

“The Pilgrims Progress”
“The Conclusion”
(Proverbs 4:13)

Introduction:

1. Well - Tonight:
 - We Come To:
 - The “Conclusion” Of:
 - The Pilgrims Progress:
 - And Thus:
 - The “Conclusion” Of Our Year-Long Series:
 - As Well!
2. And So - As We Turn Back To:
 - Page 103 - In Our Editions Of:
 - John Bunyan’s Tale:
 - He Ends His Story:
 - Much Like He Did:
 - When He Began!
 - With A Poem!
 - Now - I Know That:
 - Bunyan Not Only Appreciated:
 - Good Poetry:
 - But Even Tried To Write Some Himself:
 - As We’ve Seen Throughout The Pilgrim Progress!
3. But - The Quality Of His Poetry:
 - Varies - As We Will See:
 - Even In This - His Final Poem:
 - At Least Of:
 - The First Part Of His Book!
 - And - As We’ve Done Throughout Our Journey:
 - With Our Pilgrim Friend, Christian:
 - We Will Read Through This Conclusion As Well:
 - And Then - Look A Bit More Closely:
 - Not Just At What It Says:
 - But What, I Think,
 - Bunyan Wants It To Point Us To!
4. And So - Let’s Read Through:
 - This Conclusion Together:
 - Starting With - *“Now, Reader, I Have Told My Dream To Thee!”*
 - Though The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Was Revised And Published Multiple Times:
 - Within John Bunyan’s Own Lifetime:
 - This “Conclusion” Is Original:
 - To The Very First Edition!
 - So - It Must Have Been Very Important To Him:
 - So That His Story:
 - Would Be Understood:
 - The Way He Intended!
5. But - As We Look At This Conclusion:
 - A Bit More Closely Tonight:
 - I Think We Will See What:
 - Ken Puls Describes As:
 - The “Main Message!”
 - Because - “Bunyan Is Pointing Us To The Word Of God That We Might Seek And Find The Savior!”
- And So - As:
 - Bunyan Wanted Us To:
 - Interpret His Story:

- I Think We Can See How It Can Apply:
- To How We Ought To Treat And Interpret:
- God's Word As Well!

* And So - As We See From The First Stanza Of This Poem - Bunyan Wants Us To:

1. Interpret Truthfully:

- The Pilgrims Progress!
 - The Four Main Points On Your Message Guide:
 - I Owe To Barry Horner:
 - Who Wrote An Extensive Commentary On The Pilgrims Progress!
- But Isn't This, Really:
 - The Desire Of Every Author?
 - For The Reader To Interpret:
 - Their Book Or Story:
 - Truthfully & Honestly:
 - According To Their Own Intentions!
 - Bunyan Even Warns:
 - "Of Misinterpreting; For That, Instead Of Doing Good, Will But Thyself Abuse: By Misinterpreting, Evil Ensues!"
 - But What Might Be True:
 - About The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Is Even More True:
 - When It Comes To The Word Of God!
- And So - Even In The Bible Itself:
 - We Have A:
 - Call To Scripture:
 - In The Same Way!
 - In Proverbs 4:13 - We Are Told To:
 - "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life!"
 - And - In Order To Do This:
 - Not Only Must We:
- Look At The Truth:
 - Of God's Word:
 - On A Regular Basis!
 - Reading It:
 - On Our Own!
 - Hearing It:
 - In The Church!
 - But We Must Also:
 - Learn From The Truth:
 - Of God's Word!
 - Which Means - We Must:
 - Take It Seriously:
 - And Interpret It Truthfully!

* From The Second Stanza Of This Poem - We See That Bunyan Wants Us To:

2. Interpret Substantially:

- The Pilgrims Progress!
 - In Other Words:
 - Focus On The Main Themes:
 - He Tried To Bring Out:
 - In His Story!
 - "Do Thou The Substance Of My Matter See!"
 - He Writes - And Not:
 - Play "With The Outside Of" His Dream!
- Bunyan Understood Well:
 - The Danger:
 - Of Reading Into:

- His Story:
 - Extreme Views!
- But He Also Wanted To Warn Against:
 - Reading His Story:
 - For Entertainment Alone!
- But Isn't This Also True:
 - When It Comes To Our Approach:
 - To The Word Of God As Well?
 - In Ezekiel 33:31-32 - The Lord Tells Ezekiel:
 - That This Is How His Own People:
 - Would Respond To His Messages:
 - Of Truth!
 - "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. / And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not!"
- We Must Not Only Be Careful:
 - To Avoid The:
 - "Extremes" - That Distract Us:
 - From The "Substance" Of God's Word!
 - We Must Also Be Careful:
 - To Avoid Reading It:
 - As Mere "Entertainment!"
 - Or - As Just Another Book Or Story On Our Bookshelf!
 - We Need To Remember:
 - The Core Of Scripture!
 - Which Is:
 - Redemption Through Faith In:
 - The Person & Work Of The Lord Jesus Christ!

