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Empowered to Transform

RUAKA

# Prayer & Fasting GUIDE

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## **Psalms 84:4-7<sup>NIV</sup>**

How Blessed are those who dwell in your house;  
they are ever praising you  
Blessed are those whose strength is in you,  
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.  
As they pass through the Valley of Baka,  
they make it a place of springs;  
the autumn rains also cover it with pools  
They go from strength to strength,  
till each appears before God in Zion.

The journey of a believer is a pilgrimage towards the celestial city of the King of Glory. Those who have found the path to this city have found a field full of hidden treasures. They have discovered pearls of the greatest value. (Matt 13:44-46) They are most blessed who have set their hearts on Pilgrimage, who have regarded this world not as their home but longed for a country beyond, to a city with foundations designed and built by God himself (Heb 11:10).

Though they meet dangers and difficulties, though Satan breaks against them through fire and sword's edge, though tortured, oppressed and mistreated through chains and prison, though regarded as weak through floggings and mocking, they go from strength to strength; having turned their backs on this world. They march to a better country, a city prepared for them by God, a heavenly country where God is not ashamed to be called their God.



# THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

By John Bunyan

The Pilgrim's progress has become a classic for Christendom over the years as a vivid analogy of the journey believers have to walk as they journey through the world towards the City of God. Written in the form of a dream, Bunyan imagines this pilgrim by the name Christian journeying through a path towards a celestial city beyond, away from his home city of destruction which he believes is doomed for destruction. As you enter into the imaginary world of Christian and journey a mile with him, consider the journey God has called you to walk too as a believer and pray dearly for strength to run a good race, to fight a good fight and to keep the faith (2 Tim 4:7).

As the year rolls off and there are many things to consider along the way, as you set out in the hope of achieving the various goals and desires you have as an individual and as a family, central to your quest must be a desire to journey faithfully with the Lord. So, enter the imaginary world of Christian this week, as a soldier attending a briefing for a mission he has yet to go. Consider what he experiences as guides for you in your real journey with God in this world, lean hard on God in prayer for strength to endure, so that as Christian receives his crown, so will you when the Lord returns or when you are called home.

If you have never read the book The Pilgrim's Progress (it is an easy read that you can finish in one day), spare some time and watch the animated version of the book on Youtube:

[Pilgrim's Progress: Journey To Heaven | Full Movie | Based on John Bunyan's book](#)

It will help you build familiarity with the story of John Bunyan.

## **Psalm 86:11** NIV

*Teach me Your way, O LORD, that I may walk in Your truth. Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name.*

## Song:

# THE SAVIOR WITH ME

By Frances J. Crosby

- 1 I must have the Savior with me,  
For I dare not go alone,  
I must feel His presence near me,  
And His arm around me thrown.
  - 2 I must have the Savior with me,  
For my faith at best is weak;  
He can whisper words of comfort,  
That no other voice can speak.
  - 3 I must have the Savior with me  
In the onward march of life,  
Through the tempest and the  
sunshine,
  - 4 Through the battle and the strife.  
I must have the Savior with me,  
And His eye the way must guide,  
Till I reach the vale of Jordan,  
Till I gain the other side.
- Then my soul shall fear no ill;  
Let Him lead me where He will,  
I will go without a murmur,  
And His footsteps follow still.**

## FASTING

Along this year's faith Journey, we hope that our troubles, frustrations from failure and a fallen world around us will find a proper audience with God through prayer and fasting. That which you'll encounter that is too hard or impossible to bear will be met by Jesus' words in:

### **John 16:33** NIV

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

While fasting is mostly associated with times of great distress and pain so that the people turn to the Lord from a place of need and strain, many others go to the Lord out of a sincere desire to commune with Him or because the Lord calls them to come to Him in isolation. But special still is when fasting is done in preparation for a special task or assignment that God calls someone to perform. Jesus our Lord himself fasted and prayed in this manner before His public ministry setting an example for us to follow. We too must delight in fasting for the journey ahead unknown to us, for the power to endure and overcome.

# HELPFUL GUIDELINES:

**The Prayer Guide:** As provided, this guide is full of verses and helpful reflections to aid your time of prayer. Use them as helps in your time with God. For sure you are not constrained to only pray for what is provided but it would be of great benefit to join in with the rest of the church in unity of prayer.

**Journal:** Find a journal that can allow you to honestly reflect on the answers to some of the questions asked in order to more meaningfully interact with God in Prayer.

**Time:** Plan ahead of time an ideal time and place where you will interact with God in prayer without disruption for at least 45 minutes daily. You can break that in two, do half the time in the morning and the other during the day. If you do not plan, chances are you will not do it.

**One another:** Consider syncing your time of prayer with a friend or fellow REAL group member so that you can encourage one another and keep each other accountable.

**Go beyond:** The guide is a helpful aid in your interaction with God but can also be limiting. Faithfully pray through the guide and if you get some more time to pray, go beyond and cry out to God for other issues not herein captured.

**Other aids:** Music, sermons and podcasts can be helpful tools to keep you engaged all day. When the hunger begins to bite, you can use them as tools to help you persevere.

**Beginning your fast:** In the morning, before you start your day, find a quiet place (preferably out of bed) for at least 10 mins to commit the fast to God and ask for strength to pray.

**Breaking the fast:** If possible, take a few minutes in thanksgiving to God every day before you break your fast as a reminder that it is he who sustains you. Then take some water and a light snack before you can have a heavy meal.

**Full day Fast:** While the corporate fast we are involved in as a church is partial (6 am-6 pm), should you find you have the ability or are convicted to do a full (Day and Night) fast during this time, go ahead and do so but with the knowledge of someone you trust.

