

**Aim:**

**Refer:**

**Resources:** Have a picture of someone pouring water on an oil fire: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGalywDwebM>  
 Pictures of Pilgrims Progress are available here: <http://www.bunyanministries.org/>

Have you heard the object lesson of the wise and foolish men before? Briefly discuss what it means. (House on rock represents a life with a good spiritual foundation eg. Habits, faith etc.)

Have you heard the object lesson of the vine and branches before? Briefly discuss what it means. (A branch will eventually die if it is cut from the tree; it will not produce fruit. We cannot produce the Fruit of the Spirit if we are disconnected from God; without God we die a spiritual death now and eternal death later.)

*Last week in Pilgrims Progress, we left Christian at the house of Good-Will, the keeper of the wicket or small gate.*

*Then Good-Will said, "Look before thee; does thou see this narrow way? THAT is the way thou must go; it was created by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ and His Apostles; and it is as straight as a rule can make it. This is the way thou must go."*

*"But," said Christian, "Are there no turnings nor windings, by which a stranger may lose his way?"*

*"Yes, there are many ways that join upon this and they are crooked and wide. But by this thou mayest distinguish the right from the wrong, the right is only straight and narrow."*

We heard Jesus talking about the narrow gate in our Bible story this morning. The Old King James Version of the bible says, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." Strait spelled s-t-r-a-i-t means small. But Proverbs chapter 4 compares a spiritual journey to a path, straight for the wise path and crooked for the sinful one and warns not to turn to the left or right. (Proverbs 4:11, 27; 59:8) So that is why John Bunyan who wrote Pilgrims Progress also chose a straight and narrow pathway to represent a Christian's spiritual journey.

Discuss: Why did Jesus use a narrow gate instead of a wide gate? (Fewer people use a narrow gate, few people choose the away to heaven)

Discuss: Why a straight road instead of a windy road?

- God never changes – a straight road never changes direction
- With winding roads there may be many ways to travel to one destination, but with a straight road there is only one way. There is only one way to heaven.

*Down the straight and narrow way, Christian came to the house of the Interpreter.*

*The Interpreter led him into a very large parlour (a lounge room) that was full of dust and called for a man to sweep. Now, when he began to sweep, the dust began to fly about, so that Christian almost choked. Then said the Interpreter to a girl that stood by, "Bring the water, and sprinkle the room," and when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. The Interpreter said, "This parlour is the heart of a man, the dust is his sin and He that began to sweep at first, is the Law; but she that sprinkled the water, is the Gospel."*

Remember how Christian turned aside to go to see Mr Legality in the village of Morality? When he did this it represented someone trying to save themselves by following the law / by their own good works. When Christian did this his burden got heavier.

When the man who represented the law swept at first, did it clean the room?

Read Romans 3:20, 21

Knowing the law does not help us to keep the law – in fact it makes us more aware of how we fail to keep it. Without Jesus we have no hope. Without the girl who represented the Gospel, sprinkling the room, there was no hope of getting rid of the dust.

*Then the Interpreter took him by the hand and had him into a little room where sat two little children. The name of the elder was Passion and the name of the other Patience. Passion seemed to be much discontented; but Patience was very quiet.*

*Then Christian asked, "What is the reason of the discontent of Passion?"*

*"The Governor of them would have him wait for his best things till the beginning of the next year; but he will have all now." Then I saw that one came to Passion and brought him a bag of treasure, but after awhile he had wasted all away and had nothing left him but rags...*

*"Then," said Christian, "I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now but to wait for things to come."*



*"You say the truth: 'For the things which are seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'"*

What does the word patience mean? (Being willing to wait, not in a hurry)

What does the word passion or passionate mean? (A strong barely controllable emotion; excited, crazy about)

God made us with emotions – emotions make life more exciting. But at the same time, God didn't make emotions to control us. Sometimes people say their emotions were controlling them; but that is not an excuse for doing the wrong thing. We always have a choice and with God's help we can even change our emotions.

Read Romans 12:2

Read Matthew 6:19, 20

Discuss: With the two children, what does Passion represent? (Those who look for treasure on earth)

Discuss: What does Patience represent? (Those who want their treasure in heaven)

Which is the wiser way to be?

*Interpreter led him into a place where was a fire burning against a wall and one standing by it, always casting (throwing) much water upon it; yet did the fire burn higher and hotter.*

*"This fire is the work of grace in the heart; he that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil."*

*Then he took him about to the backside of the wall where he saw a man with a vessel of oil in his hand, of the which He did also continually cast, but secretly, into the fire.*

*"This is Christ, who continually, with the oil of His grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart; so notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of God's people prove gracious still."*

Do you know what happens when you pour water on an oil fire? (It gets bigger – Could show a picture or clip)

Have you ever heard of people who followed God in really difficult situations? (Like Corrie Ten Boom who survived a terrible prisoner of war camp and then became a self-supporting missionary and even organised a mission for her former enemies. Missionaries who continued to serve even after the deaths of their families. The martyrs who died singing while being burned.)

Sometimes people endure things that seem impossible, but the work of God inside them makes it possible, like the oil feeding the fire even while the water tries to put it out.

Discuss what will happen to the fire if it is no longer connected to the source of oil? (It will eventually die, just like a branch cut off from a tree will die.)

Discuss: What can we learn from this? (We need to stay connected to God)

*I saw also, that the Interpreter took him again by the hand and led him into a pleasant place where was a palace. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book to take the name of him that should enter therein; he saw also, that in the doorway stood many men in armour to stop those who would enter. Then Christian saw a man say, "Set down my name, Sir." The man drew his sword and put a helmet upon his head and rushed toward the door. The armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all and into the palace at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, saying— "Come in, come in; Eternal glory thou shalt win."*

Discuss: What do you think the different things in this object lesson represent and what can we learn from this object lesson?

- Palace = heaven
- Men in armour who stop those entering = Satan & his angels
- Men who want to enter = people
- Fear can stop us doing what we should do
- If we don't try we will never succeed
- The way to heaven is not always easy

*Then the Interpreter led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. Now the man seemed very sad and he sighed as if he would break his heart. Then said Christian to the man, "What art thou?" The man answered, "I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in despair, as in this iron cage. I cannot get out; I sinned against God; I have grieved the Spirit, and He is gone; I tempted the devil and he is come to me. I*



*cannot repent, therefore I have shut myself out of all the promises and there now remains to me nothing but dreadful threatenings of certain judgment..."*

Read 1 John 1:9 and John 3:16

Can you imagine what God would do if this man asked for help? (He would free him and save him)  
Why didn't God help this man? (He didn't ask)

*Interpreter led him into a chamber where there was one rising out of bed and as he put on his raiment, he shook and trembled and said, "This night, as I was in my sleep, I dreamed that the day of judgment was come and that I was not ready for it; but this frightened me most, that the angels gathered up several and left me behind. Also the pit of hell opened her mouth just where I stood. My conscience, too, afflicted me and as I thought, the Judge had always his eye upon me in anger."*

Read 2 Peter 3:9

This man says that he felt that the Judge who represents God, has always looked at him with anger. How does God feel towards sinners? (He loves them)

Discuss: What does this man need to do?

Each of us has a choice too. We can choose to live God's way or our own way. God's way is not always easiest, but it is always best. For some people the parables and object lessons of Jesus are just stories, just like for some people, Pilgrims Progress is just a story. But for those who want to know more about God, the parables of the Bible have hidden meanings same as Pilgrims Progress.