

This chapter is very long, so we’re dividing it up over a few weeks. Do you remember back a few chapters of the shepherds warning Christian and Hopeful about the Enchanted Ground? There are two focal points of what we’re covering today; the drowsiness that wants to overcome them and their antidote for it.

First of all, **Enchanted** in the dictionary means “to subject to magical influence; bewitch; to impart a magic quality or effect to. Some other words may be; captivate, charm delight, enrapture, entrance, beguile spellblind and hypnotize. The Bible talks quite a bit in the Old Testament about enchantment. The International Stand Bible Encyclopedia references enchantment to the occult and witchcraft. There are many Hebrew words used to describe enchantment and here is an excerpt from this review by Dwight M. Pratt; *“All these forms of enchantment claimed access through supernatural insight or aid, to the will of the gods and the secrets of the spirit world. In turning away faith and expectation from the living God, they struck a deadly blow at the heart of true religion. From the enchanters of the ancient Orient to the medicine-men of today, all exponents of the ‘black art’ exercise a cruel tyranny over the benighted people, and multitudes of innocent victims perish in body and soul under their subtle impostures. In no respect is the exalted nature of the Hebrew and Christian faiths more clearly seen than in their power to emancipate the human mind and spirit from the mental and moral darkness, the superstition and fear, and the darkening effect of these occult and deadly articles.”* The Greek word *pharmakeia* – which is the use of medicine, drugs or spells, is also used in the definition of enchantment. Interesting that pharmaceutical drugs fall under enchantment!

Charles H. Spurgeon talks about the drowsiness of the air as this; *“There are, no doubt, many of us who are passing over this plain; and I fear that this is the condition of the majority of churches in the present day. They are lying down on the settles of Lukewarmness in the Arbors of the Enchanted Ground. There is not that activity and zeal we could wish to see among them.”* It would surely represent our generation of Christianity wouldn’t it? He also goes on to say; *“It is designed to induce, according to Spurgeon, ‘insensibility, inaction, and insecurity.’ He further adds: ‘This is not the sleep of Jacob, in which a ladder unites Heaven and earth, and angels tread the ascending rounds; but this is the sleep in which ladders are raised from hell, and devils climb upward from the pit to seize thy slumbering spirit.’”*

It seems as though this Enchanted Ground is lengthy and extensive which would insinuate a subtle, long drawn out trap. It makes you think that if Christians find themselves tempted by lethargy and lukewarmness, the subtle prolonged entrapments will eventually get them to fall asleep and not wake up. Satan’s attacks are not always upfront and obvious; they can sometimes be indirect – even to want to fall asleep when you’re not tired! This is what happens to Hopeful. David says in **Psalm 13:3**; *“Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.”* This is not a new scheme by the devil to lure believers astray. Hopeful tries to justify his need of a nap because of all the hard work for the Lord that he’s done, but the spiritual climate that is filled with carnal temptations to get him to cast off restraint, to relax and take it easy is knocking at the door of his mind. We’ve all seen the ‘excuses’ for taking time off from our labouring for the Lord haven’t we? It’s not that rest isn’t needed at times, but we have to be very discerning. What might some of these allurements be? Quit ushering or being a Sunday school teacher; having your kids so busy in sports and things that you are regularly missing church fellowship; work colleagues keep organizing events that you just can’t miss to keep you out of church and prayer meetings; the camping, lakes, mountains, ocean and sunshine must be taken advantage off so you engage in conversation with your friends of all the places you’ve been to and what you’ve done; or you’re just plain tired of serving in the church, doing evangelism, discipleship etc.

These, if not managed by the Holy Spirit in you, can subtly lull you into slumber to keep you out of fellowship of the local church.

