

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

1 Peter 03:05-09

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 3, verses 5 to 9.

Yesterday we read Peter's advice for sisters who are wives, encouraging them to submit to their husbands. He instructed them not to focus on outward adornment like elaborate hairstyles, gold jewelry, or fine clothes, but rather to cultivate inner beauty with a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. Then Peter cited examples from the Old Testament to illustrate his point.

Verse 5: "For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,"

When Peter mentions the holy women who trusted in God, the term "trusted in God" in English can also be translated as "faith in God," indicating a connection with God through faith. Moreover, "holy" implies being set apart for God. Therefore, these women who trusted in God were spiritually-minded women, set apart for God, adorning themselves with a gentle and quiet spirit so that they could submit to their husbands. Here we see that their submission is not merely external obedience but originates from within, as the Holy Spirit cultivates gentleness and quietness in their souls, leading them to willingly submit in their inner being before exhibiting outward obedience to their husbands.

Verse 6: "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

Peter specifically highlights Sarah from the Old Testament as an example. He says that Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. If you refer to the Old Testament, in Genesis 18:12, there's an account of Abraham and Sarah where Sarah referred to Abraham as lord. The context was when Abraham received three visitors who were actually angels, and he prepared a generous meal for them while he stood by to serve. At that moment, the angel told Abraham that Sarah would have a son by next year. Considering their old age, Sarah, who was at the entrance of the tent, heard this and laughed to herself, as recorded in verse 12: "Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'" This seems to be the only instance where Sarah addressed Abraham as "my lord." She did not say this directly to Abraham but rather muttered it to herself upon hearing the angel's words, finding it hard to believe. In her muttering, she referred to Abraham as "my lord."

Peter refers to this example, and we can try to speculate on Peter's thought process behind using it. Addressing one's husband as "lord" to his face may be out of politeness or formality, but when muttering to oneself, still referring to Abraham as "my lord," it demonstrates that Sarah obeyed Abraham from her heart, making her an excellent example of lifelong submission to Abraham.

In the early years, when the glorious God appeared to Abraham and called him to leave Ur of the Chaldeans and go to the place God indicated to him, it was only a promise at that time. God did not give Abraham a map, nor did He tell Abraham the route, and God seemed not to have provided how to live along the way. As a result, Abraham agreed, and thus Abraham became the father of our faith. What about from Sarah's side? Sarah also immediately followed along, without hesitation or delay. Even after enter the Promised Land, Abraham had moments of weakness, calling Sarah his sister to protect himself, for she was very beautiful, fearing that if it was known she was his wife, they would kill him to take her. It was Abraham's weakness that led to Sarah being taken by the kings of Egypt and King Abimelech. Fortunately, God intervened both times, rescuing Sarah and bringing her safely back to Abraham. In both instances, Sarah showed complete obedience without

complaint. Throughout Abraham's life, he was molded by God, ultimately becoming the father of faith for all of us.

Sarah symbolizes grace. Therefore, Peter says to the sisters who are wives: "If you do good and are not afraid with any terror, you are Sarah's daughters." In other words, you are daughters of grace. God will give you sufficient grace to enable you to submit to your husbands in all things, just as Sarah submitted to Abraham.

Verse 7: "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

In verse 7, Peter turns to husbands. Though it is only one verse, it elucidates the husband's responsibility profoundly. Firstly, there is a key word at the beginning of this verse, "likewise," which the Chinese Union Version did not translate. Preceding this, the passage discusses wives' submission to husbands. When addressing husbands, Peter adds the adverb "likewise," implying that husbands are also to submit to their wives, albeit in a different manner. However, when speaking of mutual submission, Paul also instructs the saints in Ephesians 5:21, "submitting to one another in the fear of God." Therefore, there is no contradiction in truth, as the roles of men and women were created differently from the beginning. Consequently, the considerations regarding submission naturally differ. Paul's teaching to husbands is to love their wives.

The word "love" is very broad. How should one love? What kind of love can make your wife feel it? Paul did not specify these details about loving one's wife. Concerning husbands loving their wives, Peter, who has more experience, adds many details based on his experience. The first is, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding." In the original text, "understanding" means knowledge. KJV translates it as "understanding," NIV as "considerate," and Darby translates it literally as "knowledge." Collectively, it means you must know your wife, live with her in a considerate and reasonable manner according to her needs. First and foremost, living together is crucial, followed by living together in a manner that is

considerate. Peter tells husbands here that when you take your wife as your spouse, you must live with her, not leave her or abandon her. This is the most basic requirement for husbands. Furthermore, you must dwell with her in a manner that is considerate, meaning you must know her, be sensitive to her, and meet her needs in a reasonable and understanding way, so she can live comfortably with you.

The second point is to honor her, to respect her, to value her, to see her as worthy and precious. Why should a wife be honored? Peter gives two reasons. The first reason to honor a wife is because she is "as to the weaker vessel." If we translate according to the original text, it should be she is a vessel of weakness. "Weaker vessel" implies that both husband and wife are vessels created by God, with the wife being the weaker vessel and the husband the stronger vessel. The function of a vessel is to contain things.

