Pilgrim's Progress (Part 1)

Quote: "You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."
– John Bunyan

- **The Author's Apology** (at the beginning of the book)
  - Define "apology": a formal justification or defense
  - "like sparks from coals do fly" – author hopes this book will "spark" conversations
  - There is an scriptural allusion or citation on almost every page
  - "This book will make a traveler out of thee"
    - Bunyan wants the reader to begin his own spiritual "pilgrimage"
    - Define "pilgrimage": a journey to a sacred place

- **(Read 1st paragraph)**
  - "den" = Bedford jail
  - "wilderness" = reference to Israel's wanderings in the wilderness
  - "dream" = Bunyan's allegory (portraying the Christian's journey in picturesque language)
  - "a man" = referred to as Christian (later in the story he refers back to him as "Graceless")
  - His attire: (Activity slide - match Scripture references to descriptions)
    - this corresponds with page 3 of the Handouts (Pilgrim's Progress - Part 1)

- **(Read 2nd paragraph)**
  - Christian's Family
    - Wife: Christiana
    - Boys: Matthew, Samuel, Joseph & James
    - They think he is mentally unwell
      - "Dad has got religion!"
    - He doesn't try to persuade them further
      - They make fun of him, scold him, and neglect him

- **Evangelist**

- **Questions:**
  - Who does Christian represent? All of unsaved mankind
  - What is the burden on his back? His sin
    - Why do other people in the City of Destruction not have a burden?
  - What is the book he is reading? The Bible
    - How do we know that?
  - Why does it upset him so much? It shows him that he is lost
  - Who does Evangelist represent? (Discuss further)

- **John Gifford**
  - Evangelist is based on the pastor of the church in Bedford
  - Does "Evangelist" today have to be a preacher?
    - What does an "Evangelist" do? Point people to Jesus
    - Who can do this?
      - 2 Corinthians 5:11 – "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

- **Parchment Roll from Evangelist**
  - "Fly from the wrath to come"
  - "Whither must I fly?"

- **Evangelist's message:**
  - Go toward "yonder wicket-gate"
- small gate built into a larger door, wall, or fence
- Matthew 7:14 – "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
- "keep that light in your eye"
  - Christian must keep "that light" (God's Word) in sight or he'll never find the "wicket-gate"

○ Application:
  - Why does Evangelist not try to help remove the burden from Christian's back?
  - Evangelist doesn't say, "Quit doing this or that." He just points him to "the light."
  - How does this compare to when we are working with someone who is unsaved?

○ Fleeing the City of Destruction
  - Regardless of the pull of family, Christian fled
  - Not even one's closest relatives should be allowed to hinder you from serving God

○ Obstinate & Pliable
  - The City of Destruction doesn't give up its people without a fight
  - They represent the condition of most people when they hear the Gospel
    - Obstinate = wants nothing to do with it
    - Pliable = goes along with it until hardship comes along
  - It is thought that Obstinate's father was "Spare-the-Rod" and his mother was "Spoil-the-Child"
    - he got whatever he wanted
  - Obstinate represents people who believe that the Gospel is foolish – no questions about it – they will not be moved
  - Obstinate makes fun & calls Christian names
    - "crazy headed coxcombs"
    - "brain sick"
    - "misled"
    - "fantastical fellow"
  - Obstinate becomes angry & returns to the city
  - Pliable: notice he doesn't have his own "guidebook" nor is he reading from Christian's book
    - he's only interested in the "rewards" of this journey
  - Christian is so excited to have a companion
    - he fails to realize that some leave the City of Destruction for the wrong reason
    - Just as many walked with Jesus for "the loaves and the fishes"
    - Christian doesn't show wisdom in what he shares with Pliable
      * endless kingdom
      * everlasting life
      * crowns of glory
      * no more crying
      * seraphim & cherubim
    - Notice that Pliable has no burden on his back (no awareness of sin and guilt)
      * Once Pliable learns of the hardships of this way, he'll leave Christian & return

○ Application
  - When witnessing to someone, what is wrong with telling them that they'll go to Heaven, God will work everything out in their life, they'll have money & happiness, etc.?
**Slough of Despond**

- "slough" = mire
- "despond" = to be depressed by loss of hope, confidence, or courage
- it is believed that Bunyan (as a young man) lived beside a stream that overflowed in the spring and pooled in a low area, producing a basin of muck & mire
- they fail to notice the safe steps
  - **Application:**
    - Depression can take hold of you like the muck & mire of this slough
    - Psalm 69:2 – "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing."
    - Great men of God have battled depression: Martin Luther, John Bunyan, C. H. Spurgeon, George Whitefield
  - God always has a way through the miry places in your life
- Pliable doesn't sink as much as Christian. Why?
  - No burden of sin
  - No shame
  - Merely inconvenienced
- Pliable has had enough
  - doesn't care that Christian is still in the slough
- Christian cannot get out by himself, but which side of the slough did he work toward? (The side toward the City of Destruction or the side toward the wicket gate?)
- God sends "Help"
  - a song
  - a Scripture
  - a message
  - another Christian
- Christian asks why this slough isn't repaired
  - **Application:** What is the purpose for spiritual Sloughs of Despond?
    - weeds out the Pliables
    - used to awake the traveler to his/her spiritual needs
    - helps people who are following behind you
      - Christiana was able to avoid this mire
  - Help says that the King has tried to repair it, but the mire continues to flow

**Mr. Worldly Wiseman from the town of Morality**

- thought to be modeled after a minister in Bunyan's life
  - Edward Fowler
  - liberal pastor who wouldn't stand against the rules set on pastors by the king
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman enjoys stopping pilgrims
  - he challenges & argues with them
  - **Application:** be careful of having conversations with these types of people
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman is more persuasive than Obstinate. Why?
  - He shows concern about Christian's burden
  - He asks about Christian's family
  - "Will you listen to me if I give you good advice?"
    - Going against Evangelist's advice
      - "There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that into which he hath directed thee!"
      - "Hear me; I am older than thou."
- **Application:** always beware of "good advice" that goes against what your pastor & other spiritual leaders have told you
  * This advice is actually DANGEROUS!
- "How camest by thy burden at first?"
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman's advice:
  - Get rid of your Bible
    * let the scholars figure it out
    * Bible reading leads to fanaticism
- Mr. Worldly Wiseman is a great salesman:
  - offers the same product (burden removal) at a cheaper price (seemingly)
  - your wife & children can join you
  - Christian falls for it
- Mr. Legality in the Village of Morality & His Son Civility
  - **Application:** what could the Village of Morality stand for?
    - family values
    - good moral living
  - High Hill is actually a mountain
    - represents the Law (impossible to attain)
      * clue: flashes of fire (just like Mount Sinai where the Law was given)
- **Evangelist**
  - God sends a faithful minister to draw Christian back to the true path
    - "What doest thou here, Christian?"
    - "Thou art now out of the way."
  - Christian is embarrassed and offers excuses:
    - Mr. Worldly Wiseman seemed like a gentleman
    - He showed a personal interest in me
    - He seemed to be an expert in burden-removal
    - He knew a shorter, easier, more comfortable way
  - Christian is rebuked for his foolishness
  - Evangelist uses the Word
  - Christian is full of remorse & repents
  - Evangelist directs him back toward the way