

## Christiana's Progress - Part 2 of the Book "Pilgrim's Progress"

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September 17th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress  
Stage 2 - Part 3 (pages 25-28)

Christiana's visit to the Interpreters house continues and it's wonderful to see her desire to know and understand, being very inquisitive. It goes on to say; *"So he led them into the slaughter-house, where there was a butcher killing a sheep; and behold, the sheep was quiet, and went to its death patiently.*

*INTERPRETER. "Then, you must learn from this sheep to suffer, and put up with wrongs without murmuring and complaint. Behold, how quietly she goes to her death, and, without objecting, she allows her skin to be pulled over her ears. Your King calls you his sheep."*

Persecution is never a favorite topic, but it's the reality of the Christian walk as we'll study today. The prophet Jeremiah was threatened in the Old Testament and he says in **Jeremiah 11:18-20**, *"Now the Lord gave me knowledge of it, and I know it; for You showed me their doings. But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more." But, O Lord of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause."*

One of the schemes of the adversary is to cut you off, that you are not remembered any longer. To wipe you out and destroy your testimony. The devil takes no captives, he comes to steal, to kill and to destroy.

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus' persecution and as the ultimate and final sacrificial lamb in **Isaiah 53:6-8** where it says; *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken."*

When Jesus was being led as the lamb to his death, it's interesting to see that he only answered Pilate, not the powerful religious leaders of the Jewish people because he knew who he was, what his purpose was and didn't need to answer to their questioning. We read this in **Matthew 27:11-24**, *"Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly."*

Nowadays we would be crying religious discrimination, exercising our rights be it at school, work, recreation etc. We've gotten so proud that we've failed to understand that persecution is part of the Christian walk and it may cost you your life. If you find yourself being persecuted by the religious community, the best thing to do is to stay silent. Let the Lord defend you.

Jesus gave us a clear heads up to this in **John 15:19-21** where he says; *"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."*

You can exercise your religious rights all you want, it doesn't alter these scriptures, you may be able to delay the persecutions by exercising religious rights but you won't be able to stop it, it's part of the Christian walk. As

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a matter of fact, Jesus also says we're blessed if we consider persecution for his name in **Matthew 5:9-11**; *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."*

Our hero of faith, the Apostle Paul boasts in his suffering in **2 Corinthians 4:8-10**, *"We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."* After 300 years of persecution, Rome stopped the persecution because they couldn't kill them, as the church grew ever stronger. They instituted their own leadership, in essence legalizing it to control it and hence the Catholic church was born.

The Interpreter continues with his proverbs or parables when he says; *"Behold, the flowers differ in height, in quality, in colour, in smell, and in beauty; and some are better than others; also, where the gardener has planted them, there they stand, and never quarrel with each another."*  
*Again, he brought them into his field, which he had sown with wheat and corn: but when they looked, the tops of them all were cut off, and only the straw remained.*  
*INTERPRETER. "This ground was dunged, and ploughed, and sowed, but what shall we do with this crop?"*  
*CHRISTIANA. "Burn some, and make muck of the rest."*  
*INTERPRETER. "Fruit, you see, is that thing you look for; and, for lack of it, you condemn it to the fire, to be trodden under foot by men. Beware that in this you are not condemning yourselves."*

It is obvious that he's referring here to the body of Christ - Christians. We're not to fight and bicker with one another about our positioning, gifts and calls as we're all made very unique in God's eyes. Paul again says in **1 Corinthians 12:20-26**; *"But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."*

We're not to condemn our brothers and sisters in Christ, as it's a work of the Holy Spirit that conforms us into the image of Jesus.