**Check last page for songs to enrich your prayer time.**

### THE BURDEN ON THE PILGRIM'S BACK – A LONGING FOR THE CELESTIAL CITY.

A Pilgrim named Christian landed himself a book. A burden had begun to grow on his back and it weighed on his heart, every waking day it grew. He longed for the celestial city whose author and builder are God, and not his own for he lived in the city of destruction that was bound for doom, to be burned with fire from heaven. His wife and children pitied him and tried to console him, but when they saw his obsession with this city they began to loathe him.

#### Prayer

1. *Christian, do you remember when your heart was inflamed with such a burden over your sin and how you agonized over your soul's destruction? Thank God for the grace that led you on the path of salvation.*
2. *Pilgrim, are you currently weighed down by your sin and your heart carries great weight over sin you've not confessed and the wrath of God awaiting you? Call on the Lord for mercy! He will pardon!*
3. *Christian, do thy friends and family despise your faith? Do you mourn over your family and friends who are not listening and are in danger of eternal death? Cry out to God for them. Pray for their salvation!*

#### SONG

### Prayer for a friend

By Casting Crowns

Lord, I lift my friend to You, I've done all  
that I know to do  
I lift my friend to You  
Complicated circumstances have  
clouded his view  
Lord, I lift my friend up to You

*I fear that I won't have the words that he  
needs to hear*

*I pray for Your wisdom, oh God, and a  
heart that's sincere*

Lord, I lift my friend up to You

Lord, I lift my friend to You  
My best friend in the world, I know he  
means much more to You  
I want so much to help him, but this is  
something he has to do  
And Lord, I lift my friend up to You

*'cause there's a way that seems so right  
to him*

*But You know where that leads  
He's becoming a puppet of the world,  
too blind to see the strings*

Lord, I lift my friend up to You  
My friend up to You

Lord, I lift my friend to You, I've done all  
that I know to do  
I lift my friend to You



In his sadness, he met an evangelist and he asked him, “What shall I do to be saved? For I am condemned to die and after that face judgment (as it is appointed unto men to die once, and after this the judgment – Heb. 9:27). I find that I am not willing to die and neither am I able to withstand judgement. Because I fear that this burden upon my back will sink me lower than the grave and I shall fall into Hell.”

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household. (Acts 16:31) ... Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” (Acts 2:40) said the Evangelist.

“How must I save myself?” Asked the pilgrim. “Flee from the wrath to come. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matt. 7:13, 14) We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19).

## **Prayer:**

1. Pilgrim, are you ready for the judgment to come? Should death come to you today are you able to stand in the court of heaven? Are you on the broad path of worldliness or the narrow path to heaven? Call on the Lord for your salvation. Plead with Christ for mercy that your soul might be saved.
2. Christian, has God placed you on the road as an evangelist? Are you meant to point those seeking a way from the city of destruction to the city of God? Pray for courage to arise and do the work. Ask for faith and then for faithfulness to share the gospel message with all that the Lord sends on your way this year.

Christian began his journey to the city beyond, his family called for him “Come back! Come home!” but with fingers in his ears he ran on shouting “Life! Life! Eternal life!”. “For If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

Passionate to help, two neighbors Obstinate and Pliable ran after him to persuade him to go back. But Christian pleaded with them “Leave our friends and our comforts behind for all you leave behind isn’t worthy to be compared with the tiniest portion of that which I am seeking to enjoy. Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:18) “I seek an incorruptible inheritance that cannot be defiled and that does not fade away, conserved in the heavens for us.” (1 Peter 1:4)

## *Prayer:*

1. *Pilgrim, do you feel the pull of the world crying out to you to turn back from seeking Christ? Does your family and friends think you're brainwashed and want to hinder you from your Journey? Pray for courage to fix your gaze on Christ. Ask for strength to resist the pull of the world and the discouragement from men.*
2. *Christian, is your neighbor/family member Obstinate, who will not be persuaded by anything from what he thinks is the way even when they are dead wrong? Or are they Pliable, carried back and forth by every wind of doctrine and teaching and believe all manner of lies? Ask the Lord to change their hearts for only He can.*

I can't go back, no, I will not. For no one having put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62). Obstinate unconvinced returned home but Pliable easily persuaded joined pilgrim on the journey. But soon they fell into a swamp of despondency and were covered with mud and slime. Pliable discouraged by the difficulty chose to return but Christian found Help who pulled him out of the miry slough. The swamp is the fears, doubts, and discouraging apprehensions about oneself that arise in his soul as the travelling sinner becomes aware of his lost condition.

Help said to Christian, "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, He will come with vengeance; with divine retribution, He will come to save you." (Isaiah 35:3-4) In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. (Prov. 3:6)

## *Prayer:*

1. *Christian, do you at times look with fondness at the base life you liked in worldliness? Do you desire the past pleasures of sin and wish you would return? Cry out for your soul! Pray that the Lord will strip your heart of the desires of the world and saturate your heart with longing for the pleasures promised to us in heaven.*
2. *Pilgrim, are you currently in the slough of despond, and this faith has begun not making sense? Does fear, doubt and discouragement creep into your soul and you feel like giving up? Are you feeling lost? Call for Help! He is always close by to lend a hand. Don't let yourself sink in and get lost, call the Helper to save you.*
3. *Christian do you see your friend or family stuck in disillusionment because of discouragements, fears, pains, and sorrows? Do they seem confused about the faith and the Christ you talk of? Pray for them to be rescued from drowning. Ask the Helper to snatch them from their despondency.*





## Song:

# I WON'T GO BACK

By William McDowell

*I've been changed*

*Healed*

*Freed*

*Delivered*

*I've found joy, peace, grace, and favor*

[Verse 1]

*I've been changed (I've been changed)*

*In the presence of the lord, I've been*

*(Healed)*

*Freed (Freed), delivered (Delivered)*

*In your presence lord*

*(I've found joy)*

*(Peace)*

*Grace (Grace)*

*And favor (And favor)*

*And right now (Right now is the moment)*

*Today (Today is the day)*

*I've been changed (I've been changed)*

*I've been changed (I've been changed)*

*And I have waited (I have waited for this moment to come)*

*(And I won't let it pass me by)*

[Chorus]

*So we say*

*I won't go back, can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

*Say I won't*

[Verse 2]

*I won't go back, I can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

*(All my shame) (Guilt) (Sins)*

*They've been forgiven (Forgiven)*

*No more chains*

*Fear*

*My past (My past) is over (Is over)*

*Say right now (Right now is the moment)*

*Today (Today is the day)*

*I've been changed (I've been changed)*

*Come on someone declare that, I've been changed (I've been changed)*

*And I have waited (I have waited for this moment)*

*This moment right here I have waited all my life (To come)*

*(And I won't let it pass me by)*

[Chorus]

*So we say*

*I won't go back, can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

*Would you lift up your voices as loud as you can and say?*

*I won't go back, I can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

*Come on, somebody, lift your voice and declare it and say*

*I won't go back, I can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

*Somebody say I won't go back, say*

*I won't go back, I can't go back, to the way it used to be*

*Before your presence came and changed me*

## THE DECEPTIONS ON THE PILGRIM'S PATH – A QUEST FOR RELIEF FROM HIS BURDEN.

Not long after finding Help, Christian meets Mr. Worldly Wiseman from Carnal-Policy town. Concerned about the great burden on the Pilgrim's back, he proposes a way different way from the Evangelist, for the Christian to be loosed of his weight quickly so that he might enjoy God's blessings in peace and joy.

“There isn't a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world to travel than the way Evangelist has told you to go. You'll certainly learn this the hard way if you listen to him. The Miry Slough was just the beginning of your sorrows, you are likely to experience wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death, and who knows what else. These things are certain and have been confirmed by the testimonies of many pilgrims just like yourself. So why should a man so carelessly place himself in danger by listening to this man Evangelist?”

At this point, Christian's burden was too great and he longed to be rid off it. He was even willing to go on the path of the Evangelist as long as he was loosed off it, but the proposal for a nearby, easier and safer solution seemed wise. For there is a way that seems right and wise to a man, but its end is the way to death (Proverb 14:12) Although he claimed to be wise, he was a fool (Rom 1:22) and his worldly wisdom would soon amount to nothing (1 Cor 2:6).

The name of the village was Morality and the man who'd help was Legality or his son Civility. He was said to be very judicious and had a good reputation. He was known to cure irrational and exaggerated views of one's burden. Life in Morality was a little expensive but nothing compared to the good life of happiness, friendship, contentment, enjoyment and security it promised. So, the Pilgrim turned aside to it, but the hill seemed steeper than he first thought. It rose so high that the side of it hung above him threatening to crush him under its weight.

### Prayer:

1. Christian, has the path to eternal life been riddled with more perils than you feel able to handle? Does it scare you that God did not promise safety or fair weather but troubles just as He did? Pray today that the promise of His presence will be to you more comforting than that of ease and convenience.
2. Pilgrim, do you fear that you will sooner fall away at your time of testing? Do you wonder if you can stand when the storm and wind rage? Pray for strength from He who promises not to tempt you beyond your ability. Pray for a way of escape in your day of trouble. Pray that fear won't make you turn your back on Him.
3. Christian, do you have a thorn in your flesh that you'll do anything to be rid off? Have you prayed ten times over but the Lord has not answered your cry for relief? Are you now considering other ways apart from God to be eased of pain? Ask for patience to wait on Him, He may seem days late, but His time is right!



Lightning, thunder and a thick cloud enveloped the hill, smoke ascended from it as a furnace, and the whole earth quaked greatly. (Exod. 19:16-18) This sight filled Christian with dread and sweat beaded across his brow as he trembled and quaked with fear. (Heb. 12:21) In a bid to save himself he ran down the hill in haste only to be met by the Evangelist who asked him, "How is it you turned aside so quickly? You are going the wrong way. Don't refuse Him who speaks to you Pilgrim, for if Israel did not escape judgment when they didn't listen to Him, how much more will we not escape if we turn away from Him when He speaks to us from heaven? (Heb. 12:25) You are running into misery. You've begun to reject the direction offered by the Most High and to draw back from the way of peace. You are teetering at the point of being in danger of eternal punishment and damnation."

## Prayer:

1. *Christian, have sheltered in the cover of morality and outwardly earned a good reputation? Though you know your sin and the corruption of your heart you boast of legality and civility. Pray that Christ rescues you anew because there is no salvation there. Being moral will never attain the righteousness that God requires.*
2. *Pilgrim, are you crushing under the weight of the Law of God that is more than you can bear? Do you feel the expectations of religion and the judgement of men are sucking all the joy from being a believer? Come to Jesus for help, He gives grace to the weary at heart, for his burden is light and his yoke is easy.*

Christian fell at his feet as dead and cried, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" (Isa 6:5) but the Evangelist consoled him and said, "Men will be forgiven their sins and blasphemies (Matt 12:31) Stop doubting and believe. (John 20:27) Worldly Wiseman is of the world, speaks of the world and the world listens to him. (1 John 4:5) He loves the church at the town of Morality because it saves him best from the path of the cross. But as for you walk according to the pattern I've set for you. As I have often told you, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and their glory is in their shame. Their minds are set on earthly things. (Phil 3:17-19).

