

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

Romans 5: 14-16

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 are going to read Romans Chapter 5 verses 14 to 16 regarding the discussion on organic salvation.

Paul tells us that the gift in Christ is far greater than the inheritance in Adam. Paul uses a contrast to show that, on the one hand, as descendants of Adam, through Adam's one transgression we have inherited the negative effects that came from that offense. On the other hand, through Christ's one righteous act, the positive effects brought by Christ's gift surpass what we have inherited in Adam.

In Paul's description, there are many layers; unfortunately, these layers are not properly expressed in either the Chinese or English translations. In today's daily Bible reading, we will take some time to look into the Greek words Paul used—especially why, when expressing the concepts of “transgression” and “gift,” Paul employs several different Greek terms.

In Paul's thought, there is a process from offense to condemnation. Likewise, from gift to justification there is a corresponding process. This process is divided into several different stages; perhaps we can call it a “flow.” This flow happens to be the very trajectory of our life growth and transformation in character unto sanctification. Let us first read verses 14 to 16, and then we will break them down in detail.

Verse 14-16: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not

like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. “

Let us first look at Paul’s discourse on what man has inherited in Adam. In this passage, Paul says that Adam committed a transgression, and because of the offense of one man, all men died. Through the sin of one man came condemnation; judgment arose from one man and resulted in condemnation. In this passage, the Greek word for “transgression” is parabasis. Since it ends with -sis, it emphasizes the action of crossing a boundary. The Greek word for “trespass” is paraptōma. Since it ends with -ma, it emphasizes the result produced by crossing the boundary. The Greek word for “judgment” is krima, which also ends with -ma, and thus focuses on the result that judgment brings forth. The Greek word for “condemnation” is katakrima, which is composed of two parts: kata, meaning “according to,” and krima, meaning “judgment.” Therefore, it means “the result that comes according to judgment,” that is, condemnation.

What Paul wants to tell us is this: because Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that was a one-time action of crossing the boundary of God’s command. This brought forth the result of crossing the boundary, which is trespass. God executed judgment on this trespass, and the result of the judgment brought forth God’s condemnation of Adam. This condemnation was based on God’s original command to Adam: “In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” We know that death means separation. So, the first step was that God drove Adam out of the Garden of Eden, and Adam was separated from God. Adam’s spirit died—meaning it became useless. Adam then lived another 930 years, after which his body also died, and he was separated from this world.

Adam’s descendants all inherited Adam’s sinful nature. Although the actions of crossing God’s boundary may differ, the result of crossing the boundary is the same, the result of judgment is the same, and the result of condemnation is the same—so all men died. On the side of what is inherited in Adam, the logic is very clear and relatively easy to understand.

Now let us look at the side of Christ's gift. Paul first says, "The transgression is not like the gift," which is a general statement. The transgression is the result of crossing the line, but in contrast to the offense, the word Paul uses for "gift" in Greek is charisma.

Then Paul continues, "How much more the grace of God." The Greek word for "grace" is charis. According to our understanding of Greek, charisma is the result produced after experiencing much charis. In other words, after we experience much of God's grace, this grace produces in us the charisma gift, and this gift is meant to overcome the transgression in us.

Paul then goes on to say, "The grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ." The grace of God is Christ, and the gift in grace from Christ—in this case, the word "gift" in the KJV is gift, or "gracious gift." Paul here uses a different Greek word, dorea. Dorea is connected to Christ; it is the gift Christ gives to man in grace. If by one man's offense many died, will not the dorea gift from Christ in grace all the more abound to many?

"Nor is the gift like that which came through the one who sinned." Here, for "gift," Paul uses yet another Greek word, dorema. Earlier, we saw that for one person to sin, there was a process of judgment, resulting in condemnation. Paul says that even this process is not like the dorema. When many dorea gifts come upon a person, the ultimate result is dorema, and this dorema surpasses condemnation.

Up to this point, we see Paul has already used three different Greek words to describe "gift," all of which are translated into English as gift. Let us summarize these three and, for clarity, assign them different Chinese translations: dorea — the life imparting gift; dorema — the matured gift; and charisma — the operating gift. We know that gifts come from grace; when we experience God's grace—which is Christ—first, Christ gives us the gift that imparts life, which is dorea. Grace is the source of gifts, and gifts are the expression of grace.

A person who has experienced the grace of Christ first receives the life imparting gift — dorea — and this gift is able to bring forth the growth of life. When a person has received many gifts of life, a certain measure of life will gradually be manifested

in him. This measure of life can help him overcome the condemnation that comes from transgressions. At this time, in him there will be the matured gift — dorema. This matured gift still focuses on the expression of life. When a person has the matured gift and can rise above his transgressions, then he can have the operating gift — charisma.

Our general understanding of gifts is usually of the operating gifts. For example, Romans 12:6–8 says that we each have different gifts, able to fulfill our ministries in the church. The gifts here are the operating gifts — charisma. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 it says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”. The gifts here are also the operating gifts — charisma. The same Spirit gives to people different gifts, and the Spirit distributes to each one individually as He wills, so that each person has different operating gifts, enabling the church to meet various needs.

After understanding the definition of transgression and gift, let us revisit verses 14 to 16. Adam is a type of Christ. Because of Adam’s single act of overstepping, sin came in, and death followed; death reigned, bringing all people under its authority. Even those who did not commit the same act of transgression as Adam committed other acts of overstepping, and thus also fell into the result of overstepping — that is, into transgression.

Yet the transgression is not like the operating gift. How so? Paul clearly explains the reason. If, because of one man’s transgression, all were brought under the dominion of death, leaving no hope at all, then in the midst of this condition of death came the grace of God; and Christ, in that grace, gave people the gift of life. If death came upon all through Adam’s transgression, much more will the gift of life in grace through Christ abound to many.

Adam, through his one sinful deed, went through judgment and was condemned — this was a legal process. But in the aspect of organic salvation, Christ, in grace, gave a richer life imparting gift, which covered the entire legal process and even surpassed every step of it. This enabled man to receive the matured gift — dorema. Every transgression committed by the descendants of Adam can, through the gift

of life given by Christ, ultimately reach the matured gift, which enables man to overcome the sin behind the transgression.

In other words, Satan uses man's lust to draw out his sinful nature, causing him to sin; this forms a chain of sinning. Now, this chain has been broken. Man can be released from the sinful nature. The power of sin and death no longer controls man. At this point, the talents and abilities God has given man are also released — no longer serving the ruler of this world, but able to be used to serve God. At this stage, the operating gift — charisma — begins to function in man.

The operating gift comes from being justified from many transgressions; it corresponds to transgressions. The basis of the operating gift is the life imparting gift and the matured gift. That is, there must first be an inner measure of life in order to overcome transgressions in outward operations — and this process is also a process of justification. Romans 4:25 says that Christ “was raised because of our justification” (NKJV). The Greek word for “justification” here is *dikaiosis*, which ends with -sis, indicating an emphasis on the process of justification. Here, the reason the operating gift can overcome transgressions is because of the power of the resurrection life, enabling us to go through this process of justification. When the operating gift has overcome many transgressions, it reaches justification. In Romans 5:16, the Greek word for “justification” is *dikaionema*, which ends with -ma, indicating the result of justification.

Previously, we said that justification by faith means God first gives us a justified standing; but now, through the life imparting gift, the matured gift, and the operating gift, we overcome many transgressions and arrive at the result of justification. This process is sanctification. This is also why James 2:21 says that Abraham was “justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar” — because in Abraham there was already the operating gift, and he had reached the result of justification.

God first gave us a standing of justification — this is what Paul speaks of in Romans chapters 3 and 4. Upon this standing of justification, we must also reach the result of justification — this is what Romans chapter 5 and James 2:21 speak of.

Paul used several different Greek words to describe “gift,” which also point out the different stages of a saint’s growth in life along the path of sanctification. First, *dorea* — the life imparting gift. The gift of life is continual and never ceases. Every time we come into the grace of Christ, what we receive is the life imparting gift.

Second, *dorema* — the matured gift. The gift of life brings us growth in life. Just as a transgression goes through judgment and is condemned, so the gift of life covers the entire process of condemnation and produces *dorema*, the matured gift. When we have the matured gift, it means that the spiritual life is able to overcome that particular aspect of the sinful nature.

Third, *charisma* — the operating gift. Because we can overcome the sinful nature, we take back the sovereignty from the hand of Satan, so that our soul can submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The talents and abilities God has given us can also be redeemed and used again by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, according to His will, gives us various operating gifts — some preach, some sing hymns, some cook, some care for others, some teach. Our service is within the operating gifts, and in this way, we can bring forth a holy and glorious church.

Fourth, *doma* — the constituting gift. Paul says in Ephesians 4:8, “Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’” In this verse, Paul uses another Greek word for gift — *doma*. This is when Christ, having ascended to heaven, led the enemy captive and gave universal gifts to the church. Ephesians 4:11 tells us there are four types of universal gifts for all the churches — apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. These are cross-church gifts, given for the kingdom of Christ, special gifts God has granted to the church. This is also the highest measure of gift a saint can reach, which is why we call it the constituting gift.

The growth of gifts, from the gift of life to the matured gift, and then to the operating gift, these three aspects of gifts focus on the local church. Therefore, in the church at Rome, in Romans chapter 12, and in the church at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the gifts mentioned are all *charisma*. These are gifts given

by God to the local church so that the saints can serve the church, serve the saints, and serve God through the operating gifts.

However, in Ephesians, Paul describes the church from heaven; he sees a universal church. Therefore, these cross-church gifts are for all churches. That is, one with the gift of an apostle is an apostle wherever they go; one with the gift of a prophet is a prophet wherever they go; one with the gift of an evangelist is an evangelist wherever they go; those with gifts of care and teaching are pastors and teachers. Through the service of these cross-church gifts, all the churches can be united in the truth. Paul's description of gifts highlights both life and operation.

The gift of life and the matured gift focus on the life aspect and serve as the foundation. The operating gift is the application. Actually, Jesus Christ Himself also spoke of the two aspects of gifts. In Luke 19:11–27, Jesus told a parable of the minas. Jesus said that He was going to a far country, meaning He was going to heaven. He called ten servants and gave each one a mina; this is the gift of life, and each received the same. In the end, some gained five minas, some ten minas. When Christ returns, He will settle accounts with the servants. Those who gained five minas — this is the matured gift; those who gained ten minas — this is also the matured gift. The reward of Christ is given according to the proportion of growth in life. The one with five minas rules five cities; the one with ten minas rules ten cities.

In Matthew 25:14–29, Jesus told another parable of the talents. Here, the silver was given according to the talents: one received five thousand, another two thousand, and another one thousand; these are operating gifts. The one with five thousand redeemed his talent and gained five thousand more; the one with two thousand redeemed his talent and gained two thousand more. When Christ returns, the reward given is the same, because what they did was merely redeem their talents. In the future, the reward God gives us will not be based on the size of our work, but according to the measure of our growth in life.

Dear brothers and sisters, through Paul's use of different Greek words to describe gifts, we are helped to see the path of growth in life.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, as descendants of Adam, we were dead in transgression and had no hope. But because of Your grace and the gift of life in grace, You have made us alive and continually provide life to us so that the matured gift may be displayed in us. Help us overcome the innate sinful nature so that we may use the talents and abilities You have given us to serve the church and serve the saints. As we operate in the gifts and serve You, let Your resurrected life help us go through the process of justification and ultimately reach the result of justification. This is the path You have ordained for our sanctification. Bless the church I am in, that many saints may be raised up by You, work together in life, and operate the gifts to serve the church, filling the church with a holy and glorious atmosphere. I pray this in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!