

GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By

Pastor George McKim

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Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations in this booklet are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

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Scripture Readings: Matt. 17:1-22 & Isaiah 40:29-31

V1] “Led them up on a high mountain by themselves.” They didn’t stay where they were - they were going to the next level in their experience and in their Christian growth. V4] “let us make here three tabernacles.” [Or three shrines] V16] “But they could not cure him” – isn’t that a sad inditement on the church?

If you notice, the very last verse of Chapter 16 – 6 days prior to the supernatural transfiguration of Jesus - He had already primed them to expect it. V28] says, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” 6 days later, Peter, James and John saw a glimpse of His powerful glorious kingdom when He was transfigured before their eyes. The word that God has laid upon me for this church is simply this - ‘Going to the next level.’ He “Led them up on a high mountain.” - going to the next level. He was taking them to their next level of learning; their next level of Christian experience; of development; of personal growth and intimacy; but notice, He had to lead them up on the high mountain - they were going to the next level.

There is a buzz about this church; a buzz of anticipation and expectation and Holy Ghost excitement - not hype. We don’t want hype, because hype leaves you dry and empty. But when God lifts you up He takes you up for a reason. “But those that wait on the Lord... shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” God is moving. God is preparing this church. We are in the process of what Paul Scanlon from Bradford calls ‘crossing over.’ I believe this church is crossing over. We are going over; we are going up; we are going to the next level. We have come thus far and it is not over - our best days are ahead.

We need to keep the awareness of God among us. Would you allow God to move if He wants to move? Because sometimes churches are so rigid and ritualistic that He can’t get in. Isn’t that what He said about the last church of the last church age, the Laodicean church? He said, I am outside “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” *You are doing everything right, great meetings, great programmes, but I am outside waiting to get in.*

I believe our destiny lies at the next level. So we must go the next level to discover a deeper relationship with God; a closer walk; a greater intimacy and a personal breakthrough. Staying where we are will only frustrate us for we are born again to grow. We are born again to reach our fullest potential in God.

“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him.” [Col 2:9] We are fully furnished; we are equipped completely; we are completed and perfected in our Christian life. We are born again to grow. We are born again to develop. The sad thing is that there are Christians and they are saved for 20 and 30 years and they are still taking the milk bottle when they should be on the meat; when they should be going forward; when they should be getting mature in God.

Don’t be a big spiritual ‘wean’ [child] when you are 20. Be a man of God; a servant of God; a woman of God. Because I tell you the half has not yet been told - what God has in store for you and I and this church. We want to tap in to God’s supernatural presence and the glory of God to be around us, in us; and moving through us. People are afraid of the glory of God. No! This treasure is in earthen vessels that the Excellency and the power may be of God not of us. We are just vehicles of His presence and when His glory comes upon us, then we see things in a different light. We are born again to be winners - and winners go the next level. It is imperative for me to say this to you. It is imperative for me to go to the next level. I met a

woman a year ago in a seminar in London. I had never met her before in my life and she phoned me last week. She said she was thinking about me and praying for me and she said, 'How are you doing. I wondered, does Ireland mean anything to you because I believe God wants you to go to Ireland. She said, 'You are God's man for Ireland.' She had no idea what she had said to me because that week was the week we had to make a decision!

It is imperative for me to go to the next level. It is imperative for Pastor David to take this church to the next level. It is imperative for you to go with him to the next level. We are a team. We can't stay a minute being where we are. The next level calls us to rise up; the next level cries out to us, 'Come up to where you belong.' Remember, "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings." Eagles don't cluck with hens! They were made to fly. They were made to soar. You can soar. You can run. You can walk. But you can't stay stationary. When you stay stationary - you are left behind. All those things are **active** words. The next level calls you to rise; calls you to come up. "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press towards the mark." That is what Paul said. I am leaving the Peoples Church but thank God for the progress we have made. Don't settle for second best. Don't be a 'nearly' man and a 'nearly' woman. Don't be an 'almost' person - 'I almost got to number one.' Nobody remembers number two! Win for Christ and people will know that you have meant business.

Not all the churches are at the same level. Remember, "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings." There are churches that are soaring. There are churches that are running, and there are churches that are working. But the churches that are doing **nothing** normally die. There are churches closing by the month and it is sad. I received a 'phone call from a former heroin addict last night - Alex Muir. But he is transformed. He has just come back from Belarus. He has bought a place as he is starting a church. Steve Derbyshire was a heroin addict and now he is a Pastor of 1,000 people in Ilford. John Wagner was a heroin dealer who was converted and today he is in Florida with a church of 2,500 people. Jay Fallon was from Glasgow - he had a heroin overdose and they resuscitated him and brought him back to life. His mum encouraged him to go to Teen Challenge and today he is a Pastor of a church in Wales.

