



Pilgrim's Progress

Part Two - Christiana

The Pilgrims Progress

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John Bunyan

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The Departure

After her husband, Christian, left on his journey to the Celestial City, Christiana was plagued with many troubling thoughts. One day, as her four boys were gathered around her, she said with tears in her eyes, “My sons, we are in terrible trouble. Your father went to the Celestial Land, and he wanted us to go with him, but I wouldn’t listen to him. Now we are left alone here with no one to comfort us.”

As the boys heard her words, they started to cry and begged to go to their father, but Christiana only cried, “I wish we had gone with him and shared his trials. That would have been much better for us.” And they all began to cry louder.

The next morning when they woke up, still feeling very depressed, they heard a hard knock at the door, and Christiana called out, “If you come in God’s name, come in.”

A man then opened the door and came in, saying, “Peace to this house.”

Seeing that the man was a messenger, she got excited, hoping he brought news of her husband. The man then began to explain, “My name is Secret. I have come from the Lord of the Celestial Land to tell you that He invites you to come to His table. He will feed you with the best food in His

house. Your husband is already there, and he would be thrilled to hear that you are coming.”

Hearing this, Christiana was overcome with joy and replied, “I am ready to go. Will you help me and carry my children?”

The messenger simply replied, “Christiana, bitter must come before the sweet. You will have to pass through many trials before you can enter the Celestial City, as your husband did. Follow the light that you see dimly in the distance. Go to the Wicket Gate. Stay on the straight and narrow path.”

Having said this, the messenger then left, and Christiana called out to her sons, “Everyone start packing. We are going on a trip to the Celestial Land.”

When the children heard this, they were filled with joy, looking forward to seeing their father, and following in his footsteps. Quickly, they gathered their things and got ready for the journey, but just as they were about to leave, two neighbor ladies knocked on the door. When they saw Christiana and the boys getting ready for a trip, Mrs. Timorous asked in surprise, “Why are you packing? What are you doing?”

“We are going on a journey,” Christiana replied.

“A journey! Where to?” Mrs. Timorous asked.

“We’re going after my good husband,” Christiana said, as a tear of joy fell down her eye.

“You’ll be sorry if you do,” said Mrs. Timorous. “Think of all the dangers along the way. Think of your four little boys. The safest place for them is at home.”

“Don’t try and talk me out of it,” Christiana said firmly. “I have made up my mind, and nothing can stop me.”

“You’re being foolish!” Mrs. Timorous shot back, as she began to mock Christiana. Then once she saw that there was no changing her mind, she turned to the young woman who was with her and said, “Come on, Mercy! Let’s go home. Let her do what she wants and suffer as she deserves.”

But as Mercy looked on, her kind heart was touched at the thought of leaving Christiana. So she said to Mrs. Timorous, “I think I will walk a little way with her and the boys. You know. Help them get off to a good start.”

Mrs. Timorous just laughed and said, “So you want to go with her, do you? Well, be careful. A little walk may sound fun now, but when the trials come, you’ll think differently.” Then she turned and headed back to her house.

Mercy looked at Christiana and said sweetly, “I’ll go with you to the Wicket Gate and farther if the King lets me. I’ll go as far as the King will let me go.”

At the Wicket Gate

Now, as they traveled onward over the plain where Christian had gone before them, the path was rough and uneven, and they often grew tired. However, Mercy would always speak words to cheer and comfort them, and she often took the youngest child in her arms and carried him.

When they came to the Swamp of Despair, it was even more disgusting than when Christian had fallen into it, but they knew they had to get across, so they marched forward across the little steps that paved the way. Making their way across, Christiana sank deep in the mud once or twice, and Mercy came close to getting stuck, but since the boys were quick of feet and light of heart, they made their way over the steps without even realizing there was a swamp there.

After a while, they finally came to the Wicket Gate where they saw the words written above it, 'Knock and it will be opened to you.' As Christiana knocked, she heard a big ferocious dog barking on the other side of the gate and trembled in fear. She finally got up the nerve to knock again. Hearing the noise, the gatekeeper cracked the gate and peeked through, asking, "Who are you?"

"I am the wife of Christian, a man who once passed through this gate," she said. Then looking down, she added, "These are our children. We

want to go through this gate so we can get to the Celestial City.”

The gatekeeper took her by the hand and led her in, also assisting the children through, saying, “Let the little children come to Me” (Matt. 19:14).

The man then shut the gate, with Mercy still outside, trembling and crying. Not wanting to draw attention to herself, she remained quiet, but when Christiana noticed that her friend was not with them, she started to intercede for her, appealing, “Wait! My friend Mercy is still outside the gate! You must let her in. She wants to go to the Celestial City too. She must have been afraid to come in since no one invited her.”

Just then, a knock was heard at the gate so loud that it startled those inside, and the gatekeeper called out, “Who is there?”

“It must be my friend,” Christiana said.

As he opened the gate and looked out, he saw Mercy on the ground. She had fainted from fear of the barking dog, as well as the fear of being left outside the gate. In sympathy, the keeper took her by the hand, lifted her up, and welcomed her into the place. Now everyone was on the safe side of the Wicket Gate, and as the gatekeeper went about his work, they all started to rejoice.

“I am so glad we made it! When I heard that dog, I was afraid we were all going to die. I barely had enough strength to knock,” said Christiana.



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