

Pilgrim's Progress

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[0:00] It's going to be a little different somewhat from normal. I want to tell you a story that pilgrims progress.

! Life is a spiritual journey, isn't it? It's a journey. Ups and downs and detours and byways. We're all travelling through. And for the believer, our journey is to a better country.

It tells in Hebrews 11 of Psalm, they desire a better country, that is, and heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.

This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. I think Roy mentioned that. John Bunyan was a preacher of long ago who was imprisoned in England.

Why? Because the establishment church of his day withstood his sound preaching. It was too controversial. It was too biblical. It was too straightforward.

[1:15] And Bunyan wrote a book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, From this world to that which is to come. From this world to that, that world which is to come.

And this book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, has been a popular read now for over 300 years. Even in modern times, still a popular read. And a new cartoon version is about to be launched mid-April next month. It's still top of the pops, as it were. At one time, second only to the Bible in distribution and circulation, readership.

And this gripping book was written by this man, John Bunyan, while he was holed up a prisoner in a dreadful jail. His only offence was to be a forthright preacher of the gospel.

And this amazing story that he wrote in that jail cell is still as powerful, powerful for us today and relevant for us here and now.

[2:28] And it's one, it's a book that's one of my favourite books really. And I'm sure you might be provoked. If you haven't already read that book, have a read of that book.

Or you can see on YouTube there's multiple versions of the recounting of that story. *Pilgrim's Progress*, a challenging story. And the story pictures the Christian life as that of a traveller from this world to that which is to come.

A traveller headed towards heaven. And I see five main themes in this story which we'll cover and we can translate those five themes I've put to you into our everyday lives here and now, in this place, in this time, in this world as we head to that which is to come.

And truly for us all it is firstly, it is firstly a journey. One point is it is a journey. The journey of *Pilgrim* is our journey.

It can be. The journey of *Pilgrim*. Our life is a journey along life's road. Join me as we journey with *Pilgrim*, as we travel with him through his journey.

[3:50] This story tells of the Christian adventure along the highway to Mount Zion, that heavenly city, a better country. It tells of a dream of a man, about a man.

And he was firstly known as *Graceless*, that was his name, *Graceless*, a man without grace, *Graceless*.

We can all identify with this man. He at first was lost. He did not know God's saving grace. And this man lived in the city of destruction.

That was his hometown, his homeland, the city of destruction, which of course it represents for us the world. The world. This world.

The world. And when he got saved, *Graceless* was given a new name, *Christian*. A new name. This story tells of this man once lost, his conversion to Christ and then the perils of his journey towards heaven.

[4:57] And he took this journey, his journey from the city of destruction towards the city of glory, the celestial city, the city of glory, the city which is to come, heaven.

Christian's journey, it started here in that city of destruction when he realised where he lived was about to be burnt with fire from heaven for its sinfulness and corruption.

A man dreamed a dream of a man on a journey and this man was provoked with that realisation the city of destruction was to be the city of destruction.

It was to face God's destruction and damnation as he thought on the scriptures such as this that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away and the day with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also and the works therein shall be burnt up.

The pilgrim knew that he needed to find the city of glory. He had to find that city of glory for his refuge so he began his search for this kingdom of pure joy.

[6:14] He started a journey from home with a book in his hand the Bible. He started the journey with a book the Bible in his hand and a great burden the weight of his worldly cares upon his back.

He was weighed down with worldly cares and concerns upon his back and like the pilgrim we are all starting out in the city of destruction. We are doomed we are lost.

Many stay there in that city blinded they cannot see careless they stay put in their peril and are eternally lost in the city of destruction.

For pilgrim it was different. A man came a spiritual guide named evangelist the man named evangelist visited Christian and he represents for us a faithful witness who points others to the cross points others to the Christ the way the truth the life a faithful witness was this man evangelist pointing others to the saving grace of God an evangelist urges the man flee flee run for your life flee for your life flee from the wrath to come flee from the city of destruction and find the city of glory. this was the pressing message evangelist gave the man the gospel the gospel message and he urged him flee from the wrath to the city of refuge to the city of glory God leads us out I noticed in reading the word lately how it emphasizes this truth that he is the God who brought us out brought us out of the land of Egypt isn't he isn't he still that God is he your God the God has brought you out out of the land of Egypt he leads us out out of the city of destruction out of the condemnation into his salvation he leads us out of the world he rescues us out he plucks us out from the city of destruction and what was most pressing for this pilgrim was his consciousness of his burden we see the man taking a journey and we see secondly a burden this man was weighed down with this intolerable burden by this great and heavy burden this knowledge of his sin that's what it was that's where it begins salvation begins when we realise all have sin and come short of the glory of God a burden a burden a burden of sin the knowledge of his sin was like this weight this heavy load this heavy sack that he could not remove of his own doing a burden the knowledge of his sin and by reading that book that precious book in his hand he came to understand this burden that he bore by reading the book by reading the book in his hand here he was with this heavy burden upon his back with a book in his hand graceless came to see his condition lost condemned damned under the wrath of

