

3

The Interpreter's House

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

When a person has been awakened to his or her need for a savior, that person also needs to learn about the fundamental realities of the gospel and the Christian life. As Jesus cautioned in Luke 14:27-33, those who decide to follow Him must carefully count the cost of discipleship. Sadly, many professing Christians do not count this cost, and in time they abandon their pilgrimage. In this message, we will join Christian as he learns important lessons about the perils and rewards of a pilgrim's journey.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ephesians 6:10-18; Hebrews 6:1-12

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To demonstrate the value of teaching inquirers and new believers about the challenges, complexities, and promises of discipleship.
2. To explain the important spiritual lessons that are conveyed in the different rooms of Interpreter's house.
3. To promote a spirit of humble reliance upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
4. To exhort Christ's disciples to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

QUOTATION

We come tonight to the interpreter's house. And since every minister of the gospel is an interpreter, and every evangelical church is an interpreter's house, let us gather up some of the precious lessons to ministers and to people with which this passage of the Pilgrim's Progress so much abounds.

—Alexander Whyte

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. The Seven Rooms of Interpreter's House

- A. When Christian entered through the wicket gate, Goodwill directed him to call at the house of Mr. Interpreter.
 - i. Part of the church's mission is to teach inquirers and new believers about the way of salvation and the realities of the Christian life.
 - ii. Mr. Interpreter led Christian through his house and showed him spiritual realities that were illustrated in each room.
- B. The first room contained a portrait of a solemn person with a book in his hands and his eyes lifted heavenward.
 - i. This person represents ministers of the gospel who plead with men and women to receive Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Christian has already met people like Evangelist, Help, and Goodwill, who demonstrate this calling.
- C. The second room was full of dust, which could only be removed by washing with water.
 - i. Like a broom stirring up dust, the law stirs up an acute awareness of sin.
 - ii. Though the law reveals the nature and power of sin, a person can only be cleansed through the gospel.
- D. In the third room were two children, who contrasted the discontent of those who seek fulfillment in this life with the steadfast patience of those who await the life of the world to come.
- E. In the fourth room one man was trying in vain to put out a fire that another man was fueling, illustrating Christ's act, amidst spiritual opposition, of sustaining the flame of the gospel in a person's heart.
- F. A battle raged in the fifth room, in which a man in armor, symbolizing the armor of God in Ephesians 6, vanquished many foes.
- G. The sixth room contained a man in an iron cage.
 - i. This man was once a pilgrim like Christian.
 - ii. His heart had become so hardened that he could not repent.
- H. A frightened man in the seventh room had awakened from a dream that depicted God's day of reckoning.

II. A Call to Persevere

- A. The account of the caged man in the sixth room warns believers of the danger of apostasy.
 - i. In the language of Hebrew 6:6, this former pilgrim had despised Jesus Christ and in his heart had crucified him again.
 - ii. The true desire of his heart had been for lusts, pleasures, and worldly profit.
- B. Although we rarely hear sermons about apostasy today, the danger of committing the unforgivable sin was frequently addressed in Bunyan's day.

- i. Today, we tend to associate the unforgivable sin simply with the sin of unbelief.
- ii. Yet, many who profess faith in Jesus Christ and believe themselves to be true pilgrims later reveal that their hearts never truly belonged to Christ.
- iii. In this episode, Bunyan reminds Christians, not to doubt God's electing grace, but to closely examine their own hearts and to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who instructed Christian to visit Interpreter?
 - a. Mr. Worldly Wiseman
 - b. Evangelist
 - c. Goodwill
 - d. Help
2. The dust that was stirred up by the broom in the second room represented
_____.
 - a. The law
 - b. Spiritual lethargy
 - c. The impatience of this present age
 - d. Spiritual warfare
3. Bunyan employed the image of a man secretly fueling a fire to illustrate Christ's act of preserving His saints.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. What did Christian see in the sixth room of Interpreter's house?
 - a. A man in an iron mask
 - b. A scene of the day of judgment
 - c. Two children
 - d. A man in an iron cage
5. Due to his belief in God's sovereignty, Bunyan did not believe that apostasy was a real danger for professing Christians.
 - a. True
 - b. False

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of Interpreter's house? Why was this an important place for Christian to visit?

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2. Which of the rooms in Interpreter's house do you find the most encouraging? How does this room speak to your own experience of the Christian life?
 3. Which room in Interpreter's house do you find most sobering or disturbing? What can Christians learn from this room?
 4. What does it mean for a professing Christian to apostatize? Does this mean that a Christian has lost his or her salvation? What should believers know about apostasy, and how should they respond to those who forsake their earlier profession of faith?