

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Beatitude 8—Carrying the Message (The Sharing Choice)

– The Road to Recovery Sermon Series

Over the past couple of months, we have been exploring the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, along with the eight Beatitudes of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, and applying both sets of principles to our journey of faith. Before I studied the A.A.'s Twelve Steps, I thought the program was designed only for those in recovery. However, the more I have learned about these principles, the more I have discovered many valuable, even divine, lessons within them for my own reformation. To some degree, as I have often said, we as human beings all experience spiritual bondage and are captivated by certain strongholds. In other words, one way or another, we are all addicted to something, whether it relates to possessions, power, or pleasure. The reason I compare addiction with these three common temptations is that addiction wears various masks.

The more obvious additive issues may come from drinking alcohol or taking drugs, and these addictions can be easily noticed. However, doing something excessively—whether watching, shopping, gambling, eating, or working—is not always recognized as a life challenge. Yet these activities can easily become forms of addiction if they gradually turn into substitutes that help us escape from our real lives. To live a truly happy and healthy life, we must overcome our spiritual bondages and strongholds.

As many of us know, a few months ago we launched our sermon series titled “The Road to Recovery” by admitting that we were powerless over certain life struggles. Without the greater power that comes from the Lord God, we confessed that our hearts could be not renewed. These statements are reflected in A.A.'s Steps One through Three, which form the first stage of our spiritual recovery, called acknowledgment.

The second stage of A.A.'s Twelve Steps can be called renovation. In order to transform our broken hearts, we need the courage to make an honest moral inventory of ourselves. We need humility to ask God to remove our shortcomings. We also need the willingness to make amends to those we have harmed through our wrongdoing, whenever possible. These are the key elements of A.A.'s Steps Four through Nine.

The final stage of A.A. can be referred as maintenance, and it is found in Steps Ten through Twelve. This principle is not a one-time decision but an ongoing commitment, as the recovery journey can be compared to a long-distance race rather than a short sprint. We continue to take a daily inventory of our lives and seek to make ourselves right before the Lord. To do so, we must deepen our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. Through these spiritual practices, we can maintain our recovery and keep ourselves from slipping back into former patterns of life.

Today, we finally arrive at the Twelfth step of A.A. and will apply it to our spiritual recovery race. This principle states: “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all of our

affairs.” This step can be called “Carrying the Message of Recovery” and it is crucial to overcoming spiritual bondages or strongholds.

Recently I revisited a copy of The Big Book, first published in 1939. Since then, it has been edited many times and translated into over 70 languages. Today, it is still considered a foundational text to those in recovery through A.A. The Big Book is indeed quite large—nearly 600 pages—and consists of four parts: the Introduction, the Chapters, Personal Stories, and the Appendices. As I understand it, one of the main purposes was to show “other alcoholics how the first 100 members of A.A. got sober.” Interestingly, the first chapter begins with the story of Bill Wilson, the co-founder of A.A., and much of the book includes personal testimonies from recovering alcoholics. Sharing the stories of how individuals recovered from their struggles sets A.A. apart from many other recovery methods. We can see that sharing stories of recovery to help others is central to the Twelfth Step.

For Christians, carrying the message—the theme of the Twelfth Step—can be understood as “evangelism.” As we saw in the video clip this morning, this English word comes from the Greek one “euaggelion,” meaning “gospel” or “good news.” The verb form means “to bring” or “to share the good news.” Throughout the history of Christianity, the gospel—the Good News of Jesus Christ—has been passed down to us by the people of God. Likewise, throughout the Bible, we see the importance of passing on our faith to the next generation.

For instance, in our Old Testament reading today, God speaks through the prophet Isaiah “to proclaim good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61:2). As followers of Christ, we are all called to be “ministers of our God” (Isaiah 61:6). In the New Testament, Jesus declares, “You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others...” (Matthew 5:14-16). Some may say, “Yes, that was Jesus’ command, but it was given to the apostles, so witnessing is only for church leaders.” However, in our epistle reading this morning, the Apostle Paul reminds us that shining the light of Jesus is not limited to disciples or missionaries, but is the calling of all who are in Christ and have received a new life. Each of us, reconciled to God and made new, is entrusted with “the message of reconciliation,” and we are all called “Christ’s ambassadors” (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). What an honour we have!

