

A Faithful friend; the seductions of a woman called Wanton; Adam the First with his three daughters called The Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the Eyes, and The Pride of Life; Moses the man of the law; Discontent with his friends Pride, Arrogancy, Self-conceit, and Worldly-glory; and Shame are in the cast line up for this week’s Illustrated Message! Each one has been sent across the path of Christian’s friend called Faithful, with whom he meets up with after going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Faithful’s journey has been different than Christians and would seem that he still has more of his flesh ruling him than Christian but when he sees his brother Christian fall headlong after outrunning him, he extends a helping hand to pick him up. Keeping a humble heart is at the essence of Christianity. Allowing pride in our walk with Christ sets us up for a fall as it did with Christian. We shouldn’t be in competition with our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord, but humbly walk beside them. I Corinthians 10:12 says; *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”*, and Matthew 23:11-12 says; *“But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

In James 5:5 we read about wanton pleasure, *“You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.”* Faithful was solicited by the beguiling Wanton who flattered with her tongue, offered all sorts of sensual pleasures, seducing him with her looks; all of this to lure him to backslide. She did not let him know though, that if he fell for her, she would lead him to the pit of death and hell. This temptation comes to believers, male and female alike. The devil is no respecter of persons and he’ll try to seduce both men and women with wanton pleasures and his ultimate goal is to bring them to hell itself.

Adam the First refers to God’s first creation who became the fallen Adam. Jesus Christ is referred to in [Romans 5:12-21](#) as the “last Adam”. The old sin nature – Adam – is sent to tempt the born again person to yield again to the old temporal fleshly man. His delicacies are the lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The old Adamic person may look impressive, but it’s very repulsive. Galatians 5:19-21 says; *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Faithful almost fell for the trap, but he saw written on Adam the First’s forehead, “Put off the old man with his deeds.” We read that in Ephesians 4:22-24; *“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”*

The old adamic nature is a relentless tyrant and sends his counterpart of condemnation to assail him. This condemnation comes through none other than Moses – the law. This scene would seem incomprehensible or unfathomable to those who are born again but still only “live by the law”, the do’s and don’ts. How could Moses do that! Jesus himself says in Matthew 5:17 says; *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”* There is NO mercy in the law. If you choose to live even a little bit by the law and yet fail in even one word, you’re guilty of breaking the whole law. Jesus knew that we could NEVER fulfill the law that’s why he became the curse and fulfilled all the requirements of the law. That’s why Moses is portrayed as one coming to strike Faithful down – three times – to leave him for dead. Moses told him that he ‘did not know how to show mercy’!

Every time the law is given as a priority in Christianity instead of the person of Jesus Christ, His grace and salvation, we become ministers of death and offer them no life whatsoever. If you are in Christ Jesus, you are under grace, no longer under the law. The law will beat you up every time. That’s why we see Jesus our Lord taking Faithful by the hand to pick him up. This is powerful my friend, please understand that in Jesus you now walk in grace and not under the law.

It’s sad to see that Faithful scouted around the Palace Beautiful – the local church - he saw no need for refreshing and the teaching of the local church. It would seem then that he was still under the influence of the religious system of the day. As we remember from Chapter 12-14 the lions were ferocious towards Christian but were now asleep towards Faithful. The lions represent those who would keep pilgrims away from the non-conformist local church; they were the ideological

oppressors and persecutors of the Reformation. They were Church of England who wanted pre-eminence and total control. So unfortunately Faithful was not shown the full armor of God, the table of communion and sweet fellowship with the saints as Christian had been shown in Palace Beautiful.

In skirting the local church and walking through the Valley of Humiliation, Faithful was met by Discontent. Truthfully, if the devil can't get you off track in one area, he'll try another. Discontent lies to him saying that moving forward in humility is dishonorable; it will lessen his ability from gaining worldly glory and lose the friendships of pride, arrogance and self-conceit. For the believer in Jesus though there is honor in humility as it says in Galatians 6:14; *"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."*

Has Shame ever lied to you before? Shame says that you're weak, unmanly or unwomanly, and not self-assertive as a Christian. It says that being meek, gentle and modest are not admirable virtues. It lies to you saying that those who are powerful, wealthy or educated will disown you and you'll be led to poverty and ignorance. These lies can seem persuasive from a worldly perspective, but Luke 16:15 says; *And He (Jesus) said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before me, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.'* Worldly wisdom will try to dissuade you from anything to do with Christ; this wisdom is rationalism, skepticism, materialism, naturalism, mysticism, pantheism, humanism and the like. I Corinthians 3:18 says; *"Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise."* Press on as a born again Christian, don't be ashamed. Hebrews 11:16 says; *"But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."* I Corinthians 1:27 also says; *"but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."*

In conclusion, I'd like to reiterate the necessity of walking in grace. When you evangelize and share the good news of the gospel to unbelievers, don't put them under the law. Point them to Jesus who is full of grace, love and mercy. The law is merciless; Jesus is mercy and grace.

