

midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee." So the roaring lions were intimidating, but they could do nothing as Christian walked on the *strait and narrow path* between them.

CONCLUSION:

--Intimidations, whether from *our failures*, or from the *consequences of our failures*, or from the *realities of common trials and testing in life*, can keep us from traveling faithfully as pilgrims of the Kingdom of God. But God's Word and this story from John Bunyan, and this sermon today all join in a chorus to encourage you: Don't let intimidation stop the progress of your spiritual journey!

20-26-01 --Timorous & Mistrust in Pilgrim's Progress
intimidation, regrets, assurance, fears, courage, aging
Prov 26:13

Don't let intimidation stop the progress of your spiritual journey!

INTRODUCTION:

--In Pilgrim's Progress, at the top of Difficulty Hill, Christian meets two other pilgrims, *Timorous* and *Mistrust*, who are fleeing in the other direction because of two lions that block the road ahead. They warn him, and Christian's answers: You make me afraid; but whither shall I fly to be safe? If I go back to mine own country, that is prepared for fire and brimstone, I shall certainly perish there; if I can get to the celestial city, I am sure to be in safety there: I must venture. To go back is nothing but death: to go forward is fear of death, and life everlasting beyond it: I will yet go forward. So Mistrust and Timorous ran down the hill, and Christian went on his way.

BUT Fear grips Christian's heart when he finds his roll of assurance missing, lost earlier when he slept at a resting place half-way up the hill. Backtracking to find his scroll makes him reach the lions just when night is falling...

--**Text**, Prov 26:13, The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!" impediment to pilgrimage is often intimidation. ---**Title:** *Timorous & Mistrust* represent how loss of trust or confidence arising from intimidating fears can prevent us from courageously going forward in our spiritual journey. **HOM.idea.**

I. The Intimidation of Lost Time

- A. The Christian's soul is not immune to the nagging of regret...
[my back injury... "why was I so foolish with my back... if only I had been more careful... if only I had used my brain instead of my brawn... if only!"]
- B. Because time is so precious, regret over its loss is so painful
[Christian: "O wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the daytime!...How many steps have I taken in vain!...I am made to tread those steps with sorrow, which I might have trod with delight, had it not been for this sinful sleep. How far might I have been on my way by this time! I am made to tread those steps thrice over, which I needed not to have trod but once: yea, now also I am like to be benighted, for the day is almost spent. O that I had not slept!] Regret over lost time is painfully nagging because lost time seems to be irretrievable...
- C. Regret is a symptom of lost confidence [Loss of Christian's roll is symbolic: "*this roll was the assurance of his life, and acceptance at the*

desired haven-- it was his assurance of acceptance into the Celestial City]

D. The Lord allows the intimidating process of regret to seal in our hearts a lesson not to be forgotten--

1. Christian's mistake: "O wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the daytime! that I should sleep in the midst of difficulty! that I should so indulge the flesh as to use that rest for ease to my flesh which the Lord of the hill hath erected only for the relief of the spirits of pilgrims!"
2. Christian lesson: 1 Th 5:6-8, So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.
3. Christian's hope (and ours): Time past is irretrievable; but the time ahead is still available...

TRANS: Don't let regret over lost *time* and *effort* intimidate you. IF it does, **Don't let intimidation hinder your spiritual journey!** Instead go forward with confidence in the Lord who has called you to pilgrimage. He will help you regain your lost roll of assurance and get you back on the road! There is still work to do in the hours left.

A WISH by Ella Wheeler Wilcox	Do you wish the world were better?
Do you wish the world were better?	Let me tell you what to do:
Let me tell you what to do:	Set a watch upon your actions,
Set a watch upon your actions,	Keep them always straight and true;
Keep them always straight and true;	Rid your mind of selfish motives,
Rid your mind of selfish motives,	Let your thoughts be clean and high;
Let your thoughts be clean and high;	You can make a little Eden
You can make a little Eden	Of the sphere you occupy.
Of the sphere you occupy.	

II. The Intimidation of Falling Night [Christian: now also I am like to be benighted, for the day is almost spent. O that I had not slept!]

- A. Regret is an emotion we feel, but the result of a mistake is a reality we must deal with. [After Christian regained his roll]: But O how nimbly did he go up the rest of the hill! Yet before he got up, the sun went down upon Christian; and this made him again recall the vanity of his sleeping to his remembrance; and thus he again began to condole with himself: Oh thou sinful sleep! how for thy sake am I like to be benighted in my journey! I must walk without the sun, darkness must cover the path of my feet, and I must hear the noise of the doleful creatures, because of

my sinful sleep!] Forgiveness removes the eternal consequences of sin, but not always the temporal side-effects.

- B. **Remember**: our pilgrimage is primarily a journey of faith:
1. The human condition is tied to a world of fading daylight, where *people age, bodies deteriorate, night approaches*.
 2. Our response to nightfall: keep moving in the will of Him we do not see (whether we are *in broad daylight* or in the *twilight of life*)-- John 9:4, As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.
- C. Faith encourages us amid the intimidations of falling night--
1. "Will I make right choices? (since "I must walk without the sun")--
 - a. When light is running out, we still have the God of light!-- Psa 139:12, even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.
 - b. When our eye fails to see clearly, we still have God's eye-- Psa 32:8 (NKJV), I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.
 2. "Will I be able to keep going?" (since "darkness must cover the path of my feet") [fear of falling: our fear as we age is tripping and falling --God's concern is that we not fall spiritually, halting our journey of faith]

TRANS: Falling night intimidated *Christian*, for it also meant, "I must hear the noise of the doleful creatures." It reminded him of the lions *Timorous & Mistrust* warned about." **"Don't let the intimidation of lost time and falling night hinder your journey!"** Fine! BUT what about...

III. The Intimidation of Roaring Lions

- A. What lions roar, threatening to devour us (esp. as we age)? dwindling *finances*, deteriorating *bodies*, disappearing *friends and relatives*, diminishing *mobility*, ever decreasing *options*?
- B. God's promise to you-- 1 Cor 10:13 (NRSV), No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.
- C. In our story, *Watchful*, the porter of the *House Beautiful*, which was beyond the lions, called out to Christian when he saw him approaching: "Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none: keep in the