To be a Pilgrim – John Bunyan’s Great Invitation. Part 1

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[0:00] I will say that one of the most wonderful things that ever happened to me was to be introduced by Dr. J.I. Packard to an audience, and so that will go into my own spiritual autobiography when the time shall come.

But this morning it's my pleasure to invite you into a great story of pilgrimage from which I have taught for quite a lot of years now.

And when I opened this Pilgrim's Progress up for my students today, many of them have not read it in childhood, as many of you would have.

So what I want to know, I'm just going to ask you, you don't get any prizes and I don't have any bonuses or stars or anything, but how many of you have read Pilgrim's Progress? A lot of you.

How many of you read it in childhood? How many of you read it more than once? Okay. That's very interesting. I mean, partly you're here because you have read it, and so there's a bit of a self-selecting quality about this, but there's still a remarkably high level of readership of this great work in a room like this.

[1:10] And that's pretty impressive, because you must remember it was published first in 1672, and that's a long time ago. Most books published at that time have long air now since being read, except by a few like Dr. J.I.

Packer, who reads John Owens and tells us that we all ought to. But Bunyan went one better than John Owens. He told stories.

And stories outlive sermons. I'm sorry to say. Maybe I'm not sorry to say, because I love story. But we all love story, and Bunyan was able to put into story form the great vision of the heroic life.

The life lived under the call of God that was just an ordinary life, just anybody. In the old Middle Ages plays, they would call this person every man.

But he stops being ordinary at the moment that God's call touches his life. And from that moment on, he's not just anybody. He is one of the elects of God on his way to the celestial city.

[2:17] And Bunyan was able to see that the ordinary life lived under the call of God becomes a heroic journey. Now, the gift of that to you and me is almost inestimable.

It's almost inestimable, because we almost can't imagine ourselves without that quality of significance and theology, that we're moving in a direction.

Even with all of the postmodern deconstruction of the sense of self, if you are here because you were formed by Christian faith, because you were called into the life in Christ, you have lived all your life with a sense that there is a significance about your life that was unrepeatable and that was sealed to you by the call of God.

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And that is a gift of a sense of worth and value and direction that in many ways, of course, comes to the scriptures, but has been brokered into the modern consciousness of the Western world by John Bunyan.

Now, once it's stripped of its spiritual significance and of the call of God as that which makes this life significant, it very quickly loses its sense of coherence. That is, the modern self, under the pressure of no longer understanding what grants that significance, is gradually disintegrating.

[3:35] And we see that in literature. My daughter just last, on Friday night in Halifax, went to Neptune Theatre's performance of Samuel Beckett's play called Happy Days, in which a woman, it's mostly a one-person play, in which a person is buried in a mound and gradually the mound comes up around her head and her monologue continues through the acts of the play as she is buried in solitude and terror and absolute isolation and gradually is buried.

That is the picture. Samuel Beckett got it. Without this sense of God's call on our lives, without our sense that our lives are lived towards God's call and directionally and intentionally and under God's gracious hand, we very quickly become these isolated monads.

And in that, the disintegration of the self, which those of you who are studying in the university context these days are very well aware of from contemporary literature. So, what I'm talking with you about in these two mornings is this life lived as hero journey.

This call of God that gives us a sense that what we do day by day matters on the grand scale. That God's call can reach us and call us out on pilgrimage.

In teaching this course, I almost always, and I do teach a whole course on this at Regent College where I am back now. Those of you who were with me last spring maybe don't know we made a major move to Nova Scotia to our early retirement acreage home in the Annapolis Valley.

[5:12] And we, I come back to teach for blocks of time at Regent's gracious request. And so, I'm right now teaching this course. And I'm going to try very hard not to try to give you the whole course in these two mornings because I think that would be too heavy.

But, I have a lot I'd love to tell you about. And I won't, I won't be able to talk about lots of things. But we will follow some things on these handouts. And I have some illustrations and so on to show you.

But when I start this course, I almost always read Psalm 84. And I want to just read that psalm as the, part of the scriptural rooting of the image of pilgrimage because Bunyan didn't come up with the idea of pilgrimage.

He didn't think, oh, what would be a wonderful picture of the Christian life? The idea of pilgrimage is deeply embedded in the scriptures, deeply embedded in the English life and even in the countryside.

So, the other great picture of pilgrimage in English literature is Chaucer's Canterbury Tale. And if you want to get a real sense out of literature of the great divide that the Protestant Reformation made, you read the prologue to Canterbury Tales with this happy, motley crew of people going half on a holiday, partly on a religious trek, but generally kind of a feeling of festivity and conviviality.

[6:30] And they tell their stories to beguile the trip. And then you put that beside Pilgrim's Progress and you see the intentness of purpose, the seriousness, the significance, and that the goal of the pilgrimage is a goal beyond this life.

And you get a sense of, whoa, there's a kind of a depth dive on the theme of pilgrimage, which has always been there, but which is at a new whole level of the individual Christian traveling in company with other believers, but that the individual life has this quality.

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So let me read Psalm 84, verses 1 through 5, and you can take on the whole psalm in your own time to this week. But this is this wonderful psalm that goes with the pilgrimage to the temple.

As the Jewish people would go up to the temple to worship, then there would be this psalm in their hearts. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!

My soul yearns, even thanks for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Do I know what the goal of the pilgrimage is?

[7:42] This is it. Even the sparrow has found a home and a swallow, a nest for herself, where she may have her young. A place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house. They are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

To stop in the middle of a psalm almost breaks my heart, but I'm going to just let that text move us into this theme of pilgrimage for this morning. And let's just look to the Lord in prayer, and ask that he would bless our time together.

