

# WAY TO SHILOH

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## **THE STORY OF THE DOOR**

Once upon a time, in a land not so very far away, there was a war. This was between a Mightily Good King, and a large number of rebels. Because they were rebels against the King they lived not according to the King's ways but by their own. They didn't honour the King but worshipped various people of their own, who they raised up and then pulled down to raise another in his or her place. They didn't pay tribute to the King, as they should have, but rejected him and forgot him. They were an unruly rabble, lying, cheating, self-seeking, lovers of money and power, thieves & murderers. They fought amongst themselves doing terrible things. When members of the Kings army came against them in their shinning armour they scorned them and ran away snipping at them and laying traps. The leaders of the rebels were dark characters who blindfolded the people and treated them cruelly, or gave them sedatives to numb them into a kind of wake/sleep. The land outside of the Kings castle was very dangerous because of the lawless nature of the rebels, but most wanted to remain there as they thought they'd be free to do what they pleased. This, of course, was not true, as it was their own actions that had made the land so oppressed and restricted. It was not so in the castle of the King. In this kingdom was safety, joy, peace, love, loyalty and such like in great abundance.

So it came to pass that some of the rebels came to hear this about the kingdom (for it had been well voiced abroad but not widely believed), and they approached the castle of the Great King. One day two particular men came to the great door of the castle. The first man came to the door some time before the second and he strolled up to it and waited for it to be opened. He wistfully looked back down the path to his own land and sighed. Oh how he wished things weren't so bad and he could stay and just enjoy his life without the King, but he had been told this was best for him and he thought that he would save himself from trouble by coming into the castle. As he stood there he wondered why the door was not being opened for him. Surely the people inside could see him standing there. He looked at the door. It was vast, much taller than him, and in front of it was a mote. He looked closer, the hinges of the door were rusted and old and looked like they hadn't moved for many years. Brambles and thorns had grown over much of it. The man became disgruntled and wondered how anyone was supposed to get in here. He decided to shout out to the King. "Excuse me, can you hear me?". There was no reply. "Uh, this is hopeless", the man thought "I don't even know if I'm being heard, or if there even is a King in there, he hasn't been seen for years." Anyhow he decided to continue, "Could someone please open the door and let me in, I've heard it's better in there than out here, and besides, it's getting dark and things get very dangerous around here at that time." Still there was no answer. "Look," said the man " I realize I've never come here before, but if you are there could you let me in because I've heard you love us lot really and will overlook our little rebellious ways, and the truth is I'm not as bad as a lot of them. I'd be quite an asset for you and your Kingdom."

Just as he was saying this he saw a man coming towards the great door from the same direction he had come from, except on a slightly different path. This path was a lot more stony and steep. The first man looked down at him and turned back to the door, "See what I mean! Look at the state of this chap". Still there came no answer. The second man arrived at the door and looked at it. The first spoke to him and said, "You'll have no chance getting in there, I couldn't even get an answer!". Undaunted the man stepped forward, he was trembling and looked very weary. He looked at the first man and said, "But I must get in there, it is my only hope as I know there is but one way into the castle". "Ok", replied the first, "no need to be over dramatic, things aren't that bad out here. If you can't get in just go back to town before it gets dark, it doesn't look like anything's going on here anyway". The second man looked at the door and said "I'm so very hungry and thirsty, I know there's the bread and water inside there". "Oh, if that's your problem," replied the first " here, I was wise enough to bring some food and drink from the nearest town along, and not just bread and water either". The second man didn't seem to be listening and walked forward to the edge of the mote. He looked so desperate that the other man thought he might throw himself in, but instead he bowed his head and in a quiet voice asked if it might be possible to let someone as poor as him into such a great kingdom. Just as before, there came no reply, and the man fell to his knees and started to cry. The first man could see his shoulders moving up and down and thought to himself, what a hopeless case.

At this point a noise came from within the castle from behind the door. Both men couldn't make it out, maybe it was a latch or something. The second man, still on his knees, whispered this time. "Oh my Lord my King have mercy on me, for I am a rebel against you and your ways, but I have come to the end of myself. It is as if I were under some spell, but I've been brought to my senses and see what I've done and how I've tried to live in your land but paid no attention to you or your ways, only provoking you to anger with my wickedness. I've followed others and chosen to reject you, please forgive me for this great wrong. I know you are a perfect judge and must deal with people's transgressions and I don't see how I could possibly get in, but I've heard there is a way, and it is this way that I cling to now and put my trust in. I am amazed that you ever could have paid such a price and, you see, I just must get in as there is nothing for me out here only a fear and dread of what is to come, could it be that you paid that price for me? I have never paid you any mind and my debt to you is so very great, oh how can one such as I enter!"

At this point both men were startled to hear a booming voice from within the castle. It seemed as loud as the thunder of a great storm, and it said this;

"Come in my child, your debt has been paid."

The man leapt to his feet with joy and looked, as from within the large door, a much smaller door began to open. It was a drawbridge and it spanned the mote. It was only wide enough for one person and the second man ran across it into the kingdom, and immediately the bridge was taken up. The first man could see much light from within, but as the drawbridge closed, once more things became dark again. The man stood in amazement at what had just happened and how unfair it was. He wondered what sort of a King would act in this way and turned to go and find safety in his hometown, after all, even if it was getting dark and things weren't perfect, he didn't need to grovel like that he thought. He reasoned with himself that, after all, nobody's perfect and we're only human, and besides, he'd done a lot of good and was well thought of by those around him.

As he walked away with his back to the Kingdom the clouds gathered overhead, and bandits and wild beasts began to draw near to him, hiding behind rocks and bushes, but the man didn't seem to notice.

James 4.6 *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

