

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

1 Peter 01: 09-12

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 9 to 12.

Peter's rich life experiences qualified him as an apostle of hope. When the church began to face severe persecution from the Roman authorities, the Holy Spirit moved Peter to write letter to encourage and comfort those saints in distress. Peter was different from Paul. Paul had received thorough Jewish education, was familiar with the law and scriptures; he had also received thorough Greek education, excelled in logical thinking and debate, hence Paul's writings are filled with the light of truth and revelation. However, Peter's writings are entirely the fruit of his life experiences. Paul's works are logically clear and structurally sound, while Peter's writings seem spontaneous, once start he couldn't end; with thoughts flowing continuously and intricately interconnected. Due to unclear paragraphs, they are not easy to understand, and it's difficult to find the focal point of his writing.

If you look at the original Greek text, from verse 3 to verse 12, it is actually one long sentence; it almost encompasses all the richness of Peter's spiritual experiences throughout his life, condensed into this one sentence. Therefore, we need to deconstruct this long sentence first to clarify Peter's logical thinking and truly understand the burden in Peter's heart.

Let's first identify the main words in this long sentence. Based on the arrangement of these words, we can find that Peter's logic begins with praise to God, which leads to regeneration, living hope, and the inheritance reserved in heaven. When Peter describes these words, he uses many modifiers, all of which are conclusions drawn from his personal experiences and realizations.

At the beginning, we see that his praise to God is rich in content. Genuine praise should not only express gratitude and admiration but also include reasons for

thanksgiving and grounds for praise, which requires a deep understanding and experience of God the Father. In praising God, Peter first mentions regeneration, which occurs by the great mercy of the Father and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Regeneration leads to a living hope, indicated that this hope is of life, is full of operation and vitality. Next, it brings forth the inheritance reserved in heaven, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and does not fade away. These three words represent the three stages of complete salvation for every saint: we begin with regeneration and end with the full enjoyment of the inheritance God has prepared for us in heaven, which is the completion of salvation. This complete salvation is prepared to be revealed in the last time, namely when Jesus Christ returns, so that salvation can be fully realized in us.

From the beginning of regeneration to the culmination in the heavenly inheritance, the process in between is the sanctification process for every saint. It is also the process of accumulating living hope in heaven, and the process that saints through faith, draw upon God's keeping power today. In contrast to the great joy we'll receive when Jesus Christ returns and our bodies be redeemed, today, in the process of sanctification, we may experience various trials and even temporary sorrow. So, we have Christ in heaven, seating at the right hand of God, interceding for us. Additionally, we have the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, working in us to help us through the trials we face.

Here, Peter contrasts faith with gold, likening the process of testing faith to the refining of gold. According to the Chinese Union Version, after faith is tested, it becomes more precious than refined gold. NIV and KJV translate similarly, but the original text may allow for another translation: the testing of faith is more precious than the testing of refined gold. ASV and Darby versions of the Bible translate it this way, which is also valid. On one hand, it emphasizes that indeed faith is more precious than gold, while on the other hand, it underscores the importance of valuing these trials. People generally dislike suffering, but the testing of faith is necessary. In this process, we may experience temporary sorrow, but the outcome is praise, glory, and honor. During the endurance of various trials, Peter encourages

the saints to focus on Jesus Christ, urging us to learn to love Him because we believe in Him, which brings incomparable joy filled with glory.

Therefore, in the three stages of Christian salvation, Peter help us to focus on the middle stage of sanctification, which he describes in verse 9 as the salvation of the soul. Then, from verse 10 to verse 12, the portion we are reading today, Peter further reveals that this salvation of the soul was the subject of careful examination by the Old Testament prophets, then confirmed and revealed to us. It is also conveyed to us through the preaching of the apostles and scrutinized in detail by angels.

Verse 9: “for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Firstly, as we mentioned yesterday, a better translation for the term used in the Chinese Union Version as “spirit-soul” is “soul”. So, the fruit or outcome of faith is the salvation of the soul. The Greek word for “fruit” is “telos,” which can be translated into English as “end,” “outcome,” “purpose,” or “goal”. In other words, the result of your faith being tested in various trials is the salvation of your soul.

As we mentioned earlier, the complete salvation of every saint involves three stages: the first stage is regeneration; the second stage is the salvation of the soul, which involves the process of sanctification; and the third stage is the redemption of the body. For the first and third stages, we only need to accept; it is entirely what Christ has done for us. For example, our regeneration includes forgiveness of sins, being justified by God, reconciled with God, and our being consecrated to God. This is entirely the grace of Jesus Christ's redemption, which we can only accept. Once accepted, we are delivered from the judgment of the lake of fire and saved from eternal perdition. This is the salvation of our spirit, which we receive upon believing in Jesus Christ.

