

Pilgrim's Daily Progress

by John Sung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' teachings and taking the nine steps to heaven, which include being poor in spirit, mourning, being meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being merciful, being pure in heart, being a peacemaker, being persecuted for righteousness' sake, and being willing to sacrifice for the Lord.

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Perseverance in Faith", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Sung emphasizes the importance of the pilgrim's daily progress towards holiness and righteousness, outlining nine steps based on Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5. He encourages believers to humble themselves, mourn for their sins, and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance as they climb the mountain of blessings. Each step represents a deeper commitment to faith, including being merciful, pure in heart, and willing to endure persecution for righteousness' sake. Sung challenges his audience to actively participate in their spiritual journey and to carry the cross, following the example of Jesus and the early martyrs. He concludes with a call to action, urging believers to witness and spread the Gospel despite the challenges they may face.

Transcript

Matthew 5

I spoke on Rebirth a few days ago, and went on to holiness and filling of the Holy Spirit. Today let us go a step further --- the pilgrim's daily progress. Let us all advance! How shall we progress on the pilgrim's way to heaven? There are nine steps. We must climb, from station to station. Blessing upon every forward step. These nine steps are given by Jesus on a mountain. That mountain may be called the mountain of nine blessings.

Vs 1,2 "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying." Many followed Jesus. There was no church building, so Jesus climbed a hill. Since He taught from the hill his sermon has therefore been called "Mountain-climbing Sermon." What do we mean by that? Now mountain climbing is a hazardous undertaking. But we must climb this mountain. What mountain do you climb? Is it the one Jesus is climbing? Let us consider the first step.

Vs 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is the first step. To be poor in heart is to humble oneself. Jesus went through this. Jesus came down from heaven to the manger. He had power, He was God. But He humbled Himself. He left all His glory, to be a nobody. So, to be a Christian one must be humbled. One must repent to be blessed. For we have sin. Before God we must repent, confess our sins. To be poor in heart is to repent. Have you taken this first step?

Vs 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. This is step 2. This brings consolation to pilgrim on his way. Jesus had passed through this stage, and He is leading us through. Jesus was baptized. When He got out of the water, the heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him. He was comforted. What is to mourn? It is the Spirit's work: To know sin, to be conscience-stricken, to weep and mourn, and to pray for forgiveness. Jesus says, "These who are comforted are born again." Step 2 is Rebirth. To be born again is to receive comfort. How many have taken this step? I have. To be comforted by the Lord is wonderful comfort, joyful comfort. Enough? No. There are seven steps more. Let's take step 3.

Vs 5 "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." This is step 3. Jesus had taken this step. The meek obey the Holy Spirit. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to fast forty days. Jesus obeyed completely. When a man is born again he has the Holy Spirit in his heart. He is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Should he sin again his heart would palpitate. Thus chastised by the Holy Spirit he repents and is restored to peace. Many have asked me, "How is it my heart is not at peace after rebirth?" I reply, "Go and witness. You'll find peace." Any person born again is controlled by the Holy Spirit. He is troubled by the slightest if he does not submit to the Spirit's control. The meek inherit the earth, because they obey. Have you?

Vs 6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." This is step 4. When Jesus hungered and weakened in the desert Satan tempted Him to change stone into bread. Did Jesus yield to the temptation? No! Because he regarded God's Word more than food. Many zealous for righteousness and for hearing the Word would rather go hungry. Before a man hears the Word he rejects the Holy Spirit. After hearing, he desires the Holy Spirit. This is what is called --- for righteousness sake". After preaching in Foochow, several hundred followed me to Shanghai to the Bible Conference and to prayer. For this is the Holy Spirit's witness in a person born again. Have you?

Vs 7 "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." This is step 5. Mercy overflows from love. It is that quality of sorrow upon seeing a soul unsaved, and greater sorrow from seeing the soul of an unsaved relative. To be mercifully concerned invites the same unto itself. One concrete expression of mercy is the formation of a preaching band --- to go out saving souls. Step 5 is: 'form a preaching band.' Have you?

