

# LADDER OF HAPPINESS

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We are living in a world today that cannot tell you where we came from, why we are here, or where we are going. Many are looking for the ladder of "success" but when they think they have found it and climbed it, they are not happy. The world cannot answer these questions or make you happy. But I declare unto you that the Word of God can answer these questions and any others you might have as well as make you happy if you will obey what it says. Therefore, I turn to the Word of God to show you the Ladder of Happiness.

This ladder with eight of its rungs is found in Jesus' message sometimes called "The Sermon on the Mount" in Mat. 5:1-12. This section of Scripture is often called the Be-attitudes, which are attitudes that ought to be. What we are determines what we do.

The setting of this message was on a mountainside believed to be near the sea of Galilee. (Mat. 5:1) Jesus is the One delivering the message and the Scripture says in Mat. 5:2 that He did so by teaching. Jesus was a great preacher but He was also a great teacher as well. Some say, "You are a teacher and not a preacher." Jesus was a teacher! Therefore, I do not mind being called a teacher because that puts me in good company.

The subjects He was teaching were said to be "disciples." (Mat. 5:1) The word for disciple means a learner or follower. Some think this message was only given to the apostles, but there were multitudes present. (Mat. 5:1) Most of those who heard the message were lost because Jesus admonished them to "seek the kingdom of God" in Mat. 6:33 which is still part of this message. If those present were all saved then why waste words telling them to seek something they already had? Therefore, the subjects of this message for the most part were lost and Jesus taught them how to have happiness.

"Blessed" means happy and spiritually prosperous. There are eight different results or outcomes of those who practice these eight requirements. Thus, we call this the Ladder of Happiness, which one can have if they climb each rung, one at a time. Let me say in the beginning, so as not to be misunderstood, no one can practice these requirements on his own nor can he accomplish each rung of the ladder without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

### RUNG #1

#### BEING POOR IN SPIRIT (MAT. 3:3)

The word "poor" means to be a beggar, powerless to accomplish an end, and destitute. This is the opposite of pride and self-righteousness. One comes to recognize this condition when he gets honest with himself about what the Holy Ghost has revealed to him. This work of the Holy Ghost is called godly sorrow, Holy Ghost conviction, and work of reproof in John 16:8-11. When the Holy Ghost begins to reprove man of his sin He jerks the cover off, so as to say, and lets man see that he has a deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9), is blinded (II Cor. 4:3-4), doomed (John 3:36), and in need of righteousness because he has none of his own. When this is produced in a sinner he recognizes and realizes he is "poor in spirit." This is a condition where the sinner realizes he is lost, separated from God, and has no hope within himself.

But the Lord gave him a promise, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." All whom the Holy Ghost brings to this point, He will save because the Lord promised in Luke 19:10, that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." This refers to one to whom lostness

has become a reality. (Phil. 1:6; I Thess. 5:24) The "kingdom of heaven" here is equivalent to "kingdom of God" in the synoptic gospel of Luke 6: 20, which will be the new heaven one day. Happy is the man who recognizes he is lost by being on the first rung of the ladder of happiness, because he knows there are more rungs ahead and the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #2**

### **MOURNING (MAT. 5:4)**

"Mourn" means to grieve or lament with a passionate lamentation so great that it cannot be hid. There are three kinds of mourning. First, there is a natural mourning. This is when one mourns over a loss, whether it be money, a house, material possession, or a loved one. The second kind of mourning is worldly sorrow. This kind causes a person to mourn because they got caught and their conscience could not bear the outcome. Judas is an example, when he was condemned in his own conscience, brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders and said, "I have betrayed innocent blood." He cast down the silver in the temple and went out and hanged himself. (Mat. 27:3-5) This result of worldly sorrow is true to the Scripture in II Cor. 7:10b, "the sorrow of the world worketh death."

