

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

Leviticus 3:17

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 3. We will read the last verse - verse 17 today.

The peace offering, also known as the thanksgiving offering, is a sacrifice offered to God in gratitude, to fulfill a vow, or simply out of a willing heart to give to God. The peace offering can consist of a bull, a sheep, or a goat, whether male or female. This is a sacrifice shared between God and man. The blood of the sacrifice must be sprinkled around the altar, and the fat of the sacrifice, along with the kidneys and the fat tail of the sheep, must be burned on the altar as a sweet-smelling offering to the Lord. This is the food offered to the Lord, while the remainder becomes food for the people.

The priest's portion is the breast and the right thigh, while the rest is shared by the one who offers the sacrifice along with his family and friends. This is a joyful feast, witnessing the peace between God and man, as well as the mutual fellowship.

Verse 17: "This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood."

After discussing the offering of the peace sacrifice, a special reminder was added: in all your dwellings, which means in the daily lives of the Israelites, they must also observe these statutes, and it shall be a lasting ordinance for generations to come. God gave this solemn reminder concerning two matters related to eating: fat and blood. Let's first look at fat. The fat of the sacrificial animal must be removed and burned on the altar as a sweet-smelling offering by fire, which is offered to God.

Fat represents the glory of the sacrificial animal, and only God is worthy of it; it must be offered to God, and man cannot eat it, meaning that man cannot claim it

for himself. This reminds us that when we enjoy all good things, we must always offer the best to God, keeping Him in the most honored position. If we hold on to the good things for ourselves and refuse to let go, eventually, these things will become our idols. We will start to value them more than God, which will ensnare us. Therefore, when offering sacrifices, especially the peace offering, the fat must be placed on the altar as an offering to God.

Whenever we experience something good and give thanks to God, we must offer the most glorious part of that blessing to God. This is what we often refer to as "glorifying God," which means continually placing God in the most honored position. As for whether all fat is forbidden to eat, the Bible contains many verses where God promises the Israelites the enjoyment of fat. For example, Deuteronomy 32:14 says, "Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes." Here we see that God allows the Israelites to enjoy all kinds of good things, including the fat of lambs. Therefore, I personally believe that the fat mentioned in this verse refers to the fat during the sacrifice, which must be considered the most glorious part and offered to God.

Next, let's look at the issue of blood. People began eating meat after the flood, when God permitted them to eat meat. God said to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9:3-4, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." Here, we are also told the reason why we are not to eat blood—because blood represents the life of the animal. Man must respect life, and the source of life comes from God.

In Leviticus, we see that when offering sacrifices to God, if an animal is used, its blood must be sprinkled around the altar, and the blood of the sacrificial animal foreshadows the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus shed His precious blood on the cross, and by giving His life, He took upon Himself the punishment for our sins. The blood of the sacrificial animal is a foreshadowing, and the Bible says it must not be consumed. However, the blood of Jesus brings us real redemption. Jesus says in John 6:55-56, "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who

eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." Jesus instructs us to drink His blood so that we may dwell in Him, and He will dwell in us.

What is the blood of Jesus? In 1 Corinthians 11:25, when Paul speaks about the breaking of bread and drinking of the cup on the Lord's Day, he specifically quotes Jesus from the Last Supper, where He established the Lord's Table: "In the same manner, He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'" Therefore, every Lord's Day, when we gather together to eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of the Lord, this cup represents the new covenant established by Jesus' blood. We do not drink the blood of the earth, but we drink the blood of Jesus because it is the new covenant established by God. All life on earth will pass away, but what we receive in Christ is eternal life.

So, in the Old Testament, when it mentions not eating fat and blood, I prefer to interpret this from a spiritual perspective. As for whether Christians are allowed to eat blood, this question often troubles young Christians. First, we need to understand that the laws conveyed through Moses in the Old Testament, including those concerning ceremonial practices, cleanliness, dietary laws, and the Sabbath, are all foreshadows of Christ. Since Christ has come, these foreshadows are no longer needed and have been abolished.

Paul specifically addresses issues about eating in Romans 14, and the fundamental principle is stated in Romans 14:3: "Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him." The basic principle is mutual respect. Whether one eats or does not eat, we should neither despise nor judge each other but rather respect each other in these matters. With this attitude, Paul further explains in Romans 14:14, "I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Thus, everything created by God is clean; only if you consider something unclean does it become unclean to you.

In terms of practice, what if someone considers something unclean? If you believe it is clean but someone else believes it is unclean, how should you handle this? Paul provides a very good description in Romans 14:20-21: "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak." Therefore, in practice, whether you eat or do not eat is not determined by whether you consider it clean or unclean, but rather by whether your actions cause others to stumble. If they do, it is better not to do them.