Vs 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." This is step 6. At the Hermon Mount of Transfiguration Jesus saw God because His heart was pure. One pure in heart can see the glory of God. This is holiness. Without holiness, no one can see God. Many in the Church lack holiness, hence little pulpit power. No holiness, no power. For three years my ministry in the villages was little effective. I examined myself: I lacked holiness. So I held a revival meeting for myself on Mar. 5, 1930. I fought Satan with all my might, in earnest prayer. I received strength. I could cast out demons and heal the sick, to God's glory. How about you? Have you died to self, the world? When will you take this step?

Vs 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." This is step 7. To make peace is to love one's enemy, conquering hatred with love. In Mark's Upper Room, when the disciples vied

with each other for leadership, Jesus knelt down to wash their feet. His love melted the disciples' hearts. The leader of leaders does not use power to subdue others. He uses love, in mutual forgiveness.

There was one Mr. Fang who set such an example. Once his goats had trespassed on a neighbour's vegetable garden. For this he was assaulted half-dead. Friends urged him to bring a law suit. He refrained. Rather he prayed for his assailant. Moved by the Holy Spirit the assailant came to apologize to him. He invited Mr. Fang to a meal. While they dined the host wept and wept from a troubled conscience. Mr. Fang said to him, "Jesus loves you and me, He loves everyone. So let us be happy." This was Mr. Fang's love. When Mr. Fang died many wept for him at the funeral in remembrance of his love. Who has followed in his step?

Vs 10 "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is step 8. The disciples followed Jesus to Gethsemane to pray. God wanted Jesus to drink the bitter cup. Is it easy? Painful? Jesus decided to drink it, obedient to death, being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Abraham was to kill his only begotten son. Easy? Could he do it? Abraham obeyed God's command to do it. Praise the Lord! God also wants us to be obedient until death. Are you willing to go where God sends you? God wants you to give over your money for the relief of the poor, to help preachers. Will you? To give your money to build a church, even a son for the preaching of the Gospel. Will you? No easy! When I was employed as a teacher in USA my monthly salary was at least \$100 a month. Now my lot is taking diluted porridge and wearing a coarse long-gown. How many will obey to the end? Preaching the Gospel? Testifying? Have you come to this step?

Vs 11,12 "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Is Gethsemane enough? On to Golgotha, to the cross, to die for Christ, this is step 9 to perfection. Dear brothers and sisters, are you willing? To be reviled, persecuted and gossiped about! During my preaching in America I received letters threatening my life. Prepared to die for the Lord, I wasn't afraid. Peter was crucified for the Lord. Andrew was pierced. Thomas was sawn asunder. John was exiled on Patmos Island. The disciples were killed for Christ. Brothers and sisters, there's a crown of glory awaiting martyrs and we should die for Christ.

Paul was killed by Nero. Millions from the beginning of Christianity, have died for Christ, have carried the cross. In Peking there was a girl of 17 who was willing to carry the cross after she heard the Gospel. Her parents prepared a knife to kill her when she returned home. She preached to her mother, but father had her tied up and beaten and threatened with the knife. She prayed, "My body is from my parents, but my soul belongs to Jesus." She prayed God for mercy. That night her windows were blown open. She escaped. She was found wandering in the streets of Tientsin, homeless She wrote me. She was willing to bear the cross, willing to witness, though unwanted. How about us? Are we willing? What are we doing with our two hands and ten fingers? To take hold of the cross! With our two feet and ten toes? To go the way of the cross! Our eyes are horizontally placed, our nose points vertically. That forms the cross, that we should preach the cross. Who is willing to follow Jesus, to follow Him under persecution? Who is willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake? See the cross on a nurse's cap, the cross on a church. These represent victory over the world. Will we lift high the cross to conquer the world? Dear brothers and sisters, millions have carried the cross --- Peter and Paul and many others to death. Your fathers have carried the cross. Will you follow them? Jesus died for us. His blood cleanses all our sins, redeems us to the Father. What do we give in return? I have carried the cross seven years, to the villages and cities, on high mountains and to the islands. People of Amoy you are too well to do. Don't revel in your

complacency. "Eat bitter." Carry the cross and witness everywhere though you'll be persecuted and reviled and beaten. Don't be afraid. These are the last days. Christ is coming soon. While we have life, carry the cross, double up with Jesus to the mountain of joy.

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