

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

2 Peter 01: 12-15

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week we'll be reading 2 Peter chapter 1, and today we'll read from verse 12 to verse 15.

Peter condensed his lifetime of following the Lord into five verses, starting from believing in Jesus and receiving eternal life, adding virtue, adding knowledge, adding self-control, adding perseverance, adding godliness, adding brotherly kindness, and finally adding divine love. Reaching the ultimate stage, one can be completely united with God. If we can act in this way, Peter confidently tells us, we will never stumble, and we will be able to enter the Millennial Kingdom to reign with Christ for a thousand years. After the Millennial Kingdom ends, we will richly enter the eternal kingdom, enjoying eternal communion with God in the new heaven and new earth.

These words are the crystallized essence of Peter's lifetime of following the Lord, very condensed. We should all keep them in our hearts and often reflect on them as we walk the path of life. This way, we can know where we are and what areas we need to strengthen and supplement.

Verse 12: “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.”

Peter begins by saying, "though you know and are established in the present truth," indicating that when Peter visited the churches in his later years, his consistent burden was to help the saints walk on the path of sanctification and experience the salvation of the soul. Thus, he had already spoken about this message many times. He knew that the saints understood his burden, recognized these truths, and had been established in them. However, when Peter picked up his pen to write the

letter, he still wanted to remind the saints of these things. If he did not do so, he would feel derelict in his duty. We see that Peter is like an elderly father, repeatedly admonishing his children about the matters of life growth leading to maturity. This was his central burden and the main focus of his ministry in his later years.

Verses 13-14: "Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me."

At this time, Peter was aged, and the violent Nero was fiercely persecuting Christians. In these circumstances, Peter knew that the time of his martyrdom was near; therefore, he wanted to seize the remaining time to write this letter to remind and stir up the saints. He emphasized the importance of the growth of life and the manifestation of virtue. This was Peter's final exhortation to the persecuted saints of that time and to the saints of the universal church today: not to stagnate but to continue growing in life and adding virtues.

Peter said he considered it right to remind and stir up the saints as long as he was in this tent, because he knew that the time of putting off his tent was near. Here, "tent" refers to Peter's body, reminiscent of how the common ancestor of the Israelites, Abraham, lived in tents all his life. This signifies that his time on earth was as a sojourner, always ready to move when God called. In his first epistle, Peter solemnly told us that a follower of God is a sojourner on earth, living in a tent, experiencing a life of wandering and toil, with the true place of rest being the better homeland in heaven. Here, Peter goes even further: not only are our days on earth as sojourners, but our spirit and soul residing in our body are also sojourning.

If we truly understand that our body is a temporary dwelling place, we will not be overly concerned with decorating or arranging it elaborately. Paul's view aligns with Peter's. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The earthly tent refers to our current soulish body, which

is temporary and will one day be destroyed, after which we will receive the eternal house from God in heaven, our spiritual body that we will put on after resurrection.

Paul used several clever contrasts here: one is earthly, the other is heavenly; one is temporary, the other is eternal; one is a rough tent for temporary rest, the other is a splendid house for eternal rest. With this understanding, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:8-9, when facing various difficult circumstances, we can be fearless because "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him." This was Paul's understanding of his flesh and his life on earth. When Paul reached the end of his life, he was full of confidence. He said in 2 Timothy 4:6-8, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

We see that before his martyrdom, Paul had no trace of sadness, but was full of hope and assurance, because he knew for certain that the crown of righteousness was laid up for him. Peter was the same here. He knew that the time for putting off his tent had come. He was not afraid, not worried, and not troubled, because Jesus Christ had already shown him this, more than once. The first hint Jesus gave was in John 13:36. When Jesus was about to go to Jerusalem to be crucified, Peter, not understanding, asked, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." I believe that later, Peter recalled Jesus' words and understood that Jesus was telling him that he too would be crucified in the future.

The second instance was even clearer. In John 21:18, after Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" and reminded him three times, "Feed My lambs, tend My sheep, feed My sheep," Jesus then prophesied to Peter, "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." Indeed, during the Gospel times, Peter girded himself and went wherever he wished; he was outspoken and did whatever

he wanted. Jesus predicted that in his old age, Peter would become very gentle and obedient, stretching out his hands to let others gird him and lead him to a place he did not wish to go.

When old John wrote the Gospel of John, Peter had already been martyred for many years, and John knew how Peter died. So the aged John added verse 19, "This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God." John added his own comment, revealing that Peter's martyrdom glorified God to such an extent. Dear brothers and sisters, martyrdom is not a sad thing; it is a glorious thing. When Stephen was martyred, he looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God.

There is a touching legend about Peter's martyrdom. I do not know the veracity of this legend; it may have some historical basis, but whether it is entirely true might not be so important. The legend says that during the time when Peter was in Rome, Nero was fiercely persecuting the church and Christians. Peter, as the chief apostle of Jesus Christ, was naturally a prime target. Peter decided to leave Rome to avoid danger. As he was leaving the city, he saw a familiar face entering. Peter stopped the person and asked, "Where are you going in such danger?" Upon closer look, he found it was the Lord. The Lord said to Peter, "I am going to Rome to be with those who have no shepherd." Hearing this, Peter realized his mistake and immediately turned back into the city. Shortly after, he was arrested and sentenced to be crucified. When it was time for execution, Peter said to the executioner, "My Lord was crucified for me; I am not worthy to be crucified like Him." So, Peter requested to be crucified upside down. Church history records that Peter indeed died by being crucified upside down, making a glorious testimony for God.

At this time, Peter knew his martyrdom was near, so he hurriedly wrote this letter to once again remind the saints of his burden.

Verse 15: "Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."

We see that Peter seized the time and used every opportunity to remind and stir up the saints; for this, he was diligent and made every effort. We see that even in his old age, when he was about to be martyred, Peter was still so diligent. Walking the path of life requires going through many processes, and the most important thing is a person's attitude: to be diligent and to make every effort. Peter himself set the best example. For the benefit of the saints, he continuously reminded them until his martyrdom. He wanted to leave his last words written down, so that even after his death, the saints would still remember these things. What things? The matters of growth in life and the manifestation of virtues.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are now at the end of the age, and the world we live in will only become more and more corrupt. We will face increasingly fierce attacks from the enemy. We should all the more remember Peter's ministry and his repeated reminders: that after believing in Jesus Christ and receiving rebirth, we must pursue growth in life, walk the path of sanctification, experience the salvation of the soul, and live a life full of virtues in our daily lives.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, we truly thank You. Peter, through his life following You, set a wonderful example for us and clearly showed us the way of growth in life. We believe that after receiving eternal life, we must live out the virtues that match this life. On top of these virtues, we must add knowledge; to knowledge, we must add self-control; to self-control, we must add perseverance; to perseverance, we must add godliness; to godliness, we must add brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, we must add love, until we are completely united with You. Peter was diligent all his life, making every effort, and faithfully treated Your commission as his last will, not only for the saints of his time but also for us two thousand years later. Help us to be brought into the vision that Peter saw and to follow in Peter's footsteps, using our lives to experience growth in life and manifest the virtues that Christians should have. Bless my daily life, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.