So what is Christians’ solution to the state of his friend? Hearty, rich conversation about the things of the Lord and what He’s done in their lives! This is how the body of Christ works together, we need edify each other so as to not fall into a lukewarm state. [I Corinthians 12:21-25](#). We’re not to make provision for the flesh as [Romans 13:11-14](#) says. Remember that your feelings are fickle and swing like a pendulum. Let the Word of truth – the Bible take precedence over your feelings and anchor you. Notice how Hopeful says that if he were ‘alone’ he would have surely fallen asleep? It’s been said that solo Christians are as vulnerable as solo soldiers. They underestimate the enemy and overestimate their own fighting ability. **Philippians 2:3** says; *“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself”* and **Hebrews 10:24-25**; *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up*

(other translations say to motivate, or spur on, or stimulate, or provoke) *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.*” These kinds of conversations would not be about the weather, sports, politics, gossip and the like but to stimulate your minds and spirit with Godly edification, vision, purpose, prayer for each other and the saints. Let me ask you something; do you get easily offended, uptight or nervous when you’re in conversation with fellow Christians and all they want to do is talk about the things of the Lord? If so....you may have been spiritually lulled to sleep or have become lethargic in your walk. Talking about what God has done and is doing should always be forefront to the Christian. Your testimony should never become dull and something antiquated of the past. It should always hold power and conviction.

The second focal point in the review is the conversation between Christian and Hopeful and how Hopeful first started hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ at Vanity Fair (where he lived) through the preaching of the evangelist Faithful (who was later martyred as we read). As Christian probes Hopeful about his testimony, he seeks to hear about the revelation of Jesus Christ to him. Romans 6:11 says; *“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Hopeful then shares of his previous life as a sinner living in Vanity Fair. He was a prime example of **Galatians 5:19-21**; *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst 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.”* However the preaching of the gospel brought intense conviction of his sin but he shut his eyes to the light that was burning deeply in his heart. An awakening to sin had started in his life but he didn’t know its cause. Speaking of Moses in Hebrews 11:25 it says; *“choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,”* The pleasure and peace of sinning was fleeing Hopeful the more he heard the gospel causing him to become more miserable. He couldn’t sin peacefully any longer! Conviction and guilt of sin is the commencement of a person’s conversion! He mentions trigger points that would add fuel to the fire of his conviction to the point of whether he’d go to heaven or hell. He was aware that his sin was putrid and disgusting. So we see the work of the Holy Spirit convicting Hopeful as Jesus says in John 16:8 that the Holy Spirit will do; *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.”* These three things were happening to Hopeful.

So after all this, Hopeful says something interesting; *“I concluded that I must make every effort to improve my life, otherwise I believed I was certain to be damned.”* Still not having a clear understanding of making Jesus Lord of his life to deliver and save him from sin, he seeks to find his own remedy and cure to sin through self help and self improvement and works of the flesh which he lists; leaving his worldly buddies, starts going to church and reading the Bible, witnesses to his neighbours and the like. He had a MORAL conviction now of right and wrong, heaven and hell but not a SPIRITUAL conviction. You’d think by looking at him he was a true bonafide Christian, but they were merely outward appearances, not the genuine conversion of the heart. His friends at Vanity Fair were patting him on the back admiring his lifestyle change but inside he was being eaten up by his sin. Not condemning motivational speakers, self-help guru’s and such, but when you are seriously convicted about your sin and sinful practices and addictions, YOU can’t change yourself, only the saving power of Jesus Christ will deliver you and set you free. Jesus will change you from the inside out. You can’t barter your way to heaven! The void in your heart will only be filled with the Holy Spirit living in you and faith in Jesus Christ. Look at all of the religious duties that Hopeful did and it didn’t quench the burning passion for sin nor make him clean did it? Fleshly reformation is only temporal but is not spiritually profitable.

Galatians 2:16 says; *“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”* You can be the best person with a list of all the best works in church and outside of church yet they are imperfect and stained with sin and only by the forgiveness of Jesus Christ can you be made perfectly clean. How did Hopeful change? By the evangelist Faithful speaking again into his life. He pointed out that he could only become righteous through faith in the perfect man, Jesus Christ and that it was by faith. **Romans 1:16-17** says; *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”* Here are some scriptures that talk about Jesus the righteous one and the only High Priest. Please click

on them to read them; [Romans 3:9-18](#), [Romans 3:21-26](#), [Romans 5:17](#), [Hebrews 1:1-3](#), [Hebrews 10:11-22](#), and [Colossians 1:21-22](#).

When you receive Jesus Christ into your heart and life as Lord and Saviour, you`re no longer a sinner. You are now the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You may sin and you`ll ask for forgiveness, but you`re not a sinner. II Corinthians 5:21 says; ``*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*`` Thank you Jesus! This is where we conclude today. Hopeful will continue to give an account of how he comes to Christ next week.

