

Sermon Series: The Pilgrim's Progress
"Kneeling at the Cross Beside Holy Way"
by Rev. John C. Tittle

Scripture Readings:

Micah 7:18-20

¹⁸Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. ¹⁹He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰You will show faithfulness to Jacob and unswerving loyalty to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old.

1 Peter 2:24-25

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Discussion Questions:

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. Was there ever time in your life where you had a heavy burden? How did you get through the experience? Do you have a burden now?
3. In the Pilgrim's Progress Christian has a burden at the beginning of his journey. Neither he nor anyone else from his city could release him of his burden. It was only at the cross upon holy hill that he found release. His burden fell off, rolled down the hill, and landed inside the empty tomb at the bottom of the hill, never to be seen again. Do you think that only God can unburden of us our sin? Are we involved at all?
4. Mr. Worldly-Wise' advice to Christian was that he could unburden himself in the Village of Morality with the help of the father Legality and his son Civility. What do you think John Bunyan was talking about? Have you ever tried to release your own burdens through your own moral efforts? How did it go?
5. What do you think of these words from the sermon: *You're free. You can stop trying so hard, trying to prove to God, to others, and to yourself what a fine person you are. That you've got your act together, got it all figured out on your own. You can stop waving for attention—look at me! Stop. Rest. Kneel. Really anything that you can do—it's not really "your" effort anyway. God gave you the strength you already have. It's God—not you. There's freedom in honesty—admitting that we're spiritually bankrupt, saying "You must do this God, I can't."*

6. Sometimes our burdens become such a part of us that we feel we will die if they are removed from us. Why do we not want to let them go sometimes?
7. Micah 7:18 says that "God delights in showing mercy." Do you ever find it hard to agree with Micah about God's attitude towards us?
8. The message shared various ways that God forgives our sins. Which one below particularly speaks to you? Why?
9.
 - a. God lifts our sin off of us
 - b. God covers us
 - c. God sweeps away our sins
 - d. God washes us clean
 - e. God tramples upon our sin
 - f. God throws them into the depths of the sea
 - g. God nailed them to the cross.
10. How do we discern between a "thorn in the flesh" that we have to learn to live with by God's grace and a "burden" that we need to be released from?
11. What do you think of this definition of a Christian: A person who by God's grace is forgiven and forgiving? Can you think of other short descriptions?