

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

Romans 6: 12-13

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 will continue reading Romans chapter 6, from verses 12-23. Today we will read verses 12-13.

Baptism is a declaration of the fact of union with Christ—that we are united with Him in the likeness of His death, and also in the likeness of His resurrection. The sanctification of a Christian begins with baptism, and the whole Christian life is a process of sanctification. In principle, this means that the fact of union with Christ, which was declared positionally, must be transformed into a subjective experience. This path of sanctification concludes when we rest from our earthly labors, and the measure we have attained to by then will determine, at the Lord's coