

7 - Mr. Worldly Wiseman

Now as CHRISTIAN was walking solitarily by himself, he spied one afar off come crossing over the field to meet him and their hap was to meet just as they were crossing the way of each other. The gentleman's name that met him was Mr. WORLDLY WISEMAN: he dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy; a very great town, and also hard by from whence CHRISTIAN came. This man, then, meeting with CHRISTIAN, and having some inkling of him—for CHRISTIAN'S setting forth from the city of Destruction was much noised abroad, not only in the town where he dwelt, but also it began to be the town talk in some other places— Master WORLDLY WISEMAN, therefore, having some guess of him, by beholding his laborious going, by observing his sighs and groans and the like, began thus to enter into some talk with CHRISTIAN.

Worldly Wiseman. How now, good fellow?—whither away after this burdened manner?

Chr. A burdened manner indeed, as ever, I think, poor creature had! And whereas you asked me, Whither away? I tell you, sir, I am going to yonder wicket gate before me; for there, as I am informed, I shall be put into a way to be rid of my heavy burden.

W. Wise. Hast thou a wife and children?

Chr. Yes; but I am so laden with this burden, that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly: methinks I am as if I had none (#1Co 7:29).

W. Wise. Wilt thou hearken to me, if I give thee counsel?

Chr. If it be good, I will; for I stand in need of good counsel.

W. Wise. I would advise thee, then, that thou with all speed get thyself rid of thy burden: for thou wilt never be settled in thy mind till then: nor canst thou enjoy the benefits of the blessing which God hath bestowed upon thee till then.

Chr. That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden: but get it off myself I cannot; nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders. Therefore am I going this way, as I told you, that I may be rid of my burden.

W. Wise. Who bade you go this way to be rid of your burden?

Chr. A man that appeared to me to be a very great and honourable person; his name, as I remember, is EVANGELIST.

W. Wise. Avoid him for his counsel! There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world than is that unto which he hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something, as I perceive already; for I see the dirt of the Slough of Despond upon thee; but that slough is the only beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that way. Hear me—I am older than thou: thou art likely to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death, and what not! These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies. And

why should a man so carelessly cast away himself by giving heed to a stranger?

Chr. Why, sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than are all these things which you have mentioned: nay, methinks I care not what I meet with in the way, if so be I can also meet with deliverance from my burden.

W. Wise. How camest thou by thy burden at first?

Chr. By reading this book in my hand.

W. Wise. I thought so. And it has happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions; which distractions do not only unman men (as thine I perceive has done thee), but they run them upon desperate ventures, to obtain they know not what.

Chr. I know what I would obtain; it is ease for my heavy burden.

W. Wise. But why wilt thou seek for ease this way, seeing so many dangers attend it? Especially since, hadst thou but patience to hear me, I could direct thee to the obtaining of what thou desirest without the dangers that thou, in this way, wilt run thyself into. Yea, and the remedy is at hand. Besides, I will add, that instead of those dangers, thou shalt meet with much safety, friendship, and content.

Chr. Sir, I pray, open this secret to me.

W. Wise. Why, in yonder village (the village is named Morality) there dwells a gentleman whose name is LEGALITY, a very judicious man, and a man of a very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders; yea, to my knowledge, he hath done a great deal of good this way: aye, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burdens. To him, as I said, thou mayest go, and be helped presently. His house is not quite a mile from this place; and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man, his son, whose name is CIVILITY, that can do it as well as the old gentleman himself. There, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as indeed I would not wish thee, thou mayest send for thy wife and children to come to thee to this village, where there are houses now stand empty, one of which thou mayest have at reasonable rates: provision is there also cheap and good; and that which will make thy life the more happy is there to be sure, for thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion.

Now was CHRISTIAN somewhat at a stand; but presently he concluded, "If this be true what this gentleman hath said, my wisest course is to take his advice;" and with that he thus further spoke.

Chr. Sir, which is my way to this honest man's house?

W. Wise. Do you see yonder high hill? (Mount Sinai.)

Chr. Yes, very well.

W. Wise. By that hill you must go, and the first house you come to is his.

So CHRISTIAN turned out of his way to go to Mr. LEGALITY'S house for help. But, behold, when he was got now hard by the hill, it seemed so high, and also the side of it that was next the wayside did hang so much over, that CHRISTIAN was afraid to venture farther, lest the hill should fall on his head; wherefore there he stood still, and knew not what to do. Also his burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was in his way. There came also flashes of fire out of the hill, that made CHRISTIAN afraid that he should be burned (#Ex 19:16-18): here, therefore, he sweat and did quake for fear (#Heb 12:21). And now he began to be sorry that he had taken Mr. WORLDLY WISEMAN'S counsel. And with that he saw EVANGELIST coming to meet him; at the sight also of whom he began to blush for shame. So EVANGELIST drew nearer and nearer; and coming up to him, he looked upon him with a severe and dreadful countenance, and thus began to reason with CHRISTIAN.

1Co 7:29, Ex 19:16-18, Heb 12:21

“But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none,” (1Co 7:29 NKJV)

“¹⁶ ¶ Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.” (Ex 19:16-18 NKJV)

“And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.” (Heb 12:21 NKJV)