

One More Night with the Frogs-Christine Caine

Let's go to the Bible. I love the Bible, do you love the Bible? I love this word, the Bible says in Exodus chapter eight I feel sorry for the people doing scriptures I've given them five different texts and said when I stand up there you'll know which one I'm going to use because I don't know yet. So Exodus eight, then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, this is what the Lord says, let my people go so they may worship me". This is a night of worship isn't it? God's always wanted to pull his people out of exile so that they might worship him, it's about him. If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your whole country.

This just amuses me 'cause I'm thinking like, was God like in heaven, all three of him just kind of like having a chat. What shall we send? Ah frogs, that's random. Okay, frogs like it's just you know, everyone thinks that God is boring and just like, that just amuses me, frogs. This was after like blood, gnats that are come, let's just drop in frogs right here. Okay, so just random. If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs to your whole country. The Nile will team with frogs, they will come up on your palace and your bedroom, that's always lovely and onto your bed. Interesting concept to your wedding night. Into the houses of your officials and on your people, into your ovens and kneading troughs. That would not really impact me because I don't know when I last opened my oven but that's okay, that's alright. The frogs will come up on you and your people and all your officials.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt". So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt and the frogs came up and covered the land. But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts. They also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt. Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the Lord to take the frogs away from me and my people and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the Lord". Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs except for those that remain in the Nile". "Tomorrow," Pharaoh said. Moses replied, "It will be as you say so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. The frogs will leave you and your houses, and your officials and your people, and they will remain only in the Nile".

After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh Moses cried out to the Lord about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh and the Lord did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. They were piled into heaps and the land reeked of them. I bet you're feeling blessed tonight aren't you. It's like, I'm so glad pastor had us come out on a Monday night, this is awesome. What an interesting portion of scripture. Like I said I love the Bible, there's no room for boredom it's just like, interesting. So here we have the children of Israel in the midst of 430 years of slavery, 430 years of bondage and captivity, crying out to God, asking God to set them free. The Lord hears their prayer, he decides he's gonna soften Pharaoh's heart and so, we're in the middle of here where the Lord is sending a series of 10 plagues in the book of Exodus.

In order to soften Pharaoh's heart, me thinks it's just a good idea to say YES to God before the plagues come but anyway, Pharaoh was a little bit hard-hearted and so in this point we're here in the middle of a bunch of frogs and so the frogs come everywhere scripture tells us. I mean, the whole country is filled with frogs. I don't particularly like any kind of critters and it would just be gross to have frogs in your bathtub, try to go to bathroom and there's frogs up out of the toilet. You know like it'd be gross. Anyway, so at the end of the day, it was like there were frogs everywhere.

When God sends a plague of frogs he's not playing, there were frogs in the bedroom, there

were frogs in the kitchen, there were frogs down the street, there were frogs in the Nile. Here a frog, there a frog, everywhere a? There were frogs everywhere and so I would imagine the only thing worse than a whole bunch of frogs is like a Mrs. Pharaoh that was not happy with the condition of the frogs. I'm sure she nagged Mr. Pharaoh, so Mr. Pharaoh finally went to Moses and said you know what, I'm done. Tell your God I will do whatever he wants. I will set these people free, just get rid of the frogs.

So Moses says okay, you set the time. You tell me, God is willing to get rid of these frogs. God is well able to get rid of these frogs, God is waiting to get rid of these frogs so Pharaoh you set the time and you tell me when you want to get rid of these frogs and then for me one of the most fascinating, strange and incomprehensible verses of scripture in the entire Bible, it's just one verse. Really one word, it takes three but it's really only one word. Pharaoh looks at Moses in verse 10 and he says, tomorrow.

So Moses says set the time Pharaoh, and Pharaoh says tomorrow. I just have to ask the question, God's willing to get rid of the frogs, God can get rid of the frogs, God wants to get rid of the frogs, what on earth would cause this man to wanna spend one more night with those frogs? What is it that would make him wanna spend another night with a frog?

And you know what, I'm not here tonight in Fredericksburg, Virginia to ask why Pharaoh all of those years ago wanted to spend one more night with his frogs. My question is, what are the frogs that are in you, on you, around you that you've been carrying for years? And God says I'm willing to get rid of those frogs, I'm able to get rid of those frogs, I am wanting to get of those frogs and you come and you sit in church, and you hear sermon after sermon and you go, you know what? I'm gonna do that, but I'm gonna do it tomorrow and God says this is not the time for tomorrow, the hour is urgent, the day is urgent, today is a day of salvation. Today is the day of deliverance, today is the day of freedom, you don't need to wait one more night to get rid of those frogs. It is so amazing to me, I've thought about this so often in my life. What is it that would make a Christian wanna spend one more night?

