

## Behind the Hymn: The Blood-washed Pilgrim

I had just finished listening through an unabridged recording of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. At the same time I had been reading Darius Salter's biography of Francis Asbury. Together, they brought the pilgrim's image to mind:

- traveling light
- loose from the world
- strangers and aliens (1 Peter 1; Heb. 11 & 12)
- lay down all worthless idols; don't carry them along
- freedom from possessions that only feed wanting rather than satisfy it
- contentment (1 Timothy 6:6-11)
- resisting temptation and enduring trials

In December, 2003, as I thought about writing a new hymn text on this subject, using a folk tune, I felt drawn to rewrite the old gospel song, *The Blood-washed Pilgrim*. It was obviously based on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, so it seemed a good place to start. The original text had good content but needed lots of rewriting for clarity and relevance. I also adapted the music a bit here and there. The hymn was completed on December 22, 2003.

Hymn: [The Blood-washed Pilgrim](#)