

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

Leviticus 05: 07-13

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Leviticus chapter 5, and today we'll read from verse 7 to verse 13.

The sin offering deals with the sinful nature, which is a matter of life. When your life is not right, you have no standing to come before God. Therefore, chapter four addresses the sin offering, starting with the most serious and impactful sin: when the anointed priest sins, causing the entire congregation to fall into sin. At this time, the sin offering is necessary to reconnect life and restore the worship and service to God.

The sin offering resolves the difficulties between man and God. Different people's sins have different effects, and the methods of restoration also differ. God has very clear regulations on how to offer the sin offering, what kind of sacrifice should be offered, and the method of offering it. Man has no freedom in this; man can only follow God's commands.

The trespass offering deals with sinful actions, which is a matter of daily living. However, the root of every sinful action still lies in man's inherent sinful nature. Therefore, the trespass offering has two parts. The first part targets the root, the sinful nature, which, like the sin offering, deals with the relationship of life between man and God. The second part involves addressing the restitution for the damage caused by sinful actions.

Chapter five addresses the trespass offering, not starting with the most serious sins, but with the sins that people most commonly commit. The most common sins people commit are the lapses in daily life that cause them to be unholy before God. For this type of sin, verses 1 to 13 are dedicated, and then verses 14 to 19 deal with trespasses against God, while chapter six, verses 1 to 7, address trespasses against others.

This arrangement seems to follow the frequency with which these trespasses occur in a person's life, starting with the most common and taking the most time to address the most frequently committed sins. This also shows that God desires us to always live a holy life.

Previously, we read about the four types of trespasses commonly committed in daily life: failing to give required testimony, accidentally touching a dead animal, coming into contact with another person's uncleanness, or making a rash oath. Listing these principal lapses can extend to similar behaviors in daily life since this section deals with one's own shortcomings. Strictly speaking, these do not cause loss or harm to a third party, so the second part, dealing with restitution, is not mentioned.

However, the root of these shortcomings still comes from human sinfulness, which needs to be addressed. Therefore, the trespass offering is presented specifically for human sinfulness, and sometimes it is also referred to as a sin offering. But the impact of these daily shortcomings is smaller than the sin offerings in chapter four, so only a female lamb is required for the offering. It can be either an ewe lamb or a female goat. We can understand it as offering an ewe lamb for the things that should have been done but were not, and offering a female goat for the trespasses committed by doing what should not have been done. Although these trespasses affect a person's holiness before God, they do not completely sever the relationship with God's life or the fellowship in that life. Therefore, the type of sacrificial animal is not strictly prescribed.

Verse 7: “If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.”

If his family is poor and he does not have the means to offer a female lamb, he can offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons as a substitute. Why offer two for the trespass offering? Because one is to be offered as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering.

This is quite significant, as it reveals that the trespass offering includes both a sin offering and a burnt offering. The sin offering is meant to remove the difficulties and obstacles caused by sin, while the burnt offering is to gain God's acceptance. Referring to these verses, we can look back and see that when a female lamb is offered as a trespass offering, the fat of the lamb is to be taken and burned on the altar. This part is to be accepted by God and corresponds to the burnt offering. Additionally, the lamb's blood is to be applied to the four corners of the altar, and the remaining blood is to be poured at the base of the altar. This part addresses the difficulties and obstacles brought about by sin and corresponds to the sin offering.

As for the remaining part of the sacrifice, we read in 6:26 that it belongs to the priest, and the priest must eat it in the courtyard of the tabernacle. If someone cannot afford to offer a female lamb, he can offer two turtledoves or young pigeons—one as a sin offering to remove the difficulties of sin, with the remainder going to the priest, and the other as a burnt offering, to be entirely burned and offered to God, thereby gaining God's acceptance.

This arrangement helps us understand the spiritual significance behind the trespass offering. When we sin, removing the obstacle of sin is only half of the process; we also need to fully dedicate ourselves to pleasing God. At that time, the type of sacrifice depended on the economic ability of the person offering it—those who were wealthy could offer a female lamb, while the poor could offer turtledoves or young pigeons.

For New Testament believers, this applies to their spiritual accumulation and richness. Seasoned believers, when they realize a shortcoming in their lives that causes them to lose their holy testimony, feel deep remorse and seriously offer an ewe lamb or a female goat as a sacrifice, representing the accumulation of their many years of spiritual labor. Younger believers who do not have an ewe lamb can still offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Next, let's look at how these two birds are handled.

Verse 8-9: “And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide it completely. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering.”

Among the two birds, one is to be used as a sin offering. The priest is to select one for the sin offering, and he is to wring off the bird's head but not sever it completely. The blood of the bird is then to be sprinkled on the side of the altar. If an ewe lamb were offered as a trespass offering, the blood would be applied to the four corners of the altar to remove the obstacle of sin. Since the bird has less blood, it is sprinkled on the side of the altar, serving the same purpose of removing the obstacle of sin. The remaining blood is to be drained at the base of the altar, symbolizing the firm foundation of salvation.

As for how the bird's body is to be handled, the Bible does not provide detailed instructions. However, following the principle of the sin offering, where the meat of the sacrifice belongs to the priest, this bird would also likely be the priest's portion.

