

# Xix. a New Hope

by John Sung

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*John Sung's sermon offers a powerful message of hope in God's promise of a new creation free from sorrow and pain.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 30:5, Revelation 21:1

**Topics:** "God's Mercy", "Hope"

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## Description

John Sung delivers a powerful sermon titled 'A New Hope,' emphasizing that while God's anger is temporary, His mercy endures forever. He draws from Psalm 30:5 to illustrate that weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning, highlighting the hope of a new heaven and new earth as described in Revelation 21. Sung encourages believers to look beyond their current struggles and yearn for their eternal home, reminding them that God will wipe away all tears and there will be no more pain or sorrow. He stresses the importance of being spiritually thirsty for God and warns against the distractions of the world that can dull our appetite for His presence. Ultimately, he reassures the congregation that God's love and grace are ever-present, urging them to remain faithful and hopeful.

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## Transcript

### THEME SONG

For His anger is only for a moment,

But His mercy forever shall endure.

Though our tears flow down all the night long,

Dawn breaks forth with song.

I came to learn this chorus when I visited North China last year. How precious! It has comforted me and lifted me up. The tune is written by a brother in Kowloon, Hong Kong. He is one of my fruits. In turn he has helped me.

The words of this chorus are taken from King David's Psalm 30:5. It is said that David was gripped by a severe stomachache one night while he reveled in his riches. He prayed earnestly for deliverance. He was healed the next morning. So he said, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." God's chastisement is love. His anger is but for a moment. His favour is for life.

Rev. 21:1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and first earth passed away; and there was no more sea." Most of Revelation speaks of sorrow and fear, but this chapter on the new heaven and new earth gives us what a hope and consolation! The happiest message in the whole Bible is found here. Everything is new. The old passes away. What we see today will one day change and pass away, yea, even the sea! This world is a "sea of sorrow", its waves constantly roaring and raging. If this world is a paradise, who will ever look to the everlasting home above?

Year before last there were 80 delegates from East and North China sailing from Shanghai to attend the Bible Conference in Amoy. When the boat called at Makung, Foochow, everybody was delighted by the wonderful scenery. But soon a storm arose. The boat rocked and rolled. The sightseers became terribly sea-sick, and what a mess of sea-sickness it was. Everybody now looked for land. O, when are we landing? Now the world is like a rocking boat in a stormy sea. Thanks be to God, there won't be such a sea in the new heaven and new earth. Joy truly! So Jesus says, "Ye shall overcome the world." This world can never give us true peace and joy. Why? Because it is "when this world's troubles multiply that heaven's peace becomes the sweeter." Do you not all yearn for the heavenly home? I'm sure that's the sentiment of the older generation. Now, let's look with aged John to what follows in Vs. 2.

Vs. 2. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Not only the new heaven and new earth, but the new city coming down from heaven, adorned like a bride. Thanks be to God, that there is such a home prepared for us. "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." Some sojourn here 50 years, some 20. But to live up to 89 is most miserable! To be born and to be returned immediately is most blessed! For, sooner or later, we must go. So, we should look up, set our affections on things above. Don't be like the prodigal son, so engrossed by this world that he forgets home. This world not being our home, we must say heaven is. "Coming home --- this world is none our concern."

But this does not teach us to get out of the world, to neglect our earthly duties. Rather we should have a clear perspective of the world so that we may not be encompassed and subdued by it. Though we are in the world, we are not of the world. Though we seek not to be hermits, we should transcend the world, and be separated unto holiness. In this crooked and perverse generation, let us be children without blemish, living in the world, yet out of the world!

