

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

1 Peter 1:13-19

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue to read 1 Peter Chapter 1, verses 13 to 19.

Peter encourages the saints in the midst of trials not to lose heart or lose hope. Faith, when tested, becomes more precious than gold, and the ultimate result of perfected faith is salvation of the soul. This gives us a living hope, that at the coming of Christ, we may inherit the incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance kept in heaven for us. Just as Jesus Christ gained glory through suffering, today the Holy Spirit also guides us through suffering to obtain glory; this is the path of the cross, and the cross is the only way to glory.

Peter begins by praising God the Father, leading us into the eternal purpose of God. Then, starting from verse 13, Peter tells us how to live a holy life. In today's passage, we can summarize it into three points. The first point is to eagerly await the Lord's return (verse 13). The second point is to strive for holiness like God (verses 14-16). The third point is to live in the light of judgment (verses 17-19).

Let's first look at the first point: eagerly awaiting the Lord's return.

Verse 13: "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The translation in the Chinese Union Version renders it as "要約束你們的心." This word in Greek is typically translated as "mind" or "understanding," so the Chinese translation "心思" is more accurate. The KJV translates it as "Gird up the loins of your mind," which means to prepare oneself for serious action, just as people

would gird up their loins before engaging in activities like competitions or battles. Here, "girding up the loins of the mind" implies that our thoughts should not be scattered, like a dragonfly flitting about, pausing here and there; rather, we should concentrate our attention, be vigilant, and exercise self-restraint. It's about having a clear mind and focusing our hope on the grace brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Generally, focusing our minds on a task is relatively easy because once the task is completed, we can relax. However, Peter here emphasizes the need to concentrate our attention and exercise self-restraint. We are to eagerly await and hope for the revelation of Jesus Christ, for it is at His coming that our salvation will be fully realized. Today, our experience and enjoyment of salvation are limited by our physical bodies, so they are only partial. It is only when Christ returns that our bodies will be redeemed, and at that time, we will put on a spiritual body, allowing us to fully experience the richness and completeness of salvation.

It's indeed challenging for a person to focus their mind on waiting and hoping for something that will happen in the future. That's why Peter uses the term "revelation" instead of "the second coming of Christ" or "the advent of Christ." In English, the translation for this term is "revelation." Often, we translate it as "启示" in Chinese, which means to unveil or uncover: removing the cover so that we can see. Therefore, the revelation of Christ is an experience we can have even today.

For example, when you're reading the Bible, you restrain your thoughts, and hope to see Christ in your reading; likewise, when you're praying, you also restrain your thoughts, and hope to encounter Christ in your prayer. Of course, the Christ we see today is still partial and incomplete because our experience of Christ today is just a foretaste, and it's only at the return of Christ that we will have a truly perfect experience and enjoyment. Therefore Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter not only hopes that we will await the coming of Christ but also that we will experience some manifestations of Christ in our daily lives today. This is how we can truly restrain our thoughts — by experiencing Christ's manifestations each time, we turn back to Him, refocusing our attention on

Him. Just like when Peter denied the Lord for the third time, and the Lord turned and looked at him, and Peter saw Jesus, this sight made him weep bitterly. Such a sight helped him turn back. In today's life, we also need Jesus Christ to appear repeatedly to help us restrain our thoughts.

The second point: Learning to be holy as God is holy (verses 14-16).

Verse 14: "As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance."

"Being obedient children" here means that once we believe in Jesus Christ, as stated in John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name," we become children of God. "Children" speaks of a relationship of life, meaning we receive eternal life from the Father. And the Father's expectation for His children is that they would be able to obey His will, which is what is meant by "obedient children" here.

Before we believed in Jesus Christ, as described in Ephesians 2:2-3, Paul says: "In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others." We were once sons of disobedience and children of wrath, living according to the customs of this world, indulging in the desires of the flesh. Peter advises us not to conform to our former ways because now we are obedient children, no longer disobedient or children of wrath. It was because of our ignorance that we indulged in our desires in the past. But now, as children of God, we understand His will. God sacrificed His only begotten Son to save us, paying the price for our sins. We cannot return to our old lives of indulgence now that we understand God's will.

The Chinese Union Version advises not to conform to our former ways. The term "conform" implies a certain level of passivity. The NIV translates it as "do not

conform," which is more neutral. Personally, I prefer the translation from the American Standard Version (ASV), "do not be conformed" which is in the passive tune. According to our experiences, the trends of this generation can subtly lead us astray. Our past lives have formed certain inertia, and if we don't intentionally break away, it's easy to unconsciously return to our old ways. In our past lives, we were not free, and sin was like opium; you may have the freedom to indulge at first, but once addicted, you lose the freedom not to indulge. Obedient children of God must live out the life that comes from the Father, a life that can help us break free from our old ways and bring us true freedom.

Verses 15-16: "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

God is holy, He is the one who calls, and we are the created beings. We are to live in accordance with the call we have received; therefore, we are to live a holy life, which means being holy in all our conducts. God called the Israelites, and in Leviticus 19:2, He said, "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, you shall be holy, for I the Lord Your God am holy." In the Old Testament, the Israelites followed God outwardly, so holiness there was more about being set apart for God. Because of this, God wanted the Israelites to be separate from the Gentiles; they couldn't intermarry or live together with them. God's purpose for the Israelites was to maintain purity so that Jesus Christ could be brought forth from among them.