Verse 10: “And he shall offer the second as a burnt offering according to the prescribed manner. So, the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.”

The second bird is to be offered as a burnt offering. We see that for a person to be accepted by God, the obstacle of sin must first be removed. Therefore, a sin offering is presented first, allowing the person to come back into God's presence. Following this, the burnt offering is made to please God. According to the regulations in Leviticus 1:15-17, the bird offered as a burnt offering requires that the priest wring off its head and drain its blood at the base of the altar. The crop and its contents are to be removed, and the wings of the bird are to be torn open. The whole bird is then placed on the wood on the altar and burned, turning into a pleasing aroma acceptable to God. In this way, the priest makes atonement for the person with the trespass offering, and their sin is forgiven.

Verse 11: “But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.”

If a person is too poor and cannot afford to offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons, they may offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour instead. An ephah was a unit of measurement used in ancient Israel, roughly equivalent to 22 liters today, so a tenth of an ephah would be about 2.2 liters of fine flour.

Here, we see God's tolerance and mercy. For the shortcomings in daily life, as long as we are willing to repent, even offering just 2.2 liters of fine flour, God accepts it. This serves as their sin offering, allowing them to be forgiven for their daily shortcomings and return to holiness. This raises a question: how can fine flour, which comes from plant life, atone for sin? Doesn't the Bible say that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin?

This question is challenging to answer, but the most reasonable explanation might be that this offering addresses the shortcomings in daily life. These shortcomings do not completely sever our relationship with God, but they do affect our holiness before Him. A seasoned believer might consider these to be serious sins and therefore offer an ewe lamb. Some believers with experience might view them as minor sins. While there is no distinction between greater and lesser sins before God, the impact of sins can vary, and this impact can differ from person to person.

Experienced believers, who regularly experience close communion with God, may feel that any loss of holiness significantly affects their intimacy with God. For them, this seriousness compels a solemn offering of an ewe lamb. More experienced believers, recognizing that these daily shortcomings have adverse effects, might offer turtledoves or young pigeons, seeking the covering of blood to bring peace to their conscience.

In contrast, younger believers, who may not have experienced close communion with God and whose spiritual sensitivity is lower, might not fully perceive the impact

of these daily shortcomings. They need to be taught that such lapses lead to a loss of holiness before God and require a price to be paid to restore it.

This price is a tenth of an ephah of fine flour. This offering serves as a reminder that what is needed most is a pure and gentle nature, like that of Jesus, to enhance their spiritual sensitivity. Since this is a sin offering, oil, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit, and frankincense, which symbolizes resurrection, cannot be added. Adding frankincense would turn it into a grain offering, but what is being offered here is a sin offering, so those elements are not included.

Verse 12-13: “Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the Lord. It is a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. The rest shall be the priest’s as a grain offering.”

The person offering the sacrifice is to bring a tenth of an ephah of fine flour to the priest, who will take a handful and burn it on the altar. This act is to be a memorial before God, similar to the fat of the ewe lamb or the burnt bird. It is offered to God as a remembrance.

Because the offeror’s spiritual maturity is still developing, they may not deeply perceive the wrongness of their actions, such as failing to provide the required testimony, touching something dead, coming into contact with uncleanness, or making rash statements. These may have been common behaviors before receiving grace, and after receiving grace, they need to be taught that these actions are wrong, require repentance, and must come with a small cost as a reminder of the need for spiritual maturity.

If the offeror presents the trespass offering, the priest will atone for the sins committed in these matters. Even if the offeror does not fully recognize these actions as sins, God does not require a blood sacrifice; as long as they are willing to obey and offer the tenth of an ephah of fine flour, God accepts it. Here, we see

God's abundant tolerance and mercy. For individuals at different levels of spiritual maturity dealing with common shortcomings in daily life, God seems to allow them to address these issues according to their spiritual maturity. These sins affecting their communion with God can be atoned for with an ewe lamb, turtledoves or young pigeons, or fine flour, depending on their level of spiritual development.

For the youngest Christians, when they offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, God accepts it, and their sins are forgiven. The priest takes a handful and burns it on the altar, while the remainder is given to the priest who assisted with the offering. This process is similar to the offerings of an ewe lamb or turtledoves, where part of the offering belongs to the priest.

Dear brothers and sisters, the common shortcomings in our daily lives can affect our holiness before God and the closeness of our communion with Him. May we be willing to be reminded and live a holy life before God. Thank God, He truly cares for our level of spiritual maturity and does not place a heavy burden on us. May God give us a willing heart to follow His commands and maintain holiness before Him according to our spiritual measure, so that we can live a godly life.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! We are truly grateful to You. You have told us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. In our daily lives, we acknowledge that we often fall short of Your standards and fail to live a holy life. We frequently come into contact with death, encounter uncleanness, and our tongues are often out of control. Help us understand that these things do not please You and affect our intimacy with You. Help us learn to offer trespass offerings according to our spiritual measure and to seek Your forgiveness regularly. You have promised us that if we confess our sins, You are righteous and faithful to forgive all our trespasses. Help us to live a holy and godly life before You each day. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!