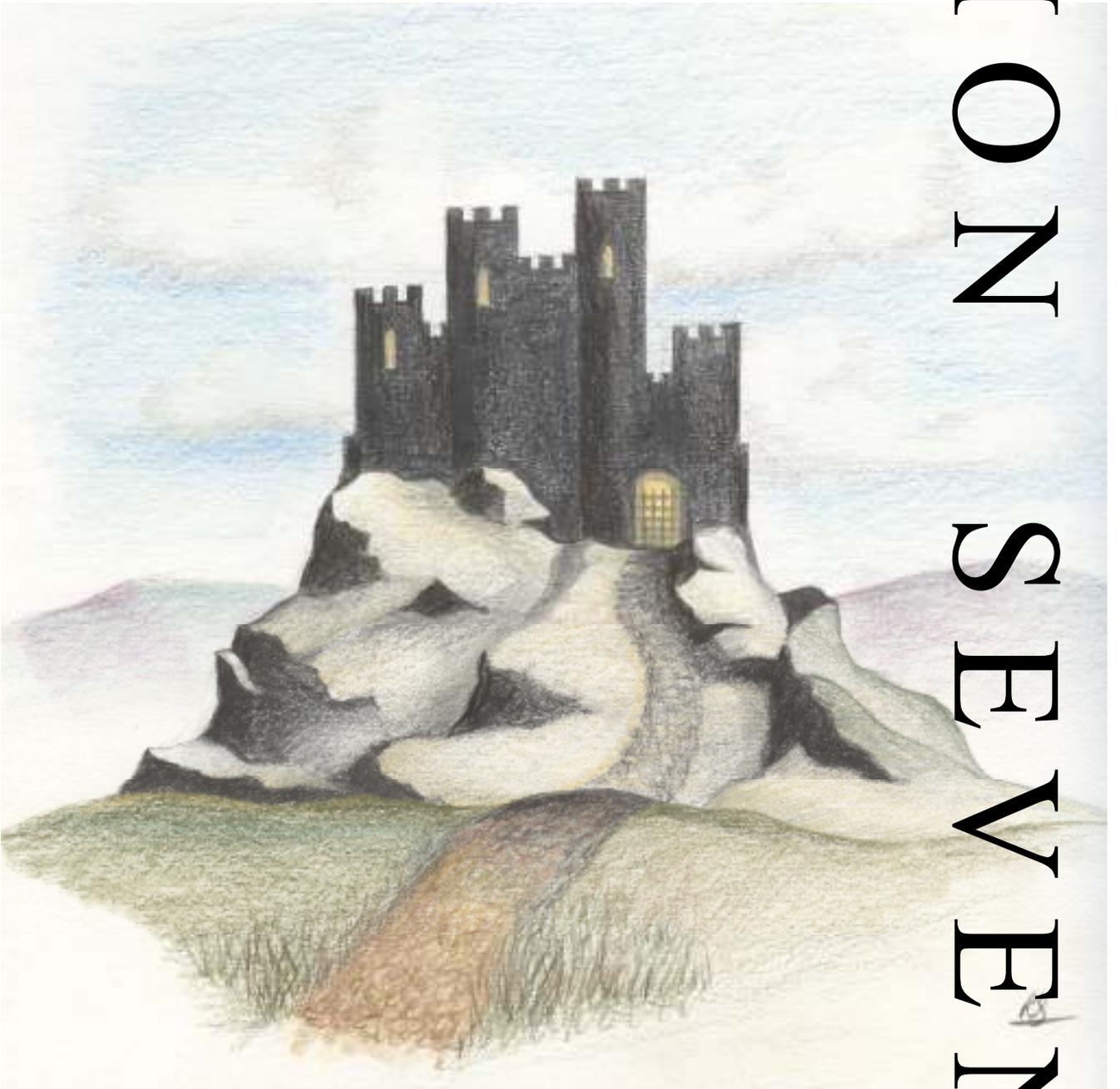


Filthy Lucre and Doubting Castle



S E S S I O N S E V E N

SESSION SEVEN

Outline: Filthy Lucre and Doubting Castle

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

DRAMA (1) INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIAN

THE STORY CONTINUES

DRAMA (2) DOUBTING CASTLE

DISCUSSION ABOUT DOUBTS

TESTIMONY AND POSSIBLE SONGS

WHAT IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE DOOR OF DOUBT?

