

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

October 8th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress
Stage 4 - Part 1 (pages 36-38)

Does your daily life as a Christian identify with any of these characters so far? Remember, this is an allegory of Christiana's everyday life and you and I can face the same things in our spiritual pilgrimage to heaven. We pray that the Holy Spirit enlightens you as you read this chapter and review today.

Let's start by this opening conversation; "*MERCY. "I think this is a losing place: here Christian lost his roll, and here Christiana left her bottle behind. Sir, what is the cause of this?"*
MR. GREAT-HEART. "The cause is sleep or forgetfulness: some sleep when they should keep awake, and some forget when they should remember; and this is the very reason why often, at resting-places, some pilgrims, in some things, come off losers. Pilgrims should watch, and remember what they have already received, providing for their greatest enjoyments; but for lack of doing so, often their rejoicing ends in tears, and their sunshine in a cloud: witness the story of Christian in this place."

We've probably all experienced this at some point in our walk with Jesus haven't we. Jesus knew that and in **Matthew 26:40-41** he had hoped that his disciples would have tarried with him during his intense time of prayer and travail, but they too fell into slumber and came out losers. It says; "*Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

The importance of watching in prayer and being sharp and alert in the spirit is found in **Luke 21:34-36** where Jesus says; "*But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* King Solomon also says in **Proverbs 24:33**; "*A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man."* In this case, spiritual poverty will come upon you.

The script continues; "*When they came to the place where Mistrust and Timorous met Christian to persuade him to go back for fear of the lions, they saw, as it were, a stage, and before it, towards the road, a broad plate with a copy of verses written on it, and underneath, the reason for raising the stage in that place. One of the verses was: "Let him that sees this stage, take heed unto his heart and tongue; Lest, if he do not, here he speed as some have long a-gone."* The words underneath the verses were, "*This stage was built to punish those on, who, through timidity or mistrust, are afraid to go farther on pilgrimage. Also, on this stage, both Mistrust and Timorous were burned through the tongue with a hot iron, for trying to hinder Christian on his journey."*

The Lord is the one who built this stage. How many numerous times have you heard about a brother or sister in the Lord who through mistrust and fear, stopped serving the Lord, and as a result have ended up on a stage of Gods chastening and punishment? People leave the Lord out of fear and mistrust, and as the Lord is not wanting you to perish, like a father he chastens and punishes you for your disobedience. Yes, it is so.

In **Hebrews 12:5-11**, the writer says this; "*And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."* If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have

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had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

That scourging could be many things; doors close on you, events to happen in your life in order to get your attention. He'll chasten you to get you back on the straight and narrow road so that you don't spend an eternity in hell which is not His will. You still have a free will, but it's God's training ground and how he deals with his children. Your father may have sat you down in a chair or put you in the corner to think about your disobedience; do you think Abba Father is any different? Not at all. You may not figure it out right away as to why things are happening, but when you humble yourself and look at your heart, God will show you if it's a demonic attack on you or if it's indeed He himself getting your attention to get you back on the narrow holy road.

Being put on a public stage happens all the time. When Christians fall into willful sin, the media exposes them and the Lord allows the media to chasten them if they don't repent. The Old Testament is full of examples of Israelite kings and priests who when they fell into sin and didn't repent, God gave them over to their enemies to chastise them. God is not concerned about the human rights activists that rule our society when he needs to chasten you. He is God, he's holy and he loves you as his child and will give you correction, public or otherwise.

In **1 John 4:17-19**; the Apostle John says; *"Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us."*

Does love rule your heart or does fear? If fear does, you'll have torment. If so, check your love walk to see how obedient you are to the Lord and how in love you are with Him. Jesus is the lover of your soul and when you're in constant communion and fellowship with him, fear won't be dominating your life.

Jesus is clear that love and obedience to him go hand in hand and in **John 14:23-27** he says; *"Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

Fear and timidity can quench and smother your zeal and fire for Jesus if they're given reign in your heart. That's why Jesus said to 'not be afraid.' The Holy Spirit, if you allow him, will fill your hearts with peace, comfort and love.