The third kind of mourning is godly sorrow, which is a deep grief caused by God--the Holy Ghost in conviction. This mourning is over the root sin of unbelief and not just over the fruit of sin, such as drinking, lying, stealing, adultery, murder, and etc. When one weeps over only the fruit of sin, it is a result of worldly sorrow and the outcome is death--remains lost--separated from God--death. But when one mourns over his sin of unbelief (root; John 16:8-9) it is a result of godly sorrow and the outcome is repentance to salvation. (II Cor. 7:10)

The person who mourns over his sin of unbelief is blessed because he has been awakened and "shall be comforted." "Comforted" means to be encouraged and strengthened and is from a root word that means "called along one's side to aid." This is a gracious promise because the same Spirit who awakens one to see that he is "poor in spirit" and causes him to "mourn" also comes along-side to encourage, strengthen, and finish in that person what He has started--completed salvation. (Phil. 1:6; Psa. 34:18; Isa. 66:2)

"Mourning" as a result of godly sorrow goes side by side with a consciousness of being "poor in spirit." Being "poor in spirit" is an attitude toward self while "mourning" is an attitude toward sin.

The woman in Luke 7 experienced this as she mourned and washed Jesus' feet with her tears and had her sins forgiven. (Luke 7:48) The publican of Luke 18 mourned over his sin, smote his chest and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner" and went away justified. (Luke 18:13-14) Three thousand cried out (mourned) on the day of Pentecost and said "What shall we do?" (referring to their being saved; Acts 2:37) and they were saved that day.

Happy is the man who recognizes he is on the second rung of the ladder of happiness by being lost and mourning over his sin, because he knows there are more rungs ahead and the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

### **RUNG #3**

#### **BEING MEEK (MAT. 5:5)**

Meekness is hard to define. Some say it is humility--yes, but it is more; mild tempered--yes, but more; gentleness--yes, but more; involves patience--yes, but more. For one to be meek he must have a teachable spirit and this requires a work of Holy Ghost conviction. (Psa. 25:8) The Holy Ghost teaches sinners (lost) in the way (the narrow way that leads to the strait gate). (Mat. 7:13-14) Meekness is a prerequisite for receiving the gospel because Isa. 61:1 states, "because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." The only ones who are meek are those who are "poor in spirit" and "mourn"; Therefore, this rung on the ladder of happiness is a by-product of the first two rungs.

Meekness is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealing with us as good and right (even before saved) and that without disputing or resistance. This is coming to the end of self and this cannot be done without a work of the Holy Ghost.

The result of this is that the meek "shall (future tense) inherit the earth." This is a quote of Psa. 37:11 where the Psalmist is referring to the land promised to Abraham and his seed. The wicked may have temporary power, but God's true servants (saints not Jehovah's Witnesses--don't be deceived by their teaching) shall really and finally have dominion in the land. This will be a reality in the millennium (1000 year reign of Christ on earth).

Meekness is an inwrought grace of the soul and the exercise thereof must first be toward the Lord. Just as rung #1 is an attitude toward self and rung #2 is an attitude toward sin, rung #3 is an attitude toward the Lord. Happy is the man who recognizes he is on the third rung of the ladder of happiness, because he knows there are more rungs ahead and the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

### **RUNG #4**

#### **HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS (MAT. 5:6)**

"Hunger" and "thirst" are words we understand in the physical, where they mean to have a strong desire or craving for food and water. But spiritually it refers to having a strong desire or craving for righteousness. In the Greek "righteousness" is preceded by the definite article "the," thus it refers to "the righteousness" who is the Lord Jesus Christ. I Cor. 1:30 states that Christ Jesus is made unto us "righteousness" as well as other things.

This means a lost person needs to hunger and thirst after the Lord Jesus. Later in this message Jesus states in Mat. 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He was speaking not only to His disciples but to the multitudes (Mat. 5:1), the majority of whom were lost. Now the first thing you will say is, "A lost man does not seek the Lord." It is true Rom. 3:11 says, "none seeketh after God." But it is also true that Jesus said to seek in Mat. 6:33. In Luke 13:24 He said some would seek and not be able to enter the strait gate. This is not a contradiction.

We must "rightly divide" (II Tim. 2:15) the Word and understand that man does not seek until he is awakened and stirred by the Holy Spirit and then he seeks. But he needs to do more than just "seek." He must "hunger" and "thirst" after righteousness. And this

can only be accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit as He convinces of (the) righteousness, who is Jesus, in His work of Holy Ghost conviction called "reproval" in John 16:8,10.

Notice Mat. 5:6 says those are blessed that "do" hunger and thirst after righteousness. This refers to continuous action, present time not in past time. Jesus was speaking to the lost.