[9:37] God God's judgment and the message that he read it caused him to tremble it caused him to cry he got convicted of his sin and he came to desire that city of glory God's heavenly city yet to come he desired that city and his burden was so unbearable as it's variously pictured in modern movie portrayals of this it's this huge load that's just bowing him down with this burden his burden his burden of guilt his burden of shame his burden of sin he just had to find deliverance and every man on earth faces death and hell Hebrews 9 27 it says and it is appointed unto man what to die once to die but after that the judgment some will think oh I'll get another chance

I'll come back as a as a butterfly in my next life or whatever it be garbage you get one shot at life one life one death then judgment it is appointed once to die but after this the judgment and this man's burden as he came to realize this as it gripped his heart this heavy burden of his guilt of his shame of his hopelessness outside of Christ it pictures for us a soul guilty without Christ this weight of sin was so heavy upon him and his cry was what must I do to be saved how can I be saved many

will wonder never finding the way to be saved never finding the way of escape never finding the city of glory some will sink into despair and defeat yet pilgrim kept pressing on to escape the judgment of God he pressed on to search to find eternal truth eternal life and we meet many characters in Bunyan's story along the way as we travel with him further just like we meet all types of people in our lives in our own lives and we may recognize some of those kind of people as we make our own life's journey we see some of the characters of pilgrim's story in our own lives some people for example like obstinate obstinate was one of the characters

Bunyan met rebellious towards anything that is spiritual obstinate another man was pliable sort of oh just go along here I'll go along there curious sounds interesting but weak willed he just got diverted not willing to put his sure trust in Christ he got discouraged when something happened that was hard and he packed his bags and went back home pliable some people are like that aren't they they just oh I'll follow God if it's easy and I'll hear it but they don't commit to Christ they're not trusting in him and another character is talkative blah blah blah blah people like that talkative he is all talk in truth he was a prayerless drunk a deceptive unsaved man talkative we meet people like that don't we through life's journey people that are maybe just obstinate pliable just blowing with the wind or talkative all talk and not really knowing the saviour and then we see next in the story that Christian encounters the swamp of depression

I'm using some I've changed some of the terms to make it a bit more modern the swamp as it were he fell into this swamp this swamp land this bog this mire this swamp of discouragement and that can happen for all of us as we seek after God as this burden gets heavier and heavier loading us down as pilgrim's doubts and fears and temptation as his lust and shame and guilt was overwhelming him and he came and fell into this bog into this stinking swamp a foul putrid swamp as his heavy burden weighed him down he was sinking glug glug glug and in such a time the pilgrim prayed!

he cried out and he was pulled out by help a man came his name was help we need some people like help in our lives don't we some help let's be one of those kind of people a help pulling the man out of the bog this sinner convicted of his sin help drew him out and he told him how this swamp was made from the corruption and scum and filth of sin so pilgrim journeyed on this book in his hand this burden on his back he journeyed on and this book penetrated his heart his soul and drew him closer to the message of salvation!

[15:32] Mr world wise man but he was a false teacher we can counter people like that don't we this so called wise man was truly a fool a fool with a silver tongue and he pointed pilgrim to the village of morality he says that's where you'll get rid of your burden that's where you'll get free from your burden go to the city of morality there you can be delivered from your burden through morality, through moral rules, through keeping the law.

Some would wrongly tell us that if we live a moral life, just be a good person, just try harder, just be good. As if that can make you free from your guilt and make you right with God rather than through Christ.

And they are deadly wrong. Worldly wise men was deadly wrong. He tried to deter Christian, to detour him, to give up his silly fascination with faith and to stray from his path.

Morality and law cannot save. They cannot free us from the load of sin. We see the scriptures tell us that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

The law can expose our sin. Condemned. Condemned. Guilty. Judged. Sin. Sin. Sinner. The law tells us.