Detest the wisdom of the world because First, of its ability to turn you from the way you should go and get you sidetracked. But you Strive to enter in at the narrow gate; for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. (Luke 13:24) the gate to which I send you leads to life, and few are

those who find it, but the way that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and those who follow it are many. (Matt. 7:13-14) In the same way, loathe yourself for listening to him and put not your trust in man even yourself, for you are mere flesh and your heart easily turns away from the Lord (Jer 17:5).

Second, is the way it works to portray the cross as very unpleasant and repulsive to you. It is zealous to make the cross seem offensive to you; which you are meant to prefer more than comforts and pleasures, choosing like Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of the Cross of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. (Heb. 11:25-26) He that seeks to save his life shall lose it, for he who comes after Him and doesn't hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life cannot be his disciple (Luke 14:26).

Lastly, is that it points you in the direction which leads to death. Legality is the son of the Bondwoman who is in bondage along with her children. For Abraham had two sons, one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. He who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, but he of the freewoman was born through the promise. These women are the two covenants: One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves,... But the celestial city, Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. (Gal. 4:21-27). Legality could never free you of your burden and no one has ever been rid of his burden by him. You cannot be justified by the works of the law for cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them (Gal. 3:10).

## Prayer:

1. *Christian, have you lost your path and listened to the wisdom of the world? Have you sinned greatly against the Lord and you desire to be forgiven? Call on Jesus for the forgiveness of your sin, there is no sin too great that He can't forgive, His blood is enough to cleanse every dark blot.*
2. *Pilgrim, have you lived life trusting your intuition and it seems to somewhat work for you? Have you chosen your own path and neglected God's instruction because yours makes more sense? Pray that God might frustrate your way so that you turn to Him because sooner your flesh on which you trust will fail you terribly.*
3. *Christian, is the cross repulsive to you in what it represents? Is the shame and sorrow that it points towards a source of Joy for you or offence? Do you find it delightful that Christ has ordered this path for you too? Pray that God would open your eyes to the treasure below it, the riches beyond it, pray for joy in the cross!*

## BE MAGNIFIED

*By Don Moen*

I have made You too small in my eyes  
O Lord, forgive me  
I have believed in a lie  
That You were unable to help me  
But now, O Lord, I see my wrong

*Heal my heart and show Yourself strong  
And in my eyes and with my song  
O Lord, be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified*

Be magnified, O Lord  
You are highly exalted  
And there is nothing You can't do  
O Lord, my eyes are on You  
Be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified

Be magnified, O Lord  
You are highly exalted  
And there is nothing You can't do  
O Lord, my eyes are on You  
Be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified

Be magnified, O Lord  
You are highly exalted  
And there is nothing You can't do  
O Lord, my eyes are on You  
Be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified

*O Lord, be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified  
O Lord, be magnified*

# JUST AS I AM

*Hymnal*

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

*Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot;  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt;  
Fightings within, and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind;  
Yes, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

*Just as I am, Thy love unknown  
Has broken every barrier down;  
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

# THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

*Hymnal*

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame,  
And I love that old cross where the Dearest and Best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
Has a wondrous attraction for me;  
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above,  
To bear it to dark Calvary.

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,  
A wondrous beauty I see;  
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,  
To pardon and sanctify me.

Christian was full of shame, he scolded himself and felt defeated. Turning to Evangelist he asked, "Is there any hope? May I now go back to the way that leads to the narrow wicket-gate? Will I be abandoned for what I've done and sent back to where I came from, riddled with shame? I am sorry I listened to this man's counsel. May my sin be forgiven?"

"Your sin is very great, for you have committed two evils. You abandoned the good way, and you chose to walk in forbidden paths. Yet the man at the gate will receive you, for he has goodwill for men. But be careful not to turn aside again, because if you do, you may perish altogether when his wrath is ignited. Blessed are you should you put your trust in Him. (Psalm 2:12)

## Prayer:

1. Christian, have you experienced grace that is greater than all your sins? Has the Lord pardoned you for what seemed too much offence? Praise Him for His great mercies! Worship and adore Him for the kindness shown!
2. Pilgrim, are you riddled with guilt over your sin, even though you know that you've been forgiven? Do you desire the gift of felt forgiveness for your sin? Ask Christ to free you, for he pardons and he comforts.

# TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

*Hymnal*

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
O'er us sin no more hath dominion  
For more than conqu'rors we are!

His Word shall not fail you, He promised;  
Believe Him and all will be well;  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

## THE RESOLVES OF THE PILGRIM'S PATH – AND WARNING FOR THE FAINT AT HEART.

So, Christian embarked on his journey until he reached the narrow wicket gate. On arrival he called out, "Will He within open to wretched me, even though I have been an undeserving rebel? If you let me in, I won't fail to sing His lasting praise!" I am a poor burdened sinner from the City of Destruction, going to Mount Zion so I may be delivered from the wrath to come, and I am told, that this gate leads to my destination. Are you willing to let me enter?" Goodwill the keeper of the gate replied, "I am willing with all my heart; an open door is set before you and no man can shut it. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matt 7:8) "Oh, what undeserved favor it is for me to gain entrance here!" exclaimed the Pilgrim.

"From now on, on the narrow way you must go. It was established by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ, and his apostles. The way is straight but many side paths connect to this narrow way, crooked and wide. You must distinguish the right way by paying attention to what is straight and narrow as it is the way which leads to life. (Matt. 7:14) As for your burden, be content to bear the load until you come to the place of Deliverance."

