

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

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February 11th, 2018 - Christiana's Progress  
Stage 7 - Part 1 (pages 77-79)

Do you remember Giant Despair from Pilgrim's Progress? It's in Doubting Castle where Christian and Hopeful were captive because they got off the straight and narrow path and fell into the hands of Giant Despair who held them incarcerated, until they despaired even for their lives, and at one point, thought to take their own lives by suicide. They came to their senses though, fought back and escaped it's clutches.

How monstrous is Despair in your life today? Has it gripped you to doubt the very words of Jesus in the Bible, to doubt that all of the promises of God are yes and amen? Has it caused you to doubt and not believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to you as a helper and intercessor and endue you with power to overcome all the fiery darts of the devil? Not only that, but do you doubt that the gifts that the Holy Spirit wants to give you are no longer relevant and needed in the body of Christ today? These are some of the topics we'll be covering in today's message.

Let's start by reading the following from the script; "*Then they fought for their lives, and Giant Despair was brought down to the ground, but was very reluctant to die. He struggled hard, and had, as they say, as many lives as a cat; but Great-Heart killed him, for he would not leave him till he had severed his head from his shoulders.*"

What does despair mean? It's the complete loss or absence of hope. Synonyms are disheartenment, discouragement, desperation, distress, anguish, depressed, despondent, gloomy, miserable, pessimistic, suicidal, unhappiness, to lose hope and faith and more. This is what Giant Despair held Christian and Hopeful in for a long period of time the story told us.

**John 8:34-36** says; "*Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."*

Being set free means forever, so if you've been set free from despair, you are free indeed. But you have a will, and if you choose, you can go right back into the prison of despair. Your adversary the devil is more than willing to let you come right back into his clutches and prison of despair...if you choose, even though through Christ Jesus you've been set free.

**2 Corinthians 4:7-9**, the Apostle Paul says; "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*"

Where has the Giant Despair held you captive in doubting Gods promises in his word? The devil, the Giant of Despair, was defeated by Jesus at the cross, therefore you have to in Jesus name demolish the doubting castle once and for all and not continue to be held in its prison. So Jesus has destroyed the devil, he saved your soul, led you the cross and you're born again and are now a son or daughter of God. So a good question to ask yourself is, if you have become a Christian, where have you been building the doubting castle again that you and Jesus previously demolished together? As a new Christian, you are presently going through or have gone through a period of time of sanctification where your mind is being washed with the word of God, getting rid of the despair in your life. Why then, after all the wonderful deliverance, would you want to build another doubting castle?

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I believe that it just starts with a foundation of fear that sneaks its way back in (lack of faith in the Bible), bricks of despair (false teachings) end up building walls of doubt (in God's word) in your mind, and the next thing you know, you've bricked yourself in to a safe house, barricading yourself from the radical fundamental teachings of Christ regarding signs, wonders, miracles, healings, gifts of the Holy, speaking in tongues, etc. You start to believe that you can't trust God's word and get to a place that you disregard the work of the Holy Spirit altogether. This becomes a dungeon that has you captive to despair (false teaching) and gradually more walls (doctrines of devils) go up, and before you know it, Doubting Castle has been built again, only now it's called a 'Religious Doubting Castle' and the devil of despair (a false teacher) has managed to keep you doubting the supernatural word of God and all its promises.

So, even though you're a Christian, you're in a dungeon that you've allowed to be built by false teachers. Let's read about them in **2 Peter 2:18-22**; *"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, **the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error**. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*

Rejecting the Holy Spirit is rejecting part of the Trinity. Jesus and God the Father knew we would need help to live our Christian lives, so the Holy Spirit was sent to fill up and indwell every Christian at Pentecost, and he continues to do it every day to those who receive him. Rejecting the Holy Spirit would be like a husband bringing home to his wife all these beautiful gifts (car, lawn mower, snow blower, washer & dryer, food processor etc.) that would make her life so much easier and fruitful, but she continually resists because she has a blockade of thoughts like; I've never done it that way before, I like how I do it, I don't want to change, this works fine for me or many other excuses.

Well, we are the bride of Christ and he's given the Holy Spirit as our helper to make our Christian life easier to walk and more fruitful. Being stuck in religion and tradition is in essence saying I'm not moving for anyone or anything. A husband after time, would get tired of all the rejection, being frustrated that you're not using any of the gifts that he's given to you because he loves you, wouldn't he. I think it's the same with Father God. He's given us everything to live a victorious life in Jesus and we can grieve the Holy Spirit by continually rejecting him and his gifts.

Let's face it, the majority of Doubting Castles being built in Christians are a direct result of not believing what the Bible says as truth and instead believe in false teachings that keep them out of God's promises. Those false teachings are to not believe that signs, wonders, miracles, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophesying, words of wisdom and knowledge, gifts of healing are for today. It grieves the Holy Spirit.

We read in the script that it was easy to demolish Doubting Castle, but how easy it is to rebuild it. Despair was living in Doubt. The facade and description of the castle is that of doubt. What does doubt mean? It's a feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction. Synonyms are: uncertainty, unsureness, indecision, hesitation, dubious, suspicion, confusion and more. So you could say that doubt leads to despair.

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**James 1:5-7** says; *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."*

Jesus says in **Matthew 21:20-22**; *"And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."*

The script says that it took seven days to destroy Doubting Castle and they rescued Mr. Despondency and his daughter Much-afraid, and they also saw the remains of many who had succumbed and died at the hands of Giant Despair. How many are in the church today who are like Mr. Despondency and Much-afraid. Their Christians, they're on their Christian pilgrimage to heaven but they've been ensnared by the devil.

What does despondency mean? It's a state of low spirits caused by loss of hope or courage. Synonyms are: hopelessness, despair, discouragement, low spirits, wretchedness; melancholy, gloom, misery, desolation, disappointment, disheartenment, dejection, heartache and more.

Are you so despondent as a Christian that you're spiritually starved at the point of spiritual death? How about being afraid. It means; feeling fear or anxiety. Synonyms are: scared, terrified, petrified, scared witless, scared to death, reluctant, hesitant, unwilling, disinclined, and more. Examine your heart today and see if you're like these characters. Are you afraid of the Holy Spirit and his work because of tradition or of false teachers who have told you otherwise?

The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:14-16**; *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these 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.'"*

False teachers will bring you into bondage by fear.

**2 Timothy 1:7** says; *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*

Jesus clearly shows what he has given to the church in **Luke 10:17-19**; *"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.'" And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 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."*

Has the devil lied to you saying the demons aren't subject to you and that you don't have authority over them, or that it was only for the disciples back then but not for the church today? You do have authority to trample on all the giants of despair, doubt, unbelief, fear, despondency, false teaching that would hold you captive etc., that would want to lock you up in the Religious Doubting Castle.

**Colossians 1:13-14** says; *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."*

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**Colossians 2:13-15** also says; *"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*

We read in **Genesis 3:14-15** the judgement that came upon the devil - the serpent - it says; *"So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

Jesus Christ, the offspring of the woman Mary, would crush the serpent's head someday. This was prophesied regarding the Messiah who has both come and gone and will return again! He is the one who lives in you today and has given you authority to not believe the lies and false teaching about the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ, you can resist building a castle, fortress or safe place of doubt and unbelief. Believe me, the adversary will present you with many opportunities and will throw the door wide open to get you to doubt and walk in fear. You can be religious and nominal but devil will convince you to resist the gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Hebrews 4:15** says; *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."* Jesus was not a sinner, that's what gave him the victory.

**1 John 3:5** affirms it again; *"And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Jesus defeated the devil because he is without sin."*

This is the same Jesus that helps you tear down the Doubting Castle in your life, to sanctify you and renew your mind according to the Word of God.

**1 John 3:8** says; *"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."*

Does this mean though that you can't rebuild doubting castles again? You can but it has nothing to do with Jesus. He demolished it and has given you all authority to resist fear, doubt and unbelief. Do you believe Gods word or only in part? Do you build a castle and fortress to accommodate false doctrines. I don't know about you, but I want everything that Jesus won for me at the cross, not only a part, but in full! I want my whole inheritance. How about you?

**Hebrews 2:14-15** says; *"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, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

That's you who he released from fear and bondage! Why would you want to rebuild it then after it's been torn down and not believe his word? Why would you want to listen to false teachers and doctrines to resist the Holy Spirit for tradition and religion sake.

**1 John 4:4** says; *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*

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Why doubt the word of God and think that it doesn't mean what it says and doesn't apply to you? Every time you read the word, you should read it like a prophecy, 'Thus saith the Lord'. Whether you believe it or not, the word does not change, we have to change to what it says about us. It's conditional as the Lord will not force it on you. It's your choice if you want to continue to live in a Religious Doubting Castle, not Jesus' choice. God has so much for us, let's not fall back into despair through false teaching which hold us captive.