After Christian and Hopeful parted ways with Ignorance, they continued on their journey. When they came to a certain place, Christian remembered that something had happened in the vicinity to a man named Little-faith who lived in the town of Sincere. Here is a summary of what happened:

- Little-faith sat down and fell asleep at Deadman’s Lane.
Three rugged scoundrels – Faint-heart, Mistrust, and Guilt – came over to Little-faith as he was getting up.

As Little-faith was getting ready to continue his journey, the men made him stand up and then demanded his wallet.

Mistrust took his money while Guilt struck him on the head with a large club, knocking him to the ground.
• He was bleeding to death on the ground when the thieves heard someone coming down the road. They were afraid it might be Great-grace, so they ran away.

• After a while, Little-faith came to and struggled on his way.

• The thieves were not able to take his jewels but got most of his spending money.
Today, we will consider multiple metaphors in Bunyan’s allegory about the true nature of faith. What is faith? Is it contrary to reason? How do we obtain it? Does our faith remain static or does it grow? How does one live by faith? How important is it?
What Is Faith?

• **Objective meaning**: when we speak of “the Christian faith.” “I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

• **Subjective meaning**: a personal attitude that looks away from self to God in Jesus Christ.
What Saving Faith Is Not

1. **Blind credulity:** a blind leap in the dark.

2. **Intellectual assent:** believing in certain historical facts. “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder” (James 2:19).

3. **Temporal well-being:** trusting God for finances, safety, health, loved ones, etc.

4. **A mystical affair:** as if achieved through direct contact with God.
5. **Psychological manipulation**: arising from undue pressure on a person to believe something.

6. **Artistic appreciation**: a genuine feeling that arises when one stands to observe the three cardinal virtues in the universe: beauty, goodness, and truth.
Three Elements Of Saving Faith

1. **Knowledge**: knowing about something without giving assent to it.

2. **Assent**: acknowledging the truth of a statement or proposition.

3. **Trust**: The “Chair” illustration.
• **Section I:** The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe in the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.
Section II: By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principle
acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.
• **Section III:** This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.
Faith: 12 Propositions

1. Faith is the gift of God. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

2. Faith is made effective in the hearts of people by the Spirit through the ministry of the Word. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).
3. Faith must be nourished by the means of grace (e.g., truth, prayer, the sacraments, etc.).

4. Saving faith rests upon the truth of the testimony of God speaking in his Word.

5. Saving faith unites us to Christ and is the sole condition or instrument of justification.
6. Faith is not a mere intellectual conviction of the truth of truths revealed in the Scriptures, but includes a hearty embrace of and a confident reliance upon Christ, his meritorious work, and his gracious promises.

7. Faith, although always as to essence the same, is often different in degrees in different persons, and in the same person at different times.
8. Faith is exposed to many enemies, and may be often and in many ways assailed and weakened, but that, through divine grace, it always in the end gains the victory.

9. Faith grows up in many to the measure of a full assurance through Christ.

11. Faith has no merit before God; it is not our contribution to complement what God has done for us in Christ for our salvation.

12. Faith is the instrument by which we receive the grace of God.
• “But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of \textit{little faith}?” (Mt. 6:30; cf. Lk. 12:28).

• “And He said to them, ‘Why are you timid, you men of \textit{little faith}?’ Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm” (Mt. 8:26).
“And He said, ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” (Mt. 14:29-31).
“And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said to them, ‘Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ And they began to discuss among themselves saying, ‘It is because we took no bread.’ But Jesus, aware of this, said, ‘You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves because you have no bread?’” (Mt. 16:5-8).
Etymology Of “Little Faith”

• The compound word is oligópistos, meaning “of little faith or trust.”

• The first part of the word, olígos, is an adjective literally meaning “few in number” or “little, small, few.”

• An oligarchy is “a government by a small group of people; a form of government in which the exercise of power is restricted to a few people or families” (OED).
Faith Has To Be Exercised

• Refuse to allow yourself to be controlled by the situation; refuse to panic.
• Remind yourself of what you believe and what you know. Faith holds on to truth and reasons from what it knows to be fact.
• Faith applies what you know and believe about your relationship with God to particular situations.
"This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (I Tim. 1:18-19).

Intellectual doubts may have their basis in a conscience that has been disobeyed.
“I sometimes wonder if there is any more vital lesson for Christian living than this: that God has condescended to our weakness by making us promises, that he will never break them, and that faith reckons on his faithfulness by grasping hold of them. We sometimes smile at the
Victorians’ ‘promise boxes.’ Biblical promises were printed on small pieces of paper, rolled up like miniature scrolls and stored in a wooden box for random selection in times of need. And, to be sure, that practice did wrench the divine promises from the context in which they were originally given. Nevertheless, I rather think that even such a naïve trust in detached promises was better than the present-day accurate but
A More Vital Lesson?

unbelieving knowledge of the promises in their context. So many of us complain of spiritual doubt, darkness, depression and lethargy, of besetting sins and unconquered temptations, of slow progress towards Christian maturity, of sluggishness in worship and in prayer, and of many other spiritual ills, while all the time we do not use the secret weapon which God has put into our hands.”