Father, we just pray that in this room you will see hearts set on pilgrimage. That there will be an intentionality about our walk with you, and a sense of that yearning that draws us that would become palpable.

That you would lead and guide us in our thoughts, as once you led and guided John Bunyan to give the gospel to the world and the new narrative.

[8:56] We give you thanks because you are the one who calls us, the one who equips us, and the one who in your presence we worship. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, my friends, Bunyan. I gave you a handout that gives you a little chronology of his life and time.

And this is borrowed with thanks from Christian History magazine, which had a whole feature on Bunyan, which I give you the date of, Volume 5, Number 3. And I was so happy to get all of the kind of English period that Bunyan lived and worked in, on one sheet.

So I hung on to this. And I'm not going to give you all this walkthrough, because that's another whole thing. But when you're trying to place Bunyan, you're going back to the 17th century. Remember last spring we talked about George Herbert and John Donne?

They're the early part of the 17th century, sort of 1620, 16 to 1635, kind of where they're flourished. Well, 1615 to 1630.

[10:05] But early part. Think of them as the early part of the 17th century. And then you have the huge event in the middle of the 17th century, which is the Puritan Revolution, when the Commonwealth was established under Cromwell, without a monarchy for a period of time.

And then you have the restoration. So you have the 17th century in sort of three big periods. You have the early Stuart monarchs, and then you have the beheading of Charles I. You have the Puritan Commonwealth government, the Republican government under Oliver Cromwell from 1640, roughly, 1642.

I think you would see here. Let's just see. Just find me where the parliament is convened. We're going to go up.

Yeah. That doesn't show me the Cromwell, the onset of Cromwell government, roughly 1642, I'm going to say. 49. 49. Okay.

The war, there is the last civil war fought on English, between the sectors of English society, between the monarchists and the Puritans, and then 1649 is the Cromwell government.

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[11:24] And this ends when Cromwell dies, and his son Richard is not nearly as gifted a leader as Cromwell. Cromwell was a very gifted leader. If you want to know about this period, Antonia Fraser's book, Our Chief of Men, Cromwell, Our Chief of Men, is really a very fine accounting.

And as a Catholic historian, she gives him a much better press than he usually gets, which I think he richly deserved. But at any rate, his son was not up to the standard of his father.

And so the English called back their monarch. That is in Charles II, they invited him to come back and take up the reins of government in 1660, and you have the return of the monarchy at that time.

So Bunyan's life, which is 1628 to 1688, 60 years span, spans across that huge convulsion in English history, which was the civil war and the period of experimenting with Republican government.

And he is himself as a young man, probably 14 or 15 years old, really very young, in Cromwell's army. In fact, that may be where he began to hear the gospel preached fervently, because Cromwell, one of the things he did was arrange for preachers of the strong Puritan caste to preach to the troops.

[12:52] And it could well be that the beginning of Bunyan's own personal journey could be rooted in those short years that he was in the army as a young man.

At any rate, he emerges out of that period as a converted Puritan, and he tells his story in a book called Grace Abounding.

And when you think about the history of English literature, the first great spiritual autobiography, and indeed the great spiritual autobiography, in English. Next only to Augustine's Confessions, in terms of its influence on English thinking, and the first to be written in the memoir mode, particularly, is Bunyan's Grace Abounding.

There are earlier spiritual journals of various kinds, but Grace Abounding is Bunyan's own story. And if you want to get some background on what went into the Pilgrim's Progress, who Bunyan was before he became an ardent Puritan believer, then Grace Abounding is the story.

My students find Grace Abounding either very interesting or very, very distressing, because Bunyan doesn't just have, he doesn't, somebody doesn't present him with the four spiritual laws, and then he says yes, and then he signs his name at the back of the book.

[14:10] Bunyan has a very long struggle to enter into a confident, assured sense that he truly belonged to God. This was a factor both of his personality, which seems to have been generally depressive with some periods of extreme depression.

Richard Greaves, who is his most recent biographer and a historian from the University of Florida. Richard Greaves studies Grace Abounding with a psychiatrist friend, and they agreed that he had a general low-grade depression with periods of extreme depression when the bottom fell out.

So when you're reading this book, you're in this kind of a roller coaster. It's kind of, boom, boom, boom. It just gets a little glimmer. It starts to think, yes, maybe he is among the elects. And then he loses his confidence, and he goes down. And finally, the scriptures come to him, warranted by the Spirit.

And that was a very, very important aspect of Puritan conversion, was that nobody could tell you that you were of God's elect except the Spirit of God.

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And so when you're reading Pilgrim's Progress, the short synopsis of the Puritan experience of salvation is near the end of the book when Hopeful tells his story. The long story is given to us in the whole book, but when Hopeful tells his story to keep them awake, they tell stories to each other when the journey gets tough, and they're starting to feel like, I'm sure they're going to make it all the way, then they tell each other the story of God's gracious dealings in their soul.

[15:38] You hear the 17th century English. Something we've lost so huge, the idea of sharing what has God been doing in your life. But they tell each other their story, that keeps them awake and encouraged, and on they go with the story.

So Hopeful's story is told as they're fighting off the weariness near the end of the journey. And Hopeful, who is the companion figure in the second half of Pilgrim's Progress, tells his conversion story, and it is in little, the whole Pilgrim's Progress, and the whole model of Puritan conversion experience.

