

Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the Book "Pilgrim's Progress"

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Stage 6 - Part 5 (pages 70-72)

Have you been abandoned in the midst of battle by someone who did not do right by you? Instead of sticking by you as a brother or sister in Christ to help you win your battle, they flee. What's the greater good that God is doing in your life? That's what Mr. Not-right did to Mr. Feeble-Mind.

In today's review we read the following;

"Now, just as Mr. Feeble-mind and Gaius were talking, there came someone running, who called at the door and said, that, about a mile and a half off, there was one Mr. Not-right, a pilgrim, struck dead in the place where he was, with a thunderbolt." To this, Mr. Feeble-Mind gives this poetic statement;

*“What one would think doth seek to slay outright,
Oft times delivers from the saddest plight.
That very Providence whose face is death,
Doth oft times to the lowly life bequeath.
I taken was, he did escape and flee;
Hands crossed gave death to him and life to me.”*

It's evident that Mr. Not-right lost his life trying to preserve it, and Mr. Feeble while about to lose his life keeps his life and finds eternal life. Mr. Not-right escaped from the grip of Giant Slay-good. He escaped death for a little while. He left his fellow brother in Christ at the mercy of the giant and fled for his life. Thinking that at least he got away from Slay-good, Mr. Not-right's life ends being struck by lightning.

Has it happened to you when others have not done right by you, abandoning you in your time of peril, battle and distress? They got away...but did they really get away? Probably somewhere down the road you hear of what really happened to them as we read about Mr. Not-right.

In the book of Genesis, Joseph went through a series of trials only to end up positioned by God to fulfill his purpose in life. Here's what happened to him:

- Joseph gets sold by his brothers according to [Genesis 37:12-36](#). They despised him, were jealous of him, they didn't want to hear about his dreams, they threw him in a pit and then sold him out for a little money. Then they tore his robe of many colours, dipped it in blood and lied to their dad, that his favourite son had been killed. Are there those close to you, or family, who are tired of hearing about your mission in life, about your dreams and the call that God has given to you? They want to shut you up and try to get rid of you?
- He was falsely accused of raping Potiphar's wife according to [Genesis 39](#). Have you been falsely accused? Wherever you've been positioned by God in your life - false accusations are being hurled at you.
- Joseph was imprisoned on false charges according to [Genesis 40](#). Yet God's blessing was on Joseph and prospered everything he did - why? Because his heart was right and the integrity that he walked in.
- Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams according to [Genesis 41](#). In spite of all that happened, Joseph was called to Pharaoh's court and was placed 2nd to him in all of Egypt.

It's almost a type and shadow with Mr. Feeble-Mind isn't it. Feeble-Mind was about to lose his life, God intervened, rescued him and now he has unbelievable favour at Gaius' home.

After Joseph made it into power, brought his family out of famine into the richest land in Egypt, and been restored to his brothers, wisdom has shown him that all of his struggles were part of God's bigger purpose in his life. We read this in **Genesis 50:15-21** where it says; *"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead,*

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they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you."' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."

After Jacob dies, Joseph was probably taken by surprise with the request of his father because he had already forgiven his family. But there was an acknowledgement of the evil that had been in their hearts towards him so as to sell him into slavery. The dreams were fulfilled that Joseph had in all the sheaves bowing down to him when his brothers fell at his feet asking to be his servants. God meant all of it for good because he saw what was going to happen years and years down the road in their lives.

We have to keep that in perspective in the trials that happen in our lives too. The greater good is what God has in mind when you go through what would seem to be unjust trials in life. Look at the life of the Apostle Paul. What we read about in the following verses are the multitude of trials and hardships that he went through, it didn't look like there was anything good in it. Yet, still thousands of years later, we gain strength, faith and endurance through what he suffered don't we.

2 Corinthians 11:22-28; *"Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."*

Naked, beaten, whipped, the open seas, false brethren...and in the midst of it all, he was building the early church. In natural rational and reason, you'd think that Paul was doing something wrong. But not, it was God's will for his life, just like it was for Joseph.

Mr. Feeble-mind was taken captive and was being robbed by Slay Good, but only to end up after being rescued, positioned in a better place at the House of Gaius. He still had the trial, his life was threatened, but it positioned him on the road to be rescued.

What devil is at work with, using family, associates, co-workers etc., for evil against you, God will turn it around and use it for his good pleasure and furthering His Kingdom on earth.

Mr. Feeble-Mind says; *"This is an unexpected favour, like the sun shining out of a very dark cloud. Did giant Slay-good intend me this favour when he stopped me, and resolved to let me go no further? Did he intend, that, after he had rifled my pockets, I should go to Gaius as my host? Yet it is so."* This is the greater good that happened to him. It was much better than he could thought or imagined wasn't it.

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Not only was Mr. Feeble Mind in need of the Good Samaritan, but Christiana's family as well, and if you were to be honest, you yourself are in need of a good Samaritan, an Inn to rest at and heal from all the hardships in life. To get oil and wine poured into your wounds, to heal all the heart-ache and torments you've incurred in the battle.

