

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

Leviticus 6:8-13

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 6, and today we will read verses 8 to 13.

We have completed reading the five basic offerings: the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. We have also come to understand that these five basic offerings are all types of Christ. By offering Christ as a sacrifice, we, who are inwardly sinful and outwardly commit sins, can receive forgiveness, be reconciled with God, and be accepted by Him.

Leviticus 6:8 through 7:38 recounts these five basic offerings from a new perspective, focusing on the priests. It examines how, according to God's will, the priests should assist people in making offerings: what their responsibilities are, what they should do, and what portion they receive during the offering process.

We must appreciate God's wisdom: In the Old Testament, the priests were mediators between God and people, and only the descendants of Aaron could serve as priests. However, in the New Testament, Peter declares in 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Here, Peter clearly tells us that every saint in the New Testament is a royal priest, so the passage we are about to read is relevant to every believer.

In the Old Testament, the priests offered bulls and sheep as sacrifices. What, then, should New Testament priests offer? In Romans 15:16, Paul shares his own experience, saying, "That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Paul tells us that New Testament believers are priests of the gospel, and the priest's duty is to bring God to people and bring people

before God. This means we must preach the gospel, lead people to salvation, and help them grow and become equipped until they mature and can be offered to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, perhaps you have the identity of a priest but you don't have the ministry of a priest; you might not know how to be a competent gospel priest. In that case, you need to understand the life and the necessary equipment of a priest even more. I hope that through our reading of the Scriptures, we can understand the responsibilities of a priest and be willing to train ourselves to live the life of a priest.

The most important aspect of the priest's life is offering burnt offerings, so today we will examine the burnt offering. In the first chapter, we learned that the burnt offering was a voluntary offering from the Israelites to God, allowing them to be accepted by Him. They could offer a bull, a ram, a goat, or even a dove or pigeon. The distinctive feature of the burnt offering is that the entire sacrifice was burned on the altar, transformed into a sweet aroma, and brought satisfaction to God. It was a sacrifice that brought pleasure to God. Let's take a look at the priest's responsibilities in offering the burnt offering.

Verses 8-9: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Command Aaron and his sons, saying, this is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it.'"

Aaron was the high priest, and his sons were the priests, who were to help the people offer the burnt offering. The burnt offering was to be placed on the altar's wood from evening until morning. During the day, there would usually be many Israelites who voluntarily came to offer burnt offerings, and the priests were very busy assisting the people in making their offerings. But when night came, and the people went home to rest, the priests could not go off duty. They had to place the burnt offering on the altar's wood to burn from evening until morning, ensuring that there was always a burnt offering on the altar. The priests' dedication was to be continuous, lasting all night until morning.

It is particularly notable that God's instruction regarding the burnt offering begins with the priests offering the evening sacrifice; this is similar to how Genesis chapter 1 describes God's creation, where evening comes first, followed by morning. In Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31, it speaks of the six days of creation, with each day mentioning there was evening and there was morning, from the first day to the sixth day, as if God places special importance on the evening.

From the perspective of the age, after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the entire era entered into the night, which will continue until Christ returns as the morning sun. During this period of waiting for Christ's return, the priests must be vigilant, and the offering of the burnt sacrifice must not cease. From a personal perspective, night is when most people rest, but if you are a priest of God, this is the time for you to dedicate yourself to God.

If a priest does not have personal dedication and devotion before God, they will not have the strength to serve and help others with offerings during the day. So, when speaking of the priest's service, God begins with the priest offering the burnt sacrifice at night, and the fire on the altar must be kept burning. The fire on the altar must not go out; this is the most important duty of the priest: the fire on the altar must be kept burning continuously and must not be extinguished.

In these few short verses, God repeatedly reminds us, on one hand, expressing that God is always ready to accept and be pleased with man's burnt offering. On the other hand, the priests also need to be ready at all times to assist people in making their offerings. Especially at night, when no one is making offerings, the burnt offering that the priests themselves offer must not cease from evening until morning.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you have begun to serve in the church, when there are many people, your service is visible and praised, which can make you feel motivated in your service. But if it is at night, when no one sees your labor, there are no words of praise, no caring glances, can you continue to labor and serve with the same dedication? This is the basic requirement for priests: the burnt offering

must be placed on the wood from evening until morning, and the fire on the altar must be kept burning continuously.

Verse 10: "And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his body, and take up the ashes of the burnt offering which the fire has consumed on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar."

The priest, while serving in the Tabernacle, had to wear priestly garments. In Exodus 28:40-43, we see that the priest's attire consisted of four items: a linen robe, a sash, a turban, and linen trousers. Because they were serving the glorious God, their attire had to be correspondingly glorious and beautiful. This also reminds the saints in the New Testament that when serving in the church, they must be appropriately dressed.

The linen robe symbolizes being without blemish in conduct; the linen trousers cover human shame; the sash represents being bound by truth, ready for action; and the turban symbolizes not seeking one's own prominence, but following God's guidance in everything. Therefore, when the priest served in the Tabernacle and helped people offer sacrifices, the garments he wore were completely in accordance with God's command, and they could not be worn carelessly.

The burnt offering involved placing the sacrifice on the altar and burning it until it turned to ashes. Here, special attention is given to the handling of the ashes. The priest had to wear the beautiful priestly garments to handle the ashes of the burnt offering altar. This is different from our usual understanding; generally speaking, ashes easily scatter and can soil clothing, so we typically change into work clothes when handling ashes.

