

The Delectable Mountains

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo Campbell

[0 : 0 0] Well if we could this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling if we could just turn back to that portion of scripture that we read for a moment and I want us to read again verses 12 to 15. So Ezekiel chapter 34 and verse 12 what it says, as a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered so will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness and I will bring them out of the peoples and gather them from the countries and I will bring them into their own land and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel by the ravines and in all the inhabited places of the country I will feed them with good pasture and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land there they shall lie down in good grazing land on the rich pasture they shall feed in the mountains of Israel I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep and I myself will make them lie down to clear the Lord God. As we continue walking with Christian in the pilgrims progress this evening we'll be given a glimpse of the celestial city and we'll be given that glimpse from the delectable mountains because

God willing next Lord's Day we'll reach our final destination in the celestial city but as you know we've walked a long way it's been a long time since we left the city of destruction and it seems that it's been a long time ago that we fled from that city but you know in that time we've walked with Christian along the King's Highway towards our destination and our pilgrimage you remember we were delivered from the slough of despond we crossed over the threshold of the Wicked Gate we explored the interpreter's house we stood at the cross where our burden rolled off our back we then persevered up the hill called difficulty and we launched for a time at the palace beautiful then we fought with a Polly in the valley of humiliation and then we went into another valley the valley of the shadow of death then we walked with Christian and faithful as they enjoyed friendship and fellowship and then we encountered the town of vanity where we had to pass through vanity fair but it was a vanity fair that faithful was martyred and then hopeful appeared and last Lord's Day we saw that Christian and hopeful they experienced distractions and diversions and even despair because for a time they were diverted away from the King's Highway onto this more easygoing path in by path meadow and it was in by path meadow that Christian and hopeful they strayed into the grounds of Doubting Castle which was the home of giant despair and it was under the direction of his wife Dividence you'll remember the giant despair he taunted and tormented Christian and hopeful to the point that Christian had double sorrow there was this darkness that came over Christian leaving him in the state of discouragement and doubt and depression and despair and even death he wanted to end his life by committing suicide but as we read Christian and hopeful they were in the dark dungeon of Doubting Castle they were there from

Wednesday until the Lord's Day morning and it was on the Lord's Day morning after much prayer that Christian and hopeful they experienced the power of the resurrection you remember how just after they were praying that Christian remembered that he had this key of promise in his bosom where he could cling and claim and even confess the promises of God and it was that key of promise which opened all the doors to Doubting Castle and enabled them to make their way back towards the King's highway and then Bunyan writes he says Christian and hopeful then went on until they came to the delectable mountains which belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken of before now in this section we see that on the delectable mountains and a little beyond Christian and hopeful they met four shepherds three scoundrels and two saviours so on the delectable mountains and a little beyond as we'll see this evening Christian and hopeful they met four shepherds three scoundrels and two saviours so first of all we look at the four shepherds four shepherds we read that Bunyan said Christian and hopeful went on until they came to the delectable mountains which belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken off before now what Bunyan meant by this is that you remember when Christian lodged at the palace beautiful he was there for about four or five nights but you remember that just before Christian continued on his pilgrimage into the valley of humiliation Christian was taken up to the top of the palace and he was told to look south and when he looked south he could see the delectable mountains and a few were to go back to the part where he looked at where he was in the in the palace beautiful we're told that Christian saw in the distance most pleasant mountainous a most pleasant mountainous country beautified with wood vineyards fruits of all sorts flowers along with springs and fountains all very delectable to feast one's eyes and the name of that country as Samuel Rutherford put it in his letters was

Immanuel's land and as Anne Cousin put it in her hymn she was the wife of a free church minister she said glory glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land but you know you remember that Christian he was promised at palace beautiful he was promised that when you arrive at the delectable mountains you may see the gate of the celestial city as the shepherds who live there will show you and so when we're at the delectable mountains Bunyan writes on the tops of these mountains there were shepherds feeding their flocks while they stood by the highway so Christian and hopeful they went over to them and they asked whose delectable mountains are these and whose sheep are these which feed upon them and you know I love how the shepherds responded to Christian and hopeful they said these mountains are Immanuel's land and they're within sight of his city the sheep are also his for he laid down his life for them did you notice that the shepherds when asked about the sheep they immediately point away from themselves they point away from themselves and they point to the good shepherd Jesus Christ because it's only Jesus who could proclaim I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep and it's only Jesus who could promise my sheep in my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give to them eternal life and they will never perish neither shall they be plucked out of my hand the shepherds of the delectable mountains they pointed away from themselves and they pointed to the good shepherd