### Prayer:

1. *Christian, have you come upon this undeserved acceptance into God's gateway to life? Have you experienced the joy of admittance into his marvelous presence? The begin by thanking Him for His enduring kindness to you a sinned deserving only His wrath.*
2. *Pilgrim, are you ready to walk as the saints of old did, unwavering in their commitment to journey only along the straight-narrow path and never turn to the crooked-wide paths? Pray that the Lord of the pilgrimage might spare you from the lures of the world, and stay true till you attain deliverance from your burden of sin.*

Next on the Pilgrim's journey was the Interpreter who Goodwill promised would reveal to Christian excellent things helpful to him on his journey. First, he showed him a man on whom the law of truth was written on his lips, and the world was behind him. A crown of gold hung above his head, and he stood like one pleading with men. His love and devotion were for his Master's service, and he was sure to have glory for his reward in the next world."

Second was a room full of dust, representing the heart of a man who was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel. The dust is his sin and inward corruption which has defiled the whole man. Until a woman brought water and sprinkled the dust, which is the gospel and the dust settled and it was swept with ease. The law uncovers sin and forbids it, but it does not provide the power to subdue it. (Rom. 7:9) The gospel comes with its sweet and precious influences and indwells the heart, vanquishing and subduing sin and the soul made clean, through faith. Consequently, the soul becomes a suitable place for the King of Glory to inhabit."

## Prayer:

1. Christian have you desired a crown of gold on your head and a glorious reward in the world to come? Where then is your devoted service in the Master's name? Would you plead with the lost to turn from their sin? Pray that the Lord uses you this year to reach those who are lost with the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ.
2. Pilgrim, do you know the gospel? Has the law brought your heart to the full awareness of its sin and corruption and you feel powerless to subdue it therefore left in anxiety and grief? Pray that the Lord will send you the sweet assurances of His gospel and teach you anew this year what good news the gospel is!

*Then, were two children, Passion and Patience, one very discontent and the other quiet and calm. "The governor of these children would have them wait for his best things until next year, but Passion wants his inheritance now. Patience, however, is willing to wait." A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' holds more authority with Passion than all the divine testimonies of the good of the world to come. Unknown to Passion, the glory of the next world will never wear out, while the good things of this world will vanish. Though he gains his good things now, Patience will have the last laugh for We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, since the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18)*

*Again, he was a fire by a wall that was fully kindled. Though the Devil continued to pour water on the fire, it only burned higher and hotter. For Christ, who continually maintains the work already begun with the oil of His grace keeps the heart gracious (2 Cor. 12:9). Again, he saw a man of courage, whose path to a palace was hindered by men in armor who blocked the doorway. But the valiant man fought fiercely, cutting and hacking his opponents. He received and administered many wounds to those who attempted to keep him out knowing well that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, (Acts 14:22) because though the kingdom suffers violence, the violent will take it by force (Matt 11:12).*

## Prayer:

1. Christian, have you been enrolled in the school of patience meant to tame your passions? Do you have desires you wish were fulfilled today but the Lord seems to withhold them for now? Pray for joy as you wait for their fulfillment. Pray also for contentment should the Lord withhold them completely in this life for we know that none will be left unsatisfied, 100 times over, when we are finally in his presence.
2. Pilgrim, has the devil broken out against you to make you despair and quench your fervor for the Lord? Does he stand opposed to you entering the doorway to God's palace? Pray for courage to press on against him as a man of war! Pray for more grace to resist his attacks and discouragements and get hold of the prize.



Then, he came to a man who sat inside a cage of despair. He was once an attractive and thriving professing Christian in his own eyes and in the eyes of others, who had received the word with joy but had no root, so in the time of temptation he fell away (Luke 8:13). Convinced to be on his way to the Celestial City, he neglected to watch and be sober. He loosened the restraints that kept his lusts in check and sinned against God. He said, "I have grieved the Spirit and He is gone. I flirted with temptation and the Devil came to me. I have crucified Him again by my life putting him to an open shame. (Heb. 6:6) I have despised Him and hated Him, saying, I will not have Him to reign over me. (Luke 19:14) I have despised His righteousness and regarded His blood of covenant as an unholy thing. I've acted spitefully to the Spirit of grace, and trodden underfoot the Son of God (Heb. 10:29); therefore, I have shut myself out of all the promises of God, I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent. Now there remains for me nothing but dreadful threats of certain judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour me as an enemy."

"But can't you repent and turn from this despicable condition?" asked Christian, "No, God has denied me repentance for it is impossible that I who once received the light and tasted of that heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit and the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, to be renewed again by repentance having slid back. (Heb. 6:4-6).

### Prayer:

1. Christian would you be the one in a cage of despair because you lost what you once had with God? Did you sleep and fall into temptation and all the glory of the Spirit you once had was taken from you? Pray that the Lord who restores is pleased to raise you again, refuse to despair and have faith! You can be revived again!
2. Pilgrim, do you see the peril of turning back on your faith? Are you taking for granted the Spirit of grace that the Lord has given to you today? Are you careless about your faith assuming that you can never fall away? Pray that the Lord would keep your heart humble and tethered to Him, that you'll never fall from His grace!

Finally, he saw a man most afraid, for in his dream he had witnessed the judgement of the world on the last day where the wheat was gathered into the storehouses and the tares burned in an unquenchable fire (Luke 3:17). His conscience testified against him for all his sins that flooded his mind and there was nowhere for him to hide (Rom. 2:14-15). Angels picked up saints around him and the Lord gazed constantly at him in disapproval, furthermore, the pit of hell opened its mouth right before him ready to swallow him up (John 5:28-29). He trembled in fear, for he thought Judgement day had come and he was not ready.