When I took a train from Hankow to Canton this time, I spent five days in soot and dirt. As the food sold on the train was unhygienic, I preferred to starve. I yearned for only one thing --- get to Hong Kong. It took three days to reach Shaokwan. Before Shaokwan the train went through a dark tunnel. When it got out of the tunnel there were the bombers "laying their eggs", so we reversed into the tunnel. On the fifth day, we were accosted by the enemy again. The train went at high speed and we got into Hong Kong. Only then did I feel a great relief. Such is our life, a traveler's life. When God doesn't permit us to enjoy this present life, it is because He loves us. For if the children of Israel were not oppressed by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, they would not have cried out to God. Nor would they want to get out of Egypt. So God not only has prepared a new heaven and new earth, but also a beautiful heavenly home. Doesn't God love us? Do you want to go home? Raise your hands if you want! I'm the first! How joyful it will be!

Vs. 3. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." More new things to see. What? The loving, hearing Father! We who would see the Holy Father at last find Him staying with us! God's tabernacle is with men. No more orphans are we when we see the Father face

to face. What joy! Why could we not have such close fellowship with the Father before? Because of sin! From Adam to Cain, in their expulsion and banishment! Sin separates us from God, from His face! But in the new heaven and new earth, when sin is no more, there will be no more barrier. And this is what Christ came into the world for --- to take us back home. We in our sins could never have turned back. It is the Lord who by His wonderful love has come to seek us. On the cross He said, "I thirst!" What thirst? His yearning for us to return home! Finally He said, "It is finished!" He finished his work of salvation. He cancelled all our sin. Now you can return. Return to see the loving Father. What joy!

Last year, Aug. 10, we sailed from Foochow back to Shanghai. Though the ship was to set sail at 3 p.m. the delegates were all ready to go on board in the morning. It rained heavily. After lunch my hosts wanted me to rest awhile. Seeing it was 1 p.m. I became restive. But they said, "Still early. Why be anxious?" I replied, "No, I must leave immediately. I must go by car. I have the tickets of some of our brethren and sisters with me." They couldn't stop me. (Maybe some thought I was a queer fellow). So they drove me to the wharf. Sure enough, the boat had lifted anchor and had begun to pull away. We jumped into a small boat while the people on board beckoned me to come up and those who sent me off feverishly watched. As the hull was too high, I couldn't climb it. In the dilemma the boat made a turn and somehow I was pulled up on board. All rejoiced! See how they all exulted for me, a nobody. I was only a little instrument of God. How much greater would the joy be when we see our Father face to face. Better that we return home early.

Vs. 4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." What more new things? 1) the new heaven and new earth; 2) the new country; 3) the new home; 4) the new environment.

Will robbers be there? Coffins? Tears? No. God will wipe them away. What we find inevitably on earth --- tears, death, sorrow, wailing, pain, we shall not see in the Father's house. There will be no graveyard there, no hospital, no law courts. While our joys on earth are often thwarted by family squabbles, the turning away of friends, financial difficulties, sickness, countless untoward events further assail us in the realm of the material and spiritual, visible and invisible, direct and indirect. For this reason you secretly blame your fate and seek death. Your tears can be put into a bottle. Some say the rich house is spared these tears, but who can tell? This world is overwhelmed with tears, but, thank God, when we reach the other side He will wipe them away. There will be no more death, sorrow, wailing. These will become things of the past.

Some years ago I took a sedan from Ping Tu, Shantung to the Tsinan Railway ---a short distance of only a hundred li. This trip was taken in deep winter under heavy snowfall. It was so cold that my lunch of bread, eggs and water became ice-frozen. My feet became terribly numbed and I had to rub them over. It was unbearable. When I inquired about the journey as we went along, the reply was another fifty li ahead. I became very restless. As it became dark upon arrival, I was obliged to go to a lodging house. But when we got to the railway station the next day, we were greeted by a bright shining sun. This experience is ours today as we wait for that glorious morning. Even now we can see the first rays of light over the distant hills! Many might doubt if there would be such a Morning. Is this talking in sleep? But God has known your thoughts from the beginning. Therefore He affirms here in vs. 5: "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, write: for these words are true and faithful." God emphatically declares that He makes all things new. These words are very true, without a doubt. Every word of God will be fulfilled. It is no vain talk. God's Word is not like the soap bubbles I used to blow upon

my younger brothers and sisters when we played together. Throughout my life God has never let me down, but Satan has often tried to trick me. I have tested God's Word and found it sure and steadfast to the last syllable. Even in such a great undertaking, in which He promises we will not only do the work He does, but even greater works.