Originally, God created humans to contain Himself. In God's design, men are physically strong, decisive, and capable, making them strong vessels. Women, on the other hand, are physically weaker but resilient, detail-oriented, and willing to compromise, making them weaker vessels yet the best auxiliary vessels. The first reason husbands should honor their wives is because she is a weaker vessel, hence you should cherish her. The second reason is because she is "being heirs together of the grace of life." Peter's statement here is excellent. The term "grace of life" is unique to Peter and is used in the context of marital relationships. This truth is completely realized from Peter's own experience in marriage. Living together with his wife, they experienced spiritual growth, shared spiritual experiences, visited and served the church together, and prayed for the needs of the church. Through all these shared experiences, they encountered many graces of life, all contained within their vessels.

Dear brothers and sisters, you must value your spouse, whom God has joined together cannot be separated. This is the negative aspect. On the positive side, spouses should share life experiences together, grow spiritually together, and participate in church ministries together, thus accumulating the grace of shared life. According to truth, there will be no marriage in heaven, but as Peter says, the grace of life shared together will last forever, it is our eternal inheritance in heaven.

Therefore, even though there will be no marital relationships in heaven, the grace of shared life cannot be replaced by other saints.

Peter advises husbands to dwell with their wives with understanding, "giving honor to the wife ... that your prayers may not be hindered." Generally speaking, hindrances to prayer come from a guilty conscience. One must repent and confess sins before having a clear conscience again and being able to pray without any hindrance. This also indicates that if a husband cannot dwell with his wife according to understanding and does not honor his wife, he must repent and confess his sins before he can have open fellowship with God again. Verses 1 to 7 of chapter 2 deal with the relationship between husband and wife, while verses 8 to 12 deal with the relationship among saints in general.

Verse 8: "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;"

At the beginning, Peter uses the word "finally," on the one hand, as a summary of verses 1 to 7, which is a summary of the husband-wife relationship, and on the other hand, it also opens a new paragraph, which is to deal with the relationship among saints in general. Between these two paragraphs, there are two common requirements. The first is "be of one mind, having compassion for one another." The word "one mind," in the KJV, is written as "of one mind," which means having the same mind, not the same as your mind or my mind, but the same as the mind of Jesus Christ. This is completely consistent with what Paul said in Philippians 2:2, that the saints should "fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Being of one mind means taking the mind of Jesus Christ as our mind, taking the preferences of Jesus Christ as our preferences, taking the decisions of Jesus Christ as our decisions, that is, everyone should be of one mind with Jesus Christ.

If someone cannot keep up, we should have compassion for one another. The saints who come together to serve in the church have different measures of life, and it is natural for some to be unable to keep up. At this time, the mature ones should bear

with the young ones, and the young ones should listen to the mature ones, learning together the lesson of being of one mind. The one-mindedness and one accord of a church is a key factor in whether the church can prosper or not; especially when developing various ministries, do not be too hasty, but allow the saints to enter into a consistent burden before moving forward together. If many ministries are developed at once without being of one mind, these ministries will eventually harm the church and make it impossible for the church to be one. Therefore, mature saints will wait until the saints are of one mind and one accord before starting various ministries. Of course, to reach one mind and one accord, there needs to be a lot of fellowship and a lot of mutual compassion.

The second is to "love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous." First, you must be able to be of one mind, and second, you must love one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. The saints in the church have different backgrounds of growth and different experiences of people and things. It is only because of believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ that they are called brothers and sisters and come together to serve together. When serving, it is inevitable that there will be friction between each other and even offenses against each other. Therefore, everyone should treat this as a process of learning and growing together. Frictions and offenses inevitably arise among them in service, so everyone should consider it as a shared learning experience, a journey of mutual growth.

It's essential to hold onto the belief that no matter what, I will love the saints around me as brothers and sisters. Having a tenderhearted attitude means showing more compassion if others offend you, avoiding petty calculations; learning to forgive, learning to show humility, which means considering others better than yourself, placing yourself in a lower position. Grace flows like water, downward. If you position yourself low enough, you will surely receive abundant grace. Typically, an experienced person is humble, making it easy to get along with others, not exerting pressure on them, and finding areas to learn from in every saint.

Verse 9: "Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."

If someone wrongs you, does evil to you, "not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling." Because that is the principle of the world, but the church is the kingdom of God. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 to 7 is the constitution of the kingdom of heaven, rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. Earthly laws apply to earthly kingdoms, while the constitution of the kingdom of heaven applies to the church. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus teaches how to respond to those who do evil to you, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." If the saints in the church could treat each other according to the constitution of the kingdom of heaven, I guarantee there would be no evil people in the church.

Peter says, "Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." We are called to bless those who offend us because of our calling. In Matthew 5:3-10, the Beatitudes of the kingdom of heaven, it speaks of our calling to be poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted for righteousness' sake. If you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, the kingdom of heaven is yours. This aligns with Peter's statement that we are called to inherit a blessing. It may seem like you are losing by blessing others despite being wronged, but in the end, it's you who truly receives the blessing. And what you receive is heavenly, eternal blessings. Compared to that, what is a little injustice we suffer?

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for entrusting us with the First Epistle of Peter. Through Peter, we see Your grace, shaping him into a mature and seasoned apostle. His counsel shines brightly with every word, and his life experience becomes our hope. He instructs us on how to handle marital relationships, how to

treat the saints in the church, lessons we ought to learn and obey, not merely imitate outwardly, but grow inwardly, leading to obedient lives outwardly. Bless my church, may we all find hope in Peter's letters, a hope we can experience and enjoy in our church life today. Bless my church, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.