FOR YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE: Prescription for Doubt

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The key to unlocking the dungeon of doubt is believing in the Word of God and trusting in His promises

CLOSING PRAYER

PREPARE BEFOREHAND:

Read Chapters 8 and 9, pick out the main points and prepare the flipchart

Prepare questions to stimulate discussion

Print both dramas and circulate to those taking part beforehand

Artwork: Picture of Doubting Castle

Decide how you want to use the artwork. Enlarge it and print it off as background or as a reminder of the session.

Testimony: Ask someone known to the group to share his/her testimony

Suggested Songs:

'My troubled soul' 1459 Robert Crichtley Copyright © 2001 Thank You Music
or

'I Lift My Eyes Up To The Mountains' Copyright © 1990 Mercy Publishing/Thank You Music,
PO Box 75, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6NW

(You could include either of these and ask someone to sing them for you, or listen to a CD)

Prepare a suitable prayer - you or someone else could say it at the end of this session

For your Travel Guide: Prescription for Doubt

Print off prescriptions/Bible verses for everyone

Session Six: Filthy Lucre and Doubting Castle

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

Can you remember what it was about?

Vanity Fayre

What did Vanity Fayre stand for?

Materialism, pride, selfishness and conformity

Where did we leave Christian last time?

On the edge of Vanity Fayre, making his escape

With whom?

It was here Hopeful joined him

Do you remember anything else about the story?

He had just witnessed something very beautiful

He had seen Faithful being taken up to the Celestial City in a chariot

Do you remember Christian's parting words to Faithful?

"Keep a place for me Faithful and remember me, dear friend."

TODAY....we have someone on the Straight and Narrow Way who wants to speak to Christian and find out how his journey is going.

So I'm going to pass you over to(name)

(Drama 1)



SESSION SEVEN

DRAMA (1): INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTIAN

Cast: Interviewer, Christian (*Hopeful is present, but doesn't have to say anything*)

Interviewer:

Hello everyone. My name is.....and I thought it would be a great idea to try and get hold of Christian and find out from him, firsthand, just how his journey is going. I'm on the Straight and Narrow Way right now, trying to find him.

(Enter Christian and Hopeful who walk past the group slowly)

Interviewer: *(with hand shading eyes, straining to see)*

Ah! Yes, I think I can see two people ahead....a man and a woman.... yes...it's Christian and someone else....oh good!

Interviewer: *(shouting)*

Christian, Christian - wait for me!

(Christian and Hopeful stop walking and wait until the Interviewer catches up. Hopeful sits down for a rest and Christian turns to face the Interviewer)

Interviewer:

Christian....it has taken a good while to find you, but I've tracked you down at last. I understand you're on a special journey which you hope will take you to the City of Gold? Would you tell us why you wanted to make this journey?

Christian:

Very happy to. It was sometime back now....I just knew I had to move away from all that was familiar to me....even from the people I loved....and begin a journey that would change my life.

Interviewer:

How do you mean....**change** your life?

Christian:

I don't mean....just change my life....as much as **save** my life. I was reading the Bible and it hit me so forcibly that one day I would have to stand before my Maker and be accountable for my life. Believe me...I didn't feel ready for that.

Interviewer:

So what did you do?

Christian:

Well....I ran! It felt like that anyway. There was an urgency about it....but I suppose you could say that I began a journey....a journey that will take me a lifetime....and I am still on that journey.

It's not been easy, you know....I've met people who have mocked me....distracted me, tempted me....I've been in situations that have almost seen me go under....I've been pulled in all directions....my courage has been sorely tested....in fact, at times I've almost given up, but something inside me....(or is it someone?)....keeps me going.

In the beginning I met a Preacher who told me to keep reading the Guidebook to help me.

He said that Pilgrims were setting off every day for the City of Gold and asked me, “Who wouldn’t want to go there? A place full of perpetual bliss, sublime happiness and everlasting life.” He told me that he was bound there himself and that I hadn’t a moment to lose, but he couldn’t guarantee that I would survive the journey, as it wasn’t an afternoon stroll, by any means.

He finished by telling me not to lose the Scroll as, without it, I would not be allowed into the City of Gold. I keep going over this conversation in my head.

Interviewer:

What has challenged you most about the journey so far?

Christian:

Hard to say really....it’s all been very challenging. I suppose I could summarise it by saying....keeping to the Straight and Narrow Way. Yes....that’s it....keeping to the Straight and Narrow Way! I’m finding it is so easy to be pulled away without even realising it.

Interviewer:

I see you have a companion now? Has she been with you all the time?