Well, I don't know what your frogs are. We get so used to them, the frogs of bitterness, the frogs of unforgiveness, the frogs of anger, the frogs of lust, the frogs of addiction, the frogs of greed, the frogs of insecurity, the frogs of shame, the frogs of lust, the frogs of apathy, the frogs of indifference, I mean you just insert what it is and we just do laps around the same old mountain and we come here and we hear a sermon, week in and week out and we think yes, I need to do what pastor says and I'm going to do it but I'll do it tomorrow. And we think because we intend to do it tomorrow that we've done something about it today and then when we wake up tomorrow we're still in that place tomorrow and you go why do I have that same old depression, that same old anger, that same old insecurity, that same old addiction, that same old lust, that same old greed, that same old bitterness, that same old unforgiveness, why is nothing changing?

It's because you are saying to yourself, I'm gonna do it tomorrow. I mean how often do we do that? At the beginning of the year, you know what? I'm gonna get fit and it's going to start, I'm gonna start running tomorrow. That's, I wanna go and I'm gonna go to school and I wanna go and learn some more and I'm gonna enroll tomorrow. And I'm gonna deal with my marriage problem, I know we've got issues and I know we need to get it dealt with and we will, we'll get around to it, tomorrow. I know I need to have that conversation with my children and we'll do, I know I know, I'm just too tired tonight. I'm just gonna do it tomorrow, 10 years later.

10 years later, I look at my own life by the grace of God and I have thought about this so much because I'm like why. Why at 50 by God's grace am I walking in freedom, it's a day by day decision but why am I, and why are other people that I started with, I came into church 28 years ago with 32

people, I was the most messed up out of all of them. 28 years later why I am I here, and many of them are not even anywhere anymore? Why is that the case? We sat under the same teaching, planted in the same church, given the same opportunities, read the same Bible, have the same Holy Spirit. What is it, does God have favorites? I don't really think so. I think the only difference between me and them is that at some point I made a decision today.

Today and I'll tell you what, let me give you a little bit of my background. I came from a being, I was born in Sydney, Australia and I was born second-generation migrant Greek. My parents were Greek and they were immigrants and we grew up in Australia though. Before my big fat Greek wedding when it was not cool to be Greek in Australia. It was not cool, I start my book with my traumatic story in kindergarten when I had my feta cheese sandwich and all the Australian kids had their vegemite sandwiches and I was ridiculed and mocked and scorned for my feta cheese which now people pay a fortune for.

But back then, it was the beginning of my shame journey. But so marginalized because of my ethnicity in a culture that did not esteem women at all and particularly a woman like me that kind of had a sense of vision and dream and destiny. I mean my mother wanted me to be you know, a ballerina and she'd drop me off at ballet classes and find me playing soccer with the boys after when she came to pick me up. She'd take me to target and leave me in the Barbie Doll aisle and then come and find me in the book aisle and just go oh my gosh Christine, no man's gonna wanna marry you 'cause you're too smart and I just, all that shame, you know you better be careful because you know, all you should be is a lean, mean, breeding machine. And so, which is okay.

You know I've popped out a couple, I think that's pretty awesome. The second one, the second kid I popped out I popped out at 40, you deserve a purple heart when you're popping out a kid at 40. That's all I'm saying so I'm all about it. I'm all about it but I do wanna tell you, I'm not into all this like natural stuff whatever. I'm like, you know, that was like for Mary back then 2000 years ago. But it was in the labor ward that I discovered the fourth part of the Trinity. There's no doubt about it. There is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and God the Epidural. I'm telling you, telling you. Do not leave home without one, awesome.

I grew up in the poorest zip code of my state, the third poorest zip code in all of Australia, in typical kind of immigrant housing, government-assisted and pretty much every week of my life from the time I was three right through till my mid teens I was sexually abused by several different men, often many times during the week. Now that messes with you. That messes, I never went from one stage of development to the other in any healthy way. I was a young woman that was full of unforgiveness as you'd well know, full of shame. Full of guilt, full of condemnation, I was so angry, I was so bitter, I could not look anyone in the eye or have any sense of any conversation.

