

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

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November 12th, 2017 - Christiana's Progress  
Stage 5 - Part 1 (pages 49-52)

We have an interesting topic in today's message; the spiritual battles that we bring on ourselves in the Valley of Humiliation. I'd encourage you to have an open and soft heart to hear what Holy Spirit wants to teach you today.

We start with Christiana hearing God's creation sing, in English! Yes, she hears the birds singing the praises of their creator. The book of Psalms in particular often mentions how creation worships, but I'd like to highlight **Job 12:7-10** where it says; *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."*

Piety had run back to the house because she had forgotten what she was going to give Christiana and returning she says this; *"PIETY. "Look here, I have brought you a summary of all those things that you have seen at our house, upon which you may look when you find yourself forgetful, and call those things again to remembrance for your edification and comfort."*

We need to always meditate on what God has done for us, and if we want good success and prosperity in life, it's really conditional upon our meditating in the Word of God. **Joshua 1:8** says; *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."*

**Philippians 4:8-9** also talks about the importance of meditating on God's word; *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."*

More peace would be in your life and home if you'd turn off the secular news, TV programs, and media that is contrary to what the Bible is telling us to do. As a Christian, what do you meditate on during the day? Do you fill your mind and thoughts with through TV and media, that's full of cursing, blasphemy, adultery, fornication, greed, power etc? If your mind is continually filled with things of the gutter, the things of the carnal nature, your life will reflect it. The Bible says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he, according to Proverbs 23:7.

Here now, is the focal part of the message. Let's read in the script where it says; *"MR. GREAT-HEART. "We need not be afraid of this valley, for there is nothing to harm us, unless we bring it on ourselves. It is true, Christian did meet with Apollyon here, with whom he engaged also in severe combat. But that fray was the fruit of those slips he got in his going down the hill: for those that get slips there, must look for combats here. And, hence it is that this valley has got so bad a name. For the common people, when they hear that some frightful thing has fallen up, when, alas! it is the fruit of their actions that brought such things to pass there. This Valley of Humiliation is, in itself, as fruitful a place as any the crow flies over; and, I am persuaded, that if we could hit on it, we might find somewhere, hereabouts, something that might give us a clue why Christian was so badly attacked in this place." When walking through the valley of humiliation, it's very important to remain meditating on God's word, that you might not stumble as a result of pride and incur more unnecessary spiritual warfare."*

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The warfare that Christian had with Apollyon, was brought on by himself. Humiliation comes as a result of not being humble, or, as a result of pride. Your attitude in the midst of humiliating experiences will show if you are truly walking dead to this world with your mind set on things above. Because if your mind is truly set on things above, you'll maintain a sure footing in the valley of humiliation, without stumbling and handling your situation in flesh as a carnal man would. Valleys of humiliation are going to come in life, but if you are truly seeking those things above, you will not be moved, and God's Grace will see you through without stumbling.

The Bible is full of stories of God's people having to go through the valleys of humiliation. Jesus in the valley of humiliation prayed in **Luke 23:34**; "*Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* This was after he was set up on a mock trial, judged and crucified. Jesus was humiliated without cause, but he took that humiliation for you and for me. Jesus willingly did this to ultimately redeem our lives from hell and eternal separation from God. Jesus forgave them when he was stripped naked, beaten, bruised to the point he was unrecognizable. He took that for you and me.

Jesus also said in **Matthew 5:43-45**; "*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*

Walk in the Holy Spirit in the midst of the valley of humiliation; when someone is humiliating you whether it be family, friends, co-workers or whoever, bless them. If you're really dead in Christ Jesus to the things of the world, you will bless those who try to humiliate you. Jesus is our best example of how to handle humiliation.

**Philippians 2:6-8** in the Amplified Bible says this; "*Who, although He existed in the form and unchanging essence of God [as One with Him, possessing the fullness of all the divine attributes—the entire nature of deity], did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped or asserted [as if He did not already possess it, or was afraid of losing it]; but emptied Himself [without renouncing or diminishing His deity, but only temporarily giving up the outward expression of divine equality and His rightful dignity] by assuming the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men [He became completely human but was without sin, being fully God and fully man]. After He was found in [terms of His] outward appearance as a man [for a divinely-appointed time], He humbled Himself [still further] by becoming obedient [to the Father] to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Jesus knew who he was in the midst of humiliation. He didn't have an identity crisis wondering his purpose in life. He knew the past, the present and the future. He is God in flesh.

**Mark 14:55-65** shows how the devil uses one lie to cover another lie and another lie. No one could agree on anything in this mock trial that Jesus was put in. It says; "*Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" But not even then did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. "*

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Jesus didn't have to defend himself because he knew who he was and he knew what would win the battle; it wasn't standing up trying to defend himself with his rights, although he could have. Jesus boldly declared again he was the Messiah - the Christ, and that He was the son of God.

Believers will suffer humiliation from unbelievers. **2 Timothy 3:12** says; *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* **Matthew 5:11** says; *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."*

For the most part when people are humiliated, it's either for what they've done wrong and have been caught, or it's for being humiliated for something they haven't done. Lies are being brought against them, they're being persecuted and humiliated. If they can't get a person one way, they'll try another way.

**1 Peter 2:19-21** says; *"For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps."*

Peter is saying that when we endure such things, we don't use the worldly system of fighting for our rights and taking people to court. In Christ, you give up your rights whether in your nation, your heritage or your family. In persecution for righteousness sake, you take it, you bless them. It's the exact opposite of what the world does. You do have authority to bind the devil and take authority over him and cast him out when he comes against you, but he is the one you do warfare with, not people.

