

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

August 13th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress

To the Reader - Part 2 - pages 9-13

It is challenging in this following scripture to grasp that Jesus did not come to bring peace on earth, even though he is the Prince of Peace, peace maker and he is God incarnate. Yet his peace, he knew, would be of his heavenly spiritual kingdom, not of the kingdom of the tangible earth that we presently live in. He says very clearly in **Matthew 10:34-38**; *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”*

He's talking about the cost of discipleship and following him. He made it clear that following him will cost you everything; your family, husband, wife, your life, your job, your home etc. Whatever you place value on in life - it will cost you that. All of those things have to be brought into proper placement at the feet of Christ Jesus. Absolutely nothing can get in the way of his Lordship in your life.

It says in the story the following; *“CHRISTIANA. “Sir, will you carry me and my children with you, that we also may go and worship the King?” SECRET. “Christiana, the bitter is before the sweet. You must pass through troubles, as did he that went before you, before you enter the Celestial City.”* It's interesting to note that Christiana thinks it's possible to enter heaven without having gone through any trials or troubles for her faith in Christ. There's a false teaching in the body of Christ today that says that because Jesus suffered for our sins, we don't have to go through any suffering, because he took that for us on the cross. Yes, we know he bore the guilt of our sins upon himself, but nowhere does it say that we won't suffer, be persecuted, go through trials and tribulations while we're alive and being his disciple.

Jesus himself said this in **Matthew 10:16-26**; *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”*

As Jesus had already been accused by the Pharisees that his miracles, signs and wonders were from Beelzebub - or the devil, he's warning his disciples that the miraculous that would follow them, would also be attributed to Beelzebub. He's showing them that their walk would be costly - just as the angel Secret told Christiana as we read above.

Look who steps onto the scene right away after Christiana takes her step of faith to start following Christ. The spirit of fear, or as represented here is Timorous. She says the following;

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TIMOROUS. "I hope not so, good neighbour. I beg you, for your poor children's sake, do not act so unwomanly and cast yourself away."

CHRISTIANA. "No, my children shall go with me; not one of them is willing to stay behind."

TIMOROUS. "I wonder in my very heart what or who has brought you into this state of mind!"

CHRISTIANA. "O neighbour, if you knew as much as I do, I don't doubt that you would go along with me."

TIMOROUS. "I pray you, what new knowledge have you got that has turned away your mind from your friends, and is tempting you to go nobody knows where?"

Timorous represents timidity, meaning fear. Fear seems to be the ringleader that leads to all the other works of the flesh! Timorous is the one who calls the meeting with all the neighbours and sure enough, all the works of the flesh show up. Here's a warning; anytime you allow fear to rule your life, it's guaranteed that the works of the flesh will follow in right behind to get you off track so that you get off the straight and narrow path onto the broad and wide road.

Let's look at the meaning of the word timid. It means; showing a lack of courage or confidence; easily frightened. Synonyms are; apprehensive, fearful, easily frightened, afraid, faint-hearted, timorous, nervous, scared, frightened, cowardly, pusillanimous, spineless; shy, diffident, self-effacing; informal, wimpish, wimpy, yellow, chicken, mousy, gutless, sissy, weak-kneed. This represents who Timorous in this story - it's a spirit of fear. In Christiana's case and in the lives of countless thousands who have made a decision to follow Jesus, fear immediately comes knocking at the door of their hearts to get them to give up, even before they start out.

But, as Christians, **2 Timothy 1:7** encourages us in this; *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* This is the guarantee of the Spirit of God in us.

1 John 4:18 continues on saying; *"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."*

Timorous and all her friends were not made perfect in love. All their world revolved around fear, doubt and unbelief, not faith! Has the spirit of timidity tried to hinder you from Gods Pilgrimage for your life, be it thru family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc? If they're not walking in faith, they're walking in fear. If fear starts tormenting you, your perfect love walk with Christ will conquer it. You won't allow anyone to stop you from your Christian pilgrimage because you have a love walk with Jesus and through that love walk with him, you walk in love with other Christians and even those who would persecute you for your faith. It's not based out of fear.

It's interesting in the script how women suddenly surround her, speaking negatively about her husband and trying to dissuade her from following in his footsteps. How many women's groups have hindered women from submitting unto their husbands in everything. We're not talking about husbands asking their wives to do sinful and immoral things that go against God's word. You see, Christiana would not have even been having this conversation with these neighbors, had she submitted unto her husband when he became a Christian and done likewise. Her husband preached the gospel to her but she rejected it and made sure her children rejected it also.

We read in **Ephesians 5:23-25**, *"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."*

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Our society is so bent on emasculating men (not physically, but in roles and titles), putting women in as head of the household. You know the term, 'she wears the pants in the family', well it's pretty obvious that Christiana wore the pants in her family at the time of her husband's conversion to Christianity, having rejected Christ's plan for her and their children. But now, her husband has died, she knows that he's in heaven, she's called out for God's mercy on her and her children, and has now just had an angelic encounter with an invitation to follow in his footsteps - to follow Christ. Now, she is the one that is looking foolish to her worldly friends.

Mrs. Bat's Eyes says; *“Oh, this blind and foolish woman!” And will she not take warning by her husband’s afflictions? On my part, I see, if he were here again, he would rest himself content in a whole skin, and never run so many risks for nothing.”* Notice how she brings up and belittles her husband.

Matthew 10:27-28, It says; *“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”* Jesus also teaches on the fear of God, but it's not the same kind of fear that we see in Timorous. It's a holy fear and a respect for God, not full of fear and intimidation that leads you down a road of destruction causing you to make decisions that are contrary to the word of God. Today, you need respect God, His Word and His plan for your life. Come out of fear and into faith.

Mrs. Inconsiderate says; *“Away with such fanatical fools from the town! I say of her, good riddance! Should she stay here, and hold onto this opinion in her mind, who could live quietly with her? For she will either be boring, or un-neighbourly, or talk of such matters as no wise body can stand. Wherefore, for my part, I shall never be sorry if she goes away. Let her go, and let better come in her place: it was never a good world since these whimsical fools dwell in it.”*

This is the spirit of antichrist, or an anti-Christian spirit, that cannot stand the light that emanates from believers in Christ, because it leads to glorifying their father in Heaven. So when those around you say that you are fanatical, un-neighbourly, boring, unwise in your Christian beliefs, just remember these words of Jesus in **John 15:18-25**; *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 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. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’”*

Don't be surprised on your Christian pilgrimage today if worldly people hate you. Jesus said they would and that they'd also hate your heavenly Father. Christiana's friends were suddenly turning on her and mocking her, as soon as she decided to follow King Jesus.

Matthew 5:14-16; *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Our Christian life is to glorify our heavenly Father, our Abba daddy, the one who created you! Don't cover up your Christian walk or let anyone snuff out the light in you.

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1 Corinthians 1:18-19 says; "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."* Christiana's friends thought they were so wise, but they were showing their worldly foolishness in their haughty attitude towards her.

Mrs. Light-Mind says; "*Come, put this kind of talk away. I was yesterday at Madam Wanton's, where we were as merry as maids. For who do you think were there, but I and Mrs. Love-the-Flesh, and three or four more, with Mrs. Lechery, Mrs. Filth, and some others: so there we had music and dancing, and whatever else was suitable to fill up our pleasure. And, I dare say, my lady Wanton is an admirable well-bred gentlewoman, and Mr. Lechery is as pretty a fellow as they come.*"

It seems like the majority of these women are attacking the late husband of Christiana as a terrible example to follow now. Mrs. Light-Mind is very slick at diverting everyone's attention to the loving the flesh, living a life of lechery, filth, wantonness, etc. But the bible says in **Galatians 5:19-21**, "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*"

In conclusion, let's read **Matthew 7:13-14**, where Jesus admonishes us simply and clearly that his requirements for us are to enter by the narrow gate; "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*"

If you're of the few who have found the narrow way, hang on to it! You're of a privileged few to be part of God's family, you've become royalty, an ambassador representing another country here on earth. It's not worth any exchange of the flesh. The devil will always throw temptations of the flesh, but resist him in Jesus name and set your face like a flint, having set your hand to the plow and not turning back. Will there be persecutions, trials and tribulations? Of course, but greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. He'll make you the head and not the tail. Maybe in some situations it may not look like it, but you are. It's unconditional obedience to the Word of God.