So when you want to know what I'm saying here, that's where you go, to that little vignette in set in the Pilgrim's Progress. Well, Bunyan, because he, and by the way, take a look at the picture.

This is an early, taken from an early engraving of Bunyan. We had a reproduction of this in the rare books room in the University of Alberta, where I did my doctoral studies, and this lithograph of this engraving hung on the wall.

So I worked under my stern taskmaster's eye, but I was never sure which one. He had this like cast in his eye. There was this sort of this feel of, you know, just know whether he was watching with that eye or that eye, but one way or another, he was there.

[16:57] And this is an old, old image of Bunyan with the typical hair of the period and the typical look that was given. Later, later engravings dolled him up a little.

They got the cast out of the eye and he looked better. But the early ones show him just like he was. And that's kind of fun too, isn't it? He, Bunyan then, now a vigorous young convert, discipled in the scriptures by his Puritan pastor, John Gifford, as he tells us in Grace Abounding, has now been called to preach.

So by this time, he's now a preacher of the word. And under the Puritan understanding, the ordination of God was by the spirit and the call came from the church and he responded by preaching and as they responded by listening and the church growing and the congregations enlarging, as they came to hear him, he was a popular preacher well known.

So you see here, 1656, he's first preaching in public and by 1660, he's in deep trouble because the king has come back, has rendered an edict that says that the only preaching in the realm will be done under the king's licensing.

And so all the preachers in the realm were invited to apply for that licensing. But Bunyan, because of his beliefs that only God could ordain and only the congregation could, only the church could call, made that very, very important distinction that to accept the king's ordination would be to compromise his call.

[18:37] You look back in history and you think, oh man, Bunyan, that's, you know, those are pretty, that's hair-splitting, that's pretty fine. If the king wasn't willing to give you a license, you should have just signed a form and kept on preaching.

But you know, it's those distinctions that were made in the 17th century. And those of you who are students at the University of England know this. It was those distinctions made in the 17th century that granted us religious liberty today because it was a freedom of conscience matter.

You had the freedom of conscience to hear God's call and live under it as you were instructed by the spirit and within the life of the church. So rather than accept or rather than apply for, the king's license, Bunyan accepted in prison.

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They played really rough. Nowadays we look back on this period and we start to say, oh, you know, the church was a little bit pressed or there were difficult times. It was, the historian Gerald Craig called this the period of the Great Persecution.

He has a book called Puritans in the Age of the Great Persecution. People like Bunyan, people like Baxter are the representatives we still remember of a whole clergy, of a whole set of people who were distrained of their earthly goods, they were robbed of their property, they were thrown in jail, they lived hand to mouth, often just kind of being looked after by some of the members of their congregation from time to time, and they suffered terribly for the right of the conscience to follow the call of God, not as a matter of state, but as a matter of conscience.

[20:15] They feel. It's what the Pilgrim Fathers brought to America, and it's become a major, a major tenet of the American culture that is the separation of church and state.

But it was that, that idea, which we have not been so concerned about, those of us who stayed with the British Crown, was established in suffering. So, Bunyan's in prison, and there's an image that many people will remember became, became very well known in the Western world when Terry Waite emerged from captivity in Lebanon.

and Terry Waite, who was the English clergyman who went to try to negotiate with the terrorists, which is always a scary thing to do, and that had been in prison for three years, I think, a long imprisonment, said that a friend had sent him a postcard of John Bunyan, and he held up to the press the day he was released a picture of this postcard which was the image from a stained glass window in the new Bedford meeting.

They call it the Bedford meeting, the church that John Bunyan actually founded or was certainly part of in its very, very early days continues to be a church in England, although it has a museum quality, it now has a museum attached, but in a more recent building of this church, they put in a series of stained glass windows, and this picture of Bunyan in prison writing, looking out, and actually seeing not just Bedford but beyond it to the celestial city is an image that Terry Waite held up to the cameras, and I was just finishing doctoral work and I was so excited I thought, my goodness, it was suddenly our topical subject, and he said, this is what kept me going in prison, was remembering that I am part of a company who have been imprisoned because they sought to do God's will and God's work, and that picture, imaged by the television when Terry Waite was released, actually spurred a huge new interest in Bunyan.

Suddenly, sales of Bunyan started again and furthermore, fundraising went ahead for a new, the building of a new museum for the Bunyan memorabilia that had been kept by the Bedford meeting in a kind of poor condition.

[22:37] Suddenly, there were funds for their expansion and necessary expansion, so it's fascinating how these stories keep looping back in, and just the image had been sustaining. That is a lovely image, and I stood under the stained glass window in Bedford, but I think it's a little bit romanticized for Bunyan's conditions.

He certainly would have had, he would have a table and a desk, but he certainly was in a, would have been in a very small and unpleasant cell.

His family, I think, would have probably had to provide his food, and there was not much grace shown to prisoners. If you were a prisoner, you were disposable, dispensable.

He does tell us that he had a few books with him, so that's a great comfort. He had his Bible. I don't, you can't imagine him without it. He had his Bible and he had Fox's Book of Martyrs, and Fox's Book of Martyrs did for him what this picture did for Terry Waite.

It told him, you are part of a long tradition of people who've been willing to suffer for the faith, and for him that was an enormous consolation. And we're not sure if he had anything else, but for sure he had those two volumes.

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[23:49] There seems to, a really intriguing thing, won't it matter to you so much, but I'm very intrigued by the thought that he seems to have been working at some point on a concordance of the scripture, or he had a concordance with him that never has been found, but he had some way of accessing the scriptures, and either was compiling a concordance, or actually perhaps had one.

