

The Pilgrim's Progress: A Study

Week 2: Section 1: Pilgrim's Conviction and Setting Out; Evangelist (Pastor's Notes)

Cover the Narrative

Let's take time to discuss the basic story of pages 3-11 by focusing on these key questions:

1. How does the very beginning of the narrative start?
-By describing the narrator's activity. This represents Bunyan who is on pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world. He discovers a place in which to nap; this represents the prison cell from which he wrote this book.
2. How is the main character initially described in the text?
-A man who is clothed in rags (representing his own lack of righteousness). He is described as having his back turned to his own house (signaling that something is drawing his attention away from his usual source of comfort), a book in his hand (the Word of God), and a great burden on his back (the weight of guilt and conviction over his sin).
3. What happens to the main character, such that he becomes greatly troubled?
-He has found a book, The Holy Scriptures, which have enlightened him as to the judgment of God that is to befall the city in which he lives. He realizes that this judgment will befall him as well because he, as a sinner, is identified with the people of the city of destruction.
4. How does his family respond (be specific)?
-His family does not respond well to his conviction and desire to be saved from the judgment that is coming. They believed that he is experiencing a temporary madness, which might be relieved with sleep. When it failed to do so, they became hardened to his talking (a fruit of unbelief). Further, they chided, derided, and neglected him. The people that he most sought to listen least wanted to hear.
5. Does his trouble of mind and soul find easy rest in the world?
-No, we read that he "spent some days" walking in the fields, reading and praying. He was greatly troubled and nothing was giving him relief.
6. What was Pilgrim doing when walking through the fields, and what did he cry out?
-Reading the book, which is the Word of God. He cries out "what must I do to be saved."
7. Who answered his cry?
-Evangelist
8. What does the main character tell Evangelist is his pressing trouble?
-That he has read in his book that he will die and face judgment. He does not want to die and he is not fit to stand before God in judgment. He does not know what can change this terrible fate.
9. What does Evangelist give to this man, and how does he direct him?
-Evangelist gives the man a parchment scroll with the instruction written upon it: "Fly from the wrath to come." Further, he gives him instructions to travel to the wicket ("small") gate. He can't see the gate at so great a distance, so Evangelist directs him to follow "yonder shining light".
10. What will he find at the gate?
-When he comes to the wicket gate, he will knock, and be told what to do.

11. Who tries to hinder the man from initially leaving the city behind?

-It is fair to say everyone- his family, his neighbors, the townspeople. They all desire to stop him by employing various strategies.

12. Who were resolved to fetch the man back by force?

-Obstinate and Pliable.

We will read 8-11 to hear the discussion between the man, now called Christian, Obstinate, and Pliable.

-Select people to read the parts.

Go over the worksheets

Explain the problem over the book/worksheet combo. Work through the answers from the previous week.

Theological Discussion

- Theological significance of the characters- the man with the book and burden, his family, the townspeople, Evangelist, Obstinate, and Pliable?
- Theological significance of the Locations: City of Destruction, Wicket Gate
- This section in our study guide is titled conviction of sin. Why? And are all the people in this story equally convicted (particularly focus on Bunyan's subtle hint at the end of our section where Pliable is unhindered from mending to a quicker pace, which Christian cannot keep).
- What was the source of Christian's conviction and awakening to His own danger?
- How does Christian react when Obstinate and Pliable come to force him back home? Does he simply reject their attempt, or does he attempt to evangelize them? Discuss.

Assignment for next week:

For next Wednesday night, please read pages 11-24 in the supplied book.

- **The Slough of Despond** (page 11)
- **Worldly Wiseman's Advice** (Page 14)
- and **Christian Knock at the Wicket Gate** (Page 21)

Fill out your worksheets, and look up the Biblical references in your Bible.

-I look forward to seeing you again, then!