and righteousness than the entire world will ever need!”

The Rotten Tree

- Interpreter takes them into the garden and shows them a tree, rotten on the inside but still leafy and growing.
- He answers Mercy's question by saying that this is like many people in the garden who speak on God's behalf but don't really do anything for Him. Their leaves are pleasing, but their hearts are good for nothing."

Christiana's Testimony

- After dinner, Interpreter asks Christiana how she became a pilgrim
- Christiana recounts her
 - initial grief at loss of her husband,
 - guilt for her own intransigence,
 - dream of Christian's happy condition, and
 - invitation from the King
- She explains the opposition she endured from Mrs. Timorous – scaring her with thoughts of dangers along the way and belittling the effort
- She recounts her dream of the two men who sought to stop her becoming a pilgrim and their later assault of her in the road
- Interpreter encourages her on her good beginning and future progress

Mercy's Testimony

- Mercy is at first reluctant to speak, since she has no dramatic tale of visions
- She describes how her heart “burned” within her when Christiana described her husband’s happy life in heaven (echoes of the road to Emmaus!)
- She desired to come after realizing she could no longer live in their town “without risking utter ruin”
- Interpreter praises her for heeding the truth – like Ruth who left her godless Canaanite family to follow Naomi and Naomi’s God
 - [Ruth 2: 11-12](#) where Boaz says: “*The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!*”
- Mercy cannot sleep that night for joy – her doubts were put to rest and she was able to relax and praise God
- Mercy’s acute awareness of her own frailty and unworthiness made her a grateful recipient of God’s grace.

The Bath in the Garden

- Interpreter wants the women to bathe in the Garden to cleanse them from traveling dirt
 - **1 Cor. 6:11** “...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”
- Clean and strengthened, they were then sealed with a special sign between their eyes
 - This seal had the significance of the Passover
 - Mark greatly enhanced the attractiveness of their faces and their dignity
 - Made them look like angels
 - **Eph. 1:13** “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee[d] of our inheritance.”
 - **2 Cor. 1:21-22** “And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

They Are Given New Clothing

- Interpreter commands the waiting women to bring them clean garments
 - *Rom. 13:14* “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”
- She brings white linen clothing which – when they put it on - amazed them
 - They saw no change in themselves, but
 - They could see the glory of God in each other
 - *2 Cor. 3:18* “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”
 - Began to esteem each other better than themselves.
- *Phil. 2:3* “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

They Are Given a Guide

- Interpreter grants them the guiding services of a male servant named “Greatheart”
- He instructed him to take them to the House Beautiful, their next stop

Discussion Questions

- As she focused on the blessings of her journey, Christiana was not alert to potential dangers. In what ways do you tend to let your spiritual guard down when all seems well?
- What “barking dogs” have you experienced in coming to Christ or your walk with him?
- Interpreter did not show Christiana the same rooms that he showed Christian. Why do you think that is? What does that suggest about a minister of the gospel?
- What was significant about the robin that the pilgrims saw? What kind of warning does the robin represent for Christians today?
- What can you do to look for the “glory of God” in other believers? Have you see it perhaps this past week or month? How specifically?
- For personal reflection: What straws and mud are hindering you from seeking an eternal crown?

Reminder For Next Week:

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