

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

Romans 5: 5

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 Romans Chapter 5. We will read verse 5 today.

There are more disappointments than satisfactions in life. A person's life is both bitter and short, so some believe that they should enjoy life while they can. However, present pleasures often lead to greater suffering in the future. Therefore, others believe it's better to plan ahead and prepare for the worst, to avoid future regret. Still, there are some who are more carefree and able to find joy even in suffering. Yet in the end, no one can escape the feeling of sorrow when reflecting on the vastness of heaven and earth, left in lonely lament with tears falling.

Man is truly insignificant; seeking the purpose and meaning of life merely on the human level will yield no answer. The greatest difference between Christians and the rest of the world is that Christians are full of hope for the future. This hope is that when the Lord returns, our bodies will be redeemed and transformed; God's glory will be manifested in our very bodies. Only when man is connected to the Lord who created him can he find the true purpose and meaning of life.

Furthermore, in order to fulfill the original purpose for which God created man, one's life must submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Only then can the virtues of Christ grow within a person's character, and God's glory be revealed at the return of Christ. Therefore, every Christian joyfully looks forward to the glory of God; yet the path that leads to glory is a path of suffering.

Romans 5:3–4 is something every saint should keep firmly in their heart. Let's hope that through this time of reading the Bible, we can all memorize it, because we will certainly face tribulations—that long-term pressure and anguish within the soul. But Paul tells us, “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations,” for every tribulation is measured by the hand of God and is perfectly suited to our need.

Therefore, we should see tribulations as blessings in disguise from God. If someone suffers many tribulations in vain and receives no blessing from them, it is truly a loss without gain. So when tribulations come, don't resist, and don't run away, but rather remain in them joyfully.

Tribulation produces perseverance—that is, reaching a state not only of coexisting with tribulation, but also of coexisting with joy and rest. Because we know that through tribulation, perseverance will grow, and perseverance produces character. As we endure over time, a commendable character is formed within us, so that when we interact with others, they feel comforted and at peace. This is what spiritual maturity is.

Generally speaking, when a worldly person rises to a higher position, they give off a powerful aura that makes others feel intimidated—respected, yet afraid to draw near. This is because earthly things are exclusive in nature, even aggressive. When a worldly person is elevated, they tend to belittle those around them. But this is not spiritual maturity. A character that has been formed through tribulation, perseverance, and refined maturity is inclusive, comforting, and able to nourish those nearby. In the end, it lifts everyone up together.

Jacob in the Old Testament is the best example. In his youth, he was calculating, always seeking to grasp and unwilling to suffer any loss. Yet under God's leading, his life was filled with many tribulations. Through those tribulations, he developed perseverance, and from that perseverance grew a mature character. By the time he was old, he had truly become Israel—the prince of God—stretching out his hands everywhere to bless others. At that time, he seemed easily deceived, easily misled. But in reality, his heart was full of clarity; gain and loss on earth no longer mattered to him.

Yet when it came to the future of his twelve sons, he saw everything with perfect clarity. The blessings and prophecies he gave to his twelve sons determined the course of Israel's history. Character produces hope, and Jacob's maturity filled him with hope. He knew that through his sons, God would bring forth the nation of Israel, and ultimately, the Kingdom of Christ. In Genesis 49:10, "The scepter shall

not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” Shiloh is the One who brings peace—that is, Christ. This speaks of the scene when Christ returns and all nations will submit to Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, do not take lightly any tribulation we go through; rather, we should joyfully welcome every tribulation. Tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. We must learn to see what kind of hope we have gained in each tribulation—and that hope is usually a virtue of Christ being formed within us. This is the fruit of the Spirit. As Galatians 5:22–23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Verse 5: “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

What does it mean that “hope does not make us ashamed”? I think there are two aspects to this. The first concerns the future: if our hope is disappointed in the future, then we will be put to shame. In other words, our hope is the result of having truly endured tribulation, producing perseverance, then character, and finally hope itself; this hope is not a mere illusion or empty dream. Some believers, misunderstanding the Bible, think that once saved, they automatically hold a ticket to heaven. They believe that at the Lord’s coming, they will suddenly be glorified. Therefore, during their time on earth, they do not read the Bible, do not pray, and live unholy lives. When the Lord returns, their supposed hope will be dashed, and they will be ashamed. This does not mean they lose their salvation, but that God’s glory will not be manifested in them.

