

A New Journey Begins

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of Ruth in chapter 1. And if we read again at the verses, verse 16 and 17, where we have Ruth's confession, where Ruth said, do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts me from you. You know, this confession of faith expressed by Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi, you know, it conveys Ruth's commitment to pressing on towards the promised land. And it also conveys her refusal to return to the idolatrous land of Moab. And Ruth's confession of faith here, it was in many ways the confession of the Christian. And Ruth's confession of faith was also Christiana's confession of faith. Where, as we'll see this evening, Christiana would come to say about her husband, who had, as we saw last Lord's Day, he had crossed over the river of death and he had entered into the celestial city. Christiana could say about Christian, where you go,

I will go. And where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts me from you. And that confession of faith, in many ways, it's what sums up part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. As we said, there are two parts to John Bunyan's famous work, The Pilgrim's Progress. Part one, as we've witnessed over the past number of months, it was the Pilgrim's Progress of Christian. But part two, which is the lesser known story, it's about Christian's wife, Christiana, and the four boys, and how they also embarked on the Pilgrim's Progress, from the city of destruction to the celestial city.

Now, not many people have read part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. In fact, it's said that out of every 100 people who have read part one, only a handful have read part two. And I have to say that I'm not one of the handful, because I've never read part two of the Pilgrim's Progress, which is why I'm so excited about studying this section. And that, God willing, over the next few weeks, we'll walk with Christiana and the four boys, and we'll walk with them along the King's Highway as we go towards the celestial city. And so this evening, I'd like us to consider the opening section to part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. And I'd just like us to think about it under three headings. Three headings, the background, the beginning, and the brokenness. The background, the beginning, and the brokenness. So first of all, the background. The background. As you know, next to the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress is the most printed and the most popular book in the world.

It has been translated into more than 200 languages, and it's never been out of print. And although these are remarkable facts, you know, what's even more remarkable is that Bunyan's time in prison, it wasn't an obstacle to the gospel, but an opportunity for the gospel. It was an opportunity for the gospel. And it was in November 1660, only a few months after the restoration of King Charles II, that John Bunyan was imprisoned in the Bedford County Jail for 12 years. He was there from 1660 to 1672. But when Bunyan was released in 1672, having written part one while he was in prison, when he came out of prison, there was no one to publish it. Bunyan couldn't find a publisher who was willing to publish the Pilgrim's Progress. And so it was shelved for about six years. It was shelved for six years until 1678, when John Owen, who was the well-known English Puritan, he was an Oxford theologian, and he was also a friend of John Bunyan. When John Owen heard that John Bunyan couldn't get someone to publish the Pilgrim's Progress. He asked his own publisher to publish the book. And of course,

John Bunyan and John Owen, they were close friends. In fact, when John Owen, when Bunyan would often come to London, John Owen would often go and listen to him preach. And it's said that King Charles II, who had imprisoned his friend Bunyan, he once asked John Owen how a learned

man like him could sit and listen to an illiterate tinker. But John Owen, he responded with those well-known words. He said, may it please your majesty. Could I possess that tinker's abilities for preaching? I would most gladly relinquish all my learning. And so we have John Owen to thank for part one of the Pilgrim's Progress, which was published in 1678. And as you would expect, it was a runaway success. And because it was a runaway success, it also brought Bunyan and his family some much-needed income. But sadly, there were some who wanted to cash in on Bunyan's success by writing their own sequel. There were others who wanted to correct Bunyan's theology from part one by writing their own sequel. And this actually caused Bunyan and encouraged Bunyan to pick up his pen again and finish what he started and write part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. And so six years after the original book was published, the sequel was published in 1684. And as you would expect from a sequel, there are some similarities, but there are also some differences. The journey from the city of destruction to the celestial city is the same. And some of the original characters, they make a reappearance. But in comparison to part one, where Christian was a man, and as we saw, he was primarily walking on his own.