[17:09] It exposes our sin. It shows us for who we are, for what we are. But it cannot cleanse the heart. It cannot loose that oppressing burden of our sin. The world's wise men and all the rules and learning of them cannot remove the load of sin.

Thankfully, we see that Christian found a deliverance. He started on his journey. He felt that burden of sin. Now we come to deliverance.

The pilgrim pressed forward and he found the place of deliverance. Mount Calvary. Mount Salvation. The cross of Calvary. The cross of Christ. And the tomb of Christ.

Because he's risen now, of course. And Christian's burden, as he caught that, by the eye of faith, he put his trust in Christ, crucified.

And the burden just fell away. It just fell away.

[18:12] And it rolled down into an open tomb. Only at the cross can the burden fall. Only at the cross can you be freed from your burden of sin.

Not by man's wisdom. Or by the keeping of the law. But by the cross. Our deliverance is found there. And Paul cried, it's not by wisdom that man knew God.

But it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching. To save them that believe. And he says, but we preach Christ. Christ crucified. That's verse 23.

But we preach Christ crucified. That's the message. The message of deliverance. Deliverance only can come by this saving message. Man is saved only by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

As we read that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures. And that he was buried. And that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. That's the gospel in a nutshell.

[19:18] That's the vital message. Nothing, nothing else but the blood can save a soul and set you free. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can loose that burden of your sin off your back and transform a life.

The word of God shows a man not only that he is a sinner, but how to be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. As we hear, God manifests faith in our hearts, doesn't he?

We trust his word. We trust his message. We believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour. And the cross does what nothing else can do.

Nothing else. Nothing else can do what the cross can do. To remove the pilgrim's burden. And the pilgrim received forgiveness. His heart was set free. He was renamed Christian.

[20:24] No longer known as Graceless. Now Christian. Christian. He received God's grace. For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God. Good works, baptism. Good morals, keeping the commandments. Religious ritual. Nothing of that can save you.

No actions of your own doing. But all of his grace can lighten that load. Take your sin away. Free. Free. Free.

Free. As Christian came to the cross, his burden fell from off his back. He set him free. And his heart was set rejoicing.

Conversion. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, is a new creature, old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

[21:23] Next Christian receives peace. New garments and a scroll as a passport into the city of glory. He receives the seal of the Spirit of God.

He's saved a saved man. And he's got it in writing, as it were. By the order of God. Saved.

Declared. Saved. Old things are passed away. All things are become new. Saved. Saved.

Gloriously saved. Along his journey further, we see that Christian met some other characters such as Sloth.

Who's ever met someone like that? Oh, just take it easy. She'll be right, mate. Sloth. Don't care about the things of God.

Another man was hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. You know, going their own way. These men, they vainly tried to make it on their own way. As if there's some other way.

[22:27] There is no other way. No other way. No other saviour. No other salvation other than Christ. Many vainly tried their own way only to find it doesn't reach the destination.

And they vainly go the broad way. Where does it lead? To destruction. Instead of taking God's narrow way. Deliverance only can come because of the narrow way.

Because of the narrow gate that leads unto life. Few there be that find it. Another fellow that Christian encountered. His name was Mr. Atheist.

Who's ever met a guy like that? A sadly foolish and blinded man. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

They are corrupt. And have done abominable works. There is none that doeth good. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

[23:31] What a grievous condition to be in. Thank God God can still save atheists too. If they will but receive the message.

Christian overcome many obstacles on his journey. The Christian life will mean testings and trials for you.

I can't tell you it's your best life now. And it's all going to be fine and dandy. No, there will be times of testing. We know that Christian overcame many such things on his journey.

One was the hill of difficulty. The hill of difficulty. Sometimes it's uphill, isn't it? The Christian life, uphill, a battle. Christian overcame some great lions that were another test as he entered a place. And after he saw that the lions were chained, they could not hurt him because he was safe in God's keeping. We face a committed enemy.

[24:40] Brother, sister, you've got an enemy. Don't be unsettled by trial because we're too expected. What are we to do?

Be sober. Be vigilant. Because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

We've got a roaring lion, but he's all raw. God is your keeper. Resist the devil. Submit to God.

We are assured deliverance by the promises of God. The promises of God are yea and amen.

Christian then took his rest after he'd entered that palace beautiful as he'd gone through the narrow path between the lions.