As I said earlier, God is your father and as any earthly father wants their son to listen to him and follow his example, so our heavenly father wants us to do. **Romans 8:12-15** says; *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these*

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are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

We continue in the script about Giant Grim who wants to impede their journey. It says; "*Grim said to the pilgrims' guide, "What is the cause of your coming here?" Now the name of the man was Grim, or Bloody-man, because of his slaying of pilgrims; and he was of the race of the giants. Then Grim swore by the lions that it should be left alone; and therefore bid them turn aside, for they should have no passage there. But Great-Heart, their guide, made his approach to Grim, and beat so heavily on him with his sword that the giant was forced to retreat.*"

Society has always been very intrigued by spirit beings, and with the advance of media, the internet and movies, people can't get enough of either the good or evil of angels and demons. **Hebrews 1:14** says; "*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*" God has created them and commissioned his angels over you if you're born again, and one has been assigned to you probably from the day you became a Christian.

One of the prophets in the Old Testament by the name of Daniel says this about his angelic encounter in Daniel 10:12-13; "*Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia."*

This is a powerful example of the spiritual warfare of the angelic and demonic; one to carry out God's purposes for his children and the other to obstruct, delay and thwart God's purposes.

The conversation is interesting between these two angels when Grim says; "*Will you slay me on my own ground?*" **MR. GREAT-HEART.** "*It is the King's highway that we are in, and in this way you hast placed the lions; but these women, and these children, though weak, shall keep on their way in spite of your lions.*"

Now you have prayer requests going up to your heavenly father regularly and at the same time there are satanic principalities that come up to you to try to create fear, intimidation etc. There is spiritual warfare (angelic and demonic) going on for your answered prayers and blessings that the Lord has for you. The truth is that the devil is the one who is trespassing on the Kings Highway, laying claim to territory that he has no legal right to. You're not the trespasser, but he is. He's set up the roadblock and will do whatever he can to get you going on a different path. How many roads has the devil tried or is trying to stop you from progressing on?

1 Peter 5:8; says; "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" The devil and his scare tactics will try to hinder you from walking the straight and narrow, and has setup road blocks, not allowing you into the territory that God has given you as an inheritance.

You and I, like Christiana, must say; "*Though the highways have been unoccupied up till now, and though the travellers have been made in times past to walk through by-paths, it must not be so now I am risen, now I am risen a mother in Israel.*" She's referencing Deborah who was a just judge in the Old Testament.

The Giant Grim reminds me of Goliath who filled the armies of Israel with fear. The story is in **1 Samuel 17:45-47**; "*Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin.*

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But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." David knew his inheritance, walked in it, spoke to it and stepped out to destroy his adversary.

In every situation and challenge you may face in your daily walk as a Christian, the word says in the following scriptures in **2 Timothy 1:7**; "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*" ; **Philippians 4:6-7** also says; "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"; **Isaiah 54:17** "*No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the Lord.*"

Whatever giant is trying to keep you off the road you're supposed to be walking on, it's clear here from Isaiah you 'you shall condemn it'. You've been given authority over it, don't shrink back in fear and timidity. Jesus while under extreme satanic attack says in; **Matthew 4:10-11**; "*Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"* Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." Jesus needed ministering angels as we need them also as heirs of salvation.

I'm listing a number of scriptures here to use in prayer to quote when Giant Grim wants to attack you.

Colossians 2:15 "*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*"

Hebrews 2:14

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

1 John 3:8

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Luke 10:19

"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

John 14:23-27

"Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

You are King Jesus' child on the King's Highway fulfilling what he wants you to do. You're not the trespasser, the devil is. You have every right to walk on the King's Highway because that is what you are called to do! This is the authority you have in Christ over the devil. You don't have to take any detours off of this Highway, but you exercise your authority in Jesus name over him.

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So whatever fears and mistrust in God the devil has sown into your Christian walk, you can overcome them with the help of Gods angels, prayer and living in obedience to Bible, or you can short circuit your Christian walk and end up on a stage of Gods chastisement for walking in fear and mistrust instead of faith in God's word. The choice is yours today!