

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

Leviticus 1:14-17

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We will continue to read Leviticus chapter 1. Let's read from verse 14 to verse 17 today.

A burnt offering is a sacrifice offered by people to God for His acceptance. From the application of the New Testament, it means a person dedicating himself to God. Offering a burnt offering is done willingly according to one's ability, with the wealthy offering a bull, others offering a ram, and still others offering a turtledove or a young pigeon. Regardless of the size of the offering, God accepts them all. After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they had to toil and labor to have offerings to present; lazy and idle people would not be able to offer a burnt offering.

Likewise, New Testament saints must diligently labor to serve God, experience God, and allow God to work in them. The Christ they experience and gain will become their offering, which they can present to God as a burnt offering. The place for offering burnt offerings is on the bronze altar in the tabernacle. The bronze altar is the first object encountered upon entering the tabernacle. In New Testament terms, it is the first checkpoint encountered by saints entering the church, which is the act of offering themselves. This offering is continuous, increasingly higher, and increasingly abundant. A saint who has not dedicated himself to God has not truly begun church life. Such a saint is like a floating plant that drifts around; they come to the church as a passerby, unable to settle down or take responsibility. Such a saint cannot offer a burnt offering.

Therefore, every newly blessed and saved saint must immediately learn to offer a burnt offering, which means dedicating himself to God. Of course, a saint with a tender and immature life may not be able to offer a bull or a ram as a burnt offering, but they can still offer a bird as a burnt offering.

Verse 14: “And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the Lord is of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. ”

Every person who has received grace and salvation begins his journey to heaven. They have been transferred from the kingdom of Satan's darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved Son. They have a heavenly status and have obtained the right to become children of God. With some heavenly experiences, like a bird facing difficulties on the ground, they can spread their wings and fly away from the earth. At this time, the saint can offer a bird as a burnt offering, presenting a turtledove or a young pigeon. The turtledove is a bird of love. Song of Songs 2:12 says, "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."

The turtledove there is the bird of love. When this saint who loves the Lord issues a call of love, Song of Songs 2:14, God's response to him is, "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff." God calls this saint who loves the Lord a dove, representing purity and singularity towards God. This saint with a tender life may not have the experience of diligently laboring in service like a bull, or the experience of gentleness and obedience like a lamb, but he has responded to Christ's salvation with love. He also desires to follow Christ purely and singularly, so he can offer a turtledove or a young pigeon as a burnt offering. He must come to the tabernacle and present his offering to the priest. The one offering the sacrifice only needs to present it; he does not need to do anything further with the offering.

Verse 15: “ The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar.”

Previously, we read that when offering a bull or a ram, the one offering the sacrifice must slaughter the animal by hand and cut it into pieces. However, when offering a turtledove or a young pigeon, the priest must handle the offering for him. The priest represents the experienced saints in the church who know how to help the saints dedicate themselves. "The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its

head"—here, the altar refers to the bronze altar, which symbolizes the cross. This offeror does not have the experience of bearing the cross, so the priest must help him come to the cross. Wringing off the bird's head causes its death, which means helping him experience union with Christ's death. In this way, he will gradually learn to relinquish his own sovereignty, allowing Christ to become the head in his life.

And the bird's blood shall be drained out beside the altar, unlike the bull or the ram, whose blood is applied around the altar. The bird's blood quantity is small, so it is sprinkled beside the altar. This indicates that the offeror's experience of Jesus Christ's precious blood is not yet abundant, but the blood of Christ at the foot of the cross remains forever the basis and assurance of our salvation.

The young offeror does not have the ability to handle the offering, so the experienced saints in the church must help him understand the lordship of Jesus Christ, which is based on the Lord Jesus Christ shedding His blood and giving His life for us on the cross. When a young saint is willing to dedicate himself, the experienced saints must help him understand that dedication means relinquishing his own sovereignty and transferring it to the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us.

Verse 16: "And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes."

The crop of a bird, which we commonly refer to as the gizzard, is where the bird temporarily stores food after eating, located below the neck. Although turtledoves and young pigeons are clean, the food they consume is often unclean, making the crop unclean and hence must be removed. The term "filth" refers to the food inside the crop, which must be removed and discarded, to be thrown in the ash heap on the east side of the altar.

In Leviticus chapter 1 through 5, the primary focus is on how people should offer the five basic sacrifices: burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering,

and guilt offering. Regardless of how experienced the offeror is, the priest is still needed to assist by placing the properly prepared offering on the altar for burning.

After the offering is burned to ashes, the priest must also handle the ashes, as recorded in Leviticus 6:10, "And the priest shall put on his linen garments and his linen trousers; he shall put the ashes in the place outside the camp, a clean place." The specific duties of the priest in assisting with the offerings are detailed in Leviticus chapters 6 and 7, which we will examine more closely when we get to those chapters. For now, we understand that the east side of the altar is the place where the ashes are discarded, and the crop and its filth from the bird are to be disposed of in the same place.

