In our last two lectures, we explored the Hill Difficulty as a metaphor for the various trials, losses, and difficulties we encounter as we make our way toward the Celestial City. Acknowledging that suffering is a certain and integral part of living in a fallen, broken world, we examined what it means to enter into the darkness and to be sustained by Christ’s presence and wisdom.
“About halfway up the hill was a pleasant arbor made by the Lord of the hill for the refreshment of weary travelers. When he got there, he sat down to rest. He pulled his roll out of his coat and read it; it gave him great comfort. He also reflected again on the coat that was given to him when he stood by the cross. At last he fell asleep. It was a deep sleep. This detained him there until it was almost night.”
“And while he was sleeping, his roll fell out of his hand. Then someone came and awakened him, saying, “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!” With that, Christian suddenly got up and sped on his way. He went on until he came to the top of the hill.”
An Arbor

Arbor, n., A bower or shady retreat, of which the sides and roof are formed by trees and shrubs closely planted or intertwined, or of lattice-work covered with climbing shrubs and plants, as ivy, vine, etc.
God’s Provision

• “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt. 11:28-29).

• “Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest” (Ex. 23:12).

• “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while” (Mk. 6:31).
“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?”

- Proverbs 6:6-9
Lessons From The Arbor

• Christian forgot that the arbor was provided by the Lord for *temporary* rest and refreshment.

• Christian forgot that this was not the end of the journey, that the Lord still had more work for him to do for the expansion and edification of His kingdom.

• Christian forgot that he was to continue growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ.
Lessons From The Arbor

• Christian forgot that he was to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

• Christian did not realize that he had become self-satisfied with his roll, his robe, and his acceptance with God.

• Rather than taking a brief nap, in his complacency he fell fast asleep – and he was only half-way up the Hill Difficulty.
Lessons From The Arbor

• As a result of his losing his roll, he met Timorous and Mistrust who were running, full of terror, in the other direction.

• Christian learned that nothing takes away courage like the awareness of guilt. Timorous and Mistrust are the consequences of his sleeping at the arbor.
When he came to the top of the hill, he saw two men running as fast as they could towards him. The name of one was **Timorous**, and the other was called **Mistrust**. Christian asked, “Sirs, what’s the matter? You are running the wrong way!”
Timorous answered that they were going to the City of Zion and had even gotten up the difficult hill. “But,” he said, “the farther we go, the more danger we experience. So we turned around and are going back.” “Yes,” said Mistrust, “for right in front of us two lions were lying in our path – we are not sure if they were asleep or awake – and our only thoughts were that if we got too close, they would immediately tear us to pieces.”
Timorous

- *Timorous*, adj., full of or affected by fear (either for the time or habitually); fearful, timid.
- Timorous: “The farther we go, the more danger we experience.”
- “It is more dangerous to run down the Hill Difficulty than to clamber up. No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (G.B. Cheever).
Phobia

• The Greek word for *fear* is phobos; it’s primary idea is “to flee” or “to run” although it carries the nuances of “flight” or “terror.”

• Timorous and Mistrust had encountered the lions on the path and turned away to flee in terror.

• “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (I Pt. 5:8).

• Fear is a great enemy of the Christian faith.
“Fear does not exist in isolation. It is a response to danger...You can never be scared, as it were, in the abstract: you are always scared of something even if you cannot say precisely what that something is.”
Why We Should Not Be Afraid

• “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rom. 8:15).

• “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (I John 4:18).
“I have no fear of the future. Let us go forward into its mysteries, let us tear aside the veils which hide it from our eyes and let us move onward with confidence and courage.”
Mistrust

• Mistrust, v., to be distrustful, suspicious, or without confidence.
• Disobeying the Lord grieves the Holy Spirit and diminishes the confidence we once had.
• Once our confidence is gone, we begin to doubt whether the Lord will ever use us again to bear fruit in His kingdom.
Christian’s Response

• He openly acknowledged that Timorous and Mistrust had made him afraid.

• Rather than defending himself, he wisely asked a question: “But where shall I go to be safe? If I go back to my own country I will certainly perish there, because it is prepared for fire and brimstone. If I can get to the Celestial City, I am sure to find safety there.”
Christian’s Response

• With careful reasoning, he concludes that he must go on. He realizes that to go back is nothing but death. On the other hand, to go forward is fear of death.

• At the end of his journey, he fully expects to gain eternal life.

• His conclusion: “I will continue to go forward!”
THE LOST ROLL
He discovered that his roll was missing when he reached for it after Timorous and Mistrust ran down the hill.

After becoming distressed over it, he remembered that he had slept in the arbor on the side of the hill.

Falling down on his knees, he asked God to forgive him for his foolishness and decided to go back to look for his roll.
Christian’s Trip Back To The Arbor

• His sorrow intensified as he reflected on the “evil of his sleeping.” “Oh wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the daytime! That I should sleep in the midst of difficulty! That I should give in to my fleshly desires and to use that rest for the ease of my flesh. The Lord of the Hill built it only for giving relief to wearied pilgrims! How many steps have I taken in vain!”
Christian’s Trip Back To The Arbor

• He came to understand that he had to take the same steps three times, but with sorrow instead of joy and in the dark rather than in the light of day.

• Christian looked under the bench where he had slept and saw his roll. He quickly grabbed it and put it inside his coat.

• He gave thanks to God for directing his eyes to the spot where it lay.
He started up the hill again, but the sun set on Christian before he reached the top. Recalling his sinful sleep at the arbor again, he lamented that he had to walk on without the sun and feared the possibility of roaming lions.

While he was feeling regret about his failure, he looked up and saw a stately palace called Beautiful.
“It is a fearful thing, when the night comes on, when danger and perhaps death are drawing near, and you need all the comfort, consolation, and support that you can possibly derive from a good hope in Christ, to find that hope is gone from the soul, to find darkness where there ought to be light.”
“So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”
Acts 24:16
“Right in front of him was a stately palace called Beautiful. It stood just beside the highway.”
The Palace Beautiful