[6 : 57] What we see in part two is that it's from the perspective of a woman. It's from the perspective of Christian's wife, Christiana, who after Christian's death, you know, she's now a widow, and she has four young children. And it seems that Christiana and the boys are being illustrated or based upon Bunyan's second wife, Elizabeth, who Bunyan left his four children with her when he went to prison. Now, as a father, John Bunyan had six children. Four of his children were born to Bunyan's first wife. We don't know her name, but she was certainly a godly influence in Bunyan's life.

But only after about 10 years of marriage together, Bunyan's first wife, she sadly passed away in 1658. Then the following year, 1659, Bunyan remarried. He remarried an 18-year-old Christian woman called Elizabeth. And it was Elizabeth who brought up Bunyan's four children when he was imprisoned in 1660.

Elizabeth was a committed Christian, and she was passionate about the stand that her husband had taken against both church and state. And she would prove to be a faithful spouse. She would often take her case to London and to the House of Lords and plead for her husband's release. And it's even said that when the judge asked Elizabeth the question, will your husband leave off preaching? Elizabeth replied saying, My Lord, he dares not leave preaching as long as he can speak.

That was the reason that Bunyan remained in prison for the next 12 years. But as we said, in comparison to part one, where Christian was a man and primarily walking on his own, part two is from the perspective of a woman. A woman who was married and a woman who was a mother two children, but now left widowed. And you know, that was actually typical of the 17th century.

[9 : 14] It's also typical of every century, which actually makes part two of the Pilgrim's Progress very accessible and very applicable to us. Because it's written from the perspective of a woman, a wife, a widow, and a mother. And for that reason, you could say that part two of the Pilgrim's Progress is a family story. And it relates to family life and the Christian experience of family life.

But you know, what stands out as we follow Christiana and the four boys is, and the four boys, by the way, they all have names. There was Matthew, who was the eldest.

There was Joseph, then there was Samuel, and then there was James, who was the youngest. So Matthew, Joseph, Samuel, and James. They're the four boys in the story. But you know, what stands out for us as we follow Christiana and the four boys in the Pilgrim's Progress, what stands out is the influence of a godly mother. The influence of a godly mother.

Because, you know, as is often the case, the father figure is not present as much in the home, probably because he's out working most of the time, trying to provide for the family.

Of course, in Bunyan's case, he wasn't present at all because he was in prison, which must have had an impact upon them as a family, not only upon Bunyan as a father, but also upon his wife and his children.

[10 : 46] And what makes part two of the Pilgrim's Progress so interesting is that it's a family story. And it actually makes us realise what many of us have come to discover for ourselves.

And that is the influence of a godly mother. I'm sure that many of us can relate to that. And that we can remember things our parents or our grandparents said to us, or even the way that they lived their life before our eyes.

And maybe we didn't appreciate it at the time, but now we're so thankful for their influence and the importance that they placed upon putting Christ first in their lives and how they wanted to influence us as children and young adults.

And, you know, that's what we see in part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. We see the influence of a godly mother. And we see how important that is. In fact, it was through the influence of Christiana, who was this new convert, this godly mother, where she encouraged the four boys to flee with her from the city of destruction and begin the Pilgrim's Progress together.

Christiana says to her boys, She says, Come, my children, let us pack up and be gone to the gate that leads to the celestial city, that we may see your father and be with him and his companions in peace, according to the laws of that land.

[12 : 22] And so that's the background, which brings us to the beginning. The background and the beginning. The beginning.

And as we'll see, Christiana, you know, she never forgot when Christian fled from the city of destruction, leaving her and the four boys behind.

I'm sure you remember it yourself. That as Christian read the book that was in his hand, this book was convicting him of his sin and convincing him that the burden on his back was because of his sin.

And it was increasing all the time. And as you know, Christian, he tried to convince Christiana and the boys to flee the city of destruction with him. Christian said to her, He said, Oh, my dear wife and you, my sweet children, I, your dear friend, am myself undone by reason of a burden that lies hard upon me.

Moreover, I am told that this, our city, will be burned with fire from heaven and that we shall miserably come to ruin unless we can be delivered. But they wouldn't come with him.