A saint offering a bird as a burnt offering has a relatively immature life, so the handling of the sacrifice requires the priest's assistance. After the priest wrings off the bird's head, he must remove the unclean crop and filth, and then the remaining parts can be directly offered as a burnt offering.

Turtledoves and young pigeons are small and do not need to be cut into pieces like bulls and rams. Symbolically, immature saints' experiences of Christ are not yet complete or detailed. They have not yet experienced bearing the cross, and thus cannot be skinned or cut into pieces. Therefore, the handling of these sacrifices is entirely done by the priest.

Verse 17: " Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a [c]sweet aroma to the Lord."

The priest is to "take the two wings of the bird and tear it open, but not divide it completely." By tearing the two wings apart, the bird forms a shape resembling a cross, symbolizing Christ's cross. This indicates that the offeror has not yet experienced bearing the cross. The priest then places the turtledove or young pigeon on the wood of the altar and burns it. Verses 9, 13, 15, and 17 of this chapter all mention that the offering is to be burned on the altar. The Hebrew word for

"burn" is "Qatar", which originally means "incense." Therefore, "burn" in this context refers to the slow, gradual roasting or smoking process, allowing the offering to fully release its fragrance until it turns to ashes. This aroma rises up to God as a burnt offering. The term "burnt offering" essentially means "to ascend."

Dear brothers and sisters, the burnt offering is a sacrifice that pleases God, representing each Christian dedicating himself to God. This is what Paul refers to in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Therefore, it is only natural for every saint to offer himself to the Lord. However, according to Leviticus chapter 1, we might more strictly say that each saint's offering is to present his experiences of Christ as a sacrifice on the altar, burning it to produce a fragrant aroma that satisfies God. This is the true essence of offering oneself as a living sacrifice, as a burnt offering should be.

With this understanding, how should each saint offer a burnt offering in the church? Practically, each saint, upon coming to church on Sundays and partaking of the bread and cup in remembrance of the Lord, should use this time to offer a burnt offering. Each saint should present his weekly experiences of Christ before the Lord. Through fellowship with other saints, they should produce a fragrant aroma that satisfies God. Those with roles in the church can share new insights and deeper understandings of Christ gained through their service and labor. By offering their experiences and gains of Christ, this act symbolizes offering a bull as a burnt offering.

Other experienced saints can also share how they have followed Christ's leading, maintaining joyful obedience even in suffering. Through these experiences of obedience, they gain a deeper understanding and experience of Christ. Their sharing represents offering a ram as a burnt offering. New saints who have just received grace can share how they have experienced God's love and protection, expressing their desire to follow Christ more single-mindedly. Their offering symbolizes presenting a turtledove or a young pigeon as a burnt offering. If their sharing about God's love and protection is not as accurate, the experienced saints should appropriately help them. This is akin to the priest's role when offering a bird:

wringing off its head and tearing open the wings, symbolizing the guidance and support needed to help them grow in their offering.

At first, the immature saint might feel displeased, as if his head were being wrung off or his wings torn apart. However, such learning in the church is necessary for the growth of young saints. As they mature, they will learn how to assist those younger than themselves. For example, consider a young saint who is selling a house. After selling it for 10% more than the market value, he joyfully witnesses how God has blessed him and offers his thanks to God.

Giving thanks to God for everything is indeed good, but if the reason for gratitude is that he made an extra 10%, implying that the buyer lost 10%, this is unfair. While we understand that market mechanisms and operations are under God's control, and that gaining an additional 10% might be part of His plan, it is worth questioning if there are other factors involved. Perhaps there are specific needs of the saint, their surrounding saints, or the church itself. Experienced saints should help the younger ones understand God's will more deeply. Otherwise, if other saints are encouraged by his testimony to pray for similar gains, it raises the question of whether God would answer such prayers. If God were to answer such prayers, it would suggest a lack of righteousness on His part.

May God help each of us to willingly and joyfully offer our experiences of Christ, according to the measure of our own lives, as a burnt offering that pleases Him and brings satisfaction to God.

Let us pray: Lord, we thank You for Your guidance in reading of the book of Leviticus. We ask for Your wisdom and a spirit of revelation to truly understand the spiritual significance behind each ordinance. As we have learned how to offer burnt offerings, help us to follow Your leading in our daily lives. May the various circumstances we encounter help us to better know You, experience You, and enjoy You. Allow us to present the Christ we have gained as a burnt offering during our Sunday gatherings, placing it before our brothers and sisters. We hope that this offering, with its fragrant aroma, will ascend to You and bring You satisfaction. Bless our time in Your Word, making it more than just a set of objective rules. May it lead

us into the spiritual reality of this book and guide us on our path ahead. We pray this in the holy name of Jesus Christ.