

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

Leviticus 10:4-7

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thanks to the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We will continue to read Leviticus chapter 10, and today we will read verses 4 to 7.

Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, used their own censers and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded. As a result, they were subjected to God's severe judgment; fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Aaron and his sons, at the very beginning of their priestly service, were supposed to experience a time of great joy and celebration. However, because of Nadab and Abihu's carelessness and their presumption, they immediately faced God's judgment and were consumed by fire. In an instant, a joyful atmosphere turned into a tragedy.

Moses, a faithful prophet in all of God's household, knew that although the offering at the altar had been completed, the handling of the sacrificial meat had not yet been finished, meaning the first priestly service was not yet concluded. Now, in the face of this tragedy, the priests could not be distracted; they had to continue and complete this first priestly duty. Therefore, Moses immediately said to Aaron that those who draw near to God must be sanctified. Nadab and Abihu, by offering profane fire, provoked God's wrath and were consumed by it. This was their own fault; it was God's righteous judgment.

As priests, they still had to be faithful in their duties and could not stop now. Only in this way could God be glorified before the people. Moses, of course, knew Aaron's sorrow, but he reminded Aaron that to serve as a priest, one must be wholly devoted to God and not be influenced by any circumstances, even the death of one's own sons. Aaron also understood that this came from the hand of God, and so Aaron remained silent.

Dear brothers and sisters, though we often say that New Testament believers have the identity of royal priests, which is, on one hand, a great honor, allowing us to serve the Lord of heaven and earth, the glorious God. But on the other hand, priests must be set apart and wholly consecrated to God. God's requirements in this regard are very strict. A saint with the priestly office must meet the conditions of holiness when serving, or else, when one violates God's holiness, it will bring severe consequences from God.

Verse 4: "Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, 'Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.'"

Moses knew that Aaron was unable to immediately gather himself after what had happened, so he swiftly began to handle the sudden event. First, he called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle. Aaron's father was Amram. In Numbers 3:27, we see that Uzziel was Amram's brother, and Mishael and Elzaphan, Uzziel's two sons, were Aaron's cousins. They were part of the tribe of Levi and belonged to the Kohathites. In Numbers 3:31, we learn that the Kohathites were responsible for guarding the sanctuary and its various holy items.

Moses instructed Mishael and Elzaphan to come forward and carry their relatives, Nadab and Abihu, who had been consumed by fire. These two were their nephews. Moses told them to carry them out from before the sanctuary and take them outside the camp. Nadab and Abihu had made an error before the Lord and were struck down by God. Their bodies were now unclean and needed to be dealt with; otherwise, the priestly service could not continue. Mishael and Elzaphan, as Kohathites responsible for watching over the holy items, were familiar with the sanctuary. Thus, Moses summoned them to carry the bodies out of the camp.

This day marked the first day of the priestly service, and the entire camp of Israel had to be kept clean. The corpses were unclean, so they had to be removed and buried outside the camp. Because Mishael and Elzaphan touched the dead bodies, they too would become unclean and would not be able to participate in this round

of worship and offerings. Aaron still had two remaining sons, but Moses did not call on them to handle the bodies of their brothers because they were priests. They had to continue their priestly duties until the worship and offerings were completed. During this time, they could not be contaminated by any uncleanness or impurity.

Verse 5: "So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said."

Mishael and Elzaphan approached and carried the bodies of Nadab and Abihu, along with the priestly garments they were wearing, out of the camp and buried them, exactly as Moses had instructed. It is specifically mentioned here that they carried them in their tunics, which implies that the garments could have been removed, but Moses instructed that they be carried out still wearing them for burial.

Normally, when someone dies in a fire, the flames start from the outside in, causing the clothing to catch fire first, as garments are more flammable than the body. Usually, when a person is consumed by fire, their clothes are burned beyond recognition. However, in this instance, the fire from the presence of God seems to have been different—the men were killed, but their clothing remained intact.