And the third stage, the redemption of the body. When Jesus Christ comes again, our bodies will be transformed and glorified. When Jesus returns, if you are still

alive, you will be raptured, and if you have already died, you will be resurrected first and then raptured. In between these two, it's the process of our sanctification which is the salvation of our souls. This requires the active participation of saints, and God may allow us to undergo various trials. In this process, gradually we'll be released from the temptations of the world, from the power of Satan, and from the bondage of our own flesh. On a personal level, we experience spiritual growth and bear the fruit of the Spirit. On a collective level, we learn to coordinate with other saints and build together in the church.

This salvation of the soul is connected to our living hope. The more complete the sanctification process in you, the richer your hope will be. In this process, there are various trials, and we must be willing to pay the price, allowing our faith to be as precious as refined gold. This living hope is the theme of Peter's first epistle; it is the salvation of our souls. And this salvation of the soul, without any question, corresponds to what Paul discusses in Romans chapters 5 to 8—the lifelong sanctification process for Christians.

Verse 10-11: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.”

From the beginning, Peter speaks about this salvation, which is, of course, the complete salvation in the life of every saint: including the three stages of salvation for each person, from the salvation of the spirit, where we are born again; to the salvation of the soul, where we experience the process of sanctification; to finally, the redemption of our bodies. In Peter's original writing, this is a long sentence. So, when he mentions salvation in verse 10, he is actually referring to the end of verse 9, which speaks of the salvation of the soul. Regarding this part, the Old Testament prophets have already sought and examined it in detail, focusing on two points:

first, that Christ will suffer, and this suffering will be extensive; and secondly, that Christ will receive glory, and this glory will also be extensive.

The Old Testament prophets not only sought and examined but also provided evidence that Christ would suffer greatly before receiving glory; from suffering to glory is essentially the road of the cross. Peter himself must have carefully studied the Old Testament to come to such a conclusion. When Jesus accompanied the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus personally explained to them the Old Testament references to Christ. Although Peter did not provide us with specific verses, we can easily find several examples:

The first reference is found in Genesis 3:15, which is in the Pentateuch written by Moses, and can be considered the understanding of the prophet Moses. "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." This passage, spoken by God after the fall of humanity, anticipates future events. Here, the "Seed of the woman" refers to Christ, while the serpent being judged refers to Satan. It specifically mentions Satan bruising the heel of Christ, which was fulfilled when Jesus, indeed, was nailed to the cross by the Jewish chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes who acted as instruments of Satan, resulting in the bruising of Christ's heel. Moses prophesied that Christ would bruise Satan's head, and when God placed the sins of all people upon Jesus on the cross, God judged Jesus, and in that judgment of sin on the cross, Satan was also judged. Later, Jesus rose from the dead, which was His glory, triumphing over the power of death. Here, we see both the suffering and the glory of Christ.

The second example is Psalm 22, written by David. It's hard to imagine David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writing about something he didn't experience himself, but it's actually the personal experience of Jesus Christ on the cross; David's description is so vivid. For example, verse 1: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" This is Jesus' cry on the cross. Verse 6: "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people." This is Jesus' experience on the cross. Verse 14: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within me." This depicts the suffering of Jesus

Christ on the cross. Verses 16 to 18: "For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." This is essentially a description of Jesus' suffering on the cross by the gospel authors, showing us that Christ indeed endured much suffering.

Then, in verses 22 to 23 of this chapter: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!" Verse 22 speaks of the glory of Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension, and afterward, the giving of the Holy Spirit, resulting in the formation of the church. In the church, the brothers of Jesus Christ come together to praise God. Then, verses 27 to 28: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations." This refers to the glory that will be given to Jesus when He returns to the earth.

Indeed, another example is found in the book of Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 53, where we see that Jesus Christ will suffer many sorrows. The suffering of Jesus Christ is something we are all familiar with, but Peter also mentions that He will later receive glory, which is abundant. In the book of Isaiah, we can see several different levels of glory. Firstly, there is the glory of Jesus' resurrection. In Isaiah 53:11, it says, "By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities." After Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, those who believe in Him can be justified by God. Then, there is the glory of the Millennial Kingdom described in Isaiah 1:6-10, which depicts the glory Jesus will receive when He returns. In Isaiah 11:10, it says, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious." Finally, in Isaiah 65:17-19, we see the glory that Jesus Christ will receive in the new heavens and the new earth.

When Peter mentions the prophets of the Old Testament, he talks about their detailed inquiry and examination. How did they inquire? Peter uses a very special

term; in verse 11, he says, "They searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow." This statement is not easy to understand because when the prophets of the Old Testament spoke these prophecies, Jesus had not yet come. How could the Spirit of Christ be in them? It turns out that from the time of creation, God foresaw humanity's fall, and at that time, the triune God had already decided to carry out salvation. The Son was then tasked with executing this plan of redemption. In the Old Testament, when the Holy Spirit came upon the prophets, they were moved to prophesy. Peter seems to be revealing a secret here: in the Old Testament, when the prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, one aspect of that Spirit was the Spirit of Christ. This Spirit revealed to the prophets what Christ would do. Because of this, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 could describe Jesus' suffering in such detail and realism.

So, the prophets of the Old Testament, by proving in advance that Christ would suffer and then receive glory, essentially proved the coming of Jesus, who would walk the path of the cross and receive glory after suffering. Then Peter says, "The Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow." The prophets of the Old Testament not only knew the path Jesus needed to walk but also when He would be crucified. The clearest prophecy about when Jesus would be crucified is found in Daniel 9:25-26, which says, "Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing." This passage refers to the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, which happened during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, as recorded in Nehemiah 1:1. From that year onward, starting with seven 'sevens' or 49 years, Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and after sixty-two 'sevens' or 434 years, the Anointed One would be put to death.

The Anointed One referred to here is Jesus Christ, who would be crucified. From the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when the decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem, to

the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, there are a total of 69 'sevens,' which is 483 years. This was indeed fulfilled in history. From the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to AD 30, there are precisely 483 years in between. This timing is very clear.

He added another phrase, "and how." "When" tells us the timing of Jesus' crucifixion, while "and how" refers to the condition of people's hearts at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Let's look at the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 6. Isaiah was sent to the people of Israel, and in Isaiah 6:9, God foretold, "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'" This was because Isaiah was sent to testify to these unbelieving people. Similarly, when Jesus began His ministry on earth, it was also a generation of unbelief. For example, in Matthew 11:21, Jesus rebuked Chorazin and Bethsaida, saying, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." In verse 23, He rebuked Capernaum, saying, "And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day." So, when Jesus came, it was also a generation of unbelief. And when Jesus comes again for the second time, it will be in the last generation, which will also be a generation of unbelief.

Verse 12: "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

Peter here focuses on the saints who are experiencing suffering. He presents three layers of comfort: The first layer of comfort comes from the Old Testament prophets because they have diligently examined and proved that Christ would come, suffer greatly, and receive much glory. They received these revelations, began to proclaim them, and understood that such preaching was not for themselves because the events had not yet occurred. Instead, it was for the satisfaction of those who would

experience them when the time come. Christ had already come and accomplished these things. The words of the Old Testament prophets were intended for the saints who are currently experiencing suffering, telling them that just as Jesus endured suffering, He will also receive glory. Similarly, though saints now undergo much suffering, their faith, when tested, becomes more precious, and in the future, they too will receive glory. The first layer of comfort comes from the Old Testament prophets.

The second layer of comfort comes from the New Testament apostles, who, empowered by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, preach the gospel to the saints enduring suffering. They use the words spoken by Jesus Himself: "A servant is not greater than his master. Nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him." Just as Jesus Christ bore the cross, those who follow Him must also take up their cross and follow the Lord. Just as Jesus endured suffering and received glory, likewise, the saints enduring suffering will also go through suffering to receive glory.

Then the third layer of comfort comes from the angels. Peter says that even the angels desire to look into these things in detail. Just as Jesus Christ endured suffering to receive glory, today the angels carefully observe the saints enduring suffering, knowing that they too will go through suffering to receive glory. And when they are powerless, the angels can come to aid and assist. Dear brothers and sisters, if you are also enduring suffering, Peter tells us that this is for the salvation of our souls, so that we may have a living hope.

Let us pray together: Lord, we offer our thanks and worship for the circumstances surrounding us, knowing that though we may experience temporary sorrow in various trials, we believe that our faith, refined through such trials, can become stronger and be able to draw upon Your sustaining power more. As we endure these trials, we'll have inheritance reserved for us in heaven. Help me to learn to experience great joy even in sufferings, knowing that just as You endured suffering to receive glory, we too will one day go through suffering and receive glory. Bless my life, I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!