Before we look at the key subject of this sermon, I would like to briefly share with you a classic story of A.A. and its founders. Let us consider Bill Wilson, who had likely experienced numerous situations and made many attempts to stop drinking... Later, Bill realized that sharing his experiences with others helped him maintain his own sobriety. One of the people he reached out to was “Dr. Bob,” who would later become the co-founder of A.A. Together, Bill and Bob developed the Twelve Steps and established Alcoholics Anonymous. One key distinction of A.A., as I have mentioned before, is the practice of sharing recovery stories at A.A. meetings. Members believe that sharing their stories not only encourage others to participate in the program but also helps themselves maintain their recovery. Since the founding of A.A. in 1935, the organization has grown from just two members to over two million members worldwide, across 180 countries. About seventy-five percent of members are in the United States and Canada. Once again, the practice of sharing recovery stories and the message of A.A. is a main reason for its remarkable growth.

In today's Beatitude, Jesus says: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). God wants each of us to become peacemakers—not just peacekeepers but true peacemakers. As the Apostle Paul mentions in his epistle today, through the ministry of God's reconciliation, we can become the righteousness of God. In other words, we can experience peace at God, with God, and through God. Once we have this peace, we are equipped to make peace and bring peace into the lives of others.

Remember, we cannot do this until there is peace within us—until the peace of God dwells in our hearts. That is what recovery from habits, hurts, and hang-ups is all about: experiencing the peace of God through His redemption and cleansing power for our wrongdoings, in conjunction with acknowledging our spiritual bondages and confessing our shortcomings before the Lord. Once we begin to experience the peace of God through this divine transformation, God calls us to pass this God-given peace on to others. This is a hallmark of spiritual recovery and restoration. We begin to share the areas where we have been hurt with others for their healing and benefit. This is what we call the Sharing Choice. Many of us tend to think that we help others through our strengths. In one sense that is true—we can use our God-given resources to assist those who lack in certain areas. But we can help others through our weaknesses. Pastor Warren once said something like, "My greatest ministry will flow out of my pain. Your greatest ministry of your life will flow out of your pain—not out of your strengths, not out of your talents, not out of all these things, but out of the painful experiences of your life. God never wastes our pains."

In our Gospel reading today, we find a wonderful example of the sharing ministry in the story of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at the well in Sychar. She had had five husbands and was living with another man. Perhaps she had been trying to fill the emptiness in her life through her relationships, yet none of them could satisfy her inner longing. Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). When the Samaritan woman received this living water—when she had heard Jesus' words—she was satisfied.

At the beginning of her conversation with Jesus, she tried to hide her struggles, saying, "I have no husband" (John 4:17). In other words, she initially denied her life issues. Yet, as she learned how to receive spiritual satisfaction, she opened her heart more and came to recognize Jesus first as a prophet, and ultimately as the Messiah and the source of the Higher Power. She examined her past errors, received the spring water for eternal life, and worshipped Jesus in spirit and truth. Finally, she left her water jar and went to the people, saying, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (John 4:29). In essence, she shared with others: "Come, see a man who satisfies my inner being."

Before I became a Christian, I was not part of any religion... One way I did this was by sharing my story about Jesus—just as the Samaritan woman did—telling them about the difference Jesus had made in my life. Friends, God has given each of us our own stories. These stories are not reviews of products' they are testimonies of what God has done in our lives. Do you know the difference between a witness and an attorney? An attorney

presents the case, shows the evidence, and asks for a decision. But not once in the Bible does Jesus say, “You will be my attorney.” It is not our job to convince people to accept Christ—that is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are simply called and commanded by God to be His witnesses... Likewise, as Jesus’ witnesses, we are to share with others what God has done in our lives... The Message of Jesus Christ will not be accepted by everyone—and that is okay. Remember, some people are ready to hear what God has done for us. Are we ready to tell them His stories? We can simply share one of today’s lessons by saying: “Let me tell you about a time that something bad happened to me, but God brought good out of it.” There is a word for this—witnessing. This is what God commands us to do: to tell our story of hope in a hopeless situation.

To conclude, this sermon series is one of the longest I have ever done, and I sincerely appreciate your prayer and participation. The end of our journey through the Twelve Steps of A.A. is not truly the last. These principles, along with Jesus’ Beatitudes, are meant to be applied repeatedly in our spiritual recovery. As I mentioned at the beginning of this series, we all have messy areas in our lives. Overcoming some of our life challenges may take longer than we expect. However, if we continue following these sacred principles and rely on God’s mighty power, we can “grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). May God abundantly bless each of us and the decisions we make before Him, so that we may be fully restored in His image, enjoy our recovery process, and carry this joyful message to those beyond ourselves. Amen!

**In preparing this sermon series, I have drawn on materials and insights from various ministers, particularly those related to the Twelve Steps of A.A. as well as the “Life’s Healing Choices” series prepared by Rick Warren and his team, based on Isaiah 61:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; John 4:13-30; and Matthew 5:9.*