

Pilgrim's Progress (Part 1)

Quote: "You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."
– John Bunyan

- **The Author's Apology** (at the beginning of the book)
 - Define "apology": a formal justification or defense
 - *"like sparks from coals do fly"* – author hopes this book will "spark" conversations
 - There is an scriptural allusion or citation on almost every page
 - "This book will make a traveler out of thee"
 - Bunyan wants the reader to begin his own spiritual "pilgrimage"
 - Define "pilgrimage": a journey to a sacred place

- **(Read 1st paragraph)**
 - *"den"* = Bedford jail
 - *"wilderness"* = reference to Israel's wanderings in the wilderness
 - *"dream"* = Bunyan's allegory (portraying the Christian's journey in picturesque language)
 - *"a man"* = referred to as Christian (later in the story he refers back to him as "Graceless")
 - His attire: (Activity slide - match Scripture references to descriptions)
 - this corresponds with page 3 of the Handouts (Pilgrim's Progress - Part 1)

- **(Read 2nd paragraph)**
- **Christian's Family**
 - Wife: Christiana
 - Boys: Matthew, Samuel, Joseph & James
 - They think he is mentally unwell
 - "Dad has got religion!"
 - He doesn't try to persuade them further
 - They make fun of him, scold him, and neglect him

- **Evangelist**
- **Questions:**
 - Who does Christian represent? All of unsaved mankind
 - What is the burden on his back? His sin
 - Why do other people in the City of Destruction not have a burden?
 - What is the book he is reading? The Bible
 - How do we know that?
 - Why does it upset him so much? It shows him that he is lost
 - Who does Evangelist represent? (Discuss further)

- **John Gifford**
 - Evangelist is based on the pastor of the church in Bedford
 - Does "Evangelist" today have to be a preacher?
 - What does an "Evangelist" do? Point people to Jesus
 - Who can do this?
 - 2 Corinthians 5:11 – "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

- **Parchment Roll from Evangelist**
 - *"Fly from the wrath to come"*
 - *"Whither must I fly?"*

- **Evangelist's message:**
 - Go toward *"yonder wicket-gate"*

- small gate built into a larger door, wall, or fence
- Matthew 7:14 – "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
- *"keep that light in your eye"*
 - Christian must keep "that light" (God's Word) in sight or he'll never find the *"wicket-gate"*
- **Application:**
 - Why does Evangelist not try to help remove the burden from Christian's back?
 - Evangelist doesn't say, "Quit doing this or that." He just points him to *"the light."*
 - How does this compare to when we are working with someone who is unsaved?
- **Fleeing the City of Destruction**
 - Regardless of the pull of family, Christian fled
 - Not even one's closest relatives should be allowed to hinder you from serving God
- **Obstinate & Pliable**
 - The City of Destruction doesn't give up its people without a fight
 - They represent the condition of most people when they hear the Gospel
 - Obstinate = wants nothing to do with it
 - Pliable = goes along with it until hardship comes along
 - It is thought that Obstinate's father was "Spare-the-Rod" and his mother was "Spoil-the-Child"¹
 - he got whatever he wanted
 - Obstinate represents people who believe that the Gospel is foolish – no questions about it – they will not be moved
 - Obstinate makes fun & calls Christian names
 - *"crazy headed coxcombs"*
 - *"brain sick"*
 - *"mised"*
 - *"fantastical fellow"*
 - Obstinate becomes angry & returns to the city
 - Pliable: notice he doesn't have his own *"guidebook"* nor is he reading from Christian's book
 - he's only interested in the "rewards" of this journey
 - Christian is so excited to have a companion
 - he fails to realize that some leave the City of Destruction for the wrong reason
 - Just as many walked with Jesus for "the loaves and the fishes"
 - Christian doesn't show wisdom in what he shares with Pliable
 - * endless kingdom
 - * everlasting life
 - * crowns of glory
 - * no more crying
 - * seraphim & cherubim
 - Notice that Pliable has no burden on his back (no awareness of sin and guilt)
 - * Once Pliable learns of the hardships of this way, he'll leave Christian & return
- **Application**
 - When witnessing to someone, what is wrong with telling them that they'll go to Heaven, God will work everything out in their life, they'll have money & happiness, etc.?

¹ http://www.bunyanministries.org/articles/pp_commentary/02_com_christian_pursued.pdf

- **Slough of Despond**

- "slough" = mire
- "despond" = to be depressed by loss of hope, confidence, or courage
- it is believed that Bunyan (as a young man) lived beside a stream that overflowed in the spring and pooled in a low area, producing a basin of muck & mire
- they fail to notice the safe steps
 - **Application:**
 - Depression can take hold of you like the muck & mire of this slough
 - Psalm 69:2 – "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing."
 - Great men of God have battled depression: Martin Luther, John Bunyan, C. H. Spurgeon, George Whitefield
 - God always has a way through the miry places in your life
- Pliable doesn't sink as much as Christian. Why?
 - No burden of sin
 - No shame
 - Merely inconvenienced
- Pliable has had enough
 - doesn't care that Christian is still in the slough
- Christian cannot get out by himself, but which side of the slough did he work toward? (The side toward the City of Destruction or the side toward the wicket gate?)
- God sends "Help"
 - a song
 - a Scripture
 - a message
 - another Christian
- Christian asks why this slough isn't repaired
 - **Application:** What is the purpose for spiritual Sloughs of Despond?
 - weeds out the Pliables
 - used to awake the traveler to his/her spiritual needs
 - helps people who are following behind you
 - * Christiana was able to avoid this mire
 - Help says that the King has tried to repair it, but the mire continues to flow

- **Mr. Worldly Wiseman from the Town of Carnal-Policy**

- thought to be modeled after a minister in Bunyan's life
 - Edward Fowler
 - liberal pastor who wouldn't stand against the rules set on pastors by the king
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman enjoys stopping pilgrims
 - he challenges & argues with them
 - **Application:** be careful of having conversations with these types of people
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman is more persuasive than Obstinate. Why?
 - He shows concern about Christian's burden
 - He asks about Christian's family
 - "Will you listen to me if I give you good advice?"
 - Going against Evangelist's advice
 - * "There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that into which he hath directed thee!"
 - * "Hear me; I am older than thou."

