

# Pilgrim's Progress

Chapters 27-30

# They Reflect on Great-heart's Victory

- As Christiana and her companions reflect with Great-heart, they discuss the fact that he has been wounded.
- He replies to her that these wounds will be a means to increase his eternal reward. (2 Cor. 4)
- When asked if he had been afraid, he stated that it was his duty to distrust his own ability.
- When asked what he was thinking after being struck to the ground, he replied that he remembered his Master had been treated that way, and He conquered in the end.
- A powerful response from Matthew: "You all think what you please," said Matthew, "but I will tell you what I think. I think God has been wonderfully good to us, both in bringing us out of this Valley and in delivering us out of the hand of this enemy. I see no reason why we should ever distrust our God again. In a place like this He has given us this incredible testimony of His love."
- This is a reminder to trust the Lord and to see his kind providence.

# Mr. Honest

- In this section, they come across Mr. Honest who was asleep.
- When Great-heart woke him up, he was afraid and thought Great-heart was an enemy.
- But when he realized Great-heart was a friend, Great-heart asked what he would have done to help himself if he was an enemy.
- The response was “Done? Said Mr. Honest. “Why, I would have fought for as long as I had breath left in me, and if I had done so, I am sure you could not have prevailed over me, because a Christian can never be overcome unless he yields himself to it.” (2 Pet. 2:20; 1 John 4:4)
- The man was greatly excited when he learned that Christian was Christiana’s husband. He said to the boys, “Matthew, be like Matthew the publican, not in vice, but in virtue. Samuel, be like Samuel the prophet, a man of faith and prayer. Joseph, be like Joseph in Potiphar’s house, pure, and one who flees from temptation. And James, you be like James, the brother of our Lord.”

# Poor Mr. Fearing

- Great-heart asks about Mr. Fearing
- Mr. Honest knew him, and said he was one of the most troublesome pilgrims he had ever met
- Great-heart talks through Mr. Fearing's entire journey, all the way to the Gate. He did not fear the dangerous parts of the journey so much as not being accepted.

# They Evaluate Mr. Fearing

- Mr. Honest asks if he made it safely.
- Great-heart says, “Yes, yes, I never had a doubt about him. He was a man of choice spirit; he just always kept himself so low that his life was burdensome to himself and troublesome to others. He was more conscious of sin than most, and he was so afraid of doing injury to others that he would often deny himself those things that were lawful. He simply refused to cause an offense.”
- Mr. Fearing was rightly bothered by his sin, but the problem was that he never really allowed himself to experience to depths of the comfort of the gospel.
- Think of John Owen’s quote from *Communion with the Triune God*: How few of the saints are experimentally acquainted with this privilege of holding immediate communion with the Father in love! With what anxious, doubtful thoughts do they look upon him! What fears, what questionings are there, of his good-will and kindness! At the best, many think there is no sweetness at all in him towards us, but what is purchased at the high price of the blood of Jesus.
- This was a man who had doubts about his own salvation.
- Christiana and her company observe similarities between Mr. Fearing and themselves. In what ways do we tend to live in fearful anxiety, rather than knowing the Father’s rich grace, love and kindness to us?

# The Opinions of Mr. Self-Will

- In Christiana's dream she saw that they continued to talk
- Mr. Honest tells Great-Heart about Mr. Self-Will
- This was a man who did whatever his reason and mind prompted him to do
- "He believed that he could follow the vices as well as the virtues of the pilgrims, and that, in so doing, he would not jeopardize his salvation."
- Hear Great-heart's response: "If he had said that it is possible for the best of us to be guilty of having vices while at the same time partaking of the virtues of pilgrims, I would not fault him. For, indeed, we are not absolutely exempt from the power of any vice except by one condition--that we watch and strive against it. But I perceive that is not the case with him. If I understand you correctly, you mean that he was of the opinion that he had permission to be like this."
- He would twist Scripture to his own ends.
- This type of licentiousness is a stumbling block to true believers, but true believers will prevail in the end.

# Other Unsteady Walks of Life

- Christiana and her companions discuss the kind of person who thinks they will have enough time to repent when it is their time to die
- This is self-deception according to Great-heart
- They also address the issue of apostasy, which takes place in many who seem very sure of themselves.
- Others have no confidence in themselves, and yet by sustaining mercy are kept on the way. Some start out seeming strong, and fall away
- There is a serious warning about putting too much confidence in the flesh.

# They Come to Gaius's Inn

- They go to Gaius's inn which is open only to pilgrims. He provides them with food, with the help of his cook, Taste-that-which-is-good.
- They tell him that this is Christian's family.