The result or outcome of such hungering and thirsting is that "they shall be filled." "Filled" means to satisfy or to supply in abundance. This means that one who hungers and thirsts by the aid of the Holy Spirit will be supplied in abundance the righteousness of God who is the Lord Jesus. (John 1:4) "Shall be" indicates a promise, not "might be." (Isa. 44:3; 55:1; Rev. 22:17) This means that person is saved because he has righteousness which is a by-product of forgiveness. (I John 5:12) This fourth rung represents an attitude toward the Lord.

Happy is the man who reaches the fourth rung of the ladder of happiness because he is saved and satisfied. Also he knows that the Lord has more in store for him than just being saved and that the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #5 BEING MERCIFUL (MAT. 5:7)**

This rung reveals a person's attitude toward others as a result of being saved. The "merciful" are those who show mercy to others. One cannot extend mercy toward someone else until he has experienced mercy. "Mercy" means kindness or goodwill toward the miserable and the afflicted joined with a desire to help them. It manifests itself toward others with compassion, chiefly in acts instead of words.

A person who has climbed these first four rungs of the ladder of happiness has experienced mercy. The Lord held back wrath that hung over every sinner as the Holy Ghost worked His work and brought him to recognize that he was poor in spirit, produced mourning, meekness, and a hunger and thirst for the Lord. (John 3:36; Rom. 2:4) That is mercy!

Since we have experienced the mercy of the Lord we can show mercy to others and that brings happiness. The result of this is three-fold. There is an inward benefit--a personal satisfaction of helping others. ". . . He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." (Pro. 14:21) There is also an outward benefit--we shall obtain mercy from the hands of our fellowman. This is a result of the law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7) and the providence of God which causes others to deal with you mercifully. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." (Pro. 16:7)

The third result is an upward benefit--we shall obtain mercy from the Lord. Even after one is saved, he stills needs mercy daily from the Lord. His mercies fail not, in fact they are new each morning. (Lam. 3:22-23) And His mercies are available to us because He understands us. (Heb. 4:15-16)

Happy is the man who reaches the fifth rung of the ladder of happiness because he is saved and able to show compassion to others just as he received compassion from the Lord. Also he knows there are more rungs ahead and that the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #6**

### **PURE IN HEART (MAT. 5:8)**

The phrase "pure in heart" means to be clean from the corruption and guilt of sin before God. This does not refer to sinless perfection because the saved will not be perfect until we are absent from our flesh, which will happen at the rapture. "Pure in heart" means to have a purity of desires, motives, and interests, which will only be present in those who are saved because the Holy Spirit dwells within to guide them. (John 16:13)

The result of this is that "they shall see God." This has both a present and future fulfillment. We can see Him now with the eye of faith. Look at creation and you can see Him. Also look in His Word and you can see Him now. But in the future we shall see Him face to face. (Rev. 1:7; I Thess. 4:16-17; I John 3:2-3)

Only the Lord can make your heart pure but that is necessary if you are to see Him one day face to face. (Psa. 24:3-4; Heb. 12:14) But that man is happy because he has experienced a work of grace and mercy and has escaped corruption and guilt of his sin. He also knows that there are other rungs ahead on the ladder of happiness and that the same Spirit that brought him this far will carry him on. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #7**

### **BEING PEACEMAKERS (MAT. 5:9)**

The mention of the word "peacemakers" brings to our attention the horrible contention and enmity that sin has brought into the world--the condition due to the fall of Adam. The leaders of our land talk about peace and are trying to be peacemakers. Even the Antichrist will also talk of peace but he will promote a false peace. All these peacemakers are not blessed because that is not the kind of peace our Lord is talking about. He is not talking about peace in the world at any price.

This is referring to those who are saved, fulfilling their ministry as a peacemaker also called a ministry of reconciliation in II Cor. 5:18-20. This means to be a witness and proclaim the truth by your life and lip, by being "salt" and "light" in this world as Mat. 5:13-16 brings out.

The result of being a peacemaker is that "they shall be called the children of God." In the English this seems to suggest that one is saved (become children of God) when he fulfills this ministry. But the Greek reveals the truth of this verse. There are two Greek words translated "children," one means a babe in Christ or a born one, while the other means a mature child. The word for children here is the word for "mature child." Thus, those who are peacemakers according to God's word are referred to as mature children of God.

