Introduction

Today, we will begin our second year studying the allegorical masterpiece, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, by John Bunyan (1628-1688). Having taken a two-month break since our last lecture, we will begin this morning by examining the benefits of studying this classic work and by reviewing the primary characters and places we encountered along our journey to the Palace Beautiful.
Fifteen Benefits
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1. Bunyan provides a true biblical picture of the Christian life from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

2. The many metaphors Bunyan employs illustrate important biblical truths which are crucial for us as we seek to live out the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. We are able to comprehend the true nature of things through our imaginations (as well as through propositional truth).

4. The amazing clarity of Bunyan’s work exposes false theologies and enables us to discern truth from error.

5. Great wisdom and practical insight is given to us for the purpose of helping us on our way to the Celestial City.
6. The various people we meet in Bunyan’s allegory are representative of the people we meet throughout our lives. A careful study of Bunyan’s characters provides us with the tools we need to relate to others in a God-honoring way.

7. Christian’s successes and failures provide encouragement and warnings to us.
8. The allegory reminds us that we are pilgrims in this world and that our true citizenship is awaiting us in heaven.

9. We are reminded that our only hope for salvation is through the blood of Christ and His finished work for us on the cross.

10. We are encouraged when we learn that Bunyan avoids legalism and perfectionism and always points us to the gospel.
Fifteen Benefits

11. We are given a new “language” by which we may communicate with one another with greater understanding and meaning.

12. Through his brilliant dialogues, Bunyan helps us understand that all who profess Christ are not true believers – that there are counterfeit pilgrims traveling with us.

13. The story teaches us to persevere through trials and difficulties.
14. We are reminded that salvation is not an event or a decision, but a lifelong journey.

15. Bunyan’s classic will lead us to worship God in spirit and in truth, and move us to serve Him “so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out as a response to His summons and service” (Os Guinness).
Review of Last Year
**Christian**
The main character in the allegory who travels from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. His name is Graceless when he leaves the City of Destruction, but becomes Christian at the Cross.

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**Evangelist**
He points to the Wicket-Gate and to the shining light. The parchment he gives to Christian is for his comfort and for his entrance into the Celestial City.
Obstinate
He firmly adheres to his opinion and chosen course of action despite sound argument, persuasion, or entreaty. Being inflexible, resolute, stubborn, and self-willed, he tries to bring Christian back to the City of Destruction by force.

Pliable
He has a slight superficial conviction, but no burden on his back. He longs only for the benefits of the kingdom and is unwilling to count the cost of following Jesus. He falls into the Slough of Despond and decides to return home.
Slough of Despond

In the figurative sense, a slough is a state or condition (especially of moral degradation) in which a person, etc. sinks or has sunk. When a person comes under the conviction of sin, many fears and doubts arise in his heart. The slough is a mental, emotional, and spiritual state into which people fall because of their foolish fear, carelessness, and unbelief.

Help

Help, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, pulls Christian from the Slough of Despond, places his feet on solid ground, and encourages him to go on his way. “He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand” (Psalm 40:2).
Wicket-Gate & Light

“The gate itself, the very way of entering into this life, is a narrow one” (Lloyd-Jones). The shining light is the Word of God. “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

Mr. Worldly Wiseman

From the town of Carnal Policy. He offers safety, friendship, and contentment rather than hardships, advising Christian to go to the Village of Morality to be relieved of the burden on his back.
Legality & Civility

With the introduction of these two men, we are reminded of the three-fold purpose of the Law: (1) to be a tutor (child-conductor) or mirror; (2) to restrain sin and evil (civil law); and (3) to reveal what is pleasing to God.

Mt. Sinai

“Either Christ must live and the Law perish, or the Law remains and Christ must perish. Christ and the Law cannot dwell side by side in the conscience. It is either grace or law. To muddle the two is to eliminate the Gospel of Christ entirely.”

- Martin Luther

If a man seeks to get rid of his burden by morality in part, he does not rest on the atonement at all.
Goodwill
After Christian is corrected for going to Mt. Sinai, Evangelist speaks words of restoration to him and encourages him to go to Goodwill, who says “I am willing with all of my heart.” Enter.

Beelzebub
As Christian steps through the Wicket-gate, Goodwill grabs and pulls him. Beelzebub, and those with him, shoot arrows at those who come up to the gate with the intent to kill them before they enter.
Interpreter’s House

The Interpreter is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit illumines Christian’s heart and mind and shows him some “excellent things” which he will need on his journey to the Celestial City.

Picture of a Pastor

This is the character of a true minister of the gospel. Nothing can be more important to every one who inquires the way to heaven, than to be able to distinguish faithful pastors from hirelings, blind guides, and false teachers.
Parlor Full of Dust
The parlor is the heart of a man who has never been sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel. The dust is his original sin and all the inner corruptions of the heart that have defiled the whole man.

Patience & Patience
Passion represents the people of this world, while Patience represents the people of the world which is to come. “Jesus challenged his hearers to choose one master or another – God or Mammon. Either we serve God and use money or we serve money and use God” (Os Guinness).
Fire Burning at Wall
The fire represents the work of God’s grace that is done in the heart. It is done secretly as well as continuously. The one who throws water on it to extinguish it is the devil.

The Stately Palace
This fifth image is about a serious man who puts on his armor, overcomes the deadly force of the palace guards, and victoriously enters the palace to welcoming voices. This “Image for the Journey” is given to prepare Christian for the tribulations, pain, sorrow, and difficulties he will experience on his way to the Celestial City.
Man in an Iron Cage

The sixth image brings us face to face with a man who is locked in a cage of despair, has no hope, is unable to repent, and who anticipates his own judgment and misery in eternity. “Falling away from God finds it origins, development, and impetus in unbelief. Unbelief – characterized by mistrust and unreliability – first comes to expression in disobedience, which in turn results in apostasy” (Kistemaker).

Chamber of Judgment

There is one appointment that all of us, without exception, will keep. In a way that we cannot comprehend now, we must humbly appear before the God of the universe to give an account of our lives. “So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). “For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat” (Rom. 14:10).
Wall Called Salvation

“The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him” (WCF).

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city [Zion]; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts” (Is. 26:1).

The Cross & the Three Shining Ones

First angel: “Your sins are forgiven.”
Second angel: He stripped Christian of his rags and gave him new clothes.
Third angel: He made a mark on Christian’s forehead and gave him a roll with a seal on it.
Three Men Fast Asleep

The men are simple, sloth, and presumption. The Hebrew verb formed from the word *simple* "means to deceive or seduce." This is "the kind of person who is easily led, gullible, silly. Mentally, he is naïve; morally, he is willful and irresponsible...In short, the simple (and his elder brother, the fool) is no half-wit; he is a person whose instability could be rectified, but who prefers not to accept discipline in the school of wisdom" (Kidner).

The *sluggard* is committed to sleep and a life of ease. “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!” (Prov. 6:6).

**Presumption** means “taking upon oneself of more than is warranted by one’s ability, position, right, etc.; forward or overconfident conduct or opinion; arrogance, effrontery, pride” (OED). The sin of presumption is the sin of excessive pride.

With Christian’s burden removed at the cross, he is able to take his eyes off himself and focus on those who are still in bondage to their sins (fetters).
Formalist

Formalism is “the disposition to exalt what is formal or outward at the expense of what is spiritual; the practice of using forms of worship and of religious profession without real devotion or conviction.”

Hypocrisy

“Hypocrisy means play-acting. It refers to the evil habit of hiding one’s real self behind a mask. It amounts to insincerity. Hypocrisy is dishonesty, deception.”
The Hill Difficulty

“The hill Difficulty represents those circumstances which require particular self-denial and exertion, that commonly prove the believer’s sincerity after he has first obtained ‘a good hope through grace.’ The opposition of the world, the renunciation of temporal interests, or the painful task of overcoming inveterate evil habits or constitutional propensities, these and such like trials prove a severe test” (Mason).
**Timorous**

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

**Mistrust**

Mistrust means 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 at the Arbor

“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” (Cheever).

Stately Palace & Lions

The two lions represent the persecution of Nonconformists by the Clarendon Code. The Nonconformists were English subjects who belonged to any non-Anglican church. The first lion is civil despotism (the exercise of absolute authority). The second lion is ecclesiastical tyranny (absolute sovereignty).
Watchful the Porter

Early on in Christian’s journey, Bunyan places the House Beautiful in his path. This metaphor represents the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bunyan is acknowledging the importance of uniting with a local church for the great purpose of giving visibility to Christ’s kingdom, of making known the gospel of His kingdom, and of gathering in all its elect subjects. The porter is a pastor.
The Young Ladies

Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity
“Hence see the necessity of a Christian’s giving good evidences, that he is really possessed of those graces of piety, prudence, and charity or love, before he can enjoy the communion of saints. True faith in Jesus is never alone, but is always attended with a train of Christian graces. These are the evidences of the faith of God’s elect” (William Mason).

The Chamber of Peace

Paul wrote to the Romans: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). This is peace with God which has been brought about through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
The peace of God (Phil. 4:7) is a subjective experience based on a life of prayer.
Christian has both as he sleeps in Peace.
A Prayer for the Coming Year

Our Heavenly Father, thank you for giving to your servant, John Bunyan, the grace and gifts to write an allegory of such substance, beauty, and power. We pray that we might see your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, lifted up before us in the coming year in such a way that we come to adore, love, and serve Him with all of our hearts, minds, soul, and strength. In Jesus name, Amen.