Don't tell me you have to stay where you are; you need to go to the next level. Going to the next level will always involve going up the mountain - Going up the mountain with the Lord Jesus. It involves climbing the mountain of prayer. Luke tells us that as Jesus prayed He was 'transfigured.' Do you want transfigured? Then learn how to pray! Get to the mountain of prayer. You see mountains in the bible - Moses was 40 days in Mount Sinai and he received the law. Elijah climbed the mountain and brought down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel. Jesus was always referring to the mountain; always going back to the mountain. He spent nights there. He spent days there. He spent times there. He was always retreating to the mountain of prayer - in the morning; at night; all night! He would go to the mountain. He climbed the mountain to pray and, if you are to go the next level, I tell you, you need to get to the place of prayer.

Intimacy. You need to get there, where God is waiting to speak to you. A place higher; a place further; a place closer. I believe climbing that mountain speaks of intimacy and communion. Fellowship with the Lord Jesus and His Father - revelation. While they were there, as Jesus was transfigured, there appeared to Him Moses and Elijah. Isn't it amazing the two men who were on the mountains met Him again on **this** mountain. Moses represents the Law of God; Elijah speaks of the prophets or the Spirit of God and the fire of God. A place of fellowship; a place of revelation. Peter, James & John saw Elijah and saw Moses. God is not God of the dead - He is the God of the living. A place of revelation; a place of inspiration. Simon Peter was inspired, 'Shall we make three shrines' - even then Catholicism was taking root. Even then they wanted to build shrines. Jesus didn't let him

build shrines. Why? Because shrines idolise people. There is only One to be worshipped. That's why, when they opened their eyes, they saw Jesus only.

There were seven men on the mountain. Can you picture who the seven were? Moses, Elijah, James, John, Peter, Jesus & God. A voice from heaven, [V5] "This is my beloved son,... Hear Him!" Here is the place of instruction. Going up the mountain to the next level is achieved through prayer; through personal intimacy. Revelation comes when you draw close to God and hear His word. "This is My beloved Son, hear Him."

When Jesus speaks - we can learn.

When Jesus speaks - we are instructed.

When Jesus speaks - there is revelation.

Moses, the Law and Elijah, the Spirit and Jesus, the pre-eminent one. Jesus is always the pre-eminent one. There is nobody like Jesus. Don't be satisfied with where you are and what you have. Why? Because your best days are yet to come.

They saw Jesus only - and then they came back down. You can't stay there all the time. Who wants to stay on the mountain? They had to come down to reality. There are some Christians who are floating! They are so heavenly minded, they are of no earthly use! They came down to a problem. They came down to reality. They came down to responsibility. There was a problem - there was a boy who was demon possessed. His father brought him to the church and the church couldn't deliver him - couldn't cure him; couldn't do anything with him; their hands were tied. They were impotent - and they brought him to Jesus - and Jesus delivered him.

What I know is this; when I have secret times with God - it doesn't take away the reality of going out helping people in their greatest need. It is not just about always being on the mountain top - we have to go down to the valley to meet the people in need. But when you **are** on the mountain - it prepares you for the next valley and the God who is with you on your **last** mountain, will be the God who will be with you in your **next** valley.

I want to encourage you. Levels are there to achieve and get to, but remember, there is responsibility along the way. Elijah went up to Mt Carmel - and there he challenged religion and conquered it by bringing down the fire. Then he blessed the nation by bringing down rain. Do you know something? I believe more ministers need to climb the mountain of prayer. I really believe that. As he prayed he was transfigured. The transfiguration came in answer to Jesus' prayer. Your transfiguration will come in answer to your prayer. This church is going to be transfigured - one way or the other; either through your prayer or my prayer; but it is going to be transfigured because we believe in prayer.

Do you believe in prayer? Then you have to believe and expect and anticipate. As I preach the gospel, I expect a response. I always get a reaction - but I expect a response.

Can I encourage you to go to the next level? Don't stay where you are. - start praying. Let me read this to you just before I close. Isaiah Ch 40:29 says, "He gives power to the weak." Does anybody feel weak? Well, feel it no more - receive His power. "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength." Anybody feel they haven't got enough strength? Ask Him to give you more strength - because He increases strength. This is for everybody, this is for you and me; "Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint".