At any rate, the main text he had was the Bible, and the main thing he had now for the first time in his life was time, and he began to write much more politically.

He had to earn a certain amount, he had some farm employment of the sort of 12 cents a day that Conrad Black is now doing, or 12 cents an hour, or whatever that Conrad Black is now working for.

He had prison work making shoelaces. I'm not sure whether he braided them, or whether he just put the tips on them, or what he did, but that was his prison work, which made a few, a little bit of income for his family.

But in general, his family suffered, and his wife had to look after the children. We have the record of his wife going to the judge and pleading for the readings of her husband.

[25:00] And it's a very moving record, and it is another aspect of this period of time that these plain people were taught by the scriptures, they were literate because of the scriptures, and actually had the confidence to go before magistrates to take their stand, and in this case, she requested Bunyan's release.

At any rate, he was in prison with a short break of a few months. He was in prison for 12 years. But 12 years is a big chunk of time in a person's life.

Do you think forward 12 years or do you think backward 12 years? That's a long imprisonment. And when I think about it, I think about the way Zolzhenitsyn says in the Gulag Archipelago that the judges in Russia under the Stalin period just said, 10 years or 20 years is old.

What's that on a man's life? And that little piece comes back to me as you see this very long incarceration. But during this time, Bunyan does really become a great writer.

And so one of the things that I always find as I'm reviewing this material is God's providence. And the Puritans would love to think about God's providence.

[26:17] That he was working in Bunyan's life to create the very conditions in which the work to which he ultimately was called would happen. And for me, this is hugely encouraging because there are circumstances in our lives that can't make any sense to us.

And yet God's providence is never absent. And the Bunyan's story is a particularly eloquent testimony to the fact that his imprisonment no doubt allowed him the time away from the work of the everyday work because these were lay preachers.

These were not preachers who were on wages. He was still mending pots. You know that he was a tinker. Do you know that about Bunyan? Most people know a few things about him. Most of them know he was the tinker of Bedford.

That is, he itinerantly went around to the little towns, the little semi-rural towns of the area mending pots. And mending pots was a very modest, it wasn't a profession, very modest calling by anybody's analysis.

In fact, I would think it wouldn't be too far socially above dumpster divers in our culture. They were considered, they were considered to be just, you know, this was a job the very poor did for the poor, for the people who needed their pots mended.

[27:35] And so he would, he would travel around with his pack on his back that would contain his anvil and his little brazier, his little stove. And he would stop at the houses where pots were and actually set up his little brazier and then the pot on site.

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And that was his work from which he, along with his preaching, he was removed by imprisonment. So set aside, he writes, and out of his time comes first a number of religious, religious, to use the category, Christian tracts, little, he was engaging the dialogues of the day, so he writes little pamphlets and tracts to try to explain particular doctrines.

Then comes in 1666, grace abounding, which he writes as a letter from prison to his congregation from whom he is separated. He says, and he says, I'm writing this so that you will be encouraged and edified and, he says, I'm writing it so you will also remember the place where God met you.

And he has a wonderful, there's a wonderful line in the preface of grace abounding in which he says, remember, remember the, the barn or the hedgerow or the milk parlor, he doesn't use exactly those words, but he's saying, the place on the farm where God met you.

Just imagine the thrill to the ordinary person that God meets me in my daily place of work when I'm milking, when I'm plowing, when I'm doing my pot mending.

[29:12] And he had indeed met Bunyan. So, with that, what we want to do is really talk about the book. He does, he publishes Pilgrim's Progress Part 1 in 1678 after another brief re-imprisonment.

He was released briefly and then he was incarcerated again. Some people think it was the second incarceration that allowed him the privilege of revising his manuscripts and actually getting it to press.

So maybe, you know, that's all part of this providential period in his life by which he became an established writer. When Bunyan died in 1688, England was right on the cusp of what they would come to call in England the Glorious Revolution when William of Orange became, and Mary became the monarchs and the Protestant fact of government, the Protestant Reformation finally became established fully politically in that, in that time.

He lived then 1628 to 1688 through the extremely troubled times through times when you were the ruling party by being Puritan to times when you were put in jail for being non-conformist.

By non-conformist, Bunyan, as Dr. Packer has laid out for you in this learner's exchange many times, I'm sure, and the best introduction to this material about what is a Puritan is in Dr. Packer's quest for godliness, the introduction to quest for godliness.

[30:44] But there were Puritans within the Anglican Church, people like, some people think George Herbert would be in that group, but certainly there were Puritans in the Anglican Church and that was a very strong movement wanting to further purify the Church.

But there were also Puritans who felt outside of the Anglican Communion, felt that they were complicit with the king and with the mixing of state and church if they went into the Anglican Church and were non-conformists and that they didn't conform to the edict of the king that all worship would happen within the Church of England.

So Bunyan falls into this non-conformist group, which is why he landed so very persecuted, so did Baxter, these great men of his Puritans. What's very interesting is that from that position, Bunyan wrote books that had real universality.

So what's quite fascinating is that when you're reading Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, it has been loved by Christians of all stripes. Anglicans, Catholics, non-conformists of all times, it has been used globally as a missionary tool, almost every place missions went, people took the Bible, first task was to get some Bible translated, second task was to get Pilgrim's Progress translated.

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It is a truly global book, truly universally has spoken to people. And even when you studied in the secular academy as I did, where people are not believers, they still sense the quality, both of the writing and of the vision of what it is to be human that undergirds this story.

