

January 10, 2016 – Pilgrim’s Progress
Chapter 15 (Part II)

As Chapter 15 was quite long and extensive, we divided it into two parts. We picked up this week with the dream as John Bunyan is reflecting on the supper that Christian is about to partake of with Charity, Watchful, Discretion, Prudence and Piety at Palace Beautiful – the local church.

Their conversation focuses on The Lord of the Hill – Jesus Christ, who built Palace Beautiful, which is His church and the gates of hell won’t prevail against it. The church is to be a place of rich fellowship, edification, reflection and conversation on all that Jesus has done for us, being the great warrior who destroyed the work of the devil at the cross. Hebrews 10:24-25 is very clear about our fellowship in church with the body of Christ, it says; *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”* There is no reason or rationale for not attending a local church on a regular basis. We not only receive the word of God at church, but we’re able to give and help build up and edify others. There are probably countless thousands of Christians who do not attend church on a regular basis. We don’t know what may lie ahead of us each day or throughout the week, but as we’re consistently in fellowship with other believers at church, we know that we have those who will stand together with us in prayer and that we’ll have received the Word of the Lord that we’ll need for all that might come our way. We can’t afford not to be in fellowship. In the church, these following things (and more) should be evident and talked about:

- The Lord’s Supper, the eating of the body and drinking of the blood of Jesus, exemplified in eating the bread and drinking the wine – [I Corinthians 11:23-29](#)
- The abundance and free gift of all things to us by Jesus – Romans 8:32; *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*
- Jesus’ sacrificial giving of Himself and utmost love for the church – [Ephesians 2:19-22](#)
- Jesus being the mighty warrior – Hebrews 2:14-15; *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Romans 6:10; *“For the death that He died, He died to since once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”*
- Jesus’ love for pilgrims – Luke 19:10; *“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* [Acts 2:23-24](#)
- That Jesus laid aside His heavenly glory to identify with sinful man – [Philippians 2:6-8](#)
- That Jesus did not want to be alone in heaven but to share it with his redeemed, to make us rich in Him – II Corinthians 8:9; *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.”*
- Jesus is the great protector of the church– Matthew 16:18; *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

As Christian sleeps, he sleeps in peace. There is peace and rest in the fellowship of the saints as Jesus is the Prince of Peace. John 14:27 says; *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Christian’s tour of the church is meant for his personal equipping and also to receive strength, vision, and edification. It is imperative of the church to teach the Word of God for the edification and equipping of the saints. I Corinthians 14:26 says; *“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”*

The most fundamental teaching in the church should be on who Jesus Christ is. We see this clearly in [John 1:1-18](#). I love how the word ‘**pedigree**’ is used here! What does it mean though? It means: a line or list of ancestors; a lineage a family tree. Jesus’ pedigree is of the Ancient of Days – Almighty God as we’ve just read in John! This is what we base our faith on in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. Teaching of both the Old and New Testament, the heroes of faith, the kingdom of God and His grace, mercy and love are also key doctrines that need to be taught in the church.

Although Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave, we've still been given armour that we need to wear and use in our daily walk with God according to the Apostle Paul in [Ephesians 6:10-18](#). We're in spiritual warfare day in and day out. Notice that Christian was unable to leave until he was equipped with the armour of God? I Peter 5:8 says; *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

In conclusion, I'd like to revert back to our review from December 12th where the question was posed; what's keeping you from attending church? As we've seen today, Jesus died for the church – His bride, He's building the church and daily, thousands are being added to it. If it's a place of nurture, edification and growth ...why would you want to stay away from it? Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any hindrances that would keep you from being part of the Palace Beautiful.