Jesus Christ because they were only under shepherds they were pastors that's what a pastor is he's an under shepherd and it's only Jesus who is the good shepherd Jesus is the pastor of pastors and these shepherds on the delectable mountains they were pastors to traveling pilgrims they were pastors to to Christian and hopeful and they show them hospitality so that they will experience and enjoy rest and refreshment and Bunyan tells us he tells us the names of these shepherds these pastors he says that they were called knowledge experience watchful and sincere knowledge experience watchful and sincere and you know what Bunyan is highlighting to us with the names of these four pastors he's highlighting the biblical characteristics which a pastor must seek to possess because according to scripture a pastor must seek to possess the biblical characteristics of knowledge experience watchfulness and sincerity it's a high calling and it's a calling that in which I preach to myself and say this to myself that these are things these are characteristics which I need to possess knowledge experience watchfulness and sincerity because a pastor must seek to pastor worn and weary pilgrims with knowledge experience watchfulness and sincerity of course this description it stands in contrast to the description which we read earlier the description of the shepherds that the prophet Ezekiel had to prophesy against because as we read in Ezekiel 34 the shepherds in Israel the pastors in Israel they were the religious leaders and they were meant to feed the flock of God but but as we read they were just feeding themselves they were clothing themselves they were looking after themselves and through his prophetic message

[9 : 58] Ezekiel said to what you could describe as pathetic pastors he said to them the week you have not strengthened the sick you have not healed the injured you have not bound up the strayed you have not brought back and the lost you have not sought you know what an indictment against the pastors in Israel because as under shepherds of God they had neglected the flock of God they had neglected the Lord's people and you know if I can be personal with you for a moment I feel like one of those pathetic pastors that Ezekiel prophesied against because you know when I read what the Lord said to the the pastors in Israel what he said to to these shepherds that they the week they have not strengthened the sick you have not healed the injured you have not bound up the strayed you have not brought back and they lost you have not sought I feel that that describes me and I'm sure that many other pastors throughout our nation and beyond they feel the same because over this past year we've been unable to preach and to pastor pilgrims like we would want to we've been unable to preach and pastor to worn and weary pilgrims with knowledge and experience and watchfulness and sincerity and you know as a pastor you'd love nothing more than to be able to pastor pilgrims like these shepherds on the delectable mountains did because we read that they took Christian and hopeful they took them by the hand and they enjoyed food with them and fellowship with them and friendship with them they enjoyed time with the flock they they pastored these pilgrims they pastored these pilgrims but they also pointed out the pitfalls they pointed out the pitfalls because Bunyan writes then I saw in my dream that in the morning the shepherds called Christian and hopeful to walk with them upon the delectable mountains so they went forth with them and walked a while while having a pleasant view on every side then the shepherds took them to the top of the hill called Eirah which was very steep and they told the pilgrims to look down to the bottom so Christian and hopeful were told they looked down and they saw several men who had been dashed to pieces having fallen from the top of the hill and Christian he asked what does this mean and the shepherds said to them have you not heard of those who are by harkening to hymen a s and phyletus you remember that hymen a s and phyletus they made shipwreck of their faith they made shipwreck of their faith they turned back and what the shepherds said to Christian and hopeful is that these men at the bottom of the hill called

Eirah they remain unburied as an example to others to take heed not to come to near the brink of the hill called Eirah then the shepherds brought Christian and hopeful to the top of another mountain called caution and they observed what they thought were several men who were walking among the tombs that were there and they saw the men and they noticed that they were blind because well they stumbled upon the tombstones and they couldn't find their way from among them and again Christian he asks about about these blind men he asks what does this mean the shepherds said do you not see did you not see that there was a style which led into a meadow on the left hand of the way from that style leads a path which goes directly to doubting castle which is kept by giant despair these blind men among the tombs were once on pilgrimage just as you are now but when they came to that style because the right way was rough they chose to go out of it and go into by path meadow they were then captured by giant despair and cast into doubting castle and they've been kept a while in the giant's dungeon and then he gouged out their eyes and he led them among those tombs where he has left them to wander until this day and you know this Christian and hopeful were told that they wept tears stream down their faces but they didn't say a word to the shepherds because