And he found a place built by God. A place of refreshment. Isn't it good to have a place of refreshment? A place of fellowship. A place where we can be refreshed with the word of God as pilgrims on the pathway.

[25:45] As godly travellers. While as pilgrims we'll face many trials on our travels, but we can know God's prevailing peace. The scriptures are our comfort and guide.

And our Lord says unto us, unto you, come unto me. All ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Rest unto your souls. Truly the Lord is our loving burden bearer and our great deliverer. We can take heart in the promises of God. People of God.

You've got the promises of God. Take a hold of them. Now right through Christian's story, right through the Pilgrim's Progress account, we see it's full of scripture. It's very encouraging to take it to heart.

Read it and watch it as you can. Christian also found the support of many angels along his journey that sustained him and delivered him. And guess what?

[26:46] Angels look after us too. Amen. The Lord sends angels as his messengers to watch over us, to support and sustain. Next, Christian faces the battle.

The Christian life, the Christian journey, it means battle. It means you face warfare. And Christian received the armour of God.

We likewise have that armour, that precious godly armour, God's armour, the armour of God. His armour, he promises to us in Ephesians 6, as we could read more than I've put here, but put on the whole armour of God.

That you may be able to withstand, able to stand against the wiles of the devil. You know, there's a song, the devil is a wily old fox, isn't he? He's got his wiles.

He's a wily, crafty, sneaky, cunning, crafty character. You can stand against the wiles of the devil.

That wily fox called the devil. You can stand against all his schemes.

[27:55] He's the greatest con artist that ever was and will be. You can stand against him. Because you're wearing the armour of God. And it tells us further that we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

Seems like it sometimes, doesn't it? Some of the people in our lives. But we wrestle not against them. There's something more. There's principalities, there's powers. There's the rulers of the darkness of this world.

The spiritual wickedness in high places. That's where the wrestling match is. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all

to stand.

We're under attack. Satan attacks these travellers on the road, trying to make us doubt in our faith in Christ. In the account of Pilgrim, it tells us how Christian then encountered a demonic dragon like Apollyon was his name.

And it came to light that Apollyon was the god, small g, of the city of destruction. He was the god of where he was in his lost estate. The god of the city of destruction, Apollyon.

[29:02] And as believers, we face an ongoing combat against the god of this world, Satan. An ongoing combat. As we fight the good fight of the faith, we are dressed for battle, clothed with God's armour, bearing a stout shield, the shield of faith, and a good sword.

It tells us of the sword. It tells us of the helmet of salvation. It tells us of the sword of the spirit. The word of God. It is written. It is written. It is written. That's how Satan was crushed by the word of God.

It is written. The devil trembles when the word of God is declared. And we have that strong sword of the spirit. And while the enemy will fire his fiery darts, his flaming darts at us, as Christian was here, as Apollyon was there battling with him, the god of this world, and the Christian bears the sword of the spirit, the word of God.

And he has that trusty shield, the shield of faith. And when Satan attacks you, you can call on the name of the Lord. You can call on the name of your deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christian stood firm in faith. And he fought Apollyon with that two-edged sword. And we have that same sword today, don't we? The very sword of God. For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

[30:38] It's alive. It's powerful. Christian then next enters the fearful valley of the shadow of death. Who's ever been there? I'm sure we've all been there, or will be.

The valley of the shadow of death. When a loved one passes, when we see the grieving, the loss, there's comfort still, isn't there? There's comfort there, even there, even there, in the valley of the shadow of death, in those times of grief and loss.

Here is another testing place, another spiritual battle that we all face. We all encounter this. And amidst the gloom, Christian heard the words, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Friends, Christians, the perils that face you will include the valley of the shadow of death. But God is with you.

You need fear no harm. As he leaves this valley, the sun rises on a new day. And in this fight of his faith, he would surely come to know a victory.

[32:00] A great victory. Let's just recap. He's on a journey. He had a burden. He found deliverance. He braved the battle.

And then we see a victory. Glory to God! The Christian life is victorious. You are victorious. You are more than a conqueror.

Christian met another pilgrim called Faithful, who had also fled from the city of destruction, who joined him along the path. And next they arrived at a place called Vanity Fair.

Vanity Fair. And everyone there was staring and mocking at them, for these two looked rather different. They looked different. They spoke different. From all the traders at the fair, you can imagine a showground, a fairground, all music and mayhem, and fun and entertainment.