The parable of the good Samaritan is found in **Luke 10:25-37** where it says; *"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"* And He said to him, *"You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."* But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, *"And who is my neighbor?"* Then Jesus answered and said: *"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'* So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, *"He who showed mercy on him."* Then Jesus said to him, *"Go and do likewise."*

There was no evidence that this man was Jewish - one of their own. He was stripped naked, beaten and robbed of everything. He was rejected by his own religious leaders but the Samaritan just did the right thing, he had compassion on him. It was at his own expense. The religious leaders were not his neighbour, although they were his brothers.

Matthew Henry's Commentary says the following;

"Now this parable is applicable to another purpose than that for which it was intended; and does excellently set forth the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards sinful miserable man. We were like this poor distressed traveller. Satan, our enemy, had robbed us, stripped us, wounded us; such is the mischief that sin had done us. We were by nature more than half dead, twice dead, in trespasses and sins; utterly unable to help ourselves, for we were without strength. The law of Moses, like the priest and Levite, the ministers of the law, looks upon us, but has no compassion on us, gives us no relief, passes by on the other side, as having neither pity nor power to help us; but then comes the blessed Jesus, that good Samaritan (and they said of him, by way of reproach, he is a Samaritan), he has compassion on us, he binds up our bleeding wounds (Ps. 147:3; Isa. 61:1), pours in, not oil and wine, but that which is infinitely more precious, his own blood. He takes care of us, and bids us put all the expenses of our cure upon his account; and all this though he was none of us, till he was pleased by his voluntary condescension to make himself so, but infinitely above us. This magnifies the riches of his love, and obliges us all to say, 'How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?'"

What do we render to Jesus for having taken us off the road of destruction and death? We render to him our life and do what he's calling us to do.

Matthew 9:11-13 says; *"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"* When Jesus heard that, He said to them, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

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The script continues with the following; "*Thus, then, they went on. Mr. Great-Heart and Mr. Honest went in front, Christiana and her children went next, Mr. Feeble-mind came behind, and Mr. Ready-to-halt with his crutches.*" It kind of looks like a rag-tag entourage doesn't it? It looks like the foolish things of the world doesn't it.

This is a great picture and depiction of the Body of Christ which all inclusive, not exclusive, everyone by faith on their individual pilgrimages, yet corporately in need of the same Good Samaritan - Jesus - who is no respecter of persons.

1 Corinthians 1:26-28 talks about how God uses anyone when the Apostle Paul says; "*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.*"

Jesus delights in doing this! The foolish things or people to confound the wise or worldly wisdom. He calls us to come to him in **Matthew 11:28-30**; "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*"

The Apostle Paul saw the greater good when he says this in **2 Corinthians 4:7-12**; "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.*"

That's why we're to pick up our cross and follow Jesus. We're to get 'our self' off the pedestal and put it on the altar. Get your selfish desires out of the picture. Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies...it will not grow. We have to die to self so that we can live and bear fruit. When Mr. Feeble-Mind got 'himself' out of the way, he found life. Mr. Not-right didn't do right by hanging on to his life, but he died.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says; "*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*"

It's very comforting to know what Jesus - the Good Samaritan - did for us at his expense. Our debt to pay him is our life.

Jesus says this in **Matthew 5:1-12**; "*And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile*

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and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

From what I can see, those who are not in the categories mentioned above, Jesus doesn't use and can't use them because either money, power, prestige or unwillingness to give up their lives totally to follow him. Those who do give it up may even have to give up more. Like he said that those who love mother, father, brother, sister, husband or wife more than him, aren't fit for the call.

Matthew Henry's Commentary again says this about these beatitudes;

"The comforts of suffering saints laid down. (1.) They are blessed; for they now, in their life-time, receive their evil things,"

Luke 16:25; *"But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented."*

"and receive them upon a good account. They are blessed; for it is an honour to them,"

Acts 5:41; *"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." They rejoiced in the midst of persecution.*

"...it is an opportunity of glorifying Christ, of doing good, and of experiencing special comforts and visits of grace and tokens of his presence.."

2 Corinthians 1:5; *"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ."*

"Note, God will provide that those who lose for him, though it be life itself, shall not lose by him in the end. Heaven, at last, will be an abundant recompence for all the difficulties we meet with in our way. This is that which has borne up the suffering saints in all ages—this joy set before them."

Today, we have that joy. The Good Samaritan - Jesus - took us up and healed us and said to do likewise to those we meet. Find those who are the down-trodden, the handicap, the weak and feeble, the broken-hearted, the high maintenance person and bind up their wounds. Your pride may try to get in the way and wonder why you continually have to die to self. But that's what he's called you to do. Many a great minister have done great things with the foolish things of the world. We need to recognize and acknowledge that we too, are the foolish thing of this world that God has chosen to show his love, grace, mercy and compassion to. Confess that you have need of Jesus. Who is he calling you to reach out to and minister to today?