[32:26] And it is now strongly established as the leading non-fiction narrative of the 17th century. I think that would be the least to say of it.

There would be much more you could say. Out of this life that Bunyan spanned in 1628 to 1688 as his first editor who gathered his books for a collected works edition right soon after his death said he lived 60 years and published 60 books.

So that's how I can always remember how many books he wrote and also how old he was. And so he published 60 books. That's a lot. How many, Dr. Packer, did you publish? I'll let you do the rest of it and get back to us on that.

Do you know? Are you competing with my name? No, I'm not 30. 30-ish. Well, get at it. What's that? Sure.

At any rate, of these 60 books, five rise as his great works. And that, for me, is hugely encouraging as a writer of the books.

[33:34] It's like, you know, shots on gold, you know, just keep doing it. Whatever you're called to do, keep doing it because out of that many, a few emerge. You're wanting to see something interesting.

No, okay. Yeah. So his five great works are these. The Grace Abounding, which I told you about the spiritual autobiography, which is told in first person, and it's his own narrative of conversion, well worth reading.

Then, Pilgrim's Progress, part one, which you're all going home to read, I'm sure. There are copies here which you can buy at the end, it's the time, by the way, if you don't have one. Then, in between, part one of Pilgrim's Progress and the sequel, to use today's language, part two, is a book called The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, and that's often seen as the proto-novel of the English novel tradition, because it's the first sort of realistic story with a figure who is recognizable in a village in a particular kind of way.

Then, Bunyan completed Pilgrim's Progress by writing Pilgrim's Progress part two, and those two parts of Pilgrim's Progress are bound together, and they need to be bound together in your reading.

I'll explain this to you when I walk you through them a little bit. You need both parts of the Pilgrim's Progress to get a good picture of the Christian life, and the reason for that is the first part tells the story of the individual and the call of God on the individual life, so there's a heroic significance of an individual life.

[35:01] He has a companion or two, but you kind of get this lone ranger warrior image, and I think Bunyan knew he had to correct that, and in the second part, you have a company of people traveling together under leadership, and Bunyan's saying, you know, it's a pretty hard journey if you're doing it by yourself.

I'll show you almost, you can almost put a caption on part two, I will show you a more excellent way. Travel in company. Be part of the people of God, and travel as a group together, and it is a safer and a better journey.

Maybe not as hair-raisingly exciting, according to Bunyan's narrative, because some people have said that Bunyan's first part of the story is a heroic journey, and the second is a novel of social manners, or a country picnic, as some people even say.

But it's not that easy. But Bunyan is certainly as puritan pastor trying to say, the journey doesn't have to be as harrowing as it was for dear old Christians, because you can visit the same places he visited, and if you're part of a company, and under good teaching of the word, you can not have the same degree of spiritual angst.

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So I like that too a lot, for a lot of reasons. But anyway, I've given you a map that lays out some of the major events of the Pilgrim's Progress.

[36:29] This is an end paper from a, I think it was an 1895 edition with illustrations by Strang. I can't believe his name.

I always have to double-check his name. Okay. I don't think it probably matters to you, but I like to, yes, William Strang is the illustrator of a very lovely edition of Pilgrim's Progress, which has this very attractive frontispiece with the image of the domestic scene in which the troubled man is having to make a choice between staying in a city of destruction and heading out towards the light.

A picture that is very like some scenes that Bunyan tells you in Grace Abounding as a matter of fact. And this is one of the corrected images of Bunyan with both eyes tracking. Anyway, I worry about him.

I always, you know, I just sort of worry about his eyes. That must have been hard. Here there, people, because this is a story that moves along a journey, this is a very ancient structure and technique for story.

You set somebody in motion. Those of you who know Huck Finn know that you set them on the river, on the raft, and then the events happen down the river, as it were. So this is a long story, and in order to really lay it out, you need to have a very, very straight road with all of these little side excursions around it because Bunyan says the way is straight and the gate is narrow.

[38:08] And so people who try to map it always have some trouble and they come up with various methods of mapping. But you've got, you need to start this story over in this corner because the story opens with a man who lives where we all live when we're first born, which is in the city of destruction, that is, under the judgment of God because of sin.

And I'm just going to read the opening lines of Pilgrim's Progress. This, by the way, this is a lovely edition, this Oxford World Classics, and Bill Reimer brought them in for us, for this class.

But it's actually got some lovely illustrations, good forward and so on, and it's a very nice, a very nice text. So, you will know, those of you who have read Pilgrim's Progress, as often as I see you have read or over time, the opening lines of Pilgrim's Progress.

One of the most famous paragraphs in English language, in English literature. As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep.

And as I slept, I dreamed a dream. He sets up his narrative by taking us through a dream vision, a dream frame. He sets up his, sorry, with a dream frame.

[39:35] And then he says, I dreamed and behold, and now the story begins, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and what?

A great, you can say it with me, a great burden upon his back. You know it. I looked and saw him open the book and read therein, and as he read, he wept and trembled, and not being able longer to contain, he break out with a lamentable cry, saying, what shall I do?

The narrative question is put, and the whole narrative, it's like you've got a tableau that suddenly comes to life. You've given this tableau picture, and now the story is underway.

The man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, is this certain person who discovers by reading the scripture that he is in the city of destruction, and that the only way that he can save, that he can save himself, and ultimately his family, is to flee from this place.

The story begins under an impulse of fear and anxiety, and it moves after this scene at the cross to the impulse of love.

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[40:54] So it begins under, it begins with a burdened conviction of sin brought by the reading of the scripture, something that was a very important part of the understanding of how God works with our, in our lives by the Puritans was that before you could truly experience conversion, you had to at some point recognize the seriousness of sin.

And for the, in the conversion model, that would be the first work of God in your soul, to make you aware that you were a sinner by birth and by choice, and that because of that, you were under the wrath of God, under God's judgment, and needed to flee to the cross for his mercy, so that, and once you saw how great his mercy was, then the whole rest of the journey would be moved under the impulse of love, drawn.

So there's a sense of fleeing from judgment and then the being drawn by love. And it's two sides of the same coin in Banyu's thought.

So I'm going to just walk you through some of these events. We won't get much more than just a look at some of these, but you can then read for yourselves. By the way, when you read Bunyan, you're reading English from the same, just a little later period than the 1611 Bible, the King James Version Bible.

So if you're used to the cadence of the King James Version Bible, this is not a foreign language. This is early modern English, and you could hear it when I read it to you. There's a kind of a sweet simplicity to the narrative style that has been part of Bunyan's huge appeal.

[42:32] He has a vigorous use of Anglo-Saxon-based English. If you said it side by side with somebody like Nelson, you would see a world of difference in English style.

This is really the beginning of modern prose style, and Bunyan is the first great exponent of it, actually, in terms of how he influences English literature. I'm going to come back to the story here, but I just want you to get a hold of what you're looking at here in the end of the book.

Do you realize that next to the Bible, this book was the bestseller worldwide year after year after year for 250 years. Just get a hold of that.

Think of the influence of a book like this on English literature and on our minds. It has, next to the Bible, the biggest influence in English literature. Huge influence on American literature.

If you're an American literature fan, there isn't any piece of American literature in the first two centuries of American literature that isn't deeply, deeply influenced by Banyan.

[43:34] And so, this book then had this enormous, long influence and we all in some ways map our stories against, I think, at least up until the early 20th century, we map our stories against this story and by having a map, and one of the questions you might ask is, you know, what's the good of a map like this?

Everybody's life is journey. Everybody's journey is different. We talk that way now in modern, you know, everybody has to have their own journey. And the fact is that yes, we have our own journey, but we also all have a corporate journey and that have certain features that can be identified.

And by having a map, we can be a little less surprised. So when we are in the Valley of Humiliation or when we are in the Slough, as they say in English, what we would, in America, have to say Slough of Despawn, but when we're in the Slough of Despawn, others have been there before and they have found their way out.

And I find that enormously comforting. So there's not, there's almost no place on this journey that I haven't sometimes been. And that if you read, you may not well map yourself and say, okay, that's interesting.

So a map helps to schematize and universalize the individual experience. And then we have a language to talk about with each other.

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[45:01] And that's been a part of the gift of this. At any rate, when this man first heads out on his journey, I'll show you a lovely, quite contemporary, 1939 illustration of this pilgrim, he tries to encourage some of his neighbors to come along with him.

He first tries to encourage his family. He wants his family to come with him. They think he's crazy. If you want to read a lovely description, some of you who've become Christians in adult years may have an experience that's not so unlike this one.

But let me just read what happens when he begins to feel. Instead of sleeping, he first tries to tell his wife and children.

He says, Oh, my dear wife, said he, and you, the children of my bowels, I, your dear friend, am in myself undone by reason of a burden that lies hard upon me.

Moreover, I am for certain informed that this, our city, will be burned with fire from heaven in which fearful overthrow of both myself, with thee, my wife, and you, my sweet pigs, shall miserably come to ruin, except, the which I see not, some way of escape can be found whereby we may be delivered.

[46:16] This is the man in the picture trying to convince his family of the state they're in. And this is the response. At this, his relations were sore and in. Not for that they believed that what he said to them was true, but because they thought that some frenzy distemper had got into his head.

Therefore, in drawing towards night and day hoping that sleep might settle his brain, with all haste, they got him to bed. Take a Prozac. Calm down.

Calm down. At any rate, this poor, soul-distraught person who had been reading the scripture and discovered in it that there's none righteous, no, not one, there's none that seeketh after God, he's now realizing his state as part of humanity, separated from God, started to head out on his journey and encourages some of his neighbors to come along.

And the first neighbors he talks with are pliable and obstinate. You can see these lovely pages from a 1639 illustration. And they go with him a little, little way.

I think Obdure doesn't go, but pliable goes along with him. Pliable is, you know, one of those who, yeah, this is interesting, let's go. And he goes with him as far as the Slough of Despond. The Slough of Despond is a murky, mucky place where the pilgrim nearly sinks under the weight of his load into the mutt, mug, and mire because it's the place where he is absolutely conscious of his sinful state and he is going to be weighed down by this burden into hopeless Despond if somebody doesn't help him.

[47:58] And he's helped out of this by a divine intervention and one can see an experience of depression in this time. But one of the things that's very helpful as you're reading the map is he discovers that there are steps to get out of it.

There are some steps. And one of the things that Bynch shows again and again is that things are not exactly the way you first look at him. So the Slough looks impossible, he woes, he mires himself, he is in a terrible struggle and then he finds that there are indeed steps cut out of it.

And of course, the steps are the teaching of the scripture and as he comes out of it, he meets, in fact, I always have to stop to follow the story.

Early in this, as he begins to leave, he meets an evangelist who points out the way to him and I'm just going to clarify for myself. He meets evangelist, the person who instructs him in God's grace.

as he's leaving the center and he meets him again as he comes out of the Slough to spawn. Pliable at this point, that lovely little companion, his first companion, Pliable turns around and goes back home.

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[49:12] He says, this is no journey for me, thank you very much. And although evangelist and now called Christian, he's called Christian at this very early point, as soon as he hears the call of God, finds out God's judgment on his condition and begins to move in that direction, he takes up the name of Christian, or is given the name of Christian.

And one of the interesting questions that I look at with students is, at what point would you call this pilgrim, to use a contemporary term, saved? And of course, to the English Calvinist, the question is a bit moot because he is saved by God's election and he's been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and therefore, the minute that the call of God stops being just a general call and becomes his own personal call and he responds, he is now in a process of conversion which will take a long while.

In fact, the whole process of conversion will take the whole journey because its ultimate outcome is glorification in the presence of the king. So this elongated view of conversion, I think is very healthy and cool to us.

There will be moments along our lifelong conversion when new truth is sealed to us by the Spirit and we'll never have to go back there again except to remember that moment at the cross or that time when Christ's sacrifice became real to us or that period of time in our lives when God by the Spirit brought us into a real experience of repentance.

If you're like me and you grew up in Christian faith, you were taught the scriptures from a child, you may not have experienced a great load of guilt and sin as a child. I remember my own children listening to a gospel song that was going on at that time that was popular and it said, I can remember the feeling of guilt in my soul and my little girl age four and a half said, I can't.

[51:13] I was honest. Absolutely honest. But if you have walked with God very far into your adult years, sometime you will know a time when God by His Spirit brought into you the truth of your holy dependence upon His mercy condition.

And He bears it in on you and that may well be your soul of despondent. It may have occurred at some other point along the way but almost all of us will sometime be there. And we will need the Word of God assuring us of His mercy and grace to get beyond that.

As the pilgrim continues on his journey, he has a huge temptation to just not go such a hard and arduous journey but just stop by in the town of morality.

Why not just be a good guy? I mean, what would God ask of me? Why not just be a good fellow next door, be a good neighbor, be a good friend and live a moral life and that should be fine.

And he's very tempted by that, by a man named Mr. Worldly Wise Mac. That voice is deep in all of our heads. That, you know, why make it such an arduous, such a kind of religious kind of a life?

[52:29] Just be a good guy. But as he passes, as he's thinking about going just into this little shortcut where he could just move his family over and all would be cozy and comfortable, he realizes that he's going to try to live in the town of morality.

He has to live under the whole righteous law of God. And that is a thundering mountain, Mount Sinai, that calls out your sinfulness. The law can do nothing, Paul says, but make you aware of your sin.

And so if you're going to choose that you're going to try to work your own righteousness out by the law, then you're going to live under the fearful judgment. And that of God and this pilgrim knows that what he needs is something way more than justice.

He needs mercy. So he heads back and he keeps on the journey. He passes in through the wicket gate and this is the narrow, remember Jesus said, narrow is the way and straight is the gate.

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That means like straight, meaning a little gate. And by the pictures, in Pelican's Progress, there's a little wicket gate. Those garden gates that he has to go through.

[53:40] And each of these scenes along the way is richly embellished. I'm giving you just a storyline. But there's this lovely, lovely exchange at the gate between the soul that is fleeing to God for mercy and is kind of pell-mell rising at the gate and goodwill, God's goodness, God's grace towards us in a person of goodwill says, he says, may I come in?

And goodwill says, with all my heart. I love that, with all my heart. Grace more, God's grace more ready to open the gate than we to knock on it is one of the wonderful pictures of this book.

Where are we at? Oh, I've got to stop. Okay, you need to read the book. You can buy it up here for $10.99. Which is a, I don't know, just 10.

What's that, just 10 copies? Just 10 dollars. Oh, just 10 dollars. 10 dollars even. That is a steal. And that way you can read as far as we've gotten and next week we'll just keep on going on the journey.

Okay? Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. A little time for questions.

[55:03] Oh, okay. I forgot. Do you have a few? This could be question time. I'm happy to engage your questions or discussions. Yes? I see Mary, wouldn't you talk to us about the plan of despair?

You know, we'll just, we'll try to keep walking along this journey. And yes, I think we should talk about giant despair. Which they don't, we don't get to giant despair.

Is it off on the map? I couldn't mind. Well, isn't that amazing? You see, none of these maps are adequate. Like when I look at these various mappings, they miss some points but to miss giant despair is, I think it must have, you get, don't cancel it.

don't cancel it. Yeah, don't cancel it. And if it's not on here, we've got to put it on. Absolutely. Yes. I had not realized. It may just be that it got cut off. I'll have to look at the original but regardless.

Very important sequence. These moments of despond or despair or later on the enchanted ground I think are extraordinarily important because they tell us for those of you who are golfers where the sand traps are.

[56:10] They tell us where, where things get really heavy going and knowing that can help us as we move through our own experiences. So thank you, Phil, for making us look at that because I would want to make sure we cover that.

There was another question farther back. Yes. Who's a French painter who's most known as a strong? Oh. Well, Van Gogh or Van Gogh people say he was, he knew Pilgrit Taurus very well and taught out of it as a young evangelist himself.

So there are very close links between Van Gogh and Bunyan. Some good articles on that actually for those of you who are visual. I don't think he painted, he didn't do illustrations.

William Blake did a complete set of illustrations and those are quite stunning watercolors. Very Blakean in their image. I was just looking to see if that's one of my books has a cover with a Blake image and he's been illustrated over and over again.