Therefore, this man is happy because he is saved and has matured in the Lord to the extent that he is used as a human instrument in reconciling men to God--making one again those who were separated from God in Adam. He also knows there is another rung ahead and the same Spirit that brought him this far will complete what He has started. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #8**

## **PERSECUTION (MAT. 5:10-12)**

"Persecute" means to pursue, follow after as one does a fleeing enemy, and to vex or oppress one because of their religion. Blessed when persecuted?? How can that be? This is only possible when one is persecuted for righteousness' sake (verse 10) or for Jesus' sake. (verse 11) Also in verse 11 the word "revile" is included in this persecution. "Revile" means someone uses abusive language toward you or tells lies on you.

The Lord said you are blessed when you are persecuted, in fact doubly blessed. Notice the change from "they" in verse 10 to "ye" in verse 11. This makes it personal, not just collective. We are not only blessed now but possess the kingdom now, within our hearts.

Another result of being on this rung is that we are given an unspeakable privilege of having fellowship with the sufferings of the Saviour. In Phil. 3:10 Paul cried out, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." This suffering (persecution) conforms us to our Lord's image, which is why He works all things together for our good and His glory. (Rom. 8:28-29)

Still another result of being on this rung is that our reward will be great in heaven. (verse 12) II John 8 warns us to not lose our rewards. These rewards, which will be passed out at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 22:12), are not of merit but purely of grace. (Rom. 8:17) They are not something for our glorying but so that we have something in heaven to cast back at His feet. (Rev. 4:10)

One of the best results of being on this rung of persecution is that it places us in good company. Moses was reviled again and again. Samuel was rejected. Elijah was despised and persecuted. Nehemiah was oppressed and defamed. The Lord Himself was crucified by the people to whom He ministered. John the Baptist was beheaded. Stephen was stoned. Peter was beaten and cast in prison. James was beheaded. Paul's life was one long series of bitter persecutions. And many others although unnamed are listed in the hall of faith. (Heb. 11:36-37) That is a very good crowd to be associated with.

While on this rung Jesus said, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." "Rejoice" means to be cheerful. To "be exceeding glad" means to leap for joy, denotes ecstatic joy and delight, and implies to show one's joy by leaping and skipping. Why? Because these persecutions come upon us for Christ's sake. Peter practiced this when beaten for preaching in Christ's name in Acts 5.

In view of all this, happy is the man who reaches this eighth rung of persecution on the ladder of happiness because he knows there is yet still another rung ahead and the same Spirit that brought him this far will complete what He has started. (Phil. 1:6)

## **RUNG #9**

### **HOME--HEAVEN (JOHN 14:1-3)**

The promise of this rung is given to those who, by the work of the Holy Ghost, have been made poor in spirit, mourned over their sin, had a teachable spirit (meekness), and hungered and thirsted after righteousness. And because of that promise, which is a steadfast hope set before them, the Holy Ghost also enables them to be merciful to others, pure in heart, peacemakers, and also to endure persecutions.

The Spirit of God began a good work in you a long time before you were saved, in fact

before you even recognized it. And that same Spirit will complete what He started. Paul said in Phil. 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He did this by setting up a classroom in your heart and teaching you how to live in this present world and to look for a better world by looking for that blessed hope, which is the return of the Lord Jesus in the rapture. (Titus 2:11-13)

One day the Lord Himself (not another; Acts 1:10-11) will split the eastern sky "with a shout, voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we (saints) which are alive and remain shall be caught up (rapture) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:16-17) And the same Spirit who convicted and converted us will also change us in that day. (Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 15:51-53) This mortal will put on immortality and this corruptible will put on incorruption and we will have reached the ninth rung of the ladder of happiness--home--heaven.

Until that time we are just strangers (one not at home) and pilgrims (one going home) on this earth. But we have grace that is sufficient (II Cor. 12:9), mercy new each day (Lam. 3:22-23), the Holy Spirit to enable us to reach each rung of the ladder of happiness in His time (Phil. 1:6), the words of the Lord Jesus, to not let your heart be troubled (John 14:1), and His promise that He would come and take us home with Him one day. (John 14:2-3)

This is the ladder of happiness that is climbed, not by works, but by grace through faith made effectual by the Spirit of God. Thus, He gets all the glory and to Him it is due. Happy is the man who finds himself on the rungs of this ladder we have just described.

I pray the Lord will give you understanding and allow you to find yourself on each of the first eight rungs. If so then, you can be assured of the ninth rung. If I can be of help please feel free to call or write. I am your friend and will love you if you will let me.

Because of Calvary,  
Edgar Lee Paschall