

Is God’s grace carrying you every day to walk the walk and talk the talk as a Christian? We see this week that not only by grace are you saved through faith, but also grace that helps and carries you every day to live as a follower or believer in Christ Jesus.

There are 5 people that are presented in this chapter including Watchful. So who is **WATCHFUL**? It would seem that he would represent the local pastor or elder of a local church. Together with Watchful, all of them question Christian about what he believes and his testimony. Each of us has a testimony! How we became a Christian and what has led us to the place we are at today. Remember in the writing of Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan had left the Church of England and suffered persecution and imprisonment along with others who became known as non-conformists. So scrutinizing or questioning carefully those who participated in non-conformist meetings was at the core of not being caught or being persecuted and was also to ensure that they were true Christians. Thus, careful questioning of **WATCHFUL, DISCRETION, PRUDENCE** (wisdom), **PIETY** (spiritual devotion) and **CHARITY** (love) is part of the local church. It references where Jesus talks about the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24-30. The devil will sow tares (or false brethren) into local churches; this is why church leadership needs these qualities abiding in it.

Do you desire to be in fellowship in a local church? It should offer you all of the above to watch over and care for you. Proverbs 11:14 says; *“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”* Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity are portrayed as virgins which infers holiness and purity in the church. The Apostle Paul says II Corinthians 11:2; *“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* Also, Ephesians 5:27 says; *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”* In seeing and hearing Christian’s sincerity, he is welcomed warmly by other believers in the local church. While supper is being prepared– this being a type and shadow of communion - these three then have heart-felt conversations with Christian. Piety questions him about his eventful pilgrimage; Prudence questions him about heart attitudes and Charity questions him about his family relationships.

With Piety, Christian recalls what has happened in his journey. In like manner, as you share your testimony with others, they are built up and edified as well as you. It establishes your devotion and consecration to Jesus amidst the trials you’ve faced. It’s interesting to see that Christian is able to describe the **cross, his coat and the scroll** with more detail. It reveals his clearer understanding of what’s happened in his life. Whereas before it was the cross, now it’s the cross with the bleeding man on it. He sees the sacrifice of Jesus being like that of the sacrificial lamb, taking away the sin of the world. Colossians 1:20 says; *“and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”* The coat is not just a coat now, but an embroidered coat. He sees the details and beauty of his coat of righteousness and salvation. I Corinthians 1:30-31 says; *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’”* The scroll is dearer to him as he meditates on it. Ephesians 4:30 says; *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

Prudence questions Christian regarding heart attitudes but especially his thoughts – what’s in his mind. Matthew 12:34 says; *“...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”* Here are a few scriptures regarding our thoughts and thought patterns;

- II Corinthians 10:5; *“We are destroying sophisticated arguments and every exalted and proud thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought and purpose captive to the obedience of Christ.”*
- Romans 12:1-2; *“Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].”*

- I Peter 1:13-16; “So prepare your minds for action, be completely sober [in spirit – steadfast, self-disciplined, spiritually and morally alert], fix your hope completely on the grace [of God] that is coming to you when Jesus Christ is revealed. [Live] as obedient children [of God]; do not be conformed to the evil desires which governed you in your ignorance [before you knew the requirements and transforming power of the good news regarding salvation]. But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage]; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy (set apart), for I am holy.’”

Hebrews 11:25-26 talking about Moses says; “because he preferred to endure the hardship of the people of God rather than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of the Christ [that is, the rebuke he would suffer for his faithful obedience to God] to be greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt; for he looked ahead to the reward [promised by God].” In like manner, Christian is looking forward to the Celestial City, laying aside everything that would hold him back.

What about your family Charity asks him? In preparing for communion - eating the Lord’s Supper, we need to examine ourselves in all of these areas as Watchful, Discretion, Piety, Prudence and Charity have done. Even in our close personal and family relationships, we need to have a pure heart and have done all humanly possible to ensure we’re in right standing with others and God. I Corinthians 11:27-31 says regarding communion; “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”

Countless thousands of believers have had to walk the Christian walk alone as their family refuses to believe in Jesus just as has happened with Christian. II Corinthians 4:4 says; “in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” We can pray that the spiritual blindness that is on the eyes of the unbelieving will come off.

In closing, a clear point that came across in this Illustrated Message was the power of grace. Salvation is not only by grace through faith, but we stand in grace; walk (reign) in grace; live in grace – or under grace; and we have grace that helps. Here are a few verses;

- Romans 5:1-2; “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith in this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
- Romans 5:15-17; “...For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”
- Romans 6:14; “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”
- Hebrews 4:16; “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

We have grace in every area of our life to press on and live a victorious Christian life; to walk the walk and talk the talk.