I was so broken and then, two weeks before my 33rd birthday I got a phone call from my brother George who was 35 at the time because when you're Greek all your brothers are like George, Con, Nicko, Spiro, you know, so it's just like George, George calls me. And he said, "Christine I just got a letter from the government department and it says that I've been adopted". Now, when he first told me that I started laughing because you know, when you're growing up you always say to your siblings, like your mother's from mars, we're not related, we're not, you're adopted. You know, you like always tell them but then when they tell you they are, you suddenly get really protective. You're like, no you're not. Don't lie, it didn't happen.

I said, George call the government, tell them that they've made some kind of administrative error and they've sent this document to the wrong person. Well he calls me about 10 minutes later but this time church he is sobbing. And he said, "Chris it's true. They told me the name of my biological mother, my biological father, they told me when I was born, where I went to school, when I was immunized. They have a whole file on my life". I'm like whoa. And he says, "I'm gonna go and

confront mom".

Now I don't know if you know anything about Greeks but we are very volatile. Greeks act first and think later. And I'm thinking my brother might go cray cray and so something good may not happen here. And so I jump in the car and my father had died when I was 19, at this time my mom was 61. Home alone, kept this family secret for 35 years. I'm thinking this whole thing could blow up. So I jump in my car, I go to my mom's house, and I walk in right at the moment that my brother is giving my mom this piece of paper from the government.

Well my mother takes this document and well, her whole face changes. I thought my gosh, this is true. And my mom just starts crying. She says, "George I'm so sorry. All of the adoption laws in Australia 35 years ago, they were all closed adoptions. We never thought you would find out and the last thing before your father died I promised him I would never tell you so I tore up all of the paperwork, I threw it away and I never thought you would find out".

Now, church, you could imagine that my mother's crying, my brother's crying, the dog's crying. You know, snot's flying. I mean it's all, my big fat Greek moment. I didn't know what to do so I go into the kitchen, like what do you do, Greek crisis, make food and coffee. Baklava, answer to life, the universe and everything. So I'm in the kitchen, my mother comes in behind me after awhile and she says, "Christina, since we're telling the truth," some of you are there. "Do you know, do you wanna know the whole truth"? And I'm like, my back's to her, then I just turn around.

At first I really don't know why I said this, I went I've been adopted too. And then with tears streaming down her face she just nods her head and church, I was stunned, just stunned. And I didn't say anything for a few minutes. Then the first thing like I went, am I still Greek? And I thought I was called a lot of names for a long time at school, I wanted to know there was a reason for all the persecution so I'm like, am I still Greek?

And the very next thing that came out of my mouth right there in my Greek orthodox mother's kitchen, right then, I went oh well mom. Before I was formed in my mother's womb, whosever womb that was, he knew me. He knitted together my innermost parts, he fashioned all of my days before as yet, there was one of them, I am fearfully and wonderfully made and church, that day, every fact that I thought to be true about my life changed. What my name was, what my heritage was. Every fact changed and to this night, I still don't know the facts surrounding my conception. I don't know if I was a result of a one night stand, I have no idea if I was the result of a rape, I don't know if I was the result of an ongoing affair, I have no idea about the facts surrounding my conception but I have discovered a force on the planet that is much higher than the facts and it's called the truth of the Word of God.

And you know what, Ephesians 2 verse 10 says? It doesn't say that I'm the workmanship of a rape, it doesn't say that I'm the workmanship of an adulteress affair, it says that we are his workmanship. Recreated in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. And even if the devil has sent an assignment to try to steal, kill and destroy your life, there is no demon in hell and no person on earth that can nullify the work of the cross of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, it sets us free. It gives us a life beyond our past and he can redeem your past and give you a future. I am God's workmanship.

And so, about a year later I received some of my documents you know which is like really weird. It's strange, we're going remember on the theme in case you're wondering what are the frog, I had a lot of frogs as you can tell. I fit every government funding category that exists in Australia. I'm a poor ethnic minority, abused, adopted, chick. It's awesome because I could make a fortune on government funding. Because what they do is they fund people like me and they say we're gonna give you a label victim, and we're gonna pay every week to remind you that you're a victim, come

back and get your check and we'll tell you you're a victim but I read the book and my Bible says he's redeemed my life from the pit, I don't need to live as any kind of victim but we are more than conquers through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. This stuff is real.