# What a Rich Heritage

- There is a great joy and excitement expressed by Gaius when he discovers that this is Christian's family. Christian's father and grandfather had also been part of this great line of pilgrims.
- They follow in the line of great saints such as Stephen, and James, and Paul and Peter and many post-biblical believers. "It would be utterly impossible to count all the members of that family who have suffered injury and death for the love of a pilgrim's life. And it excites me greatly to see that your husband has left behind him four sons like these."

# The Family Line Must be Extended

- Matthew and Mercy are betrothed in order to carry on Christian's family line.

# A Discourse about Women

- Gaius states that even though Eve was the first to eat the fruit, women have been very important throughout the Scriptures.
- Christ was born of a woman (Luke 2)
- A woman washed the feet of Christ
- Women were the first there on the resurrection morning
- Women are highly favored

# Lessons from the Dinner Table

- As dinner was being prepared, Matthew spoke of his appetite and his desire for the food.
- Gaius says, “And likewise, let all of the teachings that edify you in this life give birth to a greater desire within you to sit at the dinner of the great King in His Kingdom. For all of the preaching, the books, and the commandments that are given here are like the mere laying out of the table service and the setting of the salt on the table when compared with the wondrous feast that our Lord will prepare for us when we arrive at His house.”
- The various items brought to the dinner table are shown to point toward God, and to lift their eyes heavenward.
- We must ask ourselves if we are looking heavenward when the feast of the preached Word is set before us.

# Relaxing with Some Riddles

- Gaius uses riddles to teach about giving and about Christian experience.
- Samuel requests to stay at the house a while and to have Matthew marry Mercy before they leave.
- Mercy is given to Matthew to be his wife
- Gaius teaches that for sin to be conquered, one must be touched by grace

# Old Men vs. Young Men

- There is a comparison of a young man who fought his sin even in the midst of temptation, and an old man whose inclination to sin subsided because of old age.
- The lesson is that the young man walked more clearly in God's grace because of the grace of God enabling him to fight his sinful desires.

# Responses to Christ

- Mr. Honest and Great-heart use Isaiah 53 to teach that the Jews had come to a dead religion.
- They also teach that many reject Christ because they base their assessment only upon outward appearance.

# Hunting Down and Destroying Giant Slay-Good

- They rescue Feeblemind from the Giant's hands.
- Great-heart kills Slay-Good because he disrupts pilgrims on their journey.

# Feeble-mind's Story

- Feeble-mind speaks of being captured by the giant, but also of keeping his heart pure toward the Lord and trusting Him.
- Though Feeble-mind has many of the same failings and struggles as Mr. Fearing, he was invited to Gaius's house as a true pilgrim
- Another who had been captured by the Giant named Mr. Not-right escaped on his own volition. He was struck dead
- Though there are weaknesses to Feeble-mind, there is a graver danger in trusting in one's own ability.

# Weddings before leaving Gaius's House

- Matthew and Mercy are married, as are James and Phoebe.
- Though Great-heart tries to pay for their stay, Gaius says it is not customary for pilgrims to pay him. He cites Luke 10, and the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- This sort of hospitality to the saints is a great blessing, according to Great-heart.

# Feeble-mind's Reluctance to Go with Them

- Feeble-mind is tempted to stay behind, as he is afraid he will be a burden to the others.
- “But brother,” said Great-heart, “I have been commissioned to ‘comfort the fainthearted’ and uphold the weak.’ You must go along with us; we will wait for you and give you our help; we will deny ourselves of some things, both in opinion and in action, for your sake; we won’t enter into doubtful disputes or controversies in front of you; we will be made all things to you, rather than have you left behind.”

# Mr. Ready-to-Halt Arrives Just in Time

- Ready to Halt comes to be a companion to Mr. Feeble-Mind, as he too is weak. They journey with the others, but they stay in the back
- There are pilgrims of all varieties, strengths and weaknesses

# Recalling Christian and Faithful's Encounters

- As they journey, Great-heart recounts much about Christian
- Faithful had been assaulted by Shame
- Faithful suffered, but suffered faithfully and nobly
- The two men had a strong resolve for their pilgrimage. This sort of resolve is needed of us.

# Discussion Questions

- Great-heart's wounds remind him of his heavenly reward. Why can we be comforted in the midst of the pains of the Christian life?
- Fearing lived the Christian life but was robbed of much of its joy. Why is this? How are we robbed in the same ways?
- What warnings are issued about apostasy and delayed repentance? What Scriptures could be used to support these warnings?
- It is necessary to fight sin while one is young in their Christian life. Why is this?
- How can we cultivate the resolve of Christian and Faithful?