

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

Romans 2: 6-10

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 reading Romans Chapter 2, verses 6 to 10.

To those who are self-righteous and like to judge others, Paul tells us that on the moral level, the standard of God's judgment is truth—that is, the perfect human life that Jesus Christ lived while on earth. The object of God's judgment is the actions of every individual. And on the dimension of time, God is full of patience toward each person, giving people opportunities to repent.

God is also full of forbearance toward the age we live in, delaying the coming of the great day of judgment so that people may enter into His kindness. However, if a person remains stubborn and unrepentant, unwilling to turn toward God's kindness, then that person is storing up wrath for themselves. When the wrath is full and reaches the limit of God's forbearance, the day that reveals God's righteous judgment will surely come.

Verse 6: “who will render to each one according to his deeds.”

The word “render” in Greek is composed of two parts: apo, meaning “from,” and didomi, meaning “to give.” This compound word means “to give from something.” This phrase tells us that God will surely give you what you deserve based on your actions. In other words, you reap what you sow—God will certainly repay each one according to their deeds.

Today, let's take some time to examine in detail the concept of God's repayment. First, I want to clarify some ideas. The Chinese people have a long history and have passed down many virtuous customs and cultural traditions. A common Chinese saying is, “Evil will be repaid with evil, good with good. If the repayment hasn't

come, it's just because the time has not yet come." This seems to resonate with the idea that God will repay each one according to what they have done. However, Chinese culture operates on a human level, where good and evil are relative, and repayment occurs within this life. In contrast, the good and evil in the Bible are absolute, and the repayment is eternal.

Therefore, we need to temporarily set aside the relative concepts in Chinese culture, because these are only a part of God's eternal value system. We must first understand how God repays within His absolute value system. Verses 7 and 8 mention two groups of people who will receive two different kinds of repayment.

Verse 7: "eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality."

This group of people is described as those who, with perseverance in doing good, seek glory, honor, and incorruptibility. The Chinese Union Version translates this as "the blessing of incorruptibility," but in the original text, the words "of blessing" are not there. In other words, it's not about seeking the blessing of incorruptibility, but about seeking incorruptibility itself. The word "incorruptibility" is translated into English as immortality—that is, something that does not decay, does not perish; it has an eternal nature.

We must understand that everything within time is subject to corruption and decay. Therefore, within time, there is no true glory and no true honor, because only what can last forever possesses true honor and glory. In the original grammatical structure, "perseverance in doing good" is a modifier that describes the act of seeking; that is to say, in the process of their seeking, they continuously and persistently do good. Here, we must let go of the Chinese cultural concept of doing good deeds to accumulate virtue. In Chinese thinking, doing good means doing good works, such as building bridges, repairing roads, helping the poor, and so on. But in the Bible, doing good has a completely different meaning.

Luke 18:18–19 says, “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.’” Here we see that only God is good. Therefore, the word “good” in the Bible, in Greek *agathos*, is translated into English as “good” and into Chinese as “善的” or “良善的.” However, the original Greek meaning of this word is “to describe what originates from God.” In other words, only what comes from God is truly good. So, the “doing good” in the Bible is not about doing good deeds, but about seeking God and using the power He gives to do what is according to His will. Therefore, this passage is referring to a group of people who persistently seek God’s glory, honor, and incorruptibility—and God will reward them with eternal life.

Eternal life is eternal life—life that is everlasting. It is not a state to be achieved in the future, but a life that can be received today. The Greek word for “life” here is *zoe*, which refers to life that comes from God—a spiritual life. If a person persistently seeks God, they will surely receive this eternal life. Matthew 7:7 says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” This is Jesus’ promise to those who seek God.

Today, the gospel has nearly reached the ends of the earth. Those who truly seek God can now, through the internet, media, or printed materials, have opportunities to encounter the gospel. This fulfills the promise that “he who seeks will find.” And those who encounter the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior for life will certainly receive the eternal life that comes from God.

Verse 8: “but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath.”

The second group refers to those who are self-seeking, who do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness. The translation “contentious” (or “divisive” in some versions) for this term is not very accurate. The original Greek word actually means “to place self-interest ahead of what God declares right.” Therefore, the NIV

translation of “self-seeking” or “selfish ambition” is more appropriate. This translation directly contrasts with the previous verse: a person who seeks God receives eternal life; but one who does not seek God is self-seeking. Such a person is self-centered, focused only on personal gain, and for the sake of their own interests, they are willing to sacrifice the truth and follow unrighteousness. In other words, they do not act according to God’s principles.

