

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

Leviticus 10: 08-11

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week we'll be reading Leviticus chapter 10, and today we'll read from verse 8 to verse 11.

Aaron and his four sons, for the first time, served in the capacity of High Priest and priests. They brought the entire congregation of Israel before God through offerings; this was an important milestone in the relationship between God and men. It brought down the glory of God, manifesting before His people, and also brought down the consuming fire of God, which burned up the offerings on the altar. This was originally a joyous and celebratory event, but perhaps due to excessive excitement, people became careless. Aaron's two eldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, without God's command, rashly entered the sanctuary and burned incense with unauthorized fire before the Lord. God did not tolerate their recklessness at all; immediately, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them.

The fire on the altar was the fire of God's acceptance, a sign that God was pleased with the people's offerings. However, the fire in the sanctuary was the fire of God's judgment, consuming the two reckless priests. In response to this sudden incident, Moses first reminded Aaron that the first act of worship and offering was not yet completed, and so the holiness of the priestly system had to be maintained in order to glorify God before the people.

Moses immediately summoned the Levites, Mishael and Elzaphan, who were responsible for taking care of the Tabernacle's utensils, to carry the bodies of the two priests who had been consumed by fire outside the camp for burial. They were still wearing their priestly garments, which signifies that while their flesh had been judged, they were still saved. In New Testament terms, this means that Christ remained their robe of righteousness, and they did not lose their position of salvation.

Then Moses said to Aaron and his two remaining sons that they must not let their hair become unkempt, nor tear their clothes, but instead must keep themselves properly attired and continue their service, lest God's wrath come upon the people of Israel. At the same time, Moses instructed the entire house of Israel to mourn for this event. Here, we see that priests must put God first in all of their services.

This is why, during their consecration to the priesthood, the blood of the sacrifice was placed on their right earlobe, signifying that they were to listen only to God's words; on their right thumb, signifying that they were to do only God's work; and on their right big toe, signifying that they were to walk only in the Lord's path. Even if a sudden tragedy happened to a family member, the priests were not to be distracted but were to continue their service. What the priests were not permitted to do, the people had to do on their behalf, and so the people were to mourn about the Aaron's 2 elder sons.

Verse 8: "Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying:"

This verse is short, but also very important: "The Lord spoke to Aaron." In the Bible, this is the first time God personally spoke to Aaron. Aaron had already taken up the role of High Priest, so God could speak directly to him. Although the context of God's words this time may seem sorrowful, as Aaron had just lost two of his sons, it is in this very situation that God personally spoke to Aaron, to strengthen him and enable him to continue fulfilling his role as High Priest properly.

Dear brothers and sisters, sometimes, under God's sovereign authority, He allows us to go through sorrowful experiences. But often, it is through these very situations that God wants to speak to us personally—whether with words of comfort and support, or with words of correction and encouragement. God's purpose is to strengthen our faith in Him, so that we may continue to move forward in serving Him. Now, let us look at what God said to Aaron.

Verse 9: “Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.”

At the very beginning, God said, "When you and your sons enter the tabernacle of meeting," Aaron and his sons represented the priestly system of service in the Old Testament, and the Tabernacle was the place where the priests performed their duties. God told Aaron that when the priests are serving, they must not drink wine or intoxicating drink, lest they die.

It seems that God revealed to Aaron the underlying reason why Nadab and Abihu were struck down. Perhaps, during their first time serving, they witnessed the glory of God, saw God's consuming fire burn up the burnt offering, and became overly excited, leading them to indulge, possibly even getting drunk. This ultimately brought about the tragedy of their deaths. They rashly and recklessly entered the sanctuary, came before God, and offered profane fire, resulting in them being consumed by God's fire.

God solemnly instructed Aaron, the High Priest, that the priests were not to drink wine or strong drink while serving in the Tabernacle. This was to be an ordinance for the priests forever, throughout all generations. Wine is an earthly pleasure, it can bring joy, uplift the spirit, and even cause the flesh to become unrestrained, leading people to violate God's law.