* From The Third Stanza Of This Conclusion - Bunyan Wants Us To:

3. Interpret Allegorically:

- The Pilgrims Progress!
 - This Was The Genre In Which:
 - It Was Written!
 - This Means - As We've Seen All Year - That:
 - "All The Characters And Events Have Meaning!" (Ken Puls)
 - And That Is Why Bunyan Encourages Us:
 - To "Look Within My Veil!"
 - Because - If You Do So:
 - You Will Be Rewarded With Things:
 - "Helpful To An Honest Mind!"
- Now - Even Though:
 - God's Word Is Not - Altogether:
 - An Allegory:
 - There Are Many Different Ways:
 - That God Uses To Teach Us About Jesus Christ:
 - All Throughout The Scripture!
 - And So - We See:
 - The Caliber Of Scripture!
 - Just Like It Took Us Time & Effort:
 - Just To Scratch The Surface:
 - Of The Pilgrims Progress!
 - We Must Take The Time:
 - And Make The Effort:
 - To Plumb The Depths Of:
 - The Riches That We Find In God's Word!

- It Requires Great Concentration:
 - To Get Beyond The “Milk” Of The Word:
 - To The “Meat!”
 - Even Though The Apostle Peter Encourages Us To:
 - “Desire The Sincere Milk Of The Word!” (1 Peter 2:2)The Book Of Hebrews:
 - Hebrews 5:14 Reminds Us That:
 - “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil!”
 - In Addition To:
 - Great Concentration - Also:
- It Requires Great Contemplation!
 - Ken Puls Describes The Pilgrims Progress:
 - As “Endearing And Enjoyable! But His Substance Is Weighty!”
 - And - If This Can Be Said:
 - Of A Man’s Book - What Can Be Said About:
 - God’s Book?
 - The “Weightiest” Things In All The World:
 - Can Be Found In The Bible!
 - In 2 Peter 1:3 - Peter Tells Us That:
 - God Has “Given Unto Us All Things That Pertain Unto Life And Godliness, Through The Knowledge Of Him That Hath Called Us To Glory And Virtue!”
 - And That Knowledge:
 - Is Found In:
 - God’s Word!
 - In John 6:68 - Peter Said To Jesus:
 - “Lord, To Whom Shall We Go? Thou Hast The Words Of Eternal Life!”
 - And Those Words:
 - Can Be Found In:
 - God’s Word!
 - And So - What Bunyan Said About:
 - The Pilgrims Progress:
 - Is True In An Infinitely Greater Way:
 - “There, If Thou Seekest Them, Such Things To Find / As Will Be Helpful To An Honest Mind!”

* But Then - From The Forth Stanza - We See That Bunyan Wants Us To:

4. Interpret Discriminately:

- The Pilgrims Progress!
 - That Is:
 - Use Discernment:
 - When You Read About Christian:
 - And His Pilgrimage To:
 - The Celestial City!
 - Because - Like Noone Else:
 - John Bunyan Understood:
 - His Own Nature:
 - As A Saved, But Still Sinful:
 - Human Being!
 - So - He Says:
 - “What Of My Dross Thou Findest There, Be Bold / To Throw Away, But Yet Preserve The Gold!”
 - And - Even Though:
 - “History” Has “Judged That There Certainly Is A Lot Of Gold In This Rich Literary Ore!” (Barry Horner)
 - Yet - God’s Word Alone:
 - Is Truly Inspired!
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Reminds Us That:
 - “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: / That the man of God may be perfect, throughly

- furnished unto all good works!”
- As Beneficial:
 - As The Pilgrims Progress Has Been:
 - And - Other Books May Be:
 - To Your Spiritual Growth & Development!
 - Only One Book Has Come From The Mind Of God:
 - To The Hearts Of Men!
 - We Must Not Get This Wrong!
- Also - God’s Word Alone:
- Is Truly Inerrant!
 - Psalm 12:6 Tells Us That:
 - “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times!”
 - God’s Word Alone Is
 - All True & All Truth!
 - So - Only When Man’s Words:
 - Reflect The Truth:
 - Of God’s Word:
 - Is It Worth Listening To:
 - And Learning From!
 - And Further - God’s Word Alone:
- Is Truly Infallible!
 - Which Means What God Himself Tells Us About His Word:
 - In Isaiah 55:11 - “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it!”
 - As Much As:
 - John Bunyan Wanted The Pilgrims Progress:
 - To Teach Both Believers & Unbelievers:
 - That Pathway To Life:
 - Was Through The “Strait Gate” & The “Narrow Way” - Of Jesus Christ & The Gospel!
 - He Also Knew That He Had No Power:
 - To Transform Their Hearts & Lives!
 - Only God & His Spirit:
 - Through *His Own* Word:
 - Could Do Such A Thing!
 - And That Is Why:
 - We Can Trust In:
 - The Certainty Of Scripture:
 - More Than Any Other Book!

Conclusion:

1. So - As Valuable A Resource:
 - The Pilgrims Progress Is & Has Been:
 - For Us This Year:
 - Remember That:
 - God’s Word:
 - Remains Far Greater Still!
 - Only God’s Word:
 - Is “A Lamp Unto [Our] Feet, And A Light Unto [Our] Path!” (Psalm 119:105)
2. Now - As I Close:
 - Tonight’s Message:
 - And - As We Finish:
 - Our Year In The Pilgrims Progress:
 - I’d Like To End With:
 - A Fairly Lengthy Video & Song!
 - Written By Ken Puls As A Prayer!

- Which - I Hope:
 - Will Not Only Remind Us:
 - Of Where We've Been:
 - Through This Year:
 - But Also:
 - Where We're Going!

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