The script continues saying the following; *Then, as they were coming in from their trip, they saw a little robin with a large spider in its mouth.*  
*INTERPRETER. "Look here."*  
*So they looked, and Mercy wondered.*  
*CHRISTIANA. "What a sorry state that such a pretty little bird like the robin-red-breast, and a bird above many that loves to maintain a kind of sociability with men! I thought they lived on crumbs of bread, or on some other harmless matter. I like him worse than I did."*  
*INTERPRETER. "This robin is an emblem, very like some who profess the faith; for, by sight, they are like this robin, pretty of note, colour, and carriage. They seem also to have a very great love for those who are sincere; and, above all others, they seek them out to associate with them, and be in their company, as if they could live on a good men's crumbs. They pretend also to frequent the house of the godly, and the appointments of the Lord. But when they are by themselves, like the robin, they catch and gobble up spiders. They can change their diet, drink iniquity, and swallow down sin like water."*

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*So, when they come into the house again, because supper was not yet ready, Christiana again wanted the Interpreter to either show or tell some other things that are profitable."*

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were a good example of the hypocrisy. This is what the Interpreter is talking about. Jesus rebukes the highest religious leaders in the Jewish nation when he says in **Matthew 23:23-26**; *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"* *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."* *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."* These religious leaders were only concerned about the outward appearance and power they wielded.

Interpreter continues on saying; *"The fatter the sow, the more she desires the muck; the fatter the ox, the more reluctantly he goes to the slaughter; and the more healthy the lustful man is, the more prone he is to do evil. There is a desire in women to go neat and tidy; and it is a good thing to be so adorned, which, in God's sight, is very expensive. 'Tis easier watching for a night or two, than to sit up a whole year. So 'tis easier for one to begin to profess well, than to hold out, as he should, to the end."*

The fashion industry is as enticing now as it has ever been. You're walking out the door fully dressed, makeup, hair, latest designer wear, smelling wonderful, but have you put on Jesus? Peter the Apostle talks about this in **I Peter 3:3-4**. You can start off well as a Christian but are you finishing well? Are you running the race to win the prize or have you only prayed the prayer of salvation and continue on in your worldly ways? Our Heavenly Father is looking for endurance, staying the course, not looking back, growing in maturity, staying faithful to the call and election in your life. We read about this in the following verses.

**Proverbs 20:6**; *Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?"*

**James 1:12**; *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."*

**Mark 13:13**; *"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."*

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**; *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*

I don't want to be disqualified in my Christian walk and I pray you don't either.

The Interpreter continues on; *"When the Interpreter had done, he took them out into his garden again, and led them to a tree whose inside was all rotten and gone, and yet it grew and had leaves."*

**MERCY**. *"What is the meaning of this?"*

**INTERPRETER**, *"This tree, whose outside is fair, and whose inside is rotten, is that with which many may be compared that are in the garden of God; who, with their mouths, speak highly of God, but, indeed, will do nothing for him. Their leaves are fair, but their heart is good for nothing but to be tinder in the devil's tinder-box."*

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In **Matthew 7:15-19**, Jesus says; *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* Jesus always looked at and continues to look at the heart of a person.

We continue to read; *"Now, supper was ready, the table spread, and all things made ready. So they sat down, and ate, after someone had given thanks. And the Interpreter usually entertained those that lodged with him with music at meals; so the minstrels played. There was also a singer who had a very fine voice. His song went like this: "The Lord is only my support, And he that doth me feed; How can I then want anything whereof I stand in need?"*

*When the song and music came to an end, the Interpreter asked Christiana what it was that, at first, moved her thus to take her into a pilgrim's life."* The song is from Psalm 23.

Do you know that you have a testimony? You have a story to tell of how you were drawn into the love of Jesus and how you became born again. That's what the Interpreter was wanting to hear from them. Don't think lightly about the power of your testimony because in it, you overcome as we read in **Revelation 12:11**; *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."*

It's important to note that they did not love their lives to the death, just like Jesus gave his life as a lamb going to the slaughter. It would be easy to quote this scripture and leave the part out *"and they loved not their lives to the death"*. You can really see how by giving her testimony to the interpreter, she overcomes all of her present fears and doubts because the script continues to say; *"Now, when Mercy was in bed, she could not sleep for joy, for now her doubts of missing at last were removed farther from her than ever they were before. So she lay blessing and praising God, who had shown such favour to her."*

The following day, they are to continue on in their journey. It says;

*"INTERPRETER. "For, you must go from here in an orderly fashion."*

*Then he said to the damsel that first opened the door to them,*

*INTERPRETER. "Take them and have them go into the garden for a bath, and there wash them and make them clean from the dirt they have gathered by travelling."*

*When they returned from the bath-house in the garden, the Interpreter took them and looked at them, and declared to them, "Fair as the moon!" Then he called for the seal with which they used to be sealed who were washed in his bath. So the seal was brought, and he set his mark on them, that they might be known in the places where they were yet to visit. Now the seal was the contents and sum of the Passover which the children of Israel ate (Ex. 13: 8-10), when they came out of the land of Egypt; and the mark was hung between their eyes. This seal greatly added to their beauty, for it was an ornament to their faces. It also added to their gravity, and made their faces more like those of angels."*

The deeper we walk with Jesus Christ, the cleaner we feel. He references the scripture in **Exodus 13:8-10**

*"And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.' It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year."*

I believe too that this washing refers also to being baptized in water upon your confession - your testimony - of faith in Jesus. [Acts 2:38-41](#) talks about it, **Mark 16:16** says; *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..."*,

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as well as other scriptures including **Galatians 3:27** where it says; *"for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."*

The story continues saying; *"Bright white New Garments were given them, causing them to see each other for who they really are in Christ . Then said the Interpreter again to the damsel that waited upon these women, "Go into the vestry, and fetch out garments for these people." So she went and fetched out white clothing, and set it down before him; so he commanded them to put it on; for it was fine linen, white and clean. When the women were thus clothed, they seemed to be a terror to each other, for they could not see that glory each one had in herself, which they could see in each other. Now then, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. For, "You are fairer than I am", said the one; and, "You are more beautiful than I am", said the other. The children also stood amazed to see what a great change had been brought about."*

After making this firm commitment to Jesus and being washed, they see each other differently, it's like the veil has been lifted off of their eyes and they're able to see each other as Christ sees them.

Paul the Apostle also talks about putting on Jesus Christ in **Romans 13:11-14**; *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*

**Revelation 3:5** says; *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

When you truly put Christ on, it will lead to esteeming other Christians. You will seek to serve others and not yourself. **Philippians 2:2-4** says; *"fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

The crucified walk seems to be the theme throughout these illustrations, which go's contrary to the secular, humanistic mind sets that are in the majority of churches today. Jesus wants you to put on Christ in exchange for a secular image, to be clothed with a new white garment that reflects his image in all that you do as a Christian. Stealth Christianity (OO7) is simply nothing more than being lukewarm a Christian, it's an exchange of white garments for worldly garments. It's almost an oxymoron - how can you be a Christian and not have fruit and boldness to share what Jesus has done for you? I'm not talking about physical clothing garments, it's not about modest long dresses and hair in a bun. It's about unashamedly putting on Christ daily in the secular settings, and not conforming yourself to the image of this world.

We're to daily be a living sacrifice as it says in **Romans 12:1-2**, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

Many churches today have tried to make the gospel 'appeal' to the lost and as a result have conformed themselves to the world and not to Jesus. Some examples as questions would be;

- what can we do so that you'll come to church?
- how can we appeal to you?
- what can we change in our programs?

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- how can we make it more comfortable for you to come into a church setting?

This is not what the church is to be. As a man or a woman, you can just simply go out and not conform to the worlds image and put on Christ, give your testimony, and overcome by the blood of the Lamb, (Jesus' death and resurrection) and love not your life even unto death. Mercy's testimony involved Christiana's witness in her life. There are a lot of men and women in your sphere of influence that need to hear your testimony, and by it, they too will become a Christian.