[13 : 33] They wouldn't come with him. And Christian, he became more and more restless about the state of his soul until he burst out crying, What shall I do to be saved? And you remember how evangelist, how he pointed Christian in the direction of the wicked gate.

And then Bunyan writes, So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry out after him to return. But the man put his fingers in his ears and he ran on crying, Life, life, eternal life. And that was the last time Christiana and the four boys saw Christian.

But that's also how Bunyan begins part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. He briefly recaps on what happened when Christian left Christiana and the four boys behind in the city of destruction.

Bunyan writes, he says, Some time since to tell you my dream that I had of Christian the pilgrim and of his dangerous journey towards the celestial city, it was pleasant to me and profitable to you.

[14 : 48] I told you then also what I saw concerning his wife and children and how unwilling they were to go with him on pilgrimage, insomuch that he was forced to go on his progress without them.

For he does not run the danger of that destruction, which he feared would come by staying with them in the city of destruction. Wherefore, as I then showed you, he left them and departed.

Bunyan then, in the opening of the book, he almost gives an apology for taking so long to write part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. But, you know, as a full-time pastor, you can appreciate that it was difficult for him to find time to write a whole book.

And for six years, Bunyan, he kept his readers in suspense. And then Bunyan writes, he says, Now it hath so happened, through the abundance of business, that I have been much hindered and kept back from my wanted travels into those parts whence he went.

So could not till now obtain an opportunity to make further inquiry after those whom he left behind, that I might give you an account of them.

[16 : 02] But having had some concerns that way of late, I went down again thitherward. Now having taken up my lodgings in a wood, about a mile off the place, as I slept, I dreamed again.

And that's how Bunyan begins part two of the Pilgrim's Progress. In fact, Bunyan begins by creating this conversation between himself as the author and a conversation with this wise old man who went by the name of Mr. Sagacity.

Mr. Sagacity. Now the word sagacity, I'd never heard of it in my life, but the word sagacity or to be sagacious is someone with wisdom or knowledge or understanding.

It's someone with intelligence or discernment. And Bunyan, he begins part two by describing this conversation between himself and this wise old man, Mr. Sagacity.

And he writes, As I was in my dream, behold, an aged gentleman came by where I lay. And because he was to go some part of the way that I was travelling, I got up and went with him. [17:13] So as we walked, and as travellers usually do, I was as if we fell into discourse. And our talk happened to be about Christian and his travels.

And I said, What town is that there below that lies on the left hand of our way? And Mr. Sagacity, he said, It is the city of destruction, a populous place, but possessed with a very ill-conditioned and idle sort of people.

Then Bunyan, he asks, Did you never hear what happened to a man some time ago of this town whose name was Christian that went on pilgrimage up towards the higher regions?

Hear of him, said Mr. Sagacity. I also heard of the difficulties, troubles, wars, captivities, cries, groans, frights and fears that he met with and had in his journey.

Our country rings of him. There are but few houses that have heard of him and his doings, but have sought after and got the record of his pilgrimage.

[18:16] And you know, he's actually referring there to the success of part one of the Pilgrim's Progress. It's only six years later, but by then, almost every Christian home in England had a copy of part one of the Pilgrim's Progress.

Then Mr. Sagacity, he goes on to describe to the author, who was John Bunyan, he describes what Christian is currently experiencing in heaven. He says, Of course, you know, the purpose of this conversation between Bunyan and Mr. Sagacity, it's to fill us in.

It's to maybe recap and help us to catch up with what's been happening between part one and part two. You know, it's very clever, or to use Bunyan's word, it's very sagacious.

Because when we discover that Christian is now in heaven, he's in heaven with the king of the celestial city, Do you know, the first question that would come to our mind is, well, what happened to Christiana and the four boys in the city of destruction?

And that's what Bunyan asks Mr. Sagacity. Bunyan says, While it's fresh in my mind, did you hear anything of his wife and children? Who?

[19:50] Christiana and her sons, said Mr. Sagacity. They are going to do as well as did Christian himself. For though they all played the fool at first and would by no means be persuaded by either the tears or the entreaties of Christian, yet on second thoughts, they have wrought wonderfully with them.

So they have packed up and they are also gone after him. And with that, Mr. Sagacity, he offers to explain to Bunyan what happened to Christiana and the boys.

He says to Bunyan, I can give you an account of the matter, for I was upon the spot at the instant and was thoroughly acquainted with the whole affair.

And that brings us nicely to see the last section, the brokenness of Christiana. So we've seen the background, the beginning, and then the brokenness.

The background, the beginning, and the brokenness. So thirdly, the brokenness. And as Mr. Sagacity, as he explained to Bunyan what happened to Christiana, he said that her brokenness, it came in two parts.

[21:03] She was broken because of her sorrow and she was broken because of her sin. She was broken because of her sorrow and because of her sin. And the wise old man, Mr. Sagacity, he said, after her husband had gone over the river and she could hear of him no more, her thoughts began to work in her mind.

First, for that she had lost her husband and of the loving bond of that relation that was utterly broken between them. For it's only naturally, he says, that the living should have many sad thoughts in the remembrance of the loss of loving relations.

This, therefore, of her husband did cost her many a tear. But this was not all, explained Mr. Sagacity. For Christiana, he says, did also begin to consider her conscience and it did load her with guilt.

She was much broken with recalling to remembrance the restless groans, brinish tears and self-bemoanings of her husband and how she did harden her heart against all his entreaties and loving persuasions of her and her sons to go with him.

Yea, he says, there was not anything that Christian either said to her or did before her all the while that his burden did hang on his back but it returned upon her like a flash of lightning and it rent her heart in sunder.

[22 : 30] Especially that bitter outcry of his, what shall I do to be saved? That did ring in her ears, he says, most dolefully.

Christiana was a broken woman. She was broken because of her sorrow and broken because of her sin. She knew that she had lost the love of her life and she had lost him not only in this life but she had also lost him to the Lord.

Christiana was a broken woman and, you know, Christian's last words to Christiana before he fled the city of destruction, his last words, they convicted her conscience.

his last words convicted her conscience. And, you know, my unconverted friend, you know, when I think of some of you and I always think of you when preparing sermons, when I think of you and when I pray for you, you know, looking at this section this evening, you know, I sometimes wonder if you will be like Christiana.

I wonder if you'll be like her and her experience that when the Lord takes your Christian spouse out of your home and the Lord takes him or her to be home with himself.

[23 : 58] Will that cause you then to think more about your eternal well-being? Will that be the means of making you realise how much of a witness they were to you in your home?

Will that be the means? Will that be the means of your brokenness of sorrow and your brokenness of sin? Will your loss bring you to the Lord like it brought Christiana?

Will your loss bring you to the Lord? Because it was when Christiana was a broken woman that she turned to her fatherless children and she said to them, she said, sons, we're all undone.

I've sinned away your father and he's gone. He's gone. He would have had us with him but I would not go myself. I have hindered you of life.

Dear my friend, Christiana was broken because of her sorrow, because of her sin and also because of her sons. Christiana knew that she had influenced her children in the things of the world and not the things of the word.

[25 : 12] She knew that she had hampered and hindered her children from following the Lord. She knew that she had held back when she should have gone. She should have left when Christian left.

And you know, I'm sure there's not one parent who's watching this evening who doesn't want the best for their children just like Christiana wanted the best for her sons. And you know, as those who have baptized our children, you know, we have promised and we have pledged to bring up our children to know and follow the Lord.

Therefore, when it comes to the gospel, we must never hamper and we must never hinder them. Suffer the little children and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

You know, I remember hearing one minister saying to his congregation about the precious souls of children and he directed it more towards unconverted parents who had made baptism vows.

And he said to them, he said to them, be faithful during those years while your children are under your care. He said, even though you might not love the Lord or follow the Lord or be obedient to the Lord, please, please, please, don't take your children to hell with you.

[26 : 41] Don't take your children to hell with you. And you know, that's what was making Christiana afraid. She was broken because of her sorrow.

She was broken because of her sin. She was broken because of her sons and how she had hindered them and hampered them from fleeing the city of destruction. And we read that they all wept together.

They all wept and cried out to go after their father. They all cried out to flee the city of destruction and make their journey towards the celestial city.

And we're told that the next night that Christiana, she had two dreams. In the first dream, Christiana saw a parchment open before her and on it was recorded all her sins.

And when she saw the parchment, we're told that Christiana, she cried out in her sleep, Lord be merciful to me, a sinner. It's the publican's prayer. Lord be merciful to me, a sinner.

[27 : 50] And she cried out so loud that her children who were asleep in bed, they heard her. They heard her crying, Lord be merciful to me, a sinner.

And then in the second dream, that same night, Christiana saw her husband, Christian. She saw him standing in heaven.

Then we're told that the next morning after Christiana had spent some time with God in prayer, she had a visit. Someone visited her, a man called Secret.

Now Secret, he's an illustration of the Holy Spirit who's now at work in the heart and life of Christiana. Because we're told that Secret, he knocked hard at her door.

He knocked hard at her door. And Christiana responded by saying, if you come in God's name, come in. If you come in God's name, come in.

[28 : 53] And you know, my friend, that's how the gospel works. The gospel is like the Holy Spirit knocking hard at the door. And you're to respond by saying, if you come in God's name, come in.

Come in. And when Secret came in, he said to Christiana, he said, the merciful one has sent me to tell you that he's a God ready to forgive and he takes delight to pardon offenses.

He also would have you know that he invites you to come into his presence, to his table, and that he will feed you with the goodness of his house. And with that secret, he handed Christiana a letter from the king and she took it and she opened it and we're told that the letter, it smelt like the best perfume you could ever smell.

And the letter was written with letters of gold and it had the words on it, the king would have you do as Christian your husband for that was the way to come to the celestial city and to dwell in the king's presence with joy forever.

And you know as she read it she wept for joy and Christiana said to this man's secret she said will you carry me and my children with you that we also will worship this king?

[30 : 16] Will you carry me and my children with you that we also may worship this king? But you know secret he said to Christiana one of the most beautiful things he said to her the bitter is before the sweet the bitter is before the sweet you must go through troubles he says before you enter the celestial city therefore I advise you to do as Christian your husband did go to the wicked gate over the plain also put this letter in your bosom that you may read it to yourself and your children until you know it off by heart for it is one of the songs that you must sing while you are in this house of your pilgrimage also you must deliver this letter at the further gate then we read that Christiana and the four boys they just burst into tears and they began to prepare for their journey but while they were about to go two of

Christiana's neighbours come to the house and they knock at the door and Christiana said as she did before when she heard secret knocking she said if you come in God's name come in but the women they were stunned they'd never heard that kind of language before and these two women that came to see Christiana they were called Mrs.

Timorous and Mercy and we're told that Mrs. Timorous was an older woman she was also the daughter of Timorous who met Christian on the hill called Difficulty you remember how Timorous and Miss Thrust they were found at the top of the hill Difficulty and they were running in the opposite direction they were running back to the city of destruction and they were trying to persuade Christian to turn back because of the lions at the Palace Beautiful and needless to say Mrs.

Timorous tried to do the same with Christiana she tried to persuade Christiana that it would be madness to leave the city of destruction and go on pilgrimage to the celestial city Mrs.

Timorous said to Christiana she said you have heard I'm sure what your husband did meet with the lions Apollyon the shadow of death and many other things is the danger he met with at vanity fair to be forgotten for if he though a man was so hard put to it what can you being but a poor woman do but you know Christiana was having none of it she was having none of it she had made up her mind to flee to flee the city of destruction but you know what's remarkable is that the other neighbour Mercy she goes with her and God willing we'll see more of that next week we'll see what happens with Mercy but as this section concludes we see that Mrs.

[33 : 20] Timorous she returned to her house and Christiana and the four boys and Mercy they set off on the pilgrim's progress but when Mrs. Timorous gets home she sends for all her neighbours she sends for all the neighbours and they all go by different names there was one called Mrs.

Bat's Eyes one Mrs. Inconsiderate another Mrs. Light Mind and another Mrs. Know Nothing so when all these women when they all gathered at the house of Mrs.

Timorous they all began to gossip they all began to gossip about Christiana and her intended journey towards the celestial city but you know what we ought to note and this is very important what we ought to note is that the gathering of these women and the gossip of these women it didn't stop Christiana fleeing the city of destruction and beginning the pilgrim's progress the gathering and the gossip didn't stop her from fleeing the city of destruction and beginning the pilgrim's progress and you know my unconverted friend I want to ask you in conclusion this evening is it true to say that the gathering and the gossip is what holds you back from fleeing the city of destruction and

beginning the pilgrim's progress Ikon

I IOOO I I as Sometimes wonder if you fear that you'll become the focus of the gossip.

If you were to flee the city of destruction. And that you'll be gossip not only among your friends but also your family and your neighbours. If you were to flee the city of destruction and begin the pilgrim's progress.

[35 : 30] But you know my unconverted friend. Look at it in light of eternity. Because in light of eternity. What does the gathering mean?

And what does the gossip matter? In light of eternity. Because you know as we saw last week with ignorance. There was a way to hell.

Even from the very gates of heaven. As well as from the city of destruction. And you know my unconverted friend.

You have watched Christian flee the city of destruction. And begin the pilgrim's progress. You have watched Christiana and the four boys. They've now fled the city of destruction. They've begun the pilgrim's progress.

You've watched others flee the city of destruction. And begin the pilgrim's progress. Maybe you've watched someone in your own home and in your own family. You've watched them flee the city of destruction.

[36 : 28] And begin the pilgrim's progress. But you're still sitting where you are. And you still haven't moved. But I want to say to you tonight my friend.

Now it's your turn. It's your turn to flee the city of destruction. And begin the pilgrim's progress.

If you didn't begin with Christian. Begin with Christiana. Begin your pilgrim's progress tonight. By fleeing the city of destruction.

And walking on the king's highway. All the way to the celestial city. You begin your journey tonight my friend.

You take that first step. And you flee. You run like a Christian man. Crying life. Life. Eternal.

[37 : 26] Life. Well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray together. O Lord our gracious God.

We give thanks to thee for these things that we're able to consider. And to be reminded that the pilgrim's progress is not an easy journey.

But it is the best journey. It is the best journey to be on. Because we know that our saviour has drawn us to himself. And that he is the one who is leading us every step of the way.

And he is the one who will meet us. At the end of our journey. That we will see him face to face. Help us Lord we pray. If we have not begun to begin.

And if we have begun our walk. That we might be assured that he who has begun that good work. Will bring it on to completion. At the day of Christ Jesus. Help us to lift our eyes heavenward.

[38 : 27] And to keep looking to Jesus. The author and the finisher of our faith. Cleanse us we pray. For we ask it in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen.

Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. By singing the words of Psalm 121. Psalm 121. We're going to sing the words in Gaelic.

Verses 1 to 3. Psalm 121. As you know it's the sojourner psalm. Or the pilgrim psalm. A psalm that encourages us to lift our eyes.

Beyond the horizon of this world. And look to the one who is the maker of heaven and earth.

Because he is our keeper. When we leave the city of destruction. He is the one who promises to keep us.

Every step of the way. So Psalm 121. I'll read the verses in English. And then the opening line in Gaelic. I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

[39 : 28] From whence doth come my need. My safety cometh from the Lord. Who heaven and earth hath made. So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 121.

Verses 1 to 3. To God's praise. To God's praise.

To God's praise.

To God's praise. To God's praise. ay ni a Thank you.

Thank you.

[42 : 11] Thank you.