To this group of people who are self-centered and concerned only with their own benefit, God will repay them with wrath and indignation. Wrath is God’s response to acts of unrighteousness, while indignation is God’s attitude toward those who commit such unrighteous acts. This passage speaks of the ungodly and self-righteous—those who do not seek God, are proud in their own eyes, and enjoy judging others. They are a group of people driven by self-interest and personal gain. They violate God’s truth and do what is unrighteous, and the repayment from God is wrath and indignation.

Dear brothers and sisters, all people are fallen, and the selfishness within human nature—if left unchecked—will develop into a life centered on self, prioritizing personal gain even to the point of violating God’s laws.

In modern society, children are often taught from a young age to know themselves, to develop themselves, and to expand themselves. This is fundamentally contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Children in the church must be taught from a young age to fear God, for “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Only those who fear God can learn, through that reverence, to recognize the eternal and absolute value system that comes from God. This becomes a lifelong protection for them. Even if they stumble, their inner conscience can lead them back to the right path. If a child grows up being taught only a relative value system, then when they become adults, they are more likely to become self-righteous—thinking that as long as they are relatively better than others, they have the right to judge them. But this verse tells us that God will repay such people with wrath and indignation.

Verse 9: “tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.”

Verses 7 and 8 speak about God's repayment; verses 9 and 10 then describe the results of that repayment in people's lives. To those self-righteous individuals who do not seek God—who are centered on themselves, seeking their own interests, even crossing the boundaries set by God and violating His righteousness—they provoke God's wrath and indignation. Stirring up God's anger is a very serious matter. God will bring tribulation and distress upon every person who does evil.

Tribulation refers to external circumstances, while distress describes the inner feeling in a person's heart. For these evildoers, God brings about hardship in their outward environment, and distress within their hearts. Perhaps we may think that we are not those who do evil, and therefore this verse is not speaking about us. But an evildoer begins with not seeking God, and instead being self-centered, placing their own interests first.

We must admit that in many matters, we too often find ourselves in such a condition. It is a very easy downward path to take—if we continue not seeking God, we will quickly become people who do evil. The focus here is not necessarily on how many evil deeds one has committed, but that in everything we do, God is absent. If we are constantly busy, toiling day after day, doing things that have nothing to do with God and are entirely for ourselves, then we must be watchful—not to become one who does evil.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you often encounter tribulations and frequently feel inner distress, we must ask ourselves: is it possible that we are walking a path in life where God is no longer present with us? Without the presence of God, perhaps our flesh feels free, feels liberated to indulge itself—but the result of this is tribulation and distress. Paul adds another phrase: “first for the Jew, and also for the Greek.” Here Paul introduces a third dimension: the order of God's repayment. For today, we will set that aside for now, and discuss this dimension in more detail tomorrow.

Verse 10: “but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

This refers to those who persistently do good and seek glory, honor, and incorruptibility. In verse 7, it says that God will repay them with eternal life. Whoever is willing to seek God will receive eternal life, because the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has already been accomplished. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. All those who are willing to seek God can come before Him through this Way—Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:19–20 says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” Since we can enter the Most Holy Place with confidence, we can come to the throne of grace.

Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” When we have God’s life within us and God’s timely help around us to keep us from straying from His path, we can become those who do good—not simply doing good deeds, but doing the things of God, doing what pleases God. This is the natural result of the divine life being lived out from within.

God then adds glory, honor, and peace to us. Glory is the expression of God; honor is God’s nature; peace is the condition that results when one experiences God’s presence. A person who possesses God’s life and continually seeks after Him will receive more glory, more honor, and more peace. In their daily life, they will manifest the righteous acts of the saints. This is what Revelation 19:8 refers to as the “fine linen, clean and bright.” At Christ’s return, such a person will shine with the brightness of a star’s glory.

1 Corinthians 15:41, “There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.” Christ manifests the glory of the sun; the Church manifests the glory of the moon; and all the saints are able to manifest the glory of the stars. The glory of one star differs from another, because the degree of glory each person receives is different. And the degree of glory one receives is based on the degree of sanctification: the more

one is sanctified, the greater the glory in the future; the less sanctified, the lesser the glory. Ultimately, the glory that each person can manifest is the result of what is stored up in their daily living today. Paul adds another phrase here: “first for the Jew, and also for the Greek.” The order of God’s repayment remains the same. We will look more closely at this matter of order tomorrow.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for telling us that You will repay each one according to their deeds. After we have received grace and been saved, what are we pursuing each day—things that are eternal, or the pleasures of this present life? Are our daily actions according to Your righteous standards, or do we often walk crooked paths in pursuit of our own interests? Our choices each day determine whether we will receive glory, honor, and peace—or tribulation and distress. Lord, help us to be wise, to put You first in all things. Please bless my daily life. In Jesus Christ’ holy name we pray, Amen!