Paul's teachings on the attitude towards food, our understanding of the truth, and our practice are very clear. Regarding the peace offering, I would like to take this opportunity to share some final thoughts with the saints. Some may find it unusual that while the burnt offering, which is a significant offering that is pleasing to God, allows those who cannot afford a bull or sheep to offer a turtledove or pigeon, the peace offering does not have this provision.

The peace offering does not include birds as part of the offering. From a practical standpoint, the burnt offering involves burning the entire animal on the altar, which is relatively easier to manage. In contrast, the peace offering requires dividing the animal into three parts: the fat and kidneys are given to God, the breast and right thigh are given to the priest, and only the remaining part is given to the offeror. Given the small size of turtledoves and pigeons, managing this division would be quite challenging, which is a practical consideration.

However, the more important aspect is its spiritual significance. The peace offering is a sacrifice of gratitude to God. Therefore, the offeror must have a subjective experience of Christ and offer a sacrificial animal in thanksgiving based on that experience. This means that the offeror must have a certain amount of labor and gain in order to offer what they have received from Christ as a thanksgiving offering.

In other words, it's not just about having a mark of grace in position; there must also be some spiritual, practical experience. At the very least, the offeror must have

an experience of obeying God's will. In such a case, they can offer a goat. If they have been able to obey God's good will, they can offer a lamb. If their labor and service are marked by abundant experiences of gratitude, they can offer a bull. Having read about the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering—these are the Old Testament regulations for offerings made by the Israelites—how should New Testament Christians correspondingly offer sacrifices?

I personally find it difficult to establish a perfect one-to-one comparison, mainly because the New Testament Christian experience is so rich. For example, the Lord's Supper, instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper, actually incorporates elements of the burnt offering, grain offering, and peace offering. First, Christ is the perfect burnt offering, through whom we can come before God and be accepted.

Christ is also the perfect grain offering. Just as a small amount of fine flour, oil, and all the frankincense were offered on the altar and remembered by God, Christ is remembered by God, and God also remembers us personally. Through eating the bread, we receive the supply of life, and through drinking the cup, we partake in God's new covenant, which is the covenant of grace.

Christ is also the peace offering. Through Christ offering Himself, we have peace with God. By offering Himself as the peace offering, God enjoys the beauty and sweetest love of Christ. The priests serving in Christ's love are to minister to the saints, who gather together to enjoy the love feast. In the early church, the saints gathered on Sundays to break bread and drink the cup in remembrance of the Lord, and they would usually share a meal together as well. This is why, in the Jerusalem church, the Greek-speaking widows complained about the distribution of food, leading the twelve apostles to say in Acts 6:2-3, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Here we see that managing food in the church is not a trivial matter. Those who serve in the distribution of food must be of good reputation, filled with the Holy Spirit, and full of wisdom, which sets a very high standard. This highlights the

importance of meal service in church life. In the Corinthian church, issues arose during their Sunday gatherings for the breaking of bread and sharing a meal. Paul rebuked them, as seen in 1 Corinthians 11:20-21, "Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk." Clearly, the love feast in the Corinthian church was not conducted properly, leading to some people going hungry while others were not only full but also drunk.

Thus, the health of a church can often be reflected in how it manages its Sunday love feast. The principle of the peace offering should guide the Sunday love feast. The saints serving the meal are to do so with thanksgiving to God, willingly dedicating themselves to this ministry. They can offer a bull, a lamb, or a goat. They present to God the most beautiful and sincere part of their weekly experience of God and then diligently serve with love, preparing delicious dishes to share with the saints at the church's love feast. This becomes a joyous banquet where God and His people celebrate together. Each saint serving the meal acts as a priest, receiving a special portion of Christ's love and power, enabling them to continue serving God and the church with love.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, thank You for clearly presenting the Old Testament offerings before us. Also, help us to understand that gatherings in the New Testament church are essentially gatherings to offer sacrifices to You. Thank You! Through Jesus Christ, we have made peace with You, so every Sunday as we come together in church to offer thanks and worship, may You receive all the glory.

May the saints, whether serving in the church as priests or simply enjoying the love feast at home as recipients of grace, find fulfillment in their roles. Remember the church I am at, where every Sunday is a joyful gathering, with God on the throne receiving the praise and adoration He deserves. May those in need find the fullness of God's love within His house, and especially may the dedicated saints serving be strengthened by Christ's love and power to serve God and the church effectively. Let each Sunday gathering be one that pleases God. We pray this in the holy name of Jesus Christ.