I did not believe such a promise at first, until I experienced it at the Amoy campaign. Five thousand came to the meetings. One afternoon was set aside to pray for the sick. Now those who would take me to task denounced me in the newspapers as a charlatan and a witch-doctor. These opponents decided at the same time to carry to the meeting the sick, with all kinds of strange diseases, to put me to the test. Those who got wind of this counseled me against the healing session, but I would not budge. Rather I became the more vigilant and clung closer to His promises. I requested many brothers and sisters to go up the mountain to intercede for me.

Now, at the appointed time, there were gathered 2,500 sick people. Among them were several scores of the blind, dumb and paralyzed. I prayed with all my life, "O Lord, You said, 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.' I believe. I beseech You, let me see Your glory." Thanks be to God, my prayers lasted three hours. The blind saw, the dumb spoke, the being-carried ones could return home of their own accord.

There was a sister, a paralytic for forty years. She was healed immediately. She sent me a photo for remembrance. On that day, over a thousand were healed of the Lord. So, brothers and sisters, every word of God is true. Not only is it reliable, it is fulfilled!

Vs. 6. "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

It is done. Not that which is believable and is hoped for, but that which has become a reality. Not that you have waited for God, it is God who has done it, and He waits for you! Have you prepared on your part? Is there anything too hard for God? I am the beginning and the end. See how the universe is filled with the wondrous works of God!

During my sojourn in North China, one morning when got up and looked out of the window, I saw the earth a sheet of dust. Suddenly the wind blew in a hail of snow. In a twinkling, the scene had changed. Wonderful it was to see the little snow flakes blanket the great earth. More wonderful was the transformation of the muddy water into crystal ice. And how does it become condensed and congealed into sparkling frost and snow? These processes that go to cover, to cleanse, to adorn and renew the earth? Do you not say this is wonderful?

Can you make all these things? If you carefully consider the creation, you have no alternative but praise for His works. God said, "I am Alpha, I am Omega. I have prepared all spiritual blessings. Do you want them? Raise your hand if you want! Is there truly such a thing? Doubtful? Then how can we find it? Very easy! Money cannot buy it! God will freely give you the water of life. But there is a condition to it. If you thirst for it, God will give you to drink. No thirst, no drink!

But are the people of the world thirsting for Him? When you urge them to believe Jesus, what do they say? Where is heaven? Where is God? Let us eat and drink. We die and that's the end. What is Salvation? O are you not a bit concerned for that parched life within? That emptiness of soul? You really don't need, never yearn, for the joy and happiness that God can give you? I know, there are many who need Him. I

have seen everywhere many who hunger and thirst for His righteousness.

Last winter we had two thousand gathered under a freezing sky at our Hsuchang campaign. Sometimes the cold so took hold of me I almost couldn't utter a word. The zeal of the crowds, huddling together to hear me, fanned me into a flame. You Shanghainese, how about you? I know some of you have come here well ahead of others, waiting to be fed!

When I was in Singapore, a sister from Burma came all the way to hear me. She had sold her jewelry to make the trip. So there were countless others who could not be desisted by distance. In North China many came bringing their daily rations. They ate their dumplings sparingly, only one a day. At night they were obliged to crowd together, fifty in a room. (This was winter and they could not sleep in the open.) How did they sleep? Some slept standing, others sitting! They went on like this throughout the eight days. I sighed in amazement, "Lord, how wonderful is Thy Word, that men should seek after Thee like this!" The Lord said, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life."