The amplified version has, "But those who wait for the Lord, who expect, look for and hope in Him, shall change and renew their strength and power. They shall lift their wings and mount

up close to God as eagles mount up to the sun. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint or become tired”.

The Message says this, “He energises those who get tired. He gives fresh strength to drop-outs.” Anybody felt like packing it in? Don’t pack it in - because you are packing Him in. It is a Him - it is not an ‘it’. It is a relationship; it is not a religion. “For even young people tire and drop out” – I am sure Ian & Sandra, our Youth Leaders, have seen young folk in their prime stumble and fall. “But those who wait upon God get fresh strength.” Get fresh strength. “They spread their wings and soar like eagles; they run and don’t get tired; they walk and don’t lag behind”. Now, it is the word ‘wait’ that I want to leave with you. The word ‘wait’ there has 25 different versions in Young’s Concordance – they are very similar. It simply means to wait; to expect; to look for and to hope. Psalm 25:3 says, “Let no one who waits on you be ashamed.” If you focus on waiting on God, you will not be disappointed.

What are your dreams? What is your vision? What are your aspirations? What have you got in your heart that is burning in your soul? Wait on the Lord! Wait and you will, “mount up with wings like eagles.” Psalm 37:9, “Evildoers shall be cut off.” Hallelujah! It doesn’t matter what is going on in the nation, “Evildoers will be cut off.” “Evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth”. Psalm 69:6 “Let not those who wait for You, oh Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.”

David made a mistake and the people lost their focus. And there are Christians who fail miserably and they can disappoint and disillusion you. But if you look to Him and wait upon Him and look with expectation then you will not be ashamed. Isaiah 49:23, “Who wait for me.” Lamentations 3:25 “The Lord is good unto them that wait, to the soul who seeks Him.” To wait on the Lord means or implies stretching, bending forwards, earnestly expecting, serving and defending – “They that wait up on the Lord”.

Going to the next level is a reality today. I am not staying where I am, I am going on. And you don’t have to move out to move on; just move up. Going to the next level is a reality whether soaring; whether running; whether walking. One way or another, waiting on the Lord is not to be experienced by those who are standing or sitting idle. Jesus said, “Occupy till I come.” [Luke 19:13 KJV] The word ‘occupy’ means, do business; be business-like. Every one of these three verbs is active ‘doing’. There is a movement; a momentum; an activity; yet they are waiting upon the Lord.

Can I leave you with this? Do you want to go to the next level? If you want to go to the next level then it is time for you to soar; it is time for you to run; it is time for you to walk; it is time for you to arise to your destiny; to go up the mountain; to rise up and walk into a new tomorrow; to get up and live for God for the rest of your life.

To soar like an eagle, you have to be prepared to leave the nest. Some of us need training in flight. As an eagle stirs up her nest – I remember watching a programme on eagles – the big cushy fur nest is lovely and comfortable for the wee eaglets and all they do is open their mouth and the mummy fills it with food and then when they get a wee bit fatter, mum takes the fur out and they are lying going ‘ooww!’ the thorns start to prick into them. She then puts them on her wings and says, ‘*Come on out for a wee drive!*’ – first lesson on flight; aerodynamics! And she soars and they are hanging on for grim death and then she tilts them off and they are fluttering and flapping and they realise they are falling and they shout ‘Mummy!’ [or ‘Pastor!']. and, before they hit the ground, she swoops down and catches them. She repeats the exercise but eventually they get the message to flap their wings and start to float. They then start flying and then soaring and they realise that they were born with wings for flying.

You have got to look for the Son. You have got to wait for the wind – the wind of the Spirit. You have got to step out in faith; you have got to spread your wings accordingly. I come from an aeronautical engineering background – that sounds really very complicated, doesn't it? It just simply means I was a fitter in Short Bros in Ireland. But I learned about ailerons. Whatever way you tilt them you will either go up or down and your altitude is determined by your attitude in aeronautical engineering. If you have a nose down attitude, you are going down; if you have a nose up attitude, you are going to rise. Your attitude will determine your altitude because your attitude determines your destiny and you were born to soar like an eagle. Don't be burned out; don't become drained; don't be losing your joy; don't accept the status quo – I'll never do anything for God. Who am I, I am a worm. No! You are not a worm. You are a sinner saved by grace; you are an eagle in the making. Set your sights for God and do something brilliant with your life.

Folks, our testimony can give others hope. So I ask you, do you want to cluck with hens or soar with eagles? You decide. But if you want to get to the next level you are going to have to come with us up the mountain.

Go to the next level; don't be satisfied with where you are.

Go to the next level.