

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

Leviticus 5: 17-19

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 05. We will read verses 17–19 today.

The guilt incurred by offending God must be atoned for with a trespass offering, and the sacrifice for the trespass offering must be an unblemished ram. This foreshadows that the one offering the sacrifice not only receives forgiveness for their guilt but also gains the supply of Christ, empowering them to follow God's perfect will. If a sin is committed unintentionally against the holy things of the Lord, the guilty person must bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with an estimation of its value plus one-fifth of it, to make restitution for the holy thing. This means that in addition to seeking God's forgiveness for the sin, the offender must also compensate for the loss incurred, adding 20%. Because the matter involves the holy things of God, the restitution must be given to the priest, who can then appropriately replace the damaged holy item. Even if the offense against God does not involve holy things, it must still be handled with due seriousness.

Verse 17: “If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.”

This passage speaks of someone who has sinned by doing something they should not have done, and thus they need to offer a guilt offering. The guilt offering must be accompanied by a corresponding action, and this action is something God has commanded not to do. Even though the person may be unaware of their wrongdoing, they are still guilty and must bear their iniquity. This concept may

seem a bit abstract, so let's consider a practical example. In Leviticus 23:22, God commands the people of Israel through Moses, "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God." This is a command from God to His people.

This is God's kindness. God ordained that when the Israelites harvest their crops, they must not reap to the very edges of their fields, nor gather the fallen gleanings, because these are meant to be left for the poor and the stranger. In every society, there are always some unfortunate individuals who are unable to sustain themselves. Therefore, God established this regulation for the Israelites to ensure that these poor and strangers are cared for. God didn't intend for them to simply give charity under the pretense of relief, but instead, HE commanded that a portion of the field's corners be left unharvested, and any grain that falls to the ground during the harvest should also be left behind. This is God's provision for the poor and the strangers.

Here we see that God not only cares for the physical needs of the poor but also for their dignity. In Israel's history, Ruth the Moabitess and her mother-in-law Naomi returned to Bethlehem from Moab and survived by gleaning the fallen grain. In Ruth 2:2, "So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.'" Because of this merciful law of God, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth, who returned to Bethlehem with nothing, were able to survive. Later, Ruth married Boaz, the landowner, and became an ancestor of King David.

King David is the greatest king in Israel's history; it is beyond imagination that a law designed to care for the poor and the stranger would become a necessary condition for the emergence of King David. Chinese people are traditionally thrifty, and with such a disposition, it would be easy to unknowingly violate this law. Even though it is done in ignorance, it is still considered a sin.

Verse 18: “And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know it, and it shall be forgiven him.”

Even though this sin offends God, it does not result in any tangible loss, and therefore there is no way to make monetary restitution. However, it is still a sin against God. Moses would then assign a value to the offense, and based on this estimated value, a ram without blemish from the flock, corresponding in value, must be taken as a trespass offering. This ram is to be given to the priest, who will offer it as a sacrifice to atone for the sin, and the offender's guilt will be forgiven.

Verse 19: “It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the Lord.”

Whenever there is sin before God, a trespass offering must be made. In fact, for every sin we commit, some may require tangible restitution where a corresponding value can be found and must be compensated for. However, more often, we violate God's commandments without any apparent equivalent or means of compensation. There are even many sins we commit unknowingly. But if you are unaware of these sins, how can you know to offer a trespass offering?

This is a good question, so let's consider how we can apply it today. In our daily lives, we handle many things, and if these matters clearly involve the service and worship within the church—meaning they are related to the holy things of God.

Generally speaking, we understand that God's house must be holy, so when handling these matters, we pay special attention. Saints often come together to pray about these things, and only after reaching consensus do they proceed. Typically, the chances of mistakes in such matters are low. However, when it comes to issues not related to church service or worship—things that do not involve the holy things of God—we usually handle them in ways we are familiar with. For example, decisions about where we should live or how to arrange extracurricular activities for our children, or how to plan our work?

We often view these as our personal matters and handle them in our familiar ways. During this process, many times, decisions may not align with God's will, and we might not even realize it. Perhaps after some time, during your Bible reading or personal morning prayers, you receive God's insight and understand His will and guidance for you. At such moments, past actions you previously saw as unproblematic might suddenly come to mind, and your understanding might change. In these cases, you should immediately offer a ram as a guilt offering.

You need to confess and repent before God, offering Christ as your trespass offering. The blood of Christ shed on the cross will atone for your guilt. The fat, kidneys, and the fat tail of the ram must be burned on the altar as a pleasing aroma to God, ensuring that HE accepts your offering. The meat of the ram is to be given to the priest, meaning that we must experience the supply of Christ and, through this supply, receive the ability to act according to God's perfect will. The ram offered must be valued according to Moses' estimation, which is the price the offeror must pay.

This also reflects that when we discover that our previous actions were not in line with God's perfect will, and we now feel a sense of guilt in our conscience and are willing to confess and repent, there may be a significant price to pay. It could involve adjustments in your work plans or moving to a location closer to the church. Many decisions we previously thought we could make on our own, without seeking God's will, and without recognizing any wrongdoing, may come to light as we grow in our spiritual life and our conscience becomes more sensitive. When you realize that these actions were not part of God's plan for you and that you have deviated from His will, you must still offer a trespass offering to find peace in your conscience.

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that through the five basic offerings in Leviticus, God will teach us how to live a holy and godly life before Him and help us walk on the path HE has predestined for us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for Your grace. You have accomplished everything for us; You are our burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin

offering, and trespass offering. Help us, through daily Bible reading and prayer, to better understand Your will and Your plans for us. Grant us a submissive heart, willing to place ourselves in Your gracious hands and let You guide our daily lives. Give us insight to grow in knowledge and understanding, so that we may comprehend the more excellent things and align our lives with Your perfect will as our direction and standard. Also, help us to address any sins that arise from violating Your will in a timely manner, and assist us in being honest and blameless before You. Bless my life, I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ.