



A Publication of the Winnetka Ave. Church of Christ

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August 17, 2025

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TO THE UNBELIEVABLE HEIGHTS

Nearly every time I make the drive out to the Coachella Valley to preach for the brethren at Indio, mention is made of the need to ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. From the desert floor the rotating tram car travels roughly 2.5 miles, while ascending some 5,873 feet at an average angle of 26 degrees. Breathtaking. The longest tramway however is China's Tianmen Shan which is over four and a half miles long, climbing some 4,196 feet in elevation at an average angle of 37 degree. It is well known for its steep incline which brings about spectacular views of prominent cliffs and twisting road below.



Christ Jesus.” Ever forward; ever upward.

The only way the tram car will be able to climb all the way to the top, is to maintain a strong grip to the cable. Conversely, the only way the child of God can realize the goal of the upward call is by holding tightly to Christ. Kind of interesting that after discussing the necessity to “press on” in chapter three, Paul begins chapter four with the following. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.”* Hold tight!

Both the tram cars at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway and Tianmen Shan Tramway (or for that matter any other trams) move safely ever upward with a death-like grip on a cable that is moved by a powerful motor. While all this is well and good, what does this have to do with what our spiritual walk in life? The answer should be obvious. *“If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth.”* (Colossians 3:1-2) But our focus is so much higher than a mere mountain top. However, there is a most impressive take away from the example of the tram.

Paul, in his epistle to the brethren in Philippi spoke about the journey of faith and the necessity to see it all the way through, to the very top. In verses twelve, thirteen and fourteen of chapter three he uses the illustration of one pressing ever upward. *“but I press on...”*, *“...but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward...”* coming to this conclusion *“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in*

We need to recognize the essentiality of maintaining a strong hold on Christ in order to move ever forward and upward. Our faith, hope squarely set in Christ, He will guide us gently home. *“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Hebrews 12:2) *“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”* (Hebrews 4:14, see also vs. 15-16)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

The realization of the upward call of God can be ours. Paul, as he faced the end of his life, was confident in the following assertion. *“I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”* (2Timothy 4:7-8) Keep the faith. Maintain a strong grip on Christ, look upward. (wbe)

THE BULWARK