The second meaning refers to the present. When we fall into tribulation, it may appear shameful to others; some unbelievers might even mock us, asking, “Where is your God?” Even more, some Christians may become like Job’s friends, coming to correct or admonish us. Facing these added difficulties, if you have hope, you will not feel ashamed. Personally, I lean more toward this second explanation

because it fits better with what follows. The reason we do not feel ashamed is twofold: on one hand, it is our hope for the future; on the other hand, it is the Holy Spirit given to us, who pours God's love into our hearts.

Paul's simple statement here contains many important truths, which we will carefully unpack. First, he says that the Spirit God has given us is received when each of us is graced with salvation; at that moment, our spirit is born again, and the Holy Spirit dwells within our spirit. When Jesus faithfully carried out His ministry on earth, He repeatedly told His disciples that after He left, He would send the Comforter—the Holy Spirit of truth—who would guide them into all truth. Indeed, on the very Sunday of Jesus' resurrection, as recorded in John 20:22, Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit!"

The Holy Spirit enters into a person, quickening the spirit and dwelling within it. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to live inside our spirit, bringing with Him all the riches of the Father and the Son. Among these riches, the most tangible to us is God's love. The Greek word for love here is *agape*—a love that comes from God, unconditional, selfless, and eternal. The Holy Spirit brings God's abundant love and fills our spirit; this is a reality shared by every person who has been graciously saved. You might ask, "Why then do I not feel it?" The answer is found in the next phrase: this love is poured out into our hearts.

Understanding this passage can be approached through different theological frameworks. I have considered both dichotomy and trichotomy, and for me, trichotomy is much clearer and simpler. Therefore, my explanation is based on the trichotomous view: that a person is composed of three parts—spirit, soul, and body. The soul is the intermediary between spirit and body; the spirit must work through the soul to govern the body and cause it to act. Within the soul are three primary functions: mind, emotion, and will. That is, we can think, we have likes and dislikes, and we can make decisions—these are the three most important functions of the soul. The soul is the most crucial part of a person; it defines who the person is and determines how they live their life.

Within this basic framework, the Bible often speaks of the heart. I define the heart as the soul plus two interfaces: one interface is between the spirit and the soul, and the other is between the soul and the body. The interface between spirit and soul is conscience, while the interface between soul and body is desire. The Holy Spirit can transmit God's riches through the conscience, but Satan dwells in the flesh and can influence the soul through a person's desires. If a person's desires run wild, and their heart is filled with all kinds of corrupt passions, their conscience becomes unclean, blocking the pathway for the Holy Spirit to reach the soul. As a result, even though the Holy Spirit dwells within, the person cannot feel the Spirit's supply in various ways. When a Christian learns perseverance through tribulation, and from perseverance learns character, at this point their conscience is clean and open, allowing the Holy Spirit to pour God's love through the conscience into their heart.

Paul's use of the word "pouring out" is wonderful—it paints the picture of an overflowing flood. God's abundant love is poured out, filling our hearts and emotions, so we deeply feel God's great love. Our minds begin to understand that these tribulations are acts of God's love, intended to produce Christ's character and virtues within us. Then our will chooses to embrace and enjoy God's love.

Do not despise the various hardships that come upon us; what may seem like shameful tribulations to others are for us glorious hope. Because God's love has been poured into our hearts, and we have been united with God in His love, we will not feel ashamed. On the contrary, if we flee from these tribulations and let our hope remain unfulfilled, then shame will come. All of God's riches are hidden in the Holy Spirit, so we must cherish the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Ephesians 1:13–14 tells us, "In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation— in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." John 16:13 also tells us that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all spiritual truth.

Ephesians 3:16–19 also tells us that the Holy Spirit enables our hearts to comprehend God's love. This Spirit pours God's love into our hearts, and this pouring out is for our growth—so that in tribulation we can grow perseverance, in

perseverance develop character, and in character grow hope. Without God's love in our hearts, we cannot endure tribulation.

But thanks be to the Lord, for on one hand God arranges various tribulations for us in our circumstances, and on the other hand, He pours His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This allows every tribulation to ultimately become our help, producing God's glory in us. Praise the Lord, Paul clearly expresses the path for saints to reach glory in just a few simple verses. For this, we offer our worship to God.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Through the words of the Apostle Paul, we come to understand that our whole life is in Your gracious hand. You desire that each of us ultimately reach glory, so You have arranged many tribulations for us; and through the Holy Spirit, You pour Your love into our hearts, enabling us to grow perseverance through tribulation, develop character through perseverance, and receive a glorious hope through character. Lord, engrave these verses deeply in my heart. Whenever I face difficulties, may I rely on these verses to understand the value and purpose behind the trials in my life, so that I may joyfully welcome tribulations. For these are blessings in disguise, accomplishing for us an eternal and incomparable glory. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.