

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

Mark 3:20-27

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Let's continue reading Mark 3:20-27.

Yesterday we read about Jesus going up the mountain and selecting twelve men, appointing them as apostles. He wanted them to live with Him and sent them out to preach, also granting them authority to cast out demons. From that moment, Jesus officially began training these twelve disciples. The first stage of their training was for these men to live with Jesus every day, to work with Him, to listen to His words, and to see how He served God and others. They were to stay by Jesus' side to learn.

From Mark 3:20-6:6, we see the various experiences these men went through during this first stage of staying with Jesus and learning to serve. However, Mark's account is very concise, focusing on Jesus serving as a servant. Mark doesn't record Jesus' lengthy teachings, so to fully understand the disciples' training, we need to refer to what Jesus did during this time in other Gospel accounts.

In Luke 6:17-19, we see that this passage directly follows Jesus appointing the twelve apostles. Jesus then goes down the mountain with the disciples to preach to the gathered crowd, heal the sick, and later speaks directly to the disciples on a hillside.

Regarding Jesus' lengthy teachings, Matthew's Gospel provides the most complete account, especially chapters 5 through 7, where Jesus gives a comprehensive teaching to the disciples after appointing them as apostles. These three chapters, known as the Sermon on the Mount, are essential for the disciples' training. They replace the old covenant of Moses with the constitution of the kingdom of God. While Moses' law was for the earthly kingdom of Israel, Jesus came to establish God's kingdom, so He established a new constitution for that kingdom. Therefore, Jesus said He did not come to abolish the Law of Moses but to fulfill it. This

fulfillment has two aspects: externally, Jesus replaces Moses' law with a higher kingdom constitution, and internally, Jesus gives eternal life to people, enabling them to live according to the constitution of the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew 5-7, known as the constitution of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus first defines who the citizens of the kingdom are or what qualifies as citizenship. There we see the eight types of people: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. These eight types of people will receive corresponding blessings from heaven, hence they are collectively known as the Beatitudes. After defining the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus teaches many truths. These truths are crucial and foundational for disciple training but were not recorded by Mark.

After Jesus brings the disciples down the mountain, He heads towards Capernaum. On the way, Jesus heals the servant of a centurion and raises the son of a widow from Nain. These miracles were not recorded by Mark, as his focus is on Jesus as a servant. Later, Jesus and the disciples arrive in Capernaum, likely returning to the home of Peter and Andrew, which served as Jesus' headquarters in the Galilean region. They had traveled a considerable distance and now returned home.

Verse 20: "Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread."

This house is likely Peter and Andrew's home. Now Jesus returns to His own home, having traveled a long way, intending to rest. However, when Jesus returns, the crowd gathers at Peter's house again, seeking Jesus' help. Although healing and casting out demons were not Jesus' main earthly mission, out of compassion, He continued to help those who came to Him. Therefore, even when Jesus returned home, He could not rest, not even to eat bread. Eating, drinking, and resting are legitimate human needs, but Jesus was fully occupied with His work on earth. Seeing Jesus so busy, those close to Him felt distressed.

Verse 21: "But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind.'"

Jesus' own people likely refer to those related to Him by blood, not His disciples, but His mother Mary and His brothers. They had blood ties and natural affection for Jesus. They loved Jesus, but their love was based on natural emotions. Seeing Jesus working tirelessly, not even taking care of His basic needs, they judged Him as being out of His mind. Especially with Jesus working so recklessly, they worried about His physical well-being. Out of love for Jesus, they wanted to restrain Him from continuing to work, but they truly did not understand Jesus or His mission.

Jesus was acutely aware that He had less than a year and a half left to fulfill His mission, and He had to work tirelessly to accomplish it. However, at that time, Mary couldn't overcome the constraints of family ties. She truly loved Jesus and couldn't bear to see Him so busy without taking care of His physical needs. And at that time, Jesus' several brothers still didn't believe in Him. So, the opposition from Jesus' relatives, though well-intentioned, paved the way for malicious opposition.

Dear brothers and sisters, on the path of following the Lord, sooner or later we will encounter such situations. Many times, our well-intentioned actions, based on natural emotions and judgments, inadvertently obstruct God's work. Therefore, even our concerns for our loved ones need to be brought before God, asking Him to give us wisdom and spiritual insight to understand God's work in our loved ones and not let our concerns become stumbling blocks to His leading. Because Jesus' relatives said He was out of His mind.

Verse 22: "And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebub,' and, 'By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.'"

In verse 6, we have seen the Pharisees and Herodians conspiring together to destroy Jesus. Now, scribes came down from Jerusalem, joining forces with the Pharisees and Herodians to oppose Jesus.

They said Jesus had Beelzebub, which was a derogatory term implying that Jesus was possessed by a demon. Baal-Zebub is mentioned in 2 Kings 1:2 as the god of Ekron. The name literally means 'Lord of the Flies,' likely because flies are often found around dung heaps, so it is also called the 'god of filth.' It also carries the connotation of 'the ruler of the house,' as demons were believed to dwell within people, treating them as their dwelling places. Therefore, the Jews came to regard Baal-Zebub as either a demon or Satan.

If we look at the parallel passage in Matthew 12:22-32, it mentions a man who was demon-possessed and blind and mute, brought to Jesus, likely to Peter's house. Jesus cast out the demon, and the man could speak and see again. Perhaps these scribes accused Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub precisely when Jesus cast out the demon from this man, claiming that Jesus was using the power of Beelzebub to cast out demons.

They raised two objections: first, they questioned His identity, suggesting that Jesus was not filled with the Holy Spirit but with a demon. Second, they questioned His methods. These scribes were highly educated and respected individuals from the big city, known for their clear thinking. By raising these objections directly to Jesus in front of everyone, they were challenging Him. Let's see how Jesus responded. His response is divided into two parts, addressing their questioning of His methods first.

Verses 23-25: "So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.'"

Jesus directly pointed out to these educated individuals that their accusation that Satan casts out demons was illogical. Because if a kingdom is divided against itself, it cannot stand, and the same goes for a house. Logically, Satan would not attack himself. Satan's power structure is highly organized, with clear hierarchy and stability. That's why, since Adam's fall, Satan has been the ruler of the world and will continue to rule until the end of the age. If Satan were to attack himself, it would be like a kingdom or a household divided against itself, which would lead to its

collapse. From Jesus' analogy, we can see that Satan's system includes both kingdoms and households.

Verse 26: "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end."

Therefore, regarding the accusation that Satan casts out demons, Jesus pointed out that such logic was flawed. Indeed, from our own experiences, we know that human kingdoms collapse and households disintegrate primarily due to internal conflicts. If we understand Satan's schemes, we'll realize that Satan's way of corrupting people is by causing internal conflicts.

The principle of blaming others for one's actions started in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Adam and Eve through the serpent. Later, God came looking for them and asked Adam, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" In Genesis 3:12, it says, "Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'" Adam, after eating, shifted the blame to the woman. Consequently, God questioned the woman, and she replied, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." In other words, she shifted the responsibility to God, saying, "The serpent, whom You created, deceived me, and I ate." Satan's method of destruction began by sowing discord within the fundamental family unit of humanity, while Satan's own kingdom, of course, would not make such errors. After Jesus pointed out that the logic of casting out demons by Beelzebub was fundamentally flawed, He then addressed another fundamental issue: His identity. They claimed that Jesus was possessed by Beelzebub. How did Jesus respond?

Verse 27: " "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house."

Jesus told them how He cast out demons. Here, the strong man refers to Satan, the ruler of demons they mentioned. To enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, one must first bind the strong man, then they can plunder his house. This metaphor is intriguing; the strong man represents Satan, and the goods in his house are the people enslaved by Satan.

Humans were originally created by God in His image and likeness, to represent Him in managing all creation. God gave humans a very exalted position. However, after being captured by Satan, humans became like household goods in Satan's house. A household item is merely a tool with a specific function; besides this function, it has no other value. When a household item becomes old, damaged, or used up, it is discarded. This is Satan's principle of using people; he doesn't care about a person's value, only about what utility they can provide. Once that utility is lost, they are no longer valuable.

Dear brothers and sisters, think about whether your job is like this. When you reach a certain age, the king of this world calls you to retire because you are no longer useful to him, and you no longer hold any value in his eyes. Satan is the king of this world, and his practice is to use people up, exhaust them, and then discard them. However, in God's household, it's entirely different. God doesn't use people; instead, He nurtures them and grants them eternal life. Since it's eternal, it means continuous growth and increase, becoming more valuable as you grow older. That's why there's no retirement in the church. In the church's ministry, we all need to learn from Caleb, as mentioned in Joshua 14:10-11. Caleb said, "Now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in." At 85 years old, Caleb chose to go and fight for a mountain that wasn't easily conquerable because in spiritual warfare, the more challenging it is, the richer life becomes, and the stronger one's fighting ability becomes.

Jesus didn't cast out demons by relying on the ruler of demons. We see in the Gospels that Jesus cast out demons one by one because at that time, Jesus hadn't

yet bound the strong man. One day, Jesus would bind the strong man, and then we would be able to plunder his house. So, when did Jesus bind the strong man? Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Jesus bound Satan by dying on the cross. It was at that moment that Satan was bound, and the strong man was bound. Then people could plunder his goods, not in secret theft but openly. Moreover, we could even plunder the goods in Satan's house. The best example of this is found in Acts chapter 2. At that time, Jesus had already risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, and Satan was already bound on the cross.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out, and all twelve apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter stood up and delivered a powerful message. It culminated in Acts 2:36, where Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." So, when Jesus was crucified, Satan was bound at that very moment. Peter's message pierced the hearts of the listeners, and they asked Peter what they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, uniting with Christ in His death. When Jesus died, Satan was bound, and now, through your union with Jesus in His death, Satan is also bound in you. As a result, three thousand people were saved on that day, truly plundering Satan's house. Three thousand who were once captives of Satan as goods in his house were released that day.

Paul continued Peter's work by bringing the gospel to the Gentiles, as his own testimony. In Acts 26:18, he said that Christ sent him to the Gentiles to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. We continue Paul's ministry today, bringing salvation to people through preaching the gospel. It's actually entering the strong man's house, which is Satan's, to plunder Satan's goods. A person who remains captive in Satan's house becomes like a household item, with only utility and no life. But once they believe in Jesus Christ, their spirit is quickened, and they have eternal life within. Colossians 1:13 tells us

that every regenerated person is delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into Christ, the kingdom of God's beloved Son. Dear brothers and sisters, we must understand that every instance of preaching the gospel is actually warfare. We must plunder those who have been captured by Satan and made into household goods. Therefore, we need to bind the strong man in the name of Jesus Christ first. We need to use prayer and the authority given to us by God to bind the evil one, so that those who are under his control can be set free.

Let's pray together: Lord, thank You for completing the great work on the cross, not only for accomplishing our redemption but also for binding Satan at that moment. Help us to apply this established fact, enabling our friends around us to be liberated from the control of Satan and to be transferred into the kingdom of Christ's light. Bless the church where I belong, and bless the seekers in the church, that they may all experience liberation, come to know Jesus Christ, and make Him their Savior for life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.