Well, keep all these things in mind, so they may prod you to move forward in the right direction” the Interpreter warned Christian. “And let them challenge you with both hope and fear. Then Christian began to make serious preparations for moving forward on his journey.

### **Prayer:**

1. Christian, do you realize that Christ has set aside a day for Judgment where all our works will be tested as with fire? Do you know that your conscience will stand against you in judgment for any careless deed word or thought? Pray now that your works will stand the test, and that your faith will be proven true!
2. Pilgrim, consider that Christ even now lets the tares grow among the wheat. Realize that among those who profess the Lord are some destined for the furnace. Repent therefore for your sin or unbelief if there remains any in your heart. Ask for faithfulness to walk on the straight and narrow in hope and fear of God.

### THE RELIEF OF THE PILGRIM'S BURDEN; AND ENCOUNTER WITH DECEIVED PILGRIMS.

The narrow path on Christian's journey now had a wall on either side called Salvation, despite the strain from his load, Christian pressed on until he came by a cross with a tombstone below it. As Christian approached the cross, his burden fell off his back and tumbled downhill into the tomb and was no more. "He has given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death." Exclaimed the Pilgrim. He looked at the cross with tears running down his cheeks and he mourned over him whom he had died there for his great burden to be loosed from him. (Zech. 12:10) But three Shining Ones approached and greeted him "Peace be to thee. Your sins are forgiven, for He was wounded for your rebellions and he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5)

They stripped Christian of his rags and clothed him with a complete change of clothes saying, "See your sin is taken away and fine garments given to you." Zech. 3:4 They placed a mark on Christian's forehead, a seal of the Holy Spirit of the promise, (Eph. 1:13) and gave him a scroll with a seal upon it to deliver to the Celestial City. To this Christian again burst out saying "Oh, Blessed cross! Blessed tomb! Blessed rather be The Man who there was put to shame for me!"

#### Prayer:

1. Christian, have you encountered your crucified Savior? Have you seen Him who shed His blood for you and died for your sin? Sing the glories of the cross! Rejoice for the great Salvation bought for you. Thank Him who died that you may have life, who was wounded that you might be healed.
2. Pilgrim, has your burden been rolled away? Have you been clothed with righteousness you never earned and sealed with the Spirit of Truth? Pray for grace to abide in Him always. Ask for faith to hold firmly to your confession and be faithful to the Savior. Remember your righteousness is not your own so you can't lose it!

# AT THE CROSS

*Issac Watts (1707)*

1. *Alas! and did my Savior bleed  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For sinners such as I?*

*At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the  
light,  
And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day!*

2. *Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine—  
And bathed in its own blood—  
While the firm mark of wrath divine,  
His Soul in anguish stood.*

3. *Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!*

4. *Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ, the mighty Maker died,  
For man the creature's sin.*

5. *Thus might I hide my blushing face  
While His dear cross appears,  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,  
And melt my eyes to tears.*

6. *But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe:  
Here, Lord, I give my self away  
'Tis all that I can do.*

Along the path, Christian met Simple, Sloth and Arrogance who lay on the path shackled, but refused his help oblivious of the danger of the adversary, a roaring lion who walked about seeking one to devour (1Pet 5:8). Moving forward, he met Formalist and Hypocrisy from the land of Vain-Glory who had jumped over the wall of Christianity as a shortcut into the path, without coming through the Wicket gate. Though Christian questioned the legitimacy of their entry, they assured him that this had been their tradition for ages and it didn't matter how they got in as long as they were in. Still suspicious, Christian told them of the coat He had received in place of his rags, the mark on his forehead, and the sealed scroll to read for comfort on the way, which proved his legitimacy but which they lacked. For no man will be justified by the works of law except by faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal 2:16)

Anyway, the road at the bottom of the hill branched to the right and left, but the narrow way continued straight up the hill called Difficulty. Though the hill was high, Christian resolved to walk up it. "I don't care how difficult it is, because it leads to the way of life. So, cheer up Heart, and don't grow faint or fear difficulty, while the wrong ways seem easier, they end in anguish." Formalist and hypocrisy took the paths of danger and destruction which led to dark mountains where they stumbled and fell never to rise again. But along the path was a pleasant shady place of refreshment for the weary pilgrim but he slept and his scroll fell off. Then someone woke him from his sluggishness (prov 6:6) and jolted him from his slumber until he came to the top of the hill.

## Prayer:

1. Christian, have you met a hypocrite or a formalist deluded about their legitimacy as true Believers? Are there those you think are not truly saved but in pursuit of vain glory camouflage as believers in the church? Pray for their eyes to open. Ask the Lord to save them before they come to destruction and fall never to rise.
2. Pilgrim, have you fallen into slumber or sloth along the journey and neglected your work of watching? Have you become oblivious to the danger that lurks, the roaring lion who'd soon devour you? Pray to be awakened from your sleep. Ask God to rekindle your love and watchfulness. Pray for a renewal of zeal!

*Just before he got to the top, two men Faint Hearted and Mistrust raced past him downhill because they had seen lions on the path. I am afraid,” Christian admitted. “But where else would I flee? If I go back to my home, judgment awaits and I will certainly perish there. To go back is nothing but death, but to go forward, though I may fear death, life everlasting is beyond it. So, I will still go forward.” But immediately Christian realized he had lost his scroll. His heart was full of sorrow for his foolish neglect and wept over his sleep. Now in the same manner as Israel was required to wander in the wilderness for their sin, I am forced to walk this way again in sorrow, which should have been walked with delight save for this sinful sleep!*

*Having returned and retrieved his scroll, Christian returned to the hill to find Watchful waiting to receive him in the palace beautiful. But a few meters before him stood two ferocious lions making him greatly afraid. “Is your strength and courage so small? Asked Watchful. “Why are ye so fearful? Have you no faith? (Mark 4:40) Don’t be afraid of the lions, they are there to test your faith. So Christian gathered courage and walked in the middle of*

## Prayer:

1. Christian, have you heard of dangers awaiting? Are you certain that the decision you are about to make will lead you only to strife? Do you fear the way ahead is difficult and you might fail? Plead with Him for the courage to take the path that is right even though difficult and that you’ll not conform to pressure.
2. Pilgrim, do you need an increase in Faith? Are you unable to see beyond what is right before your eyes and trust God in danger or trouble? Pray that the testing of your faith will produce perseverance and result in the glory of God. Ask that God would remind you that He is the one that orders your steps on steady ground.

At the Palace beautiful were Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity. The Pilgrim introduced himself as a Christian but formally known as Graceless. He recalled the many dangers he had encountered on the journey so far as well as the people he had met. He spoke of the country where he came from, but not with fondness but with much shame and loathing. Had he desired it, he'd have returned but he wanted a better country, a heavenly one. (Heb. 11:15-16) However, though he had overcome many perils, he was grieved by his carnal thoughts and reasoning. He felt powerless and feared that though his burden was gone, the worst still lived inside him. (Rom 7:15-21) The only times he felt victory was when he meditated on the cross, looked at his robe of righteousness or read from his sealed scroll. He longed to see him who hung on the cross and enter that city without sorrow, pain or death. (rev 21:4)

Again, he remembered his family his wife and poor children. In tears, he'd trembled under the anxiety of the judgment that hung over our heads! His wife had been afraid of losing what she had in this world. His children were too absorbed in the foolish pleasures of youth. (2 Tim 4:10) So they left him to wander in his distress alone. Then they talked of the great warrior who fought with and slain him who had the power of death, the devil, to deliver those who through fear of death were held in slavery, but not without harm to Himself. (Heb. 2:14-15). He'd stripped Himself of His glory so He might do this for the poor, making pilgrims into princes, even though they were by nature beggars.

### **Prayer:**

- 1. Christian, has your journey been tough and taxing? Do you feel worn down and discouraged on the journey you've walked so far? Do you desire refreshing and rest from dangers and cares? Pray that God will send you some rest. Pray that the vision of His promise would be to you a refreshing thought to keep you going.*
- 2. Pilgrim, does he awareness of your sinful corruption wear you down and increase your longing for the day you'll be rescued from sin? Pray that the victory of the cross of Christ, and the assurance of righteousness given you by Christ and the word of God will be to you a comfort through your struggle with the flesh.*
- 3. Christian, does it grieve you that your spouse or children are not saved and are on their way to hell? Has the deceitfulness of wealth, the lure of the world and enjoyment of pleasure kept them from seeing Christ? Call on the great warrior who alone is able to rescue from the power of death! Pray they be snatched from fire!*

### THE DESTROYER ON THE PILGRIM'S JOURNEY – AND DARKEST FEARS WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

After leaving the palace Beautiful adorned with armour, Christian was led to the valley of humiliation. Here he met Apollyon the destroyer, a hideous monster with wings like a dragon, feet like a bear and mouth like a lion. Though terrified, Christian figured he couldn't run from the monster so he chose to stand his ground against it. Apollyon, laying claim on Christian as his bound subject, tried to get him to turn back but Christian refused to do so, adamantly saying that he could not live on the wages Apollyon offered since they amounted to death but Christ offered Life eternal. (Rom. 6:23) He explained that now he'd sworn allegiance to Christ and would not go back on his word, and besides he loved the Lord's service better than Apollyon's.

To this Apollyon asked, "How many have been put to death in service of Him yet He's never come from his heavenly place to rescue any out of their enemies' hands? But I have delivered those who serve me, by my power or fraudulent schemes, when taken captive by Him and His followers! And so, will I rescue you too Christian." Christian responded, "His restraint in delivering is deliberate and purposeful. To test their love and prove their loyalty to Him. As for the shameful end you say is their destiny, it is not, for they are assured of future glory when their Prince comes with the angels."

#### Prayer:

1. Christian, have you come to the valley of humiliation and has Satan come at you like a flood? Have you felt the chill he causes as he stands against you, a formidable enemy bent on destroying you? Pray for courage to stand your ground! When your time of testing comes, resist him and not cower back to his intimidations.
2. Pilgrim, does it also confound you why God allows you to face trouble instead of quickly snatching you away from it? Does that at times cloud His goodness to you? Pray for eyes to see beyond the pain He lets you endure, to the future glory that awaits those who stand His test, who despite any trial will not forsake Him.

Apollyon then attempted to remind Christian of his unfaithfulness, of how he was easy to discourage in despondency, of his attempts to rid himself of the burden by the law, of his sinful sleep, and little faith that almost made him turn back in fear. He even accused him of pride and a desire for praise in his recalling of his travails on this journey! "I am guilty of this and more!" said Christian, " but the Prince is merciful and forgiving. Besides, for my wrongdoings, I have groaned under and repented of them, and received a full pardon for these crimes."

“I am enemy to this Prince! I hate His laws, and His people, and I am here to oppose you, and spill your soul.” Apollyon began throwing darts as thick as hail, and even with all the skill he could muster Christian could not deflect them all. They inflicted wounds to his head, hand, and foot. Apollyon pressed on more forcefully, but Christian took courage and resisted as fearlessly as he could. This agonizing combat lasted more than half a day, until Christian was almost exhausted. For his wounds, made him grow weaker and weaker.

Then Christian recalled the words of the scroll. “Rejoice not against me enemy, for when I fall, I shall arise, (Micah 7:8) for in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him who loved us. (Rom. 8:37) Submitting yourselves to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) Seeing an opportunity of weakness, he made a deadly thrust and inflicted a fatal wound on Apollyon with his double-edged sword. Apollyon flew off not to be seen again. “ Though Great Beelzebub made plans for my ruin, and he sent out Apollyon enraged and fully equipped to fiercely engage me, Michael helped me and by the sword of the Spirit, I made him fly. Therefore, to Him, I'll give everlasting praise. I'll thank and bless His holy name always.”

### Prayer:

1. Christian, has Apollyon launched his fiery darts as thick as hail? Are you beaten, wounded and weakened? Are you almost afflicted and almost defeated? Arise and pray that help will be sent your way. Recall and pray the word of God, the Sword of the Spirit; our weapon against the enemy of our souls.
2. Pilgrim, has the accuser come to you with reminders of your past sin? How you do not deserve the grace you have now received? Does he even now show you the inconsistency of your confession, and persuade you to give up faith? Pray to be reminded of the Savior who saved you, whose mercy and pardon are inexhaustible!
3. Christian, has the Lord won you a battle against the enemy? Has he rebuked the devourer for you and healed your wounds? Shout for joy and make his faithfulness known! Testify with rejoicing that all may know that the Lord saves the afflicted. That he rescues his own from the hand of the enemy.

*Angels attended to Christian wounds and refreshed him for his journey. And so, he entered the valley of the shadow of death. Christian needed to go through it because the way to the Celestial City lay there. Now, this valley was a very solitary place, a wilderness, a desert, a pit, a land of drought, a land that no man save Christians pass through, and there no man dwells.” (Jer. 2:6) Christian was tested more severely. Two men, children of the spies who'd given an evil report of the good land persuaded him to go back, (Num. 13:32) saying, “It's dark as pitch, discouragement and confusion hangs over the valley and death spreads its wings hovering over it. There, light is as darkness, a dreadful sight surrounded by nothing but disorder.” (Job 10:22) There in lay a very deep ditch, into which many had perished miserably. A very dangerous quagmire, that should a man fall into it, there is no place for his foot to stand.*





Christian's heart was not turned back, and neither were his steps drawn from the way, though broken in that place of dragons and the shadow of death. (Psalm 44:18-19) He was careful to avoid the ditch on the right or the mire on the left. Again, the mouth of hell stood hard against his narrow path. Flames and smoke poured from it in frightful sights and dreadful noises. But Christian, taking another weapon of all-prayer, (Eph 6:18) resolved to walk in the strength of the Lord his God.

### **Prayer:**

1. Christian, have you come into the valley of the shadow of death? Do you feel like you are in a wasteland where no good dwells? Have you been so discouraged that you've thought of despairing? Is it all dark, and death lurks so near? Remember and pray His promise, that He will never leave you nor forsake you.
2. Pilgrim, has hell's mouth been opened near you, dreadful fears and frightful thoughts torment you? Do you worry you'll be consumed by dangers unknown and are paralyzed by many cares? Call on the Lord! Ask for strength to walk in His truth.

But one of the wicked ones sneaked up behind him and whispered into his ear many suggestive and distressing blasphemies. Christian thought this was his mind, and it troubled him deeply that he could blaspheme the One who loved him so much. This tested Christian more than anything else before, yet he didn't have the foresight to either stop his ears or understand the real source of these blasphemies. Then he recalled the words, "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, you are with me, (Psalm 23:4) and though I do not see you, you pass before me (Job 9:11). You will turn the shadow of death into morning (Amos 5:8)."

Coming to the end of the valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims who had gone this way before, but even before he'd pondered from where it came, he spotted a little cave ahead where two giants, Pope and Pagan, lived in olden times. It was by their power and tyranny that the men whose bones, blood, ashes, and other remains lay in this place, were cruelly put to death. Christian passed by this place without much danger, for Pagan has been dead many a day, and Pope though still alive was too stiff in his joints to do any harm but just sat in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they went by, and biting his nails in frustration because he can no longer intercept them. He kept shouting, "You will never mend, till more of you are burned at the stake."

## **Prayer:**

1. Christian, are you worried of forsaking the Lord? Are you concerned that you'll betray He who died for you? Are you tormented by thoughts of desertion of your Savior and return to slavery? Pray that Christ would rebuke Satan for you. It's he that plants thoughts of fear, and his end is to paralyze your walk of faith.
2. Pilgrim do you see the damage these two giants caused to many pilgrims? How paganism and papacy once held many captives, keeping them from reaching the celestial city? Thank the Lord that He has brought to us this enlightenment by the gospel. Thank Him for rolling back ignorance and for the revelation of true light

Songs to enrich your prayer time ([Click the list to access the playlist](#))

- It is well with my Soul
- Forgiven by Sovereign grace
- Oh, come to the alter by Elevation
- How deep the father's love for us
- The power of the cross
- All I have is Christ by Sovereign Grace
- Old rugged cross
- I have decided to follow Jesus
- Stand up, stand up for Jesus
- And can it be
- Come thou fount of every blessing
- Courage brother do not stumble
- Will your anchor hold
- Rafiki Mwema
- I won't go back by William McDowell.
- Prayer for a friend by Casting crowns.
- I have made you too small in my eyes
- Just as I am without one plea
- Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus
- At the cross at the Cross



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