But here, the ashes are from the burnt offering altar, which means that the offering was burned, transformed into fragrance, accepted by God, and then these ashes were left. Therefore, these ashes were also holy. The priest had to wear his robe, solemnly and carefully gather the ashes and place them beside the altar, not just dumping them on the ground next to the altar.

These ashes were to be placed in a container and taken outside the camp. Normally, the priest would place a handful of ashes on the east side of the altar, near the entrance of the Tabernacle, so that the next priest on duty could see them upon entering, as evidence that the burnt offering had been burning all night and that the fire on the altar had not gone out. The ashes from the burnt offering had to be taken outside the camp, because they were holy and could not be disposed of casually.

Moses led the congregation of Israel through the wilderness for 40 years, and the Tabernacle moved with them. When the Israelites set up camp, the Tabernacle would be at the center, and the twelve tribes of Israel would camp around the Tabernacle, three tribes on each side. The camp included the Tabernacle and the twelve tribes surrounding it. Inside the camp was where God's presence dwelt, and the ashes from the burnt offering altar had to be taken outside the camp.

Verse 11: "Then he shall take off his garments, put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place."

The priest had to first remove the robe he wore while serving and put on other garments, which were ordinary clothing, before carrying the ashes outside the camp. The priest's garments were glorious and beautiful, intended for serving God and ministering to His people. This glory and beauty were not for the general public, but for those who had the capacity to appreciate them.

Similarly, when Jesus performed His ministry on earth, the glory of the Son of God was revealed only to His disciples, so that they could recognize Him as truly the Son of God. To the unbelievers, Jesus appeared as an ordinary man; hence, they saw Him as just a carpenter from Nazareth. The same principle applies here: those who value salvation can see the glory and beauty of the priestly office. When the priest carried the ashes outside the camp, which was beyond the area of God's presence, he had to change into ordinary clothing and take the ashes to a clean place outside the camp.

Since outside the camp was beyond the area of God's presence, how could there be a clean place outside the camp? The Bible here lays a significant groundwork. Yes, without God's presence, there is no clean place. However, there is one exception, because when Jesus Christ was crucified, He was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem, at Golgotha. Hebrews 13:12-13 says, "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

Outside the camp was where Jesus was crucified. Because of the precious blood shed on the cross, this place was made holy, and it is also the place where unbelievers come to receive grace. The world must pass through Golgotha, be covered by the precious blood, and only then can it be made holy. As early as in Leviticus, when the ashes of the burnt offering were taken outside the camp, it was a foreshadowing of Jesus being crucified outside the camp, to open a way of salvation for those in an unclean place.

Verse 12: "And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings."

Here, God once again reminds that the fire on the altar must always be kept burning and must not go out. Especially at night, when the people are not offering sacrifices, it is entirely the priest's responsibility to ensure that the burnt offering continues and that the fire on the altar does not go out. Every morning, the priest must add wood and place the burnt offering on the altar; this means that the priest must offer the evening sacrifice at night and the morning sacrifice at dawn.

We know that the burnt offering is the foundation of the other four offerings because it is the offering that is pleasing to God. Only on the foundation of God's acceptance can other offerings be made. The morning sacrifice offered by the priest each day establishes the foundation of acceptance by God for that day.

On this foundation of the morning sacrifice, the people could offer various types of offerings according to their personal needs. These offerings are all based on the burnt offering. The peace offering, in particular, involves burning the fat of the sacrifice on the altar. The burnt offering on the altar usually burns slowly with a small flame, but when the fat of the peace offering is added, the fire immediately flares up, and the fragrance spreads abundantly. The peace offering, built on the foundation of the burnt offering, also testifies to the harmony between God and man, with both God and man being satisfied together.

Verse 13: "A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out."

God again reminds us that there must always be a fire burning on the altar; it must not go out. This is the most important duty of the priest. Dear brothers and sisters, do you desire the office of a priest? The most crucial responsibility of the priest is to ensure that the fire on the burnt offering altar does not go out. In other words, you must completely dedicate yourself, keeping the fire on your altar burning brightly. Let every person who comes to seek God near you offer sacrifices according to their needs.

Because the foundation of the burnt offering has already been laid and accepted by God, when sinners come to you, you can help them offer a sin offering or a trespass offering. When thankful people come to you, you can assist them in offering a peace offering. When those who wish to dedicate themselves to service, like you, come to you, you can help them offer a burnt offering. In this passage, God clearly tells us that dedicating oneself to Him is the first step in becoming a priest.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for reminding us that the fire on the altar must not go out. You are pleased with everyone who is willing to serve and dedicate themselves on the altar. You have given us such a high status; we are royal priests. You have set us apart to serve You, to be priests of the gospel, bringing the gospel to those in need, and bringing those who have received grace and salvation before You; this is a glorious ministry. To fulfill our duties appropriately, we must be people

who frequently consecrated ourselves to the Lord, and adjusting our lives so that the fire on our altar does not go out. Always ready to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, together with a group of pure-hearted saints who love You. This pleases You and is our reasonable service. Bless the church I belong to so that the fire on the altar burns brightly, and the offerings are always pleasing to You. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.