

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

August 27th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress
Stage 2 - Part 1 (pages 20-23)

Christiana, her four boys and Mercy have just been born again and they've set out on their spiritual pilgrimage. As we said last week, just because you're a Christian, does not mean that the devil stops his fight against you, but intensifies it. They've gone through the door - Jesus - and as you've just read, the adversary immediately has sent two Ill-Favoured ones across their path. Jesus says in **John 10:9-11**; *"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."*

The intent of these two thieves is to seduce and rape these women and they didn't care that they were Christians at all. What we want to highlight today is the authority that you have as a Christian and how to use the Word of God over the devil, which Christiana used to defend themselves with. They didn't give in or think they were too big to resist, but they used God's word to resist them.

The temptation is presented here by these thieves is that they want to *'make women of them for life'*. That meaning, if you do what we say, you'll be set up and taken care of for life. You won't be in need any longer. But Christiana knew that it would be sin and declared they would have nothing to do with it and would not risk their salvation for anything, no matter how much money they offered them. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** says this; *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

1 Corinthians 10:13 says; *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

These women took the word of God as their way of escape, and, with that, they both shrieked out, and cried, "Murder! Murder!" and so put themselves under those laws that are provided for the protection of women. That verse is in **Deuteronomy 22:25-27** where it says; *"But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her."*

It's interesting to note that the sin of rape is equated with murder. A good example of this is found in **2 Samuel 13:7-22**; *"And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and placed them out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her*

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exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!" So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. Then he called his servant who attended him, and said, "Here! Put this woman out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her." Now she had on a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her. Then Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her robe of many colors that was on her, and laid her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly. And Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house. But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar."

It's worthy to note that Amnon was feigning sickness to seduce his half-sister and what he called love, was actually lust. Love does not rape, hate or murder people. Tamar was innocent, thinking that she was just helping her brother. The Bible is clear that hate equals murder in **1 John 3:15** where it says; "*Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*" If you or someone you know says that they hate a person, and really mean it in the heart, you or they are guilty of murder. There is no middle ground.

The end result of Amnon's transgression is that, he hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her, and his own life was taken by his brother Absalom who murdered him, who hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. All of this started with rape.

The devil is the originator of murder, lies and hate as Jesus says in **John 8:44**; "*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*"

I'd like to share with you some statistics according to R.A.D. (Rape Aggressive Defense System) which teaches women how to defend themselves

RAPE STATISTICS
•1 in 6 women in America has been the victim of sexual assault
•There is an average of 237,550 victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year
•44% of victims are under the age of 18 and 80% are under the age of 30
•Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted
•Approximately 2/3 of rapes were committed by someone known to the victim
•Sexual assault is one of the most under reported crimes, with 58% still being left unreported

This attempted rape on Christiana and Mercy could have been avoided though, had they not been so caught up in the present blessing to not see the dangers to come. How could it have been avoided you ask? Christiana's dream - remember that from the very beginning of the book. She was warned, but got so caught up in the moment that she either didn't remember it or chose not to remember it. But the warning was there. Whatever the call and election is on your life, be sure that the devil wants to short circuit it before you can even get to it.

Let's read again what the script says;

"RELIEVER. "I marveled much, when you were entertained at the gate above, seeing you knew that you were only weak women, and that you have not asked the Lord for a conductor; then you might have avoided these troubles and dangers; for he would have granted you one."

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CHRISTIANA. "Alas! We were so taken up with our present blessing that we forgot the dangers to come. Besides, who would have thought that so near the King's palace there lurked such evil characters? Indeed, it had been well for us had we asked our Lord for a conductor; and since our Lord knew it would be for our profit, I wonder why he didn't send one along with us."

Psalm 34:18-20 says; *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken."* God watched over these two ladies and they were delivered. We haven't even highlighted the amount of missionaries overseas that encounter rape or attempted rape on a regular basis.

How many times have you gone out on your own in life, you're feeling blessed, but you find yourself in dangerous situations? There is wisdom in Jesus that you need to have at all times so that even though there are blessings in your life, the devil is seeking every opportunity to trip you up, get you off track, hurt you etc, just as what happened with Christiana. Have you ever been in a situation that you didn't see coming, only to realize later that it could have been avoided had you been more wise in your decision making? It could be anything that comes to your mind, from your childhood to present day. If you had only listened to that still small voice of the Lord telling you to, no.