And it's like there's a diversion there. It's a diversion, isn't it? As believers, we can expect to face opposition from the world. This world hates God.

[33:08] It hates you. It hates the Saviour. And Jesus said, they will hate you. As we face opposition from the world, the war goes on.

Yet God has made us more than conquerors. He's made us overcomers. Overcomers. And so the word tells us, as we come into this place, as it were, this place, the Vanity Fair, it represents for us the world.

The world and all its toys and trinkets. And the townspeople thought it was funny how the pilgrims didn't seem interested in any of their wares, their trinkets, their fancies, their toys.

This world is not my home. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and as pilgrims, abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

The message is still the same. Likewise for us, we are in the world, but not of the world. And people will think it funny. You're following Christ, you're different.

[34:16] You act different. You don't talk the same talk. You don't walk the same walk. You're changed. I was talking with a brother lately who's personally found that.

The joy of salvation. He's renewed his faith, his fervour. He loves the scriptures. And there's a difference there that his family, just blown away by.

Amen. We're different, aren't we? They separated people, aren't we? This world and its toys and trinkets has no appeal.

Might be times it does, but honestly and deeply, we know it's not anything to search and hunger after, is it? It's nothing.

It's as dross, it's as rubbish in his sight, who is our great love, the lover of our soul.

[35:19] So we see, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. This world is not my home. Love not the world and the things that are in the world.

If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So we see this fair, this vanity fair, there's a picture of this vain worldly ways.

Vain worldly ways. Vanity, vanity fair. As the preacher cried, vanity, vanity. All is vanity. Leisure and pleasure. Carnal pursuits.

Might it be sport? Entertainment? What is that in comparison with the city of glory?

What is that? Rubbish. I count it, but dunk. That's pretty, pretty offensive, isn't it? Pretty offensive language.

[36:22] That's what the scriptures call it. Dung. That's what I count it. For some travellers, it can be a distraction. When vanity gets in the way, the vain and empty pleasures and the leisure and pleasure of this world.

Not to say we can't have a bit of leisure and pleasure and time to chill out, but it's when that becomes the be-all and end-all as it is for some.

And at another time, then we see Christian and hopeful were offered abundant silver from a mine. A man called Demas came along and said, look, I'll give you all this silver in my mine.

And likewise, too, the enemy will tempt believers through worldly wealth. It becomes another detour, doesn't it? Oh, I've just got to worship the almighty dollar. You know, as if making money is what it's all about.

I count it but, Dung. The devil will tempt us through all means. Yet Christian, the pilgrim, excuse me, Christian got the victory over this temptation.

[37:33] Through the distractions of vanity fair, the love of the world, the things of the world, worldly wealth, it was as nothing for him because what does that profit a man?

If you gain the whole world, you get more than Bill Gates or whoever, some flash person who's got lots of money or means.

What is that? If you gain the whole world and you lose your own soul, it's nothing. We all come in empty-handed, naked and we leave the same way, don't we?

You can't take the trailer with all your treasures to glory. You leave it all behind. Christian knew what it was to put the word into action but seek ye first, first, the kingdom, the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

And so they were there in this place called Vanity Fair What will you buy? What will you buy? said one merchant to them mockingly and the man says we buy the truth and sell it not.

[38:43] For the believer, we know that the word calls us to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth, on things above.

Christian and hopeful did not chase after these attractions and the business of the fair. And friends, today, God's values, Bible values, Bible truth, are contrary, contrary to the ways, the culture, the values of the world and its thinking, aren't they?

We are contrary. We are a contradiction to the world. And as believers, we are living in a hostile world. It hates the gospel. It hates Bible-believing Christians.

It hates people who stand up and witness for Christ. As believers, we are in a hostile world. And we can expect to face persecution and even death.

Maybe not in Australia, not yet. But brother, sister, whose side are you on? And yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

[39:49] So don't think it's something strange, some trial. Don't think it's something unusual for you. You will, will suffer, shall suffer. Persecution. If you're a godly one.

And faithful here in the story, the account as it goes, at this time at Vanity Fair, faithful and Christian were held before the magistrate and faithful, one of them, was executed, burnt at the stake as a martyr.

That can happen. That can happen. It did in Bunyan's time in such a time as that. And it can happen and it is happening today. Christians getting killed for the faith.

You know, they make some big show about something that's happened right lately in New Zealand. But there's things happening in the Philippines. There's Christians getting killed. Just gathering in a church like this and bang, people get slaughtered.