The devil taunts a person to get into unnecessary battles with him, and because of their pride they fall, wanting their rights defended. As we see with Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, Apollyon almost took him out because of his pride. His wife Christiana and her companions though, walked humbly and did not slip going down the steep hill. That's why this Valley of Humiliation is both a blessing for some and warfare for others. It depends what you do in your Christian walk...and pride will be the downfall causing you to encounter many a demonic battle that could have been avoided because you didn't walk humbly, forgiving and blessing your accusers. You may be reading this right now, in the middle of a fierce spiritual battle, but in your self-denial and pride, you don't even want to believe that you've blown it and sinned - because pride is blinding you. Humble yourself, repent and ask God to fight this battle for you.

If you want victory in the Valley of Humiliation, you have to walk in the Spirit, not in carnality and the flesh. We can avoid bringing on ourselves a lot of unnecessary spiritual warfare by not reacting in the flesh in humiliating circumstances and let the Lord fight our battles. God's grace is on us when we walk humbly, but it's not there if we're in pride. **James 4:6** says; *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

**1 Peter 5:5-11** also says; *"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

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The valley of humiliation tests your Christian character, it shows what you really made of and how you react to it. Your persecution may not be like fellow Christians around the world, but it can come about in various ways; attitudes, conversations, family and friends turning on you and countless other examples. When you've stood fast and firm, endured persecution like a good soldier, watch God step in and defend you in a powerful way. You see, the flesh always wants to embrace and exercise its rights, but the Spirit wants you to embrace grace.

The Apostle Paul says in **Philippians 4:12-13**; "*I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" We've got to understand that when we're weak, God is strong and his strength is made perfect in it. His grace will carry us when we embrace it. Forgiveness and grace may not be the first thing that rises in your heart when you're humiliated and persecuted, but the Spirit that abides in you will rise up for you to say; 'God bless you', 'I forgive you', and 'I'm praying for you'

The script continues; "*MR. GREAT-HEART. "Listen to what the shepherd's boy is saying." So they listened, and he said, "He that is down, needs fear no fall; he that is low, no pride: "He that is humble, ever shall have God to be his guide. I am content with what I have, little be it or much; and, Lord, contentment still I crave, because thou savest such. Fullness to such, a burden is, that go on pilgrimage; here little, and hereafter bliss, is best from Age to Age."*

***This is a valley that nobody walks in but those that love a pilgrim's life.*** Do you love your Christian life? If not, you're likely to fall.

*MR. GREAT-HEART. "Your father had his battle with Apollyon at a spot just in front of us, a narrow passage just beyond Forgetful Green. And, indeed, that place is the most dangerous in all these parts. For if, at any time, pilgrims meet with any difficulty, it is when they forget what favours they have received, and how unworthy they are of them. This is the place also where others have been hard put to it. But more of the place when we come to it; for I persuade myself that, to this day, there remains either some sign of the battle, or some monument to testify that such a battle was fought here."*

I'd like to take a portion of a commentary regarding what happened in the Valley of Humiliation with both Christiana and her husband Christian.

### **"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS - AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY**

*It is significant that whereas Christian resided at the Palace Beautiful for no more than four days, subsequently in Part Two, his wife Christiana with the four boys and Mercy, stay for about a month. In descending to the Valley of Humiliation, Christiana avoids any slips so that the newly appointed guide Great-heart comments:*

*We need not to be so afraid of this Valley, for here is nothing to hurt us, unless we procure it to ourselves. It is true that Christian did here meet with Apollyon, with whom he had also a sore combat; but that fray was the fruit of those slips that he got in his going down the hill; . . . It is the best and most fruitful piece of ground in all these parts. . . . Behold how green this valley is, also how beautiful with lilies! I have also known many laboring men that have got good estates in this Valley of Humiliation; for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6).5*

*Thus Christian's confrontation with Apollyon is a result of his need for humility that is, to some degree, lacking in his pilgrimage. After his battle, his sword remains drawn. This pilgrim has matured as a soldier, for his sword remains purposely drawn and at the ready having become stained with the blood of Apollyon. He has entered into spiritual manhood and thus is better prepared to meet further assaults. So he presses on, now walking far more circumspectly (Eph. 5:15). He leaves behind, not only shivers of Apollyon's broken darts, but also his own spilt blood, disturbed ground, and split stones, which his family will wonder at when they later pass by."*

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Is your sword drawn at all times? Do you have the Bible with you at all times? Is the word of God on your lips at all times in every circumstance and situation? So when you find yourself in the valley of humiliation, it's very important to stay grounded in the word and resist the natural reasoning and rationalizing of the carnal mind which is at enmity with God.

**Romans 8:6-8** says; "*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*"

What is that carnality? Those who want to lay claim to their rights - can't please God; those who are not walking in love and peace with those who are persecuting and humiliating them - can't please God...and those are just some examples.

**Galatians 5:19-21** also specifies what the carnal actions are and how they're displeasing to God; "*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.*"

But **Galatians 5:22-23** talks about what ought to come out of your mouth and what your actions ought to be as a Christian when facing persecution and humiliation; "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*"

**1 John 2:15-17** also says; "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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.*"

This is the culmination of all we've studied today from **James 4:1-10** when he gives us a warning against worldliness where it says; "*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*"

We're to walk a Christian walk of humility in Jesus. When you do, God will fight all your battles - guaranteed.