Christian and hopeful knew in their hearts that that could have so easily been them that could have been them out on the the fields with their eyes gouged out and walking blind but were it not for the fact that the Lord kept them were it not for the fact that they claimed and claimed and confessed the promises of God's word were it not for the fact that they found that key of promise and made their way out of doubting castle that they too were a fallen foul of giant despair and you're my Christian friend it's a warning to us all not to stray into by path meadow but to stay on the narrow path that leads to life stay on the path and cling and confess the promises that are ours and so having pastored the pilgrims and having pointed out the pitfalls the shepherds also pressed for perseverance they pressed for perseverance because they then led Christian and hopeful to another place where there was a door a door in the side of a hill and when they opened the door and when they looked in they saw there was very dark and very smoky and they also heard the noise of the rumble of fire and they they smelt brimstone and as we're told it was a byway to hell it was the way that hypocrites go hypocrites like Esau and Judas and Alexander and Ananias and Sapphira because all of them they all once had a reputation of being pilgrims but they are now remembered as having a reputation of being pretend and so bunionists is calling us to parchevia he's calling us to parchevia then just before Christian and hopeful continued their journey towards the celestial city the shepherds call them to come to another hill they take them to the hill called clear and they showed them the gate of the celestial city they told them to look and see all its glory and then just as they were about to part company with the pastors were told that these shepherds they spoke to them knowledge gave them direction experience said beware of the flatterer watchful warned them not to fall asleep on the enchanted ground and sincere but them God speed and so on the delectable mountains and beyond Christian and hopeful they met four shepherds then they met three scoundrels so four shepherds and three scoundrels three scoundrels bunion rights then I saw the same two pilgrims going down the delectable mountains along the king's highway towards the celestial city now a little below these mountains on the left hand lies the country of conceit from this country a little crooked lane enters the narrow way in which the pilgrims were walking here they met with a very boisterous lad named ignorance who came out of that country and at this point Christian and hopeful they enter into a discussion with ignorance about how to enter the celestial city but this evening I just like to do with ignorance as hopeful said to Christian because hopeful said to Christian let us pass him by and talk with him later let us pass him by and talk with him later and you know we'll meet ignorance again next week as Christian and hopeful approach the celestial city and so the two pilgrims they keep going they they walk on and when they had travelled a little along the way they entered a very dark lane I was

there that Christian and hopeful encountered a man named turn away he was from the town of apostasy and it seems that turn away had ignored the warning of what it means to follow Jesus because you'll remember that Jesus said no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God and sadly for turn away he had looked back and he had even turned back he had turned away from the faith that he once professed and in doing so we're told that he had been bound by seven devils seven devils whom Christian and hopeful witnessed carrying this man turn away they carried him back to the byway to hell on the side of the hill and you know my friend what we're what we're witnessing as we draw nearer and nearer to the celestial city is that more and more hypocrites and apostates are being revealed and you know with all these illustrations of hypocrites and apostates you know Bunyan is emphasizing to us just what Peter emphasized to the early church because what Peter emphasized to the early church was give all diligence to make your calling and your election sure for if you do these things you will never fall give all diligence to make your calling and your election sure for if you do these things you shall never fall and the question arises well how do we do that how do we make our calling and our election sure how can we be sure of our calling and our election how can we have assurance well Peter says in the same passage in 2 Peter chapter 1 he says give all diligence to add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness love Peter says if you make every effort to possess and practice these seven Christian qualities in your life then they will make your calling and your election sure they'll give you assurance of your calling and your election because each one of these seven Christian qualities they're all marks of grace they're all evidence that the grace of god is working and growing in your life and so my friend the plea from Bunyan this evening is give all diligence to make your calling and your election sure for if you do these things you shall never fall you'll never be a hypocrite or an apostate make your calling and your election sure and so after witnessing turn away being carried off to the byway to hell Christian said to hopeful now I remember what was told to me about something which happened to a good man named little faith who dwelt in the town of sincere he dwelt in the town of sincere and

Christian he proceeded to recount the story to hopeful this story which he had heard he said as little faith entered this dark passage as we are currently there came down from Broadway gate and Ali called dead man's lane it's called this because of the many murders done there this little faith going on pilgrimage just as we are he happened to sit down there and fell asleep just at that time three sturdy rogues who were brothers came down the lane from Broadway gate their names were faint heart mistrust and guilt spotting little faith asleep that they ran quickly up to him and now little faith he was just awakening from asleep and he was about to resume his journey so the rogues came up to him and with threatening language they ordered him to stand still at this little faith turned as white as a sheet and had neither power to fight nor flee then faint heart he demanded hand over your money but little faith did not do it because he was reluctant to lose his money mistrust therefore ran up to him and thrusting his hand into his pocket he pulled out a bag of silver and then little faith called out he said thieves thieves with that guilt with a large club in his hand he struck little faith on the head knocking him flat to the ground and there he lay bleeding as though he would bleed to death the thieves they stood nearby says Christian but hearing someone on the road and fearing that it might be a man called great grace who dwells in the city of good confidence they fled and left little faith to fend for himself then after a little while little faith revived and getting up attempted to continue on his way and you know what we see with Christian story about little faith is that it stands in complete contrast to the hypocrisy and apostasy of some of those whom the pilgrims had just met along the King's highway because the thing is little faith was a genuine Christian little faith was a committed Christian little faith was from the town of sincere he was a sincere Christian but what hindered and hampered little faith in the pilgrims progress was his little faith it wasn't a lack of faith he had faith but is he had little faith and because he had little faith when these three scoundrels faint heart mistrust and guilt when they ran after him they stole his joy they battered him with guilt and they left him for dead and you know when you read the story in the book you know I think so many people who are walking in the pilgrims progress can relate to this character little faith because my friend the truth is it's not that you lack faith it's that you have little faith it's not that you don't believe in Jesus Christ as your savior it's that you don't think you're good enough to be saved it's not that you don't believe in the promises of God it's that you find it hard to trust that these very promises that are written in God's word that they are yours to claim and cling to and confess and because you have such little faith you know when faint heart when he runs after you you feel that you can't outrun him so you just stand still and when mistrust runs sacks your riches he steals your joy and he leaves you feeling absolutely

[26 : 21] empty as a Christian and when guilt comes well you have no energy left to fend off fend him off and you're beaten and battered by guilt because of past sins and circumstances my friend you might feel that you're just like little faith where you feel that you're struggling to to make any progress in the pilgrims progress and like little faith you feel overcome overcome by faint heart and mistrust and even guilt to the point that the Christian life seems to you maybe an existence rather than an excitement because you feel like a beggar always in need but nothing to give always in need but nothing to give you feel like a useless Christian an unprofitable Christian and an helpful Christian because you feel that you have nothing to offer the church of Jesus Christ in the way of gifts or abilities and as you travel along the King's highway you just feel like little faith little faith a hungry beggar looking and longing for home but you know I love what Bunyan says about little faith because even though these three scoundrels faint heart mistrust and guilt even though they stole little faith's joy even though they battered him with guilt even though they left him for dead they didn't take his life and they didn't take his certificate which would allow him admittance into the celestial city but more than that the three scoundrels didn't take little faith's jewels and that was because little faith's jewels they weren't considered valuable to these three scoundrels but they were valuable to little faith in fact little faith's jewels were so valuable that even as a beggar were told that he was unwilling to sell them because little faith's jewels they were his inheritance at the celestial city it would be at the celestial city that little faith would receive an inheritance that was incorruptible undefiled that faded not away but was reserved in heaven for him but like many of little faith's disposition like you my friend

Bunyan tells us that while little faith walked along the King's highway he often forgot that he had his jewels indeed we're told he forgot about his jewels for a great part of the journey and whenever he came to his mind he began to be comforted by them but then fresh thoughts of his loss would again come upon him and those thoughts would swallow up all his comfort and you know my friend if you have little faith this evening Jesus asks you not once but five times in the gospel why are you fearful oh ye of little faith why are you fearful oh ye of little faith of course the reason Jesus asks such a question is because you have no reason to have little faith you have no reason to have little faith because everything is in his hands whether you're struggling with sin or sickness or suffering or sorrow or even struggling with security this this this this section is reminding us that everything is in Jesus's hands he gives to you his jewels for the journey he gives to you his inheritance he gives to you security he gives to you surety that your salvation is safe in him and that in Christ you have already received an inheritance that is incorruptible undefiled that fadeeth not away but is reserved in heaven for you and you know my friend all this promises all these promises all this inheritance is all because your Savior is called great grace your Savior is called great grace in fact in this closing section the final point we see two saviours that's what I want us to see as we said on the delectable mountains and beyond Christian and hopeful they met four shepherds three scoundrels two saviours four shepherds three scoundrels two saviours two saviours of course

Christian and hopeful they didn't meet two saviours but one saviour beautifully described by Bunyan in two ways because as we read after the three scoundrels of faint heart mistrust and guilt after they went up after little faith stealing his joy and battering him with guilt and leaving him for dead we're told that they heard someone on the road and fearing that it might be a man called great grace who dwells in the city of good confidence they fled and left little faith to fend for himself and as Christian explained to hopeful faint heart mistrust and guilt they've often fled and they fled even with their master the king of the bottomless pit they fled when great grace appeared and no wonder because he's the king's champion that's what we're told great grace is the king's champion and you know for a beautiful description of Jesus that he has great grace and he is the king's champion and as Christian said he said to hopeful about the king's champion whoever looks closely upon his face shall see his scars and his cuts and of course he received those scars and cuts at Calvary when he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows he received those scars and cuts at Calvary when he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities he received those scars and cuts at Calvary when he received the chastisement which brought us peace and by his stripes we are healed he received those scars and cuts at Calvary when bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior he received those scars and cuts at Calvary he is great grace and he is the king's champion he is the king's champion but as Christian highlighted to hopeful he said faint heart mistrust and guilt have attacked many others besides little faith they've attacked David his a kaya and even Peter but in order to protect ourselves on the king's highway says Christian there are two things that we should do first go out with our armor on and to be sure to take our shield of faith with us it is for lack of this says Christian that many pilgrims are foiled but only the shield of faith can quench the fiery darts of the wicked one if that is lacking the wicked one will not fear us at all secondly says Christian it is good that we ask the king to guide us in our journey and that he himself would go with us oh my brother says

Christian if he will but go with us then we will not be afraid of tens of thousands who set themselves against us but without him we will only stumble along or lie among the dead but you know what we see is that Christian he didn't take heed to his own advice he didn't listen to his own advice the advice that he was giving to young hopeful because we read that they came to a fork in the road and they didn't know which path to take they didn't know because both paths looked like they went straight towards the celestial city but as Christian and hopeful as they stood discussing which way to go were told that a man black of flesh but covered with a very light robe came to them and asked them why they stood there Christian and hopeful they explained that they're going to the celestial city but they didn't know which way to take follow me said the man I'm going there also so they followed him in the way which slowly turned them away from the celestial city so that they were completely turned away from it but just before they realized that they had been led astray the man led them into a net where Christian and hopeful were both entangled and with that were told that the white robe of the man fell off fell off the back of the man's back and of course

Bayan's description is the warning which Paul issued to the church in Corinth that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light in order to lead God's people astray then Christian said to hopeful now I see my error did not the shepherds bid us to beware of the flatterer as is the saying of the wise so we have found it this day whoever flatters his neighbour is spreading a net for his feet Christian and hopeful they lay crying in the net for some time until at last a shining one came towards them with a whip of cords in his hand and as we said on the delectable mountains there was four shepherds three scoundrels two saviours and one of them was a shining one and the shining one were told he cut the net he freed the pilgrims and he said to them follow me so that I may place you in the right path again and the shining one brought them back to to the fork in the road and he guided them in the right way that they should go but then Bayan he says something very interesting he says I saw in my dream that the shining one commanded the pilgrims to lie down and he whipped them to teach them the good way wherein they should walk and as he whipped them were told he said quoting the message to the church in Laodicea as many as I love I rebuke and chase him be zealous therefore and repent I know this is something we never really hear about or even talk about we don't talk about the chastening of the Lord or the discipline of the Lord where the Lord teaches us through prayer and preaching and even through providence that we need to turn away from our sinful straying and turn back to our sufficient saviour but you know Zana with the writer to the Hebrews encouraged the Lord's people with what he said in Hebrews 12 my son do not despise the chastening of the Lord nor be discouraged when you're rebuked by him for whom the Lord loves he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives if you endure chastening God deals with you as with sons for what son is there whom a father does not chase him my friend the Lord disciplines directs and disciplines us because he loves us the Lord disciplines directs and disciplines us because he loves us this done writes Bunyan the shining one bid Christian and hopeful to go on their way and pay close attention to the other directions which the shepherds had given them so they thanked him for all his kindness and went carefully along the right way and so on the delectable mountains and beyond

[39 : 11] Christian and hopeful they meant four shepherds three scoundrels two saviours and one of them was a shining one and God willing next week we'll see what happens as Christian and hopeful reach their destination in the pilgrims progress well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us now let's pray together our heavenly Father we give thanks to thee for these reminders to us that in this pilgrims progress we need to keep persevering we need to keep pressing on towards the mark of the high call of God in Christ Jesus that there are many warnings and there are many other ways which we could go but help us we pray to stay on the right way and the narrow path help us to take heed to even the chastening of the Lord that he is the one who will disciple us and direct us and even discipline us if need be oh Lord the Taoist teach us give to us even the prayer of the psalmist teach me thy way and in thy truth oh Lord then walk will I unite my heart that I thy name may fear continually bless us Lord in the week that lies ahead that whatever is before us the

Taoist keep us on the way ever looking to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith cleanse us we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening by singing the words of Sam 9 Sam 9 we're singing verses 10 and 11 in Gaelic we're singing Sam 9 I'll read them for I'll read the verses first of all in English and then in Gaelic Sam 9 from verse 10 and they that know thy name in thee their confidence will place for thou is not forsaken them that truly seek thy face oh sing ye praises to the Lord that dwells in Zion hill and all the nations among his deeds record ye still we're seeing these verses of Sam 9 verses 10 and 11 to God's praise me

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

[43 : 51] Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Amen.