(Interviewer turns to look towards where Hopeful is sitting)

Christian:

Oh no....Hopeful joined me when I left Vanity Fayre.

I’ve had many companions....some of them not much help to me....but others have been supportive and helpful. In fact, one of them saved my life. His name was Faithful, but he was put to death in Vanity Fayre.

My other constant companion has been this Guidebook, God’s Word, and the more I read it the more I am learning to trust it.

(Thoughtfully) The most challenging experience of all was when I stood before the cross of Jesus Christ and realised, for the first time, exactly what He had done for me. I was overwhelmed!

I fell on my knees in gratitude and sensed such love and forgiveness. The burden of guilt that I have carried for so long just fell off....the weight of it just rolled off my shoulders. It was a life changing experience for me.

Interviewer:

Thank you for sharing with us Christian. I know your journey is not over yet, so I won’t delay you any longer....but simply remind you, “Keep to the Straight and Narrow Way, hold on tight to your Scroll and keep trusting in your Guidebook to help you as you travel.”

Interviewer: *(facing the group)*

And it’s back to you all in the studio at*(place)*

Hope you enjoyed hearing from us?

Goodbye and God bless.

(End of Drama)

THE STORY CONTINUES:

We join Hopeful and Christian on the next lap of their journey

Chapter 8 in the book tells about the temptations of the Silver Mine and the pull that money often has on us, taking us away from the Straight and Narrow Way.

Hopeful is ready to get involved and would love to go and try and make some money for the journey, but Christian, having been sidetracked and taken in before, sees the possible dangers and stops her from making a big mistake.

They get a chance to look down on the Silver Mine from a distance. What they see makes Hopeful glad she did not get involved and they run from their viewpoint.

After having successfully managed to avoid the temptation of the mine, they find they are presented with yet another alternative way forward. Right in front of them a luscious meadow opens up, which looks so much softer underfoot. It has a beautiful stream running by and appears to be going in the same direction as the Straight and Narrow Way.

As their feet are sore and blistered, it seems a very sensible way to go. Before travelling on they decide to have a little rest to refresh themselves and quickly fall asleep in the lush grass.

But, before long...they are rudely awakened...by the earth trembling...and a voice which seems to rip its way through the treetops like cannon fire.

This very pleasant looking place has deceived them....because....the land belongs to Giant Despair....and they have been trespassing!

Before they know what has happened to them, they find themselves locked up in a dungeon in Doubting Castle....without light....without food....and without drink!

(Drama 2)

SESSION SEVEN

DRAMA (2): DOUBTING CASTLE

Cast: Christian, Hopeful, Narrator, Giant, Giant's Wife

Props: A candle, a rope, a knife and a bottle of poison

Christian: (*wailing*)

It's all my fault...I should never have suggested we walked on the grass. We should never have left the Straight and Narrow Way. Now look to where I've brought you.

Hopeful:

Don't blame yourself. If it weren't for you, I would have gone no further than Lucre Hill.

Narrator:

Around them in the dark, cockroaches clicked and scurried. The stench was terrible and it seemed as if the Giant had forgotten their very existence. At last the door swung open and light fell like blades across the soiled straw and hurt their eyes.

Giant:

Still 'live then? Fort you mighta killed each uver by now, quarrelling 'bout who wuz to blame.

Hopeful:

Of course not....we're friends and we have every faith that our King will save us.

Giant: (*laughing*)

Your King? None knows you's here! Strayed off the King's 'ighway, din' you? Gived yoursels inna my 'ands, din' you? Now you's in my keepin'! Heared tell, that King o' yourn died coupla thousan' year back. Ain't foolin' yoursels there's a Golden City at enda that road, is you? No such fing. Just a road goes round the world and back to wherevers you started.

Hopeful:

We're poor Pilgrims....no one will pay a ransom for us. We're of no use to you as hostages....why should you want to keep us here?

Giant:

Don't mean to keep you 'ere. Mean for yous to die.

Hopeful: (*boldly*)

We're not afraid....we've been in worse places than this and we've won through, with the help of our King.

Narrator:

Giant Despair slammed the door shut again with such force that cockroaches showered down from the ceiling. Upstairs, his Giant Wife summoned him to bed by thumping the feather mattress beside her. She was whale-shaped and blubbery, her hair falling about her like seaweed, her mouth round as a blow hole.

Giant's Wife:

How fare the prisoners, my bonny barnacle?

Giant:

Not good, my little lumpen lovely. So far so fearless....I fear.

Giant's Wife:

Then give 'em a clout or two with your club, sweeting...that's my advice. That will soon knock the courage outa them.

Narrator:

The Giant followed his wife's advice, took his great club and beat the prisoners mercilessly, clubbing them so hard they fell on top of one another in a groaning heap.

Giant:

Despair and die, wormlings! My wife sends 'er salutations and says, "Why not kill yourselves? End will come quicker that way."

Narrator:

He left a candle behind, a rope, a knife and a bottle of poison.

Hopeful: (*shouting after him*)

We have been in worse straits...we shall win through...with the help of our King.

Narrator:

But the Giant had gone. The silence of Doubting Castle bore down upon them.

Christian:

When?

Hopeful:

When what?

Christian:

When have we been in a worse situation than this? I can't think of one.

Hopeful:

Bear up my friend...where there's life there's hope!

Narrator:

The Giant continued to visit Christian and Hopeful daily in the dungeon, torturing them with doubts and fears, beating them senseless with his club until they craved the blessed release of death.

Upstairs the Giant's Wife was starting to sulk.

Giant's Wife:

Shame on you, my hummocking lummock...ain't those pilgrims despaired yet?

Giant:

Not yet, lumpkin. I'm afeared we 'ave to eat 'em as they are...all stiff set in their ways and believing.

Giant's Wife: (*growling*)

You know the enemy won't pay us the reward lessen they despair! Take 'em out the morrow and show 'em the bones of them men you've ripped asunderthat'll soften their haughtiness.

Giant: (*tenderly*)

What a treasure you are to me.

Narrator:

So next day, Christian and Hopeful were allowed to leave their dungeon and, weighed down with chains, taken to the courtyard to see the bones of those who had died in Doubting Castle.

Giant:

Alla these pilgrims stayed till they grasped the troof. Troof is, there's nothing after death but darkness and dust.

Giant's Wife:

Better off dead, my dearios....better off dead.

Hopeful:

Where there's life there's hope.

Narrator:

Christian said nothing. He had begun to wonder if it could be true after all....if there really was a Golden City or could it be a fairy tale invented by the likes of the Preacher.

Hopeful knew what he was thinking and was afraid. At their darkest and most desperate hour, Christian remembered the Key which the Preacher had given them along with the Guidebook and the Scroll.

On the Key were written the words: Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

It slid into the keyhole as sweetly as oil, the door swung open and healing sunlight washed over them.

Both Pilgrims....though bruised and gasping....did not stop running till they reached the safety of the Pilgrim's Way.

(End of Drama)

DISCUSSION ABOUT DOUBTS:

(Use flipchart with headings in bold as listed below. Leave space beneath each section. Encourage comments and suggestions from Seniors and use those listed)

What do you think Doubting Castle represents?

When we lose sight of where we are going and why

If we look only to our circumstances, faith and trust disappear

It's a place that is difficult to get out of....it is stronger than we are

When we feel trapped and alone

Can you name a few of the doubts from the drama?

Are they mistaken....is there really a City of Gold?

Does God really love me?

What does DOUBT do to us?

It robs us of all that God has for us

It makes us feel hopeless

It stops us from knowing how much God really loves us

We lose our peace and security

TESTIMONY: *Get one of your helpers to give a word of testimony about what faith means to them and how they overcome doubt.*

POSSIBLE SONGS:

My Troubled Soul 1459 Robert Critchley Copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music

or

I Lift My Eyes Up To The Mountain

Brian Doerksen Copyright © 1990 Mercy Publishing/Thankyou Music, PO Box 75, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6NW, UK

SO....WHAT IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE DOOR OF DOUBT?

The Word of God is the Key

BIBLE VERSES FOR TRAVEL GUIDE: Prescription for Doubts

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The Key to unlocking the dungeon of doubt is trusting and believing in the Word of God and believing His promises

CLOSING PRAYER

SESSION SEVEN

SESSION 7: DOUBTING CASTLE



PRESCRIPTION FOR DOUBTS

I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for ever more. Psalm 121: 1-8 NIV

God protects. 1 Samuel 2:9 NIV
God is a refuge for us in times of trouble.

Psalm 9:9 NIV

God watches over us.

Psalm 121:8 NIV

I will never fail you. I will never forsake you.

Hebrews 13:5 NIV

My grace is sufficient for you.

2 Corinthians 12: NIV/God will guard you.

2 Thessalonians 3:3 NIV

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH

TO REMEMBER:

God's promises are completely dependable and trustworthy. They give us great comfort in the present and assurance for the future.

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