It's not just about wine—any good thing of the earth can have the same effect. If priests indulge in such things, it becomes easy for them to forget God's commandments and violate His laws. When priests come to serve God, they must put God first, and the matters of service must be prioritized above all else in their lives. Earthly blessings can be enjoyed, but they must not become a form of bondage. Anything that replaces God's calling in your life must be immediately set aside.

Paul also exhorts his young co-worker Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:21-22: "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but

pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Paul's reminder to Timothy is the same message to every saint who desires to serve in the church today. In the New Testament, all believers are considered priests, and they must learn to serve within the church. Through this process of learning to serve, each person can discover their own role. However, before taking up a specific responsibility, God must first do a sanctifying work in that person, which is what the next section will address.

Verse 10: "That you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

In the education of priests, they must learn to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, and between the holy and the common. Priests are ordinary people set apart to serve God, and they must first recognize that they themselves are sinners, unclean, and utterly unqualified to serve God. This is why, in the first ten chapters of Leviticus, God first revealed the regulations for offerings, so that people could remove their uncleanness through sacrifices. Becoming clean is only the first step. People must also be set apart from the common, becoming holy; only then can they come before God to serve Him.

How does one become holy from being common? It requires being set apart from everyday life and avoiding anything unclean. God hints at this here, because in the next chapters (Leviticus 11 to 15), He will reveal how to distinguish between clean and unclean foods, as well as bodily cleanliness and uncleanness in daily life. Priests must prioritize serving God above everything else. Therefore, they must be able to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the common, so that they are always prepared to serve in the Tabernacle.

Verse 11: “And that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.”

God had already given His commandments, laws, and statutes through Moses, as recorded in Exodus chapters 20 to 24. Moses had already spoken these to the people, and now the entire book of Leviticus is to be added. These are all the words that God spoke to the Israelites through Moses. Moses was a faithful servant in God's entire household, faithfully delivering God's words without adding or taking away from them.

Now God gave the priests another duty—to teach the laws and statutes that Moses had delivered, so that the people could understand and obey them. This is similar to how every believer today has a Bible, and we recognize and acknowledge it as God's Word to us, which is very important. However, many times, when we read it on our own, we don't fully understand it. That's when we need those who serve as priests among the saints to help us. Through their explanations, illustrations, and examples, they help the saints to understand God's Word.

So far, we've seen priests, in their service, have at least three main duties. First, bring the people of Israel to offer sacrifices to God. Second, teach the Israelites, helping them understand God's Word. Third, bless the people of Israel. Dear brothers and sisters, if you look at today's Sunday worship services in the church, don't you see these same three functions? First step, the saints offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to God through singing. Second step, through the sermon, the saints come to understand God's Word and learn how to apply it in their daily lives. Third step, the Triune God brings His blessing to the church. The purpose of the priests' service is to bring about peace between God and people, which is represented by the peace offering. A proper Sunday worship service should lead us to enjoy the peace offering, which is the Lord's Supper and the Lord's table.

Jesus Christ has accomplished peace between God and man for us, and we follow His command to eat the bread and drink the cup. Therefore, in a proper Sunday worship service, the saints together offer a fragrant fire offering that satisfies God, and then the saints fellowship together, enjoying the feast that God has prepared

for us. If, after the service, the saints can continue to fellowship with sincere hearts and enjoy a love feast together, every saint who participates in the Sunday worship will be satisfied in spirit, soul, and body. They will be equipped to face the new trials, new provisions, and new blessings from God in the coming week.

In the Old Testament, God set apart Aaron and his family to serve as priests for the people of Israel. In the New Testament church, God also established a system of service, so that every saint who comes into God's house may experience His abundant provision. Leviticus speaks to those who serve, helping them to fulfill their duties properly.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, we know that what You said to Aaron is also what You say to all saints who are willing to serve today. In our service, we must not love the things of this world; we must always put our service as the highest priority, for this is the calling You have entrusted to us. Grant us wisdom to discern between the clean and unclean, between the holy and the common. Give us the words to properly explain and teach the Word that comes from You, and help the saints to apply it in their daily lives. Let my service in the church be a true help to the saints. Bless the church I am a part of. We pray this in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!