In typology, this signifies that every saint who has received grace and salvation is clothed with Christ, with the robe of righteousness. Even when a person is judged and consumed, the robe remains, signifying the unshakable nature of Christ's salvation. This aligns with 1 Corinthians 3:15, which states, "If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." This passage reveals that at the judgment seat of Christ, we will all pass through the fire. A person's works may be burned away, but they themselves will be saved because Christ's righteousness can withstand the flames of judgment.

Verse 6: "And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, 'Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord has kindled.'"

After handling the unclean bodies, Moses spoke to Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Aaron was the high priest, and his two younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were also priests. Moses understood that they were grieving, but the priests were in the midst of their sacred duties, which were serious and inviolable. Nadab and Abihu had been destroyed for neglecting their responsibilities, so the remaining priests had to avoid repeating such an error. Therefore, Moses instructed them not to "uncover their heads nor tear their clothes."

It is natural for people to mourn and weep when they lose loved ones, often neglecting their appearance and letting their hair fall loose. In times of sudden grief, people would typically tear their garments and wail loudly. However, priests in the middle of their service did not have the right to do this. They had to maintain proper attire and continue their service. If they appeared before God improperly dressed, they would die, and God's anger would be kindled against the entire congregation.

Priests had to remember that they were mediators between God and man, and only through their proper and fitting sacrifices could people be brought before God. When priests neglected their duties, it was not only they who suffered, but the whole congregation would fall under God's wrath. Thus, priests in active service could not touch the dead, and they had to continue their duties. This may seem inhumane, but it is the price of being a priest—God's matters must always come first.

Though the priests had to remain dressed properly and continue their service, the rest of the congregation, the whole house of Israel, who were their brothers, were to mourn this event—the fire that the Lord had kindled, which consumed Nadab and Abihu. Aaron and his two sons were to continue their service, but the congregation of Israel would mourn for Nadab and Abihu.

Dear brothers and sisters, here we see an important principle of church life: both those who serve and those who are served must put God first. A saint in active service, when faced with sudden circumstances, must prioritize God's commission above all else, continuing their service and fulfilling their calling before attending to personal matters. On the other hand, those being served must consider the needs of the servant and take care of the tasks they are unable to fulfill. Through this mutual support, the servants can faithfully complete God's commission, and their personal needs are met through the help of the saints in the church. This is an important principle in church life.

Verse 7: "You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses."

After Nadab and Abihu were carried outside the camp for burial, the priests continued their service and were forbidden to leave the door of the tabernacle, lest they die. They had been anointed with the oil of the Lord when they received their holy office, and they had been set apart for God. Therefore, serving God had to remain their top priority, even above the sudden death of their loved ones. When people are willing to prioritize God in this way, He will surely pour out blessings, making their service fruitful.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you often feel weak and powerless in your service, and does it often seem fruitless? The most fundamental reason for this is that your dedication is not absolute. Many times, we only come to serve when we have free time, placing service behind many other things. If you are not serious and absolute with God, He will not take His commission to you seriously either.

God is always seeking faithful and diligent servants who can bear the responsibility He entrusts. Therefore, when we begin to learn to serve, we must be serious and absolute, setting aside time, environment, and more importantly, our whole being, to be devoted to service.

Our identity as priests comes from becoming children of the Father through faith, but our role as priests is something that grows as we learn and serve. Aaron and his sons established the priestly service system of the Old Testament, and God's requirements for them also apply to the New Testament priestly service system. Therefore, every saint who desires to bear God's commission must slowly grow into their priestly role through learning and service. In this process, through seriousness and absolute dedication, they will surely grow into their priestly role.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for showing us that priestly service is holy and pleasing to You. On the other hand, it requires that we set ourselves apart, completely belonging to God. We confess that in our seriousness and absoluteness, we often fall short. Lord, grant us grace so that in our learning to serve, You deepen our appreciation for service, making us willing to place it as the highest priority in life—above work, above enjoyment, and even above family. Because this ministry is entrusted to us from heaven, may we not only see the preciousness of the priestly ministry but also receive the strength to obey, becoming faithful and diligent priests. We pray You establish the service of our hands, in Jesus Christ's holy name.