

## Book Recommendation Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan

Dear brothers and sisters,

"Pilgrim's Progress" by John Bunyan is a must read for every Christian, both young and old. This book is produced with different versions to make it more readable for every age group, thus this book is accessible to many. This is a Christian classic that every Christian ought to read it every five or ten years. It is an allegory of the Christian, as a pilgrim journeying to heaven.

It was written or John Bunyan or I would say dreamed by him. He was a preacher in England and he was put into prison for preaching without a licence. For that crime he was imprisoned for three months but because he refused to heed the authorities' advice he was imprisoned for another twelve years. And it was during his second imprisonment that he dreamed this dream.

The dream goes like this: in his dream he saw a man with a huge burden on his back and he was miserable and sorrowful as a result of that burden. Life was difficult with that burden on his back and so he was desperate to remove it. The only way he can remove it is to flee from the city of Destruction, which God will destroy because of their sins. And so he had to flee his house alone as none of his wife, children and neighbours wanted to follow him, except a few individuals along the way. And so, along the way he met with all kinds of temptations and deterred many from following him onto the journey. Christian's destination was Celestial City, which is heaven. And along the way, he also met with different characters, like pliable and obstinate, hopeful, goodwill, Mr. Legality, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Interpreter and Apollyon. And Christian came across places like Interpreter's House, the Slough of despond, Doubting Castle and Vanity Fair.

Where did his great burden fell off? Christian was on a road lined with walls called Salvation. He ran as fast as he could with that load on his back. At the foot of a hill, he passed an open tomb, and he found himself beneath a wayside cross. And as its shadow fell across him, so suddenly the burden, slipping from his shoulders and fell off his back and it tumbled down the hill. It tumbled into the mouth of the tomb and it was never seen again. That cross is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which he died on the cross for the sins of God's people. And those who gaze upon that cross shall be saved and their sins forgiven. And so, Christian's sins fell away because of the cross. Christian was feeling his back and he could not believe it, the burden is no more there. By the simple act of gazing at the cross, he was set free and his burden of guilt was gone. And there stood three Shining ones. The first one said, "your soul is now swept clean of sin". The second stripped him of his mud –strained rages, and gave him bright new clothes. The third one handed him a parchment. He said, "Guard it carefully, and surrender it only when you have reached the gate of the Celestial City". Christian was so delighted that he gave three leaps of joy and went on singing. This was the day he was waiting for. And to bring us to the end of the story, Christian was at the gate of Celestial City and the angels received him warmly with the blowing of trumpets. Celestial City is heaven. This is where every Christian is going. Halleluia, praise the Lord. May the Lord receive me into heaven when my work is done. Amen.

Pastor Paul Goh