The saints in the New Testament have the life that comes from God, and this life has a holy nature, so they can naturally live a holy life. However, the natural life of the saints still exists, and this old self's life will naturally live out a life full of selfish desires, so verse 14 mentions that we need to be obedient children in order to live a holy life. The work of the Holy Spirit is sanctification, and the scope of the Holy Spirit's work is in our soul. The Holy Spirit wants to permeate our emotions, helping us to love the things of God and heaven. The Holy Spirit wants to enter our minds,

helping us to understand God's will. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit wants to influence our will to choose to live out God's life and live a holy life.

Point 3: Live each day in the light of judgment (verses 17-19). On the positive side, we need to learn to be holy like God; on the negative side, we must recognize that the old self is still present, and if we let our guard down, we will live a life full of selfish desires. Therefore, we should spend our days as sojourners in this world in the light of judgment.

Verse 17: "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear."

Our Father is both a loving God and a righteous God. In His righteous attribute, He does not show partiality and will judge each person according to their deeds. In the Chinese Union Version translation, the word "Lord" is added, which does not exist in the original text and is not found in any English version translations. In our general understanding, the Father has entrusted the matter of judgment to Christ, as recorded in John 5:22, "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." However, in verse 17, it mentions that it is the Father who judges according to each person's deeds, so we need to clarify what kind of judgment Peter is referring to here.

Peter is not referring to the judgment at Christ's second coming, as that judgment is entrusted to Christ. Peter is also not talking about the judgment on the great white throne after the millennium, which is also entrusted to Christ. What Peter is referring to here is the Father's governmental judgment on the saints who are sojourning in the world today. This also aligns with 1 Peter 4:17, where Peter says, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God." Governmental judgment is a judgment that occurs during the process, not a judgment that only happens at the end. The purpose of governmental judgment is to let you know where you have done wrong and give you a chance to correct it. The purpose of

governmental judgment is positive; more often, we translate it as discipline, which helps us to live our days as sojourners in this world with a reverent heart.

Here we need to recognize that our days in this world are just a sojourn. Our true home is in heaven, and that home is eternal. This will help us not lose our honor and glory in eternity for the sake of temporary and instant gratification. You may ask: How does God the Father carry out this governmental judgment today? The answer is through the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels, we see that the Holy Spirit was sent down only after Jesus Christ died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. On the one hand, He was sent by Christ to testify for Christ, and on the other hand, He was sent by God the Father to help the saints understand the Father's will and also to help God the Father discipline His children.

Hebrews 12:6-7 says: "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?" (NKJV) Through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the saints are helped to live their days as sojourners on earth in the light of judgment, so that they can have a reverent heart in all things. This reverence is not a fear of punishment, but a natural attitude of respect for God's righteousness and holiness. The following verses, 18-19, tell us why we should have a reverent heart.

Verse 18-19: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

"Knowing that you were not redeemed" - Peter chooses the term "redeemed" rather than "saved" to emphasize the heavy price paid by Jesus Christ to buy us back, highlighting that we were purchased with a great cost.

"from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" - This refers to the meaningless behaviors and practices inherited from our ancestors, which

were pursued for the sake of worldly benefits and pleasures. These pursuits ultimately lead to emptiness and lack of meaning. We once lived in this emptiness, but God the Father chose us, and Jesus Christ redeemed us, not with perishable things like gold or silver, which the world treasures. These things hold value in this world but cannot be brought into eternity because they decay with time. Instead, our redemption is through the precious blood of Christ.

In this passage, we must appreciate Peter's choice of words. While the blood of Jesus Christ is frequently mentioned in the New Testament, it is only here that it is referred to as "precious blood." Additionally, Peter assigns a different significance to Jesus' shedding of blood. Generally, Jesus' blood is associated with our sins and transgressions; it resolves the issue of our sins, granting us forgiveness, and ensuring that our sins and transgressions are no longer remembered by God the Father.

However, by using the term "precious blood," Peter emphasizes the value of Jesus' blood. Jesus' blood is filled with worth; it not only grants us forgiveness of sins but also aims to help us depart from futile lives, lives without value. Jesus' blood, on the negative side, resolves the issue of our sins, satisfying God's righteous requirements. Peter underscores the preciousness of Jesus' blood, which, on the positive side, assists us in departing from futile lives and living lives of true value. This enables us to be worthy of God's holy and honorable attributes, thus pleasing Him. This is Peter's unique perspective on the preciousness of the blood of Christ.

Peter then quotes the Old Testament, stating that the blood of Jesus is like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. After being chosen on the 10th day of the first month, the Passover lamb underwent detailed examination by the priests for the following consecutive five days. It had to be without blemish or spot, only then could it be sacrificed as the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first month. "Unblemished" signifies complete purity, without any defects; "spotless" implies that it remains untainted by external pollution or erosion, unaffected by the corrupting influences of the world. Only such a precious lamb could be offered as a sacrifice. Likewise, the precious blood shed by Jesus helps us depart from futile lives. Through our appreciation of Jesus Christ, we can truly understand what is

valuable and live lives of piety during our sojourn on earth. Even when we occasionally err, we can accept God's governmental dealing and turn back through the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

Peter instructs us in this passage to eagerly await the Lord's return, to strive to live a life of holiness like God, and to walk devoutly in the light of judgment. This embodies the essence of sanctified living that every believer should pursue.

Let us pray together: Lord, help us to see Your preciousness, to love Your appearance. You are perfect, without blemish or spot, and so valuable. For us, these lowly people, You were nailed to the cross. Our sins require Your blood to be forgiven. Help us even more to see the value of Your precious blood, so that we are willing to lay down our futile lives and pursue the things of value in heaven. In the process of following You, we ask that You constantly reveal Yourself to us, so that we can focus on looking to You and waiting for Your return. Bless my daily life, I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ.