

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

Hebrews 10: 32-39

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Hebrews chapter 10. We will read verses 32-39 today.

The author of Hebrews wrote the book with a burden on his heart, aiming to exhort the Hebrew saints not to draw back in the face of persecution but to continue holding fast to the true faith. Therefore, the five exhortations and warnings in Hebrews form the core of his burden. In this book, we read his exposition of the superior person and superior ministry of Christ, which are exceedingly precious truths for the church throughout generations. However, for the author of Hebrews, these were merely his groundwork to bring forth the exhortations and warnings. This is very similar to Paul's epistles, which were usually written in response to difficulties faced by a church or a particular need that arose, prompting Paul to write to that church.

The truths expounded by the author of Hebrews are entirely consistent with what Paul taught, which is why many biblical scholars believe that Paul was the author. Personally, I am more inclined to think that it was Paul's close co-worker, Barnabas. Paul referred to himself as the apostle to the Gentiles, and throughout his ministry, he often found himself in sharp contention with the Jews. Therefore, if he were the one writing to exhort the Hebrew saints, the effect might not have been as well received. Barnabas, on the other hand, was a Levite and was known as the "son of encouragement." He was well acquainted with the Jewish rituals of service and worship, and through his close partnership with Paul, he also had a profound understanding of the revelation of the New Testament. Thus, he would have been the most suitable person to write Hebrews in order to exhort the Hebrew saints.

In the fourth exhortation and warning, the author first summarizes his previous discourse on the superiority of Christ's office. Christ has opened a new and living way that leads directly to the Most Holy Place in heaven. On one hand, Christ serves

as the High Priest in the heavenly Most Holy Place; on the other hand, He also governs on earth, in God's house. Therefore, Christ takes full responsibility for us. In response, we ought to hold fast to a life of faith, hope, and love, and we must not forsake our assembling together. After this, the author presents two warnings: the first is directed at unbelievers within Judaism, and the second is directed at the Hebrew saints. We read the first warning yesterday, and perhaps it is precisely because these unbelievers were strongly urging the Hebrew saints to return to Judaism that the author's words to them are extremely stern, and his warning is exceedingly serious. The author likely knew these individuals personally and had preached the gospel to them. They had heard the truth, yet they still refused to believe, so the author directly points out their sin—there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

At that time, there were likely still Sadducees serving as priests in the temple in Jerusalem, continuing to offer sacrifices. Yet the author declares that after Christ had accomplished eternal redemption, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. He condemns them for trampling the Son of God underfoot, counting the blood of Christ—by which people are sanctified—as a common thing, and insulting the Spirit of grace. Because of this, they will face even greater punishment. Especially regarding the statement about blaspheming the Holy Spirit, the author is entirely basing his words on what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had said.

In Matthew 12, the Pharisees claimed that Christ cast out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. Christ first presented a rebuttal and finally drew a conclusion in Matthew 12:31-32, "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come." Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a sin that will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come, which is exceedingly serious.

A person who blasphemes the Spirit of grace cannot be saved. Therefore, the author's final warning to the unbelievers is that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The reason he gives such a severe warning is nothing other

than the hope of awakening some Jews to self-reflection. Today, we continue reading the author's warning to the Hebrew saints. In this warning, he first praises their past experiences of victory, then exhorts them not to cast away their confidence, and finally warns them not to shrink back.

Verse 32: “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:”

The author is confident that these Hebrew saints are truly those who have received grace and salvation; therefore, he first reminds them to recall their former days. Every person's experience of receiving grace and salvation is the foundation of their lifelong journey in following the Lord. The path of a saint is long, and moments of weakness and stumbling are inevitable. However, the joy, peace, and even the glorious experience of that first acceptance of salvation should serve as lifelong support and help. Thus, Titus 3:5 says, "He saved us, through the washing of regeneration." This does not mean that we need to be baptized multiple times, but that the experience of that one-time regeneration and baptism should help us rise again from all weaknesses and failures.

These Hebrew saints, when they first believed in the Lord and were enlightened, immediately faced conflict. During Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey, whenever they arrived in a new city, they would first go to the Jewish synagogue to preach the gospel to the devout Jews—almost without exception. As soon as some received grace and were saved, accusations and persecution from the Jewish religious community would immediately follow. Therefore, these newly saved Hebrew saints found themselves in the midst of battle and endured various sufferings. The author then goes on to recount in detail the hardships they had previously endured.

Verse 33: “partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;”

Regarding suffering, the author specifically highlights three aspects: The first is "being reproached," which refers to public insults and accusations aimed at destroying a person's reputation—either by attributing improper motives to their good deeds or by fabricating evil acts they never committed, ultimately leaving their name in disgrace and their credibility ruined. The second is "being afflicted," which causes actual financial loss or imposes an immense emotional and psychological burden. The third is "being made a spectacle," which, in the original Greek, is a single word that refers to being put on a stage for public mockery, making a person the object of ridicule before all.

Paul also expresses a similar idea in 1 Corinthians 4:9: "For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." Here, Paul says that this is God's doing. The "spectacle" mentioned in this verse in 1 Corinthians is the same Greek word used in Hebrews for "becoming a spectacle." In 1 Corinthians, it is used as a noun, while in Hebrews, it is a verb, hence translated as "becoming a spectacle."

Here we see that when saints suffer and become the object of ridicule, it is directed by God and is meant to be witnessed by both the world and the angels. God is the director, the saints are the actors, and the angels and the world are the audience. In the scene directed by God, the saints are to play their part well. God allows us to face suffering and loss, but still expects us to maintain purity and loyalty to Him, even when we are regarded as a joke by the world, without changing our stance.

God allows them to suffer so intensely, yet they remain faithful and unwavering, which may seem foolish to the world. This is for the spectators, the people of the world. The angels, however, are always on standby, ready to act at God's slightest glance or gesture to bring rescue. Meanwhile, God precisely prepares the environment so that those suffering can develop endurance through their trials.

Endurance produces character, and character produces hope. With hope, they understand that those who suffer for the Lord will not be put to shame.

This is a process that every saint must go through in their spiritual growth. The author first reminds the Hebrew saints of their past victories, even to the point of becoming a spectacle for the world to witness. In this process, they suffered, yet at the same time, they accompanied those who were enduring the same trials. They were able to rise above their own suffering and support and encourage other saints going through similar hardships.

Dear brothers and sisters, what a beautiful scene this is! It is not surprising when people praise God for the blessings they receive from Him; in fact, it might be said that it doesn't hold much value. It is only when people suffer, not only enduring their own pain but also accompanying others in their suffering, and yet still thank God, praise God, and give glory to Him—this is truly what pleases God.

Verse 34: “for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.”

This verse highlights the attitude the Hebrew saints had during their suffering in the past; it is the same attitude we should have today when facing trials. The Hebrew saints not only accompanied those who were suffering, but they also had compassion for those who were imprisoned—those who had been locked up because of their faith. Their situation was even worse than their own, and at this time, they didn't just offer companionship; they also showed empathy toward those in prison. This implies that they gave tangible help, not fearing the possibility of being implicated themselves. They did not stand idly by; rather, they actively provided supplies and helped others through their hardships.

When their own property was also taken away because of their faith, they were able to endure it with a willing heart. These Hebrew saints set a beautiful example in their past Christian lives. Indeed, they suffered for their faith and lost their

possessions. However, they still held fast to their faith, knowing that they had a better and lasting inheritance in heaven. Therefore, they could look lightly upon the losses they experienced on earth.

Dear brothers and sisters, faith is not an abstract principle or an unrealistic ideal, but it is something that, when we face trials today, gives us the assurance to declare like Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Through every trial that comes upon us, we are storing up glory in heaven that will last forever. And this glory is nothing less than our experience of Christ, for Christ is our hope of glory.

Verse 35: "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward."

The author of Hebrews first recalls the victories the Hebrew saints experienced in the past, and then encourages them not to throw away their courageous hearts. Their previous grasp and confidence in God will help them maintain a courageous spirit, enabling them to continue pressing forward. In doing so, they will certainly receive a great reward. This reward will be when they stand before the Lord, and He will commend them as good and faithful servants, giving them their due reward.

Verse 36-37: "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry."

They must endure with the hope of receiving their reward. Endurance is a character that every follower of the Lord must learn. Often, the objective circumstances lead to disappointment, and the people, things, and situations around us seem to be in opposition, creating a negative environment that makes it hard to move forward. Therefore, the author reminds them, "You must endure," continuing to walk on God's path, following His will and pressing forward. In doing so, they will receive

what God has promised. "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not delay." God is never late; the return of Christ is certain. The signs in the world increasingly resemble those that point to Christ's return, and when the time appointed by God arrives, Christ will come, without delay.

Verse 38: "Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

"The just shall live by faith" is the phrase from Habakkuk 2:4. At that time, the Chaldeans rose up to attack the kingdom of Judah, and the situation looked very bleak. The fig tree did not thrive, the vine bore no fruit, the olive tree did not yield, the fields produced no food, there were no sheep in the folds, and no cattle in the stalls. However, God promised that "the just shall live by faith." The prophet Habakkuk, because of God's promise, rejoiced and was glad. This phrase is quoted three times in the New Testament:

The first time it is mentioned is in Romans 1:17, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" Here, the emphasis is on the just, those who believe, accept the salvation of Jesus Christ, and are justified by God.

The second place is in Galatians 3:11-12, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'The just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" Here, the law is compared to faith, and therefore, the emphasis in Galatians is on justification by faith.

The third place is in this verse in Hebrews, which emphasizes that when facing trials, one must endure and wait for God. In just a little while, Christ will return, and at that time, "the just shall live by faith." Therefore, Hebrews focuses on living. God is the source of life. Although the external environment is harsh, the day of the Lord's return is near, and we must continue to hold fast. When the Lord returns, there will certainly be a completely new turning point. The Lord has delayed, but we who

believe have already received eternal life. So, what should we fear? Therefore, we cannot turn back, as the Lord does not take pleasure in those who turn back.

Verse 39: "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

The author here strengthens and encourages the Hebrew saints, because they have already believed in Jesus and have received eternal life. They will not be among those who turn back and fall into perdition. Only those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will perish. Everyone who believes in Christ has faith, which leads to the salvation of their soul. The KJV translates it as "to the saving of the soul," so a more accurate translation is "those who have faith, resulting in the salvation of their soul." This is also what 1 Peter 1:9 says, "receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."

This is the process that every saint today is experiencing on the path of sanctification, undergoing the salvation of the soul. For those Hebrew saints who were tempted to turn back or grow indifferent, the author of Hebrews first recalls their past overcoming experiences and encourages them not to throw away their boldness. They are to endure with patience, completing God's will, and they will receive God's promises. God has promised, "The just shall live by faith," and as long as they persevere, they will become those who receive the salvation of their souls. Dear brothers and sisters, this is also the encouragement the author gives to today's saints.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank and worship You for the experiences we have had with You in the past. It is by Your mercy that we have received salvation; it is also by Your mercy that we have had overcoming experiences, which help us today to remain steadfast in our trials, enduring with patience, and following Your will. What You have promised will surely be fulfilled in us. Help us, bless us, that in our daily lives we may be those who experience the salvation of our souls, walking the path of sanctification. We pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.