

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

Hebrews 09:11-14

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 Hebrews Chapter 9, and today we will read verses 11-14.

The tabernacle and the priestly service in the Old Covenant were types, foreshadowing the true tabernacle of the New Covenant and Christ Himself. A type is not the actual reality and cannot truly solve the problem of sin.

Yesterday, we read about at least three shortcomings of the Old Covenant types. First, the offerings and sacrifices could not truly remove the guilt of the conscience. Second, only the high priest could come before God, and that only once a year, which meant there was no way to promptly deal with the sins of the people. Third, the blood of the sacrifices could not truly remove sin but could only temporarily cover it, making continuous sacrifices necessary.

Even though there were these shortcomings and the Old Covenant was merely a type, it still brought people genuine hope, as they eagerly awaited the coming of the true reality.

Verse 11: "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation."

It begins by saying, "But now Christ has come as the High Priest of the good things to come." The Chinese Union Version translation might lead people to mistakenly think that these good things have not yet arrived but will happen in the future. However, in the original text, the word "future" is not present. The KJV translates it as "the good things to come," referring to what was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, which has now become a reality. The NIV is even more direct, translating

it as "the good things that are now already here," meaning that these good things have already arrived.

The Son of God has already come to the earth, has already lived a perfect human life according to God's will, and has completed the great work of redemption on the cross. He rose from the dead on the third day, ascended to heaven, and has become the High Priest of the good things foreshadowed in the Old Testament—He is the Mediator of the better covenant. All of these are accomplished facts. Today, Jesus Christ is the High Priest of these good things.

Christ has passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, which is the true tabernacle in heaven. "Greater" does not refer to physical size, as the Bible does not explicitly tell us the dimensions of the heavenly tabernacle. Rather, it means greater in effectiveness. The earthly tabernacle was only for the Israelites, whereas the heavenly tabernacle is for all who have received grace and salvation. Therefore, it is greater, and it is also more perfect because it resolves the shortcomings of the earthly tabernacle. It completely deals with humanity's problems and brings people into the presence of God.

This true tabernacle in heaven was not made by human hands. Hebrews 8:2 tells us that this tabernacle was set up by the Lord Himself. It is not of this world but is heavenly—undefiled, incorruptible, and without a veil as a barrier. Moreover, Christ, as the High Priest, ministers in the true tabernacle in heaven, and He is able to bring every person who belongs to Him into the presence of the Father.

Verse 12: "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

The high priest of the earthly tabernacle had to first offer the blood of a bull as a sin offering for himself, and then the blood of a goat for the people, before he could enter the Most Holy Place once a year on the Day of Atonement to meet with God at the mercy seat. The blood of these sacrificial animals was only effective for one year, lasting until the next Day of Atonement. However, Christ did not use the blood

of goats and calves but offered His own blood. No earthly high priest was qualified to use his own blood for the atonement of the people because he himself was also a sinner, and the wages of sin is death. Only a sinless and perfect man could offer Himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of others.

The blood of sacrificial animals could not truly atone for human sin because the life of an animal is not equal to the life of a human. Therefore, the blood of these sacrifices was only a shadow, temporarily covering sin. Even though they were only symbolic, these sacrificial animals still had to be carefully examined and proven to be without blemish before they could be offered.

Likewise, before Jesus Christ went to the cross, He also underwent thorough examination. He was subjected to three trials before the Jewish Sanhedrin and three trials before the Roman court. Finally, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, declared, "I find no fault in this Man." This confirmed that Jesus Christ was qualified to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of others.

After Jesus Christ shed His blood and gave His life on the cross, He entered the Most Holy Place once for all and obtained eternal redemption. According to Leviticus 16:14-15, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest first had to kill a bull as a sin offering for himself, then take the blood into the Most Holy Place and sprinkle it seven times on the mercy seat. Likewise, he also had to kill the goat for the people's sin offering and sprinkle its blood seven times on the mercy seat. Only then was the atonement process completed.