The script continues on saying; *"MERCY. "What a sudden blank is here! I thought that we were past all danger, and that we should never see sorrow anymore."*

CHRISTIANA. "Your innocence, my sister, may excuse you much; but as for me, my fault is so much the greater, in that I saw this danger before I came out of the doors, and yet did not provide for it when provision might have been had. I am much to be blamed."

CHRISTIANA. "Why, I will tell you. Before I set foot out of doors, one night as I lay in my bed, I had a dream about this; for I thought I saw two men, much like these as ever any in the world could see, stand at the foot of my bed, plotting how they might prevent my salvation. I will tell you their very words. They said (it was when I was in my troubles), 'What shall we do with this woman? For she cries out, waking and sleeping, for forgiveness: if she is allowed to go on as she begins, we shall lose her, as we lost her husband.' This, you know, might have put me on my guard, and have provided when provision might have been had."

It's very important to pay attention to visions or dreams that God gives you to warn you of troubles ahead, the snares and traps of the devil. As Christians we have to pay attention to that still small voice if the Holy Spirit within us, he gives us a check in our heart.

Here is God's solution to the attacks of the devil and the promise of God's Word to not leave you defenseless or helpless! It's in Ephesians 6:10-18 where it says; *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."*

Your Bible is your only offensive weapon you have to fight the devil with, the rest of your armour is defensive. Without quoting the Word of God as it would apply to the attacks of the devil you're just going to get hit and

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hit and hit again, because the devil is not taken any prisoners, his purpose is to rob, kill and destroy you and your Christian testimony before you die.

I think Christiana is a perfect type and shadow of the Body of Christ, being prepared for the Groom - Jesus. Every person can relate to her experiences that she's living out in one way or another.

Here's a really good illustration, and I'm highlighting a woman here, but it's applicable either way. If you were to come home and find a lady wearing your favorite robe, drinking from your favorite cup, eating your favorite snack, while sitting in your favorite chair, admiring and wearing all your valuables and reading your bank information. She has the fireplace on and you ask how she got into your house, and the response is that you left the door open. You probably would exercise your authority as a home owner and call 911, and you would protect yourself and family from this intrusion and would never ever leave the door open again.

Why should this be any different to the devil when he tries to take up residence in your lives and come through the door you've left open, into the temple of God which your body is that houses the Holy Spirit? Only you know the door, window, access point or chink in the armour that has been open for the devil to gain access into your life. Where have you left a door open for the devil to come into your temple and rob, kill and destroy you.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says; *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

So let's look at ways to fight back at the devil with your sword, the Bible.

The devil lies to you about God's **provision**, you say it is written;

- *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* (Philip. 4:19)
- *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."* (Psalms 37:25)
- *"Jesus said, 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.'" (Luke 12:6-7)*

The devil afflicts you with **sickness**, you say it is written;

- *James 5:14-15; "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."*
- *Matthew 4:23; "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people."*
- *Psalm 103:2-3 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases."*

The devil tempt you with **sexual sins**, you say it is written;

- *1 Corinthians 6:18; "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."*
- *Romans 13:14; "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*

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- *1 John 2:16-17; "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*
- *Romans 6:12; "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."*

The devil says to you that you can't afford to **tithe 10 percent of your income to church**, you say it is written;

- *Malachi 3:10; "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing. That there will not be room enough to receive it."*
- *Proverbs 3:9-10; "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."*

The devil says **God will never be able to forgive you of your sins**, you say it is written;

- *1 John 1:9; "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
- *Ephesians 1:7; "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."*
- *Matthew 9:6; "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*

The devil says **your defeated and there is no power in Jesus' name**, you say it is written;

- *Colossians 2:15; "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*
- *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."*
- *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."*
- *Hebrews 2:14; "In as much 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."*

I would encourage you to get a Bible promise app that has various topics with scriptures that will help you fight the devil with using the Word of God. This last one mentioned above is very powerful. The devil would parade in front of you saying that he is the stronger one and that if Jesus defeated him, why is this world so evil and he's in charge of it, etc., etc. He has a good point, but the Word of God shows us what his final destination is where he will be bound and cast into the lake of fire for eternity...just remind him of that! Realize that as a Christian, you have authority over the devil with the sword - the Word of God.

So whatever the subject matter the devil throws your way, always quote the word of God. Many know the Bible but don't use it as a sword to fight back at the devil. You can have all the degrees and titles in Christian theology, have the Bible memorized inside and out, know all of Bible history, but if you don't know how to use it to fight the devil with it, you're not going to win the battles.

If Jesus had to quote the Word of God when the devil tempted him, you do too, you're not exempt.