That could happen here. What's going to stop you? So faithful was put on trial. He was burnt at the stake and he was carried away by a chariot to the city of glory.

[40:55] He got a quick, he got a shortcut, as it were. The martyr, he was taken. And a Christian then found a new travel companion for the rest of his way called Hopeful.

And they walked in victory. But together they overcame many obstacles and opposition. But they would face more. And brother, sister, you will face peril and sword.

Potentially. we see that then they encountered the giant. It's called the giant despair, a cruel giant. This great big ogre. A great overwhelming giant called giant despair.

But they knew God's victory even there. What about you, Christian believer? You might face times of despair. Wow. Life's like that, isn't it? We're emotional beings.

Sometimes Christians can have a breakdown. Sometimes Christians can get overwhelmed by the situations that they're going through such that they despair. But thank God that even in this cruel giant despair's doubting castle, as he imprisoned them there and as he punished them, as they were held captive, they found God's victory even there, even there.

[42:13] And you, dear Christian, can find victory. You can find freedom. You can find God's care and release even in a time of despair. They suffered much there.

It was a place called Doubting Castle and they suffered. And this is a picture for us maybe of Christians who might doubt their salvation, feeling overwhelmed by life's circumstances.

Brother, sister, we face many giants. They prayed. They prayed. They prayed. And then they realised, Christian remembered that as he met with evangelists, evangelists gave him a key. Gave him a key. A key as it were. And the key was called promise. And it represented to Christian the promises of God.

The promises of God. And it tells us in the word that we have exceeding great and precious promises. We have great promises from God right here between the covers of this book.

[43:21] Exceeding great and precious promises. And many times we can be tempted. We can find times of despair in Doubting Castle. Times of discouragement. Giants can seem to overwhelm us like it's just everything's bigger than we can manage.

But God's promises are bigger, aren't they? God's promises are here for us. We can confess the word in our situation. We can find God's word. It brings us victory. Whether it be the temptations of the world, the flesh, or the devil, we have an assured victory.

This is the victory. It tells us this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. And as Christian then, he's coming to the close of his journey as he approaches that heavenly city, the city of glory, the celestial city.

As he approaches that city Emmanuel city, he climbs through the mountains of Emmanuel and he sees the many blessings of God. As it were, he sees the provision of God.

He sees the bounty of God. And it pictures for us as we could consider it of the mature Christian living in spiritual victory.

[44:33] He's been through the battles. He's got his shield. It's got a few dents in it. He's had his trials and testings, but there is spiritual victory for you, brother, sister.

And he caught his first glimpse of heaven. And Christian and hopeful then, it says, they crossed the river of death and arrived safely at the gate of the city of glory and were given admission because they knew the saviour.

they were his own people. And, you know, there's others that tried to get in some other way, tried to get in through other means and they were turned away.

But Christian and hopeful were given admission. The door swung open and they were received into glory. And friends, there's many lessons we can learn and applications we can make from this story and it's just a man's story but I put to you it's got a lot of biblical truth right through it.

It's weaved through with biblical truth. It's a great story to get a hold of. Share it with your children.

You can get easy read versions. You can get, as I say, it's on YouTube. There's multiple versions of it.

[45:47] The Pilgrim's Progress. It's full of scripture. It's full of the salvation message. There's many lessons we can make, applications we can learn. Satan was working all the time right through, wasn't he?

Right through from the city of destruction trying to convince Pilgrim, don't worry about your burden. Satan was working all the time in many guises through the story as our determined enemy and he still is, isn't he?

You've got an enemy. Realise that. Realise that. You have an enemy and he's committed against you.

We see that the path that the Christian must take. The path we tread at times is not easy. And isn't that true for you, for me?

We face afflictions. We face testings. Some would tell you, as I've mentioned, as if the Christian life is some bed of roses and it's all going to be easy.

[46:51] It's not. That's a lie. It is not easy in the sense that we will face afflictions and tests. We will suffer tribulation.

We will suffer terrors and dangers, pits and snares, despair and death, potentially. Let not the troubles deter you from the path.

God does not guarantee a Christian popularity, wealth, fun and smoothness for being in his will and way.

Granted, he gives us blessings and he helps us, he lifts us up, but it's not about making it a fun time. There's no guarantee of that.

We are guaranteed his grace and his keeping. We face times of affliction and testing as we serve the Lord and more so as you serve.

