

TRAVELING COMPANIONS: FAITHFUL AND HOPEFUL

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The people we journey with matters. Isn't it true that our traveling companions flavor and even shape our lives with the outpourings of their hearts?!

We're reading through [Pilgrim's Progress](#) by John Bunyan in my house right now. If you're not familiar, it's an allegory about a pilgrim named Christian, who journeys to the Celestial City. Only the Bible has sold more copies (!!!!!). We get to journey with Christian and witness terrain wrought with despair, triumph, loss, giants and battles — and they are *enthraling*. My sweet kids will occasionally declare; "Mom has that voice again! The one she gets when she's about to cry!" (they're not wrong). But the other gripping fact is that we get to know his traveling companions. Specifically two friends by the names of Faithful and Hopeful.

We all need a Faithful and a Hopeful

Faithful demonstrated unwavering belief in what was good and true and beautiful. He stuck with Christian. He whispered truth together in the face of darkness, and

overcame tremendous adversity, not on his own strength, but with faith free from the markings of doubt. And let's be honest... there are moments when we're invited to doubt. We're invited to consider easier routes. We're threatened with mistruth. And we benefit from a faithful friend. Not simply faithful to us, but faithful to what is true, willing to say things we can't say or see, and who lives into a story bigger than themselves. Is this something you offer to your people?

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity." — Proverbs 17:17

Hopeful was an unexpected find during some dark days. He was able to look ahead at what was to come, to see life, to advance out from under the blankets of grief. His eyes were fixed on promises, and his certainty around them saved Christian more than once. On this side of eternity we will encounter moments that pierce our hearts and whisper mistruth about the finality of pain. We need to hear reminders of what has been promised, what is coming, and what is being done even now in the days before heaven that points to life and redemption. Does the person Hopeful have a place with you? To what source of hope are you pointing?

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help them up." — Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Who is your Faithful? Who is your Hopeful? Perhaps better phrased... to whom might you be Faithful? To whom might you be Hopeful?

If this journey were wide and easy, our traveling companions might not be so important. At least, not for the same reasons. But since the hard but right road is fraught with frequent challenges, Faith and Hope just might be the greatest mercies of your journey.

As you evaluate your offerings to others, you may consider these prompts:

- Do people rest in my presence?
- How often do I complain?
- Are people well served with my words?
- How are you nourishing your heart?
- Are there people who make you want God more after you are with them? Could anyone say that about you?

Perhaps it's obvious we need people. The benefit is clear. and yet... so many of us are traveling lonely. It may be empowering to consider the cost of friendship. We'll turn there next.