And at some point I made a decision that I'm not gonna linger in yesterday, forever. That today, I'm gonna receive the freedom and the life and the liberty that Jesus has. People with my kind of background, 10, 20, 30, 40 years sit in church and still live bound but Jesus brought us out of bondage and out of slavery to take us into the Promised Land, to lay a hold of all of that for which he has laid a hold of us, and at some point you've gotta make a decision today. Not tomorrow but today, today I'll forgive, today I'll deal with my brokenness, today I'll deal with my stuff. And I remember they sent my my documents and over here it says number 2508 of 1966. You can see the particulars of child prior to adoption. Child's name, unnamed.

Do you know shocking it is to receive a birth certificate with the word unnamed typed in. The devil starts you know that tape recorder. See Christine, your mother didn't even want you. She just left you, she just didn't even give you a name. Can you just put that back up, I wanna show you something. There I am, unnamed and then there was a doctor's report, a social worker report. Here this is an assessment of my biological mother before she had me two weeks before, she came in to the royal hospital for women. It says, she does not seem to be too emotionally involved with the child. She seems to want to get it all over and done with and get back to work as soon as possible.

Which is interesting to read a document that says unwanted. The point I'm trying to make through all of this, is many of us we don't think we've got the power to choose life even though Deuteronomy tells us it's up to us to choose life or death, blessing or cursing, it's our choice. We are like Pharaoh we say, tomorrow. Tomorrow and God says well why not today because we go but God I'll tell you why. Because this is what the government says, they said I'm unnamed, that I'm just a number, this is what the medical profession says and most of us, this is how we define our lives. This is what we allow to dictate our life. Christine look at the facts. Look at the facts, I mean this is what the government says, this is what the medical profession says. I think I've got another document in there that I want you to see what the experts said about me on the 28th of March 1993. The experts told me that if my career ambition is to remain in the area of youth services in the longterm, I would strongly urge you to take time out to study for a basic social work, welfare work or other relevant professional qualifications.

These comments, I mean this whole letter was saying how useless I was. These comments I have made may be difficult for you to digest but they reflect my honest assessment of the most appropriate forward for you. I see you as a young woman with enormous innate potential, I sincerely hope that you will enhance your innate aptitude by the formal training that will provide you with the theoretical basis that you need to compliment your many talents. They were saying that I was unqualified. Now today by the grace of God we run what would be one of the if not the largest anti-trafficking organizations in the world but hang on a minute, let me show you this. But this is what the experts said and this is why a lot of us think we can't make any change. Because we define our life by black and white, ink on paper.

We say it's the facts and if you put those three documents up these would be the three institutions in society, by which most of us, we set our standards and we carry our junk because we think well look, you know it's gotta be true. The government said it. It's gotta be true, you don't know Christine. This is the doctor's report, that's what the medical profession says. This is how I've been diagnosed, it's gotta be true. Or look what this is what the education department says and so we put those up and I love all of these institutions but you know what church? I found myself another black and white ink on paper. The truth is what will take you to your destiny. If you abide in my word then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Though you wonder why there's such an assault on the truth of the Word of God, why people wanna dilute it, wanna minimize it, wanna change it, 'cause that's where the power is. And that is the thing that'll give you the power to say today not tomorrow. Because at some point I made a decision that I was not gonna allow my history to define my destiny. At some point I made a decision that I was gonna make what Jesus Christ did for me bigger than what anyone had done to me.

See what a lot of us do is we make what people have done to us, or what people have said about us, bigger than what Jesus Christ did for us. And at some point I say no no no, today, Jesus died on the cross at calvary 2000 years ago and shed his blood so that even an unnamed, unwanted abused, adopted chick from the backside of the desert in Sydney Australia could still fulfill her future and her destiny and we need a church that actually believes this stuff. A church that believes that freedom, you know people say to me well Christine, this is just because of your personality type.

You know what? Freedom has got nothing to do with where you fit on the disc profile, it's got nothing to do with your strength finder, it's got nothing to do with your love language, freedom is not a personality type. Freedom is a blood type, it's the blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It sets people free. He still sets people free today. Your past does not need to define your future. You can walk in freedom. You do not have to be bound by insecurity and you don't have to be bound by bitterness and unforgiveness and rejection and shame and guilt because he whom the son set free, shall be free indeed. There is free and there is free indeed and why settle for free when you can be free indeed.