Here, the author of Hebrews implies that Christ followed the same pattern as the Old Testament high priest. On the cross, He was like a sacrifice on the altar—He gave His life and shed His blood. However, just as the high priest had to bring the blood into the Most Holy Place, Christ also had to take His own blood into the true heavenly tabernacle. Three days later, Christ resurrected and ascended into heaven, where He entered the true heavenly tabernacle and was accepted by God. This completed the once-for-all redemption. This suggests that on the morning of Christ's resurrection, He had already ascended secretly to fulfill the work of atonement. This also explains why, on the morning of His resurrection, when He

appeared to Mary, He said in John 20:17, "Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

This indicates that after speaking with Mary, Jesus immediately ascended into heaven, entering the true heavenly tabernacle just as the Old Testament high priest would bring the blood of the sacrifice into the Most Holy Place. However, instead of the blood of animals, Jesus Christ presented His own blood. His work on the cross was not only a substitutionary death, but after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven to complete the offering. Christ is the firstfruits—the first harvested grain—who ascended and presented Himself to God, being fully accepted. This act secured eternal redemption once and for all.

Verse 13: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,"

Before Christ came to the earth to fulfill His ministry, God established the priesthood and sacrificial laws to deal with sins committed unintentionally. Leviticus 4 records the regulations for the sin offering, which varied in value depending on the status of the sinner and the impact of their sin. The most valuable offering was a young bull, followed by a male goat, and then a female goat.

If the anointed priest sinned unintentionally, Leviticus 4:3 states that he had to offer a young bull as a sin offering. If the entire congregation sinned unintentionally, Leviticus 4:13-15 required the elders to offer a young bull on behalf of the people because the sin involved the whole assembly. If a ruler sinned unintentionally, Leviticus 4:22-23 commanded that he offer a male goat as a sin offering. If a common person sinned unintentionally, Leviticus 4:27-28 stated that they had to offer a female goat as a sin offering.

Thus, the author of Hebrews points out that the blood of goats and bulls sprinkled on the unclean was sufficient to sanctify them, as their unintentional sins were temporarily covered by the blood of these sacrifices. The author also mentions the

ashes of the red heifer, which is recorded in Numbers 19:1-10. God commanded Moses and Aaron to take a red heifer without blemish, one that had never been yoked, and slaughter it outside the camp. The heifer was then burned, and as it was burned, cedarwood, hyssop, and scarlet wool were added to the fire: Cedarwood symbolizes Christ's steadfast humanity. Hyssop represents Christ's humility. Scarlet wool signifies Christ's redemption. After the red heifer was burned, its ashes were collected to prepare water for purification. This water was used to cleanse those who had become defiled. The author of Hebrews emphasizes that if the ashes of a red heifer could purify the unclean, then what follows in the next section will reveal an even greater reality.

Verse 14: "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

This verse is rich and significant, and it is our hope that all the saints will commit it to memory. The first half of the verse speaks of how Christ offered Himself, while the second half describes what His blood accomplished for us: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God..." Here, we see Christ, the eternal Spirit (the Holy Spirit), and God—revealing that the great work of redemption was accomplished through the counsel, plan, and operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is specifically called the eternal Spirit to emphasize that, from eternity, the Triune God had already determined and planned this redemption. It was not a contingency plan made after mankind sinned. That is why Revelation 13:8 refers to Christ as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Since this redemption was planned from eternity, its effectiveness is also eternal. Once the Triune God had determined the plan, Christ carried it out according to the predetermined counsel through the eternal Spirit.

How did Christ execute this redemptive plan through the eternal Spirit throughout His life? There are eight key aspects:

1. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
2. From birth, Christ had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, making Him truly Emmanuel.
3. Christ lived and acted according to the Holy Spirit, never committing a single sin throughout His life.
4. At the age of thirty, Christ began His ministry, first receiving baptism from John. At that moment, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, signifying His anointing and appointment for ministry.
5. During His three and a half years of ministry, Christ preached, cast out demons, and healed the sick by the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. According to God's predetermined plan, Christ was crucified and buried, and through the Holy Spirit, He went to proclaim His victory to the spirits of those from Noah's time who were in prison.
7. Christ was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit.
8. After His resurrection and ascension, Christ offered Himself—without blemish—through the Holy Spirit to the Father.

Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself to God, completing four aspects of salvation for us. First, Substitutionary Salvation: Christ took upon Himself the penalty for our sins on the cross. This is the substitutionary salvation, the first aspect. Second, Atoning Salvation: Christ, through the eternal Spirit, entered the heavenly sanctuary. Just as in the Old Testament, the high priest brought the blood of the sacrificial animal and sprinkled it on the mercy seat, Christ used His own blood in the heavenly mercy seat to reconcile us. This is the atoning salvation, the second aspect. Third, Redemptive Salvation: From Christ's side, this is atonement; from our side, this is redemption. Not only are our sins forgiven, but we are also accepted by God. This is the grace of redemption, the third aspect. Fourth, Reconciliation Salvation: After receiving the grace of redemption, in our subjective experience, our conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ. The Bible translates

this as "cleansing your hearts," but the original text refers to the conscience. When our conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ, there is no longer any guilt, and we can draw near to God, being reconciled to Him. This is reconciliation salvation, the fourth aspect.

Next, the Bible translates it as "to remove your dead works," but the original word modifies the conscience. Dead works are sinful actions that bring spiritual death. When people sin, it causes their conscience to be defiled. The conscience is the channel between the spirit and soul. When the conscience is blocked, the spiritual supply cannot reach the soul, and the soul is led by the desires of the flesh, causing the whole person to fall into darkness. Christ has completed the redemption work, not only through His substitutionary death on the cross but also through His atoning work in the heavenly mercy seat. We have received this one-time eternal salvation and have been reconciled to God. However, for every defilement brought by dead works, we still need to confess and apply the blood of Christ in order to cleanse our conscience.

When the conscience between the spirit and soul is unblocked, the supply from the spirit can reach our soul, and our soul is revived. Our mind, emotions, and will are restored to fellowship with the Holy Spirit. We will delight in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, understand God's will, and decide to submit to the Holy Spirit's leading, which is to serve the eternal God. This is the most noble and glorious purpose of life — to serve the eternally living Triune God. Having experienced the fourfold salvation that Christ has brought, we should respond to Christ by rising up and serving the living God. There is nothing on earth more valuable, and nothing more glorious than this!

In serving the Triune God, we must have a correct understanding. God does not require everyone to give up their work and serve Him full-time; that is a special calling from God. If it is not God's calling, and you decide to serve full-time, to speak frankly, God may not necessarily require it. In God's eternal will, He has already planned every person's life. As we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, if we should study, we study; if we should work, we work. These are all part of our daily lives.

More importantly, after receiving the fourfold salvation from Christ, we should rise up and serve God in our original identity and position. The proper mindset is that every believer should serve God, especially during your secular work. You are also learning to serve in the church until, one day, your service occupies so much of your time that you can no longer continue in your secular job. At that time, you should seek God's guidance, and if there is a calling, you will lay down your job and serve God full-time.

Based on my personal experience, if you have been serving while working, when the time comes, you will clearly recognize God's calling and the leading of the Holy Spirit. At that point, you will be able to start full-time, unpaid service, freely following the Holy Spirit's guidance and fulfilling the task God has entrusted to you, which is truly beautiful.

Let us pray together: Lord, how grateful we are. According to the eternal Spirit, You offered Yourself without blemish to God, died for us on the cross, reconciled us on the heavenly mercy seat, accomplished salvation in us, and brought us into reconciliation with the Father. Such a great grace has come upon us, who are so unworthy. Our response should be to rise up and serve the eternal God. Help us be willing to accept Your equipping in our daily lives, reading the Bible, praying, so that we may better understand Your will. Through our service in the church, may our gifts be made known. When You call, may we respond, saying, "I am ready; here I am." In this process, may Your grace and mercy never depart from us and may Your beautiful purpose be accomplished in us, blessing our daily lives. We pray this in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!