[47:51] You will be hammered and you'll be hated. There will be trouble and danger, there will be discomfort and peril and pain. Let it not deter you, saint of God.

Let it rather stir you to press onward. The question is, will you be like Pilgrim in the Pilgrim's Progress? Will you be like Pilgrim or some of those other characters that we covered?

And there's many more in Pilgrim's book. I'm just scratching the surface. But it's quite funny how he paints people with different names and you can see, oh, I can see some of those people in my life's journey.

And there are five things, just to recap, five things I've put to you that I've learned that stood out for me from this story. Firstly, we're called to be pilgrims on a journey to the city of glory, fleeing from the city of destruction.

Secondly, he will lose that burden of your sin. If you're outside of Christ and you've got that burden, it's a good thing that you're burdened by your sin. It's a good thing to be convicted of your sin.

[49:00] Because salvation starts with that, doesn't it? That we realise, hey, I can't make it myself. I have a burden. I'm sinful. I'm a sinner. But the grace of God gives release from that burden of sin.

As we bow before him, as we receive his gift of salvation, as we receive, as we turn from our way and trust his grace and saving, he looses the burden of sin.

He brings forgiveness for our sin. And will you depend upon his deliverance? The only saviour, Christ the Lord, the only way is by the cross.

The only way is by the crucified one. Christ crucified for our sins. He's the only saviour who died for our sins and rose again. He's the only one whose trust can save you by trusting his.

Saving mighty deliverance. And lastly, sorry, will you brave the battle and fight the good fight of the faith and stand for Christ? Or will you be of those who give up, turn back, fall asleep, and are defeated?

[50:13] Who will you be as Christian? Dogged, determined, trusting, despite everything he encountered, despite all his battles and trials, despite all of the setbacks, despite all of his own foolish detours.

He got to the city of glory, the heavenly city. but some were half-hearted, weak-willed, turned back, they fell asleep, they just didn't trust him, and left the path.

They stayed in the city of destruction, in defeat. I put to you today, brother, sister, arm yourself with the armour of God's word. Go forth in faith and courage to meet the enemy.

Let it stir your heart to greater works of service, to greater exploits. Know the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith.

Even your faith. Be like Christian, a Christian pilgrim, and know the burden can be loosed from your back by the grace of God, as he found that saving grace.

[51:33] And friends, today, you might be like Christian here, pictured as he was the pilgrim, burdened with the burden of sin. But after this picture, we see the burden fell off his back, as he put his trust in Christ, as he realised Christ died for my sins.

He rose again. I trust him now as my living saviour and Lord. And the burden was loosed from his back. That can be you today.

If you've yet to trust him, I urge you, see me afterwards, talk to me personally, email me, make a time to meet with me, or we can talk straight after now to talk further.

And Christian believer, have you been stirred this morning? Have you been stirred to consider, to avoid the detours that the devil would divert you to?

Don't stray from the path. Press on, press forward. Press towards the mark. We're going to close with a song now, and it's a song that is 335 years old.

[52:40] So, 335 years old. It wasn't one of these mod ones. Nevertheless, it's just as relevant for us today, isn't it?

To be a pilgrim. 335 years old. It was written by the author of Pilgrim's Progress, the one and only song that we have of his. It was written in 1684.

I don't know if he wrote it in the prison cell, but these words tell us how we ought to be minded to be pilgrims. Amen? Be a pilgrim.

Let's stand, shall we, as we close with this song? I know we haven't sung it for a couple of years, actually, so I'm probably the only one who knows it. So, help me sing it if you can.

This is number 70. And think of these words as we sing it, because it follows on from the story that we've heard about today.

[53:39] He who would value and be gains all disaster let him in constancy follow the master.

There's no discouragement shall make him once relent his first about intent to be a pilgrim who so beset him round with dismal stories do but themselves confound his strength the more is.

No foe shall stay his might! he with giants fight he will make God his right to be a pilgrim since law thou dost defend us with thy spirit!

We know we at the end shall life inherit! Then first he's free away I'll fear not what men say I'll live the night and day to be a pilgrim Let's pray.

Lord we thank you that in life's journey we can know a burden lifted a saviour realised a salvation purchased and received as your precious gift to us eternal life our sure promise Lord let it be such that each one would know that and that we would labour on as it were and press forward in this gospel race in this walk of faith in this journey of life this pilgrim journey Lord help us to be such that we'll press forward and know your victory every step of the way in Jesus name we pray amen god

bless you