

## November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – Pilgrim’s Progress Chapters 7 & 8 Review

**Matthew 7:7-8** says; “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” There is an active role that Christian has to do before the gate is open, he has to knock, and so it is with each one who is seeking after Jesus. **Good-Will** opens the wicket-gate to Christian and pulls him through. Jesus will not turn anyone aside who searches for him. John 6:37; “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out”.

The **devil – Beelzebub** hates the cross, salvation, the straight and narrow path, the blood of Jesus and heaven. He has and always will do whatever it takes to dissuade those searching for Christ to not continue on to the cross. He lies to you and tells you to be open minded, explore all possible paths to get to heaven; he says you can do what you want, you’re your own boss, try a little of this and a little of that in a religions mix, have fun, don’t restrain yourself at all, be good or don’t be good – the choice is yours ... the list goes on! But Good-Will points out again what Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14; “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” If you’re at a crossroads in your life, there’s conviction of sin and a burden in your soul, keep your focus on the straight and narrow path towards Jesus. If the path is wide, spacious and full of curves – stay away and get off of it. The burden and guilt of sin can only be lifted at the Place of Deliverance which is the cross of Christ Jesus. There is no deliverance by psychiatrists, group therapy, psychology, self-help or meditation. If anything or anyone says that you don’t need to believe in the blood and death of Jesus for deliverance, it’s a lie of the devil – as clearly depicted in the story.

I love the Interpreter. He reveals seven (7) scenes/scenarios/people which are meant to teach Christian about the straight and narrow path to the celestial city that he has embarked upon, and ultimately reveals the power of the Holy Spirit who will live in Christian. Jesus says in John 16:7-8 says; “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ‘And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;’” Also in John 16:13-14 Jesus says; “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

1. A Portrait of the Godly Pastor. A representation of those who God will put in your life as a pastor to keep you on the straight and narrow path. They have the heart of Jesus who is the great shepherd and pastor of your soul.

2. The Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel. James 2:10 says this in regards to trying to keep the whole law; “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.” The law – the 10 Commandments - will choke you to spiritual death – you can’t keep them perfectly no matter how hard you try. The law kicks up more and more sin in us and it is only the Gospel, which is the washing of the water of the Word that you can be cleansed with according to Ephesians 5:26. And Romans 7:6 it says; “But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

3. The Virtue of Patience Contrasted with Passion. This reminds me of the parable that Jesus teaches on prodigal or lost son in Luke 15:11-32. This son demanded his inheritance while he was alive, only to squander it to end up living with and tending to the pigs. James 5:8 says; “You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” Our eternal heavenly home is an inheritance worth waiting on and being patient for. Passion can be equated to selfish ambition – someone who is way ahead of the game, they want everything now and their discontentment in life shows it.

4. The Grace of Christ Conquers the Assailed Heart. What a beautiful scene. Jesus is stoking the fire in the hearts of those seeking him with the oil of grace and the Holy Spirit, albeit the devil is continually trying to quench the desire to press forward. Galatians 5:16-17 says; “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” The devil is constantly going to hurl accusations at you about the Law (legality) that you’re not

keeping. But it's not by the Law that you're saved or delivered, but by GRACE through faith in Jesus Christ according to Ephesians 2:8-9. Hebrews 7:25 says; *"Therefore He (Jesus) is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

5. The Persevering Valiant Pilgrim. Christian gets a glimpse of glory and heaven. The war wages for the souls of those who are pressing on to salvation and eternal life. Many will want to cower in the distance or even give up because of the battle, but your victory is sure when you're fueled by grace and are girded up for battle to win! II Corinthians 12:9 says; *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* When you are born again, Jesus says; *"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents [that is, changes his inner self - his old way of thinking, regrets past sins, lives his life in a way that proves repentance; and seeks God's purpose for his life]."*, Luke 15:10. Look at who is cheering you on to gain eternal life ... ALL OF THE ANGELS OF GOD IN HEAVEN!

6. The Despairing Reprobate in the Iron Cage. This is a very disconcerting scene. Someone who has tasted of the goodness of God, has been born again, yet has in his own words, neglected to watch and be sober. He cast off restraint in his walk, giving himself over to his lusts, yielded to temptations and gave way whole-heartedly to sin. Luke 8:13 says; *"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away."* Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:28-39 say; *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."* *"Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of Grace?"* It's a deep theological debate about "once saved – always saved" which we will not pursue to discuss. What we do know, is that you don't want to grieve the Holy Spirit, you want to stay on the straight and narrow pathway, you don't want to cast off restraint or to neglect to be sober and vigilant.

7. The Warning of the Final Day of Judgement. The rapture of the Christians and the judgement of the unbelievers. There are numerous scriptures in the Bible that point out these events. I'll leave you with this one in II Thessalonians 1:7-10, *"and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed."*

Heaven and hell are real; you'll live in either place eternally. You're able to make the decision while you're still alive as to where it will be. I'd like to leave you with John 3:16. It says; *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* Don't think you're giving up a lot in this world in your eternal pursuit to salvation. What heaven has to offer you for eternity cannot be compared in the slightest to what the world has to offer you now. Call on the name of Jesus Christ and be saved.