If you get to the Bedford meeting sometime, which I could say Bedford meeting, that's the name of the church, and to the museum there, you will see a huge display of illustrated Bunyan's from around the world, many, many different translations and you see the African version with the burden on their head and you see a Chinese version.

[57:32] You see that this is an endlessly translatable story. It makes sense in every culture. I think it's an astonishing thing. Okay, any other questions?

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Yes? When he was writing it, did he draw himself on that? Do you know? We don't know anything about his writing process. We do know. At the beginning of the Pebbles' Progress Part 1, he tells us how he fell into the allegory, he says.

And it's an allegory, you know, where people all represent experiences or particular values. But he does give us quite a little bit of discussion in a rhyming poem at the beginning of the book called The Writer's Apology, The Author's Apology, meaning his defense of his method.

And it's a very interesting study of how he decided that it was okay to tell truth in fiction. That was a huge leap to actually, in Puritan mind, to fame in the Declaration of Truth would be extremely risky.

So he had to convince his first readers when he sent it out to his focus group, he had to convince them that it was all right to use a fictional story to tell the truth. And to do that, he does draw on the scriptures that use parables and allegories and so on.

[58:52] And he uses that as his model. But he does talk about his creative process. He says, he was writing another book and all of a sudden he fell suddenly into an allegory about their journey and the way to glory.

In more than twenty things which I set down, this done, I twenty more had in my crown. And they again began to multiply like sparks that from the colds of fire do fly. So it seems to have just one of those books that erupted in the sense that he was writing two other books just very close to the time.

One called The Great Gate and the other called The Heavenly Footman. And those little track books set up the image which was well known for preaching and he didn't come up with the image of pilgrimage but he was thinking metaphorically as he wrote those sermonic pieces and it seems as though those two almost coalesced to create the image that he found as a center image.

I would think he probably didn't need to map it. I think that the Puritan experience was so clearly taught that all he really needed to do was remember he did two things.

He had a Puritan pattern of conversion which is basically what Owen Watkins says, basically unrest, rest, being comfortable in your life and being at peace to a period of great disturbance to being at peace again but in a new awareness of your relationship with God.

[60:13] That's the simplest the new shape narrative description of it. In a more complex way it follows Paul in Romans 8 that whom God foreknew those who did call those who called he justified those who justified he also glorified.

So there was a pattern of sexual call election call experience of justification then the long process from in this story the experience of justification is experienced that act of God is experienced at the cross.

It's where we experience justification. And then the rest of the journey can be classified as sanctification until the very end of the journey when there's a beginning the adumbration the first sense of the glorification that will yet be fulfilled when they cross the river.

So he had a very good mental map of how God works with soul and I think that he coupled that with his own experience which he told in Grace Abounding and the map is made up of that clear map that was taught so carefully of how salvation happens to us and his own experience and he melds those so that we get this great story.

Yes. Don't sell your own map short Nipsey Dirty Castle is there Oh it's there Yeah You get to it by by half minutes That's right It's off the road Thank you I'm glad Thank you I thought That's where you don't despair is There we are Well we'll So we'll get to None of the None of the detail is there Yes This is schematic So we'll have to take a bypass to get there We will look at Doubting Capital Any other questions Comments Elaborations Yes There seems to be a strong relationship between this and Luther's experience Oh Yes And Cromwell himself Very good And you're entirely right In fact this is why you all need to be

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[62:27] Grace Abounding as well as Cromwell Forest But in Grace Abounding Bunyan tells about as he was going through this long Really what he did was spend a very long time in here Although in his own experience he actually went he flirted with the idea of just fixing himself up before he kind of went into the real despair was he really one of God's chosen and elect and he did get a copy of Luther's Galatians and he writes with just a true book lover's joy he says about this time an old book did fall into my hand and it was so old it was nearly falling apart and he was excited to read this and he said I was most interested to see people from ancient days had something of my experience so he actually read his own experience in the light of Luther's experience and found Luther's breaking through into grace a huge comfort to him yeah very very like that some of you might like to look at the movie

Luther there's a fine movie just with that that would give you a sense of Luther's story and certainly he found another way that he was mapping into this story yes you mentioned five out of his 60 books that stand out which what's that oh good thank you I do those things because I knew one too quickly the fifth is the holy war which is his second great allegory there's two great allegorical pictures of Christian life that had come to Bunyan down from the fourth century on at least and maybe earlier are the Christian as wayfarer and the Christian as warfareer the two great images and so in holy war Bunyan revisits the idea of the soul of citadel under a usurping king and what has to happen to set the soul free he actually revisits in a whole book that did John Dunn did we do batter my heart free person god he revisits as a whole book study the batter my heart free person god poem that we did in middle so that's his other great work and it's another great allegory but it is a little more complex than

Feltz's Progress and has not had the same completely captivating popular appeal I'll fill the book have you ever looked at what comedians were looked at who the labyrinth of the comedians I have looked at it I've had comedians that Rinse of the World and the Paradox of the Heart which I think Bundy would be outside the immediate influence of those kinds of works because they were being read in the academy and Bundy only had a grade three education you need to remember he said at the beginning of Great The Boundary I was sent to school for an education like that of an ordinary poor man's child sort of thing so he had about a grade three education which would mean that he had basic literacy and the beginning he had a little bit of they would study some Latin but he said he quickly forgot all of that but he doesn't become really literate in the sense that he can read with his own sense of judgment and with his own understanding until he begins to be so heart hungry that he starts to read spiritual material and indeed the scriptures so it's a journey into literacy as well as a spiritual journey which is one of the things that is really interesting thanks so much thank you thank you

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