

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

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January 7th, 2018 - Christiana's Progress  
Stage 6 - Part 3 - (pages 63-66)

We continue today reading the following quote; *"Now, as they were on their way, there came someone running to meet them, who said, 'Gentlemen, and you of the weaker sort, if you love life, shift for yourselves, for the robbers are ahead of you.'"*

*MR. GREAT-HEART. "They would be the three that set upon Little-Faith earlier. Well, we are ready for them."*

Has it happened to you in your Christian walk when out of nowhere it seems, a person or people have come to you to discourage, instill fear in you, point out all the hardships ahead of you, to cause you to doubt your call and election that God has given you? This is what happened to Christiana and those with her. A lying spirit was operating in this person to tell her to stop and go another direction due to perceived danger ahead. Like Christiana, the adversary is guaranteed to throw these people across your path to react out of fear and not in faith. These people may have good intentions...but as it turns out, there were no robbers in their path...it was the devils lie to stop them.

**1 Peter 5:8** clearly warns us saying; *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."* Today we'll be focusing primarily on women and we see how the devil wanted to deter Christiana from going down the road to fulfill what God had called her to do, and today, it's no different. He will roar and devour you, if he can get you to walk in fear.

Today we've read about a man by the name of Gaius who opened up his home to fellow Christians. In the Bible, there was also one Gaius who was a host to the whole church in Antioch. According to **Romans 16:23**, he was an elder in that church and according to **3 John:1-5** he was a generous Saint and was baptized by Paul the Apostle. He opened up his home to fellow pilgrims of faith.

Gaius in the script, acknowledges that Christiana's husband Christian, was a spiritual descendant so to speak, of the early church believers who were first called Christians in the city of Antioch. We read that in **Acts 11:26**; *"And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."*

The script continues saying; *"Stephen, he was one of the first of the family from where your husband sprang, was knocked on the head with stones. (Acts 7:59-60) James, another of that generation, was slain with the edge of the sword. (Acts 12:2) To say nothing of Paul and Peter, men anciently of the family from where your husband came; there was Ignatius, who was cast to the lions..."* Gaius was affirming to his fellow Christians, that this also was their heritage as believers and pilgrims. Not only to those who had gone before, but for them also. There were persecutions that the early church faced and so too, that they would face albeit in differing degrees.

Gaius says something interesting here; *GAIUS. "I will now speak on the behalf of the women, to take away their reproach. For as death and the curse came into the world by a woman (Gen. 3), so also did life and health. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman. (Gal. 4:4)"* This is where today's message gets really interesting. He's going to address the reproach that came upon women as a result of the sin of Eve in the Garden of Eden, and will bring light to Christiana and Mercy, that the reproach of being a women has been redeemed by Jesus.

So let's read this reference from **Genesis 3:16-20**; *"To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'" Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil*

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*you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return." And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."*

It's clear that up until the fall, Adam and Eve were on the same level, but sin entered and it changed everything from the perfection in which God had made it. The woman would now bear reproach and both her and Adam would be kicked out of the Garden of Eden. This we could say is the death part.

But let's look at the life part now where Jesus stepped in and intervened in **Galatians 4:1-7**; *"Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

This redemption was for both man and woman. Specifically though, Eve made a wrong decision in the garden and thousands of years later God sent Jesus to redeem mankind from this curse, by dying on the cross and in it, removes the reproach that has plagued women since Eve's sin. Where there was death, now there's life.

Gaius continues saying; *"I read that no man ever gave to Christ as much as one penny; but the women followed him, and ministered to him from their substance. (Lk. 8:2-3)."* Here's the redeemed women now, once who was under the curse of the law, is now set free and delivered wanting to work together with Christ, lay down their lives for him in service, wanting just to be with him to meet his every need!

We read this in **Luke 8:2-3**; *"and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance."* In the natural, one could reason this away or wonder why Jesus couldn't look after himself, working with his hands, but no, Jesus had all these women looking after him. There's a greater reason as to why this was happening.

Elizabeth and Mary were rejoicing at the soon birth of Jesus in **Luke 1:42-46** where it says; *"Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord..."* Mary knew what this meant. The Messiah, Jesus, would remove her reproach and the reproach of all women.

It seems like women were referred to a lot by the writers of the gospel and it brings to mind the scripture in **Luke 7:37-50** where it talks about the one who **sins much is forgiven much and loves much**. Eve sinned much, now the redemption of Christ has come to redeem them from the curse of the law and sin. Do you see this? These women realized that they were no longer under the curse of their mother Eve because of Jesus becoming the curse for them, taking their reproach and sin upon himself, and so they couldn't help but do anything for him; serve him, feed him, give him finances from their sustenance etc.

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You have to remember that in that day and age, women were not respected, they were treated as possessions, they weren't allowed to be touched by men in public, they were segregated, like a cast system, and numerous other reproaches they bore. Why...because of the curse they were under from Eve's sin. Eve's sin was so great that she was deceived, not Adam, but then in her deception, she deceived her husband to get him to participate in the sin. This reproach carried on UNTIL Jesus came to remove it! This is more than just women being commonly known as more emotional and affectionate! This is women who are seeing before their very eyes, their reproach of sin being removed from them and their joy and love was over the top for Jesus. It's not that we don't hear of men showing their love for Jesus, they do, but not as demonstratively as women did.

That's why this woman whom we read about in **Luke 7:37-50** washed his feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair! *"And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil...."*

It goes on to say that the one who is forgiven much, loves much. She was not only a sinner, but a woman who bore the reproach of her descendant Eve. Jesus knew who this woman was and everything about her. He rebuked the Pharisees on top of it because he exposed their selfishness and hard-heartedness.

It was a woman who anointed Jesus body for his burial. **John 11:2**; *"It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick."* **John 12:3** *"Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil."*

There were women who wept when he was going to the cross in **Luke 23:27**: *"And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him."* **Matthew 27:55-56**; *"And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons."* These women knew it wasn't over at the cross. Jesus had promised that he would rise again and so they were looking for the final victory and fulfillment and redemption of all that Jesus had preached.

There were women who went to the tomb where they buried Jesus in **Luke 23:55** *"And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid."* **Matthew 27:61** *"And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb."*

All the disciples have fled, except John who is at the cross with Jesus' mother. No men were around. The women were of a different spirit, they understood the redemption more than man at this point. Again remember, it was Eve that ate the fruit and gave it to Adam. Imagine the condemnation of just being born a woman. The reason why they were treated so bad in that culture. All nations came from Eve; Romans and Greeks, and they all treated women terrible. There were no women's rights back then. Now, the promised Messiah - the second Adam - was setting them free and restoring all that had been robbed from them, their dignity and worth.

There were women that were first with him on his resurrection-morning as we read in **Luke 24:1** *"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared."* There were women that first brought tidings to his disciples that he had risen from the dead as we read in **Luke 24:22-23**; *"Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive."*

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The disciples are receiving all of this from women, who, were treated as the lowest in their culture. These men had to have all their perceptions of women changed when they became born again. Up until then, there was no hope for women, but now there is, they're back on the same level so to speak. Jesus treated them as equals.

But let's look at **1 Timothy 2:8-15** where Paul writes this to Timothy about how to build and lead the church. It's a controversial teaching that has divided much of the body of Christ when it comes to women in ministry. Many a theological discussion has taken place on this, and for the most part it's quite negative towards women in any public ministry. It says; *"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control."*

So the women, who have finally been set free after all that Jesus did for them, are now being told to be silent. So with all due respect to the Apostle Paul, it would seem like he reverted back to the religious system that he had come out from. It's possible he couldn't wrap his head around the fact that women could actually speak and teach now under the new covenant. Now what he says about women being under submission to her husband and church authority is correct because God established government and order. He first created Adam then took a rib from him to make Eve, so there is structure that God has commanded and even in the church He established government with authority structure. But to not allow women now to teach or preach as a new creation in Christ Jesus, seems like he and maybe other Christian men, couldn't quite come to terms with.

Also, if what he says about a woman only being saved through childbearing - what happens to women who can't have children, or women who remain single all their lives? Didn't their salvation come through Jesus on the cross? He almost still hangs it over women's heads reminding them that they still bear the reproach of Eve. This is the woman who's just been redeemed who he is trying to silence and control.

"In child-bearing", doesn't mean barefoot and pregnant all the days of her life. But the child-bearing, the woman who bore Jesus the Messiah, is that promise that it would break the serpents head (Genesis 3:15). The same serpent who tempted Eve and caused her to sin, is the same serpent who now Jesus the Messiah, who was born of Mary, crushed beneath his feet at the cross. I believe that's the redemption that transpired here, as every Jewish woman hoped that she would bear the Messiah, to be able to be the one that would see their reproach broken off of them.

What I derive from this scripture is the Godly order for church and marriage. In not allowing a woman to teach and speak seems like being put back under the law and the curse doesn't it.

We reviewed a bit about what [Matthew Henry's Commentary](#) said regarding this scripture and you can click on the link to read it.

When there is reverent submission and subjection of a wife to the Word of God, to her husband and her husband to God, the marriage works and there is a freedom in it. When this happens, the blessings come. If a woman teaches when she is in submission to her husband and to her church, there is blessing there, only if she does it independently and not under her husband's blessing is it wrong. There should be a co-working together for any one that teaches, with the pastor, his wife and church leadership, so that the gift in you can grow and be shared.

I would like to challenge you to think maybe what Paul was really saying. If you submit your gift to the authority in your life, you're going to be blessed. When you step out and do your own independent thing, that's

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when things can go awry. A woman ought not to teach if she is not submitted unto the church would be what I would think. Your gift ought to work with the church, not independently of it. As a woman, bring your gift under submission to your husband at home and watch God bless it. When you step out from under that, again, that's when it can go askew. As good as our gift might be, there may be a time and season for it. If your husband or leadership is encouraging you to wait a little while, submit to that and God will bless it.

Men and women were created absolutely equal. **Genesis 1:27** says; "*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*" However, the New and Old Testaments were written by men and the priests were only men who ruled Israel. No queen ever ruled and the Judge Deborah was an exemption but not the rule. She stepped in because no man stepped up to plate.

The Greek, Jewish and Roman cultures regarded women as possessions, but not Jesus. Jesus taught Mary as she sat at his feet, and corrected Martha when she tried to interfere with it. The women had a separate place in the synagogues, but here Mary was up close and personal with Jesus. In John 4:1-28 Jesus spoke personally with a Samaritan woman and even asks her to give him something to eat. Unheard of!

Jesus showed himself to her as being the Messiah, he taught her about true worship and eternal life and also read her personal mail about her adulterous lifestyle. She became the evangelist as she ran into the town telling the men about Jesus. In a culture that did not permit women to touch men and vice versa in public Jesus both touched them and healed them.

**Mark 5:21-43** is another story about a girl who was raised from the dead and a woman who was healed all by Jesus touching them. Jesus broke all the legalistic and cultural boundaries. As I said earlier, he became the 2nd Adam to restore men and women to God - holy, wholly and redeemed from the curse of sin.

It's evident that Jesus respected women, yet not once did he position a woman over a man. Here are some examples of women whom God used, both in the Old and New Testaments.

www.beliefnet.com has a list of fearless women in the Bible

*"Sarah demonstrated faith and obedience while believing God's promises. She left her comfortable and familiar surroundings to launch her journey with God.*

*Daughters of Zelophead; these girls, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah stood fearless and firm and as result reformed the culture of their day. Because they spoke up they reversed precedent and claimed possession of their father's inheritance.*

*Ruth, the Moabite; was able to overcome her past by giving her life over to the living God. By turning from her idolatrous way of life she was able to be used mightily of the Lord as the great grandmother of King David.*

*Priscilla; ministered the gospel together with her husband Aquila. The Bible describes her as an effective mentor, when she and her husband take Apollos aside and explain to him the way of God more accurately.*

*Mary Magdalene*

*Mary Magdalene was delivered from a life of demonic oppression and experienced the resurrected power of Christ. As a result she was one of the first to announce the risen Christ.*

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### Hannah

*Hannah's fervent prayer and vow teaches us that consistent faithfulness and persistent prayer get God's attention. She believed God for a son and He multiplied her faith by giving her many children.*

### The Samaritan Woman

*The woman at the well became one of the first mass evangelists for Jesus Christ. She was able to confront her past truthfully and transform into a motivating mouthpiece for the Lord.*

### Mary of Bethany

*The quintessential worshiper and intimate follower of Christ, Mary of Bethany is described in the Bible as "seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word" (Luke 10:39).*

### Esther

*Esther modeled bravery and courage when she risked her life to save the lives of her people. She teaches us that we must break intimidation and use our influence to bring glory to God.*

### Jehosheba

*Jehosheba, daughter of King Joram gripped by the power of motherly instinct, fled danger in order to protect her son from death and helped to preserve the future of Israel.*

### Deborah

*Prophet and judge to Israel, Deborah is known for her wisdom, courage and compassionate zeal for justice.*

### Miriam

*Moses' sister Miriam displays remarkable intelligence and confidence. She not only helped to save her brother's life but also helped set Israel's deliverance in motion.*

### Achsah, daughter of Caleb

*Achsah, stepped out on faith and claimed additional blessing for her family because she was bold enough to ask for more. Just like our heavenly Father is ready and willing to bless us, we must also go to Him with this same faith.*

### Daughters of Phillip the Evangelist

*These four single young women had the gift of prophecy and their ministry is mentioned in the Book of Acts. They represent boldness, courage and a willingness to step out for the Lord no matter what season of life.*

### Mary, the Mother of Jesus

*Mary, surrendered her life and her reputation to the purposes of God. Her submission shows us that when we consecrate our life to the Lord, He can do amazing things."*

As a woman, single or married, you may be gifted as an evangelist, missionary teacher etc., but operate independent of the local church. It would be better for you to bring your ministry in to an accountability to the pastoral leadership of a church and co-work together with them for the furtherance of the gospel.