Vs. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I shall be his God and he shall be my son." To the victorious one will be given this inheritance. What is victory? How can victory be won? Not easy! The Devil will cause you not to feel thirsty. He is against you obtaining the victory. But you must win, trusting the Lord.

When I visited North China, I was offered dumplings to eat. Not used to this, I felt no hunger for the next two days. I dared not eat. They offered the same to me again. After eating, I suffered from digestive disorders the following week. Friend, how often Satan would give you dumplings to kill your appetite. Don't you ever relish his free offers. When you take to his bait, you'll be hooked. Yielding to his tempting, you love the world, and when you love the world, the love for the Father is lost to you. You won't be athirst for the things above. You stop reading your Bible. Prayer becomes insipid. Testimonies are a farce. Why? Isn't it that you have succumbed to some spiritual sickness? Yes! Satan has spoiled your appetite. Pitiful! How many have been poisoned by Satan. Fatally poisoned. What sickness?

Vs. 8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There are eight kinds:

1. The fearful: These keep their face, not daring to confess their sins, nor make restitution. There are Church leaders, old-timers, who desist confession. Though knowing their need of salvation, they have no courage to confess their sins and depart from evil. They dare not make a public profession of Christ. They are vanquished by sin and captured finally by Satan.

2. The unbelieving: These deny God, the soul, judgment, heaven and hell, the infallibility of the Bible. Really, one is saved simply by believing Jesus? Superstition! Bewitchment! Blockhead! Weak minds! Ah, how pitiful! Though it is their liberty to believe or not to believe, they cannot say the same of death. For if you persist to remain in disbelief, you will be cast into the lake of fire. Too late by then!

3. "Saved!" Are you cleansed? Yes, I have been immersed. I've spoken in tongues. Self exaltation! Self-satisfaction and pure conceit. No more thirsting for the everlasting mercies. These people are abominable before God.

4. Murderers. Others deserve to die, not me! I am No. 1. These have tongues as sharp as knives, never restraining to revile and criticize, to gossip and to argue. These who have no qualms hurting others for self-advancement, who get angry with others for no reason. The Lord says, "Those who hate are murderers. Can a murderer desire God and love the Lord? If you forgive not others neither will you be forgiven of God. Moreover, you will come under Satan's accusation.

5. Whoremongers. Lovers of make-up, lovers of fashion. Getting up in the morning, these do not commune with God, but rather with themselves before the mirror. These comb their hair to a smooth perfection. These make-up their faces with Hazeline snow, put on their western dresses and out into the world they go for their "socials". If you invite them to Church, that would hit them real hard, for where could they find time? Too little time for love-talks.

There was a girl student who relished to hear the Word. She began to love the world and took on several boyfriends. She had time for all kinds of make-up, for social dances, but no time for Church. No shadow of hers any more would enter God's House. But the cinema added one more patron from her attendance. Ay, to commit fornication with the world results in her love for the Father being snatched by the Devil.

6. Sorcerers. These trust in their own manipulations. These regard prayer as superstition. These disobey the Word of the Lord. These resist the Truth and rebel against God. The Bible says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."

7. Idolaters. Covetousness is idolatry. There are many who love to gamble. Why? Out of a heart of covetousness. These want to make a million but of nothing. These dream of riches. While chewing their rice, there goes the abacus tick-tack-a-tack-tack in their mind. When approached to receive Christ as Saviour, then comes the answer, "Wait till I make my million. It won't be too late." These who have already made their pile would go on without a break, on and on till they strike some illegal gain that lands them inside the coffin --- without Christ! Pitiful!

8. Liars. Dishonesty, manipulation, reliance on power, cunning and cheating. Here's the excuse, "In business, you can't make money without telling lies." Some doctors who have nothing to do at home pretend to be occupied. As a result the patient dies. How can they face up to this?

All the above-mentioned eight types of people are filled with the Devil. How can they absorb anymore the living water? To send this living water up to their mouth would avail nothing. For they refuse to drink or to swallow. Their portion is the Lake of Fire. But they will begin to thirst when they get there --- to no avail. Let us take note, brothers and sisters, never to give place to Satan, for He is waiting to swallow us. Let us be conquerors. Let us rather be athirst for Him than to become self-satisfied. If you are not athirst, or if you get stopped in your drinking system, God will pressure you, strike you. God will turn the tap of your life and remove that hindrance. Then out of your belly will flow rivers of living water. God will chastise you if you slacken to testify for Him.

There was a rich man, a half-millionaire who married many wives. A Christian friend of his urged him to believe in Christ and be saved. He replied, "I can become anything but a Christian." One day this friend gave him a Bible. When the friend left he burnt up the Bible. Helpless, the friend prayed for him. Later on the half-millionaire's wealth rose to \$600,000. He indulged in his sins all the more. Suddenly, the bank crashed. His hundreds of thousands of dollars evaporated into thin air. He became heavily indebted. He was deserted by friends and wives. He got a job as a clerk. His Christian friend visited him again to witness to him. He comforted him with the Word. Being moved by kindness he gladly received Jesus as

Saviour. Later this man said to me, "Mr. Sung, had not the Lord reduced me to bankruptcy, had he not struck at me materially and mentally, I would have continued to enjoy my way to hell, and taste my troubles 10,000 times over. Though God's chastisement seemed hard to endure, it did me much good. Had He not struck at me, I would not have sought and thirsted for His Kingdom and righteousness.

There was a sister much pampered by her parents. When she grew up she deserted the Lord. She daily went out with boyfriends to dine and dance till midnight. Her parents could not control her. When exhorted to read the Bible, she had her Bible burnt. Tearfully helpless, her parents prayed. Later she got married. After a few years, however, her husband took another. A quarrel ensued and the tender ties were broken. She tasted hell for two years. Unable to bear it she sought to commit suicide. It was her baby daughter that kept her from the plunge. She wept in secret. One day she met a friend whom she had brought to Christ. Amazed, her friend queried, "How have you become so distressed? As for me, have I not become healthier and stronger? Since you led me to Christ, a great change has transformed my life. Joy has filled my heart. But you?"

By this testimony she was revived. She knelt before the Lord and confessed her sins. She was soundly forgiven and greatly comforted. Her tears were dried. Have not the storms in your family life been driving you to return to God? "For his anger is only for a moment, but his mercy forever shall endure."

A famous pastor was greatly used of the Lord. Owing to a pay cut, he resigned. He couldn't take it to be a poor preacher. How many a preacher has "changed occupation" because of low pay! Now, this pastor went to open a shop. In less than ten years he made a hundred thousand. He built a row of houses to let. He drove a car. He felt he was somebody. Those concerned for him pleaded with him to serve the Lord and not forget His mercies. He replied, "There's no need for you to persuade me. I was a pastor." His children also pleaded with him and prayed for him.

One night fire broke out. All his properties were burnt up. He lost over ten thousand for some of those houses were built on loan. He became so sorrowful and depressed that he wanted to end his life. His daughter counseled, "You're only fifty. You still have life to serve the Lord. We will pay your debt. Has not the Lord a reason to send this trouble? The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. If you serve him faithfully He will bless the remainder of your days." So he went to preach again. "For His anger is only for a moment, but His mercy forever shall endure."

"All things work together for good to them that love God." God chastises whom He loveth. Are you going through some trouble? Are you homeless? God wants you to desire the eternal home above. Don't be discouraged! Don't be afraid. Those who go through temptation are blessed. That God should chastise you thus is to make you athirst for Him, to bring forth rivers of living waters out of your belly. That after you've gone through it all, He might make you perfect, strengthen you and lead you to his eternal glory.

"For His anger is only for a moment

But His mercy forever shall endure

Though our tears flow down all the night long

Dawn breaks forth with song."

Not only will God freely give you living water, He will also become a fountain flowing forever from within you. God wants you to be athirst and drink, be filled and to flow. If not He will chastise you. He will cause

you to receive and give forth, to flow on and on to wider fields, without end. But when you love the world, the flow will stifle, so He must use trouble to correct you, to make you a clean pipe, a fit vessel, that His living water might flow to bless others.

God's love is wonderful. I've been a preacher for nine years. Not easy. Often I've been discouraged. My flow almost stopped. But God loves me. He has encouraged me in various ways. He has caused me to flow outwards, to flow and flow unto life everlasting. To work for God is not easy. One must "eat plenty bitter". Who can go on but for the constraining love of Christ? One would have taken a vacation from the Lord --- to become a Dead Sea!

Once while on my way home from a campaign I got down to waiting at a railway station for four hours. How tedious! Satan then came to tempt me, "Why preach? What's the gain to leave home for long journeys? How bitter! And what results have you got?" I became downhearted. "Lord, I don't want to continue a preacher." But God sympathized with my weakness. He sent another preacher to comfort me. "Do you recognized me?" I looked at him. He said, "I heard you are here. So I come to see you. You saved my whole family a few years back. But you were not aware of it. I was a postal clerk before. I fell in love with a girl student. I thought of leaving my wife. At that time you came to our place to preach. I happened to pass by and went in to look-see. You were preaching on Luke 16:18, "Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." And you said, "Adulterers go to hell and everlasting death if they repent not and believe the Lord." My heart throbbed uneasily at your word. I couldn't sleep the whole night. I went to hear you the second and third days. The Holy Spirit caught hold of me. I couldn't do anything else but repent. I went forward to confess my sins. The Lord saved me. I separated from that girl student. I begged my wife's pardon. We were reconciled and our love increased the more. A great transformation overtook our family. All came to the Lord. Happiness filled our souls. My friends and relatives also were saved. Now we have a Bible class in our office. These are all your fruits from those seeds sown in tears. The tears you shed moved me deeply. I've nothing to give you in remembrance save this little bag."

Oh Lord! I'm unworthy! How you have consoled me, encouraged me. I must press forward! I will flow into the crooked and parched lands! Brothers and sisters, the cross cannot outweigh God's grace. The clouds of sadness cannot cover the Lord's kindly face. Whenever you look to the Lord, you will see His glory. The Lord wants you to flow on and on. Are you athirst? Are you flowing? May the Holy Light of God fill you and cause you flow to life everlasting.

Are you downcast? Perhaps in our midst there are those who've lost their husbands, their children are unfilial, houses are burnt and destroyed .... You have sustained losses materially, spiritually. Don't blame the Father Almighty. He chastises you because He loves you. He wants you to long for Him and better things above.

"For His anger is only for a moment,  
But His mercy forever shall endure."

Beloved, weep not! God knows your evil circumstances. Don't be downhearted, don't say die! You're in deep sickness? Your family is breaking up? You're being cheated and oppressed? You've being reviled and accused? Quickly examine yourselves: Have you loved the world? Have you been ungrateful and rebelled against God? Is the Lord pruning you, refining you to make you perfect? Don't blame God for chastising you. Look to Him the more. Draw nigh. "For His anger is only for a moment....." Hear me sing it

again!

Oh, these things will soon pass away, look to Him with eyes of faith. Be hopeful. Wait for the times of restitution. The Father will wipe away all tears. No death. No sorrow. No crying. No pain. For the things of the past are gone. Alleluia! Be you athirst and He will freely give you the water of life to drink. Love Him wholeheartedly. Gladly testify for Him and the rivers of Life will flow from within you. Arise! Be victors of God. You who are under chastisement, who are fallen into testing. Don't be discouraged. The Lord loves you to the end. He is ever waiting to give you His bountiful grace. But will you look to his smiling face, now awaiting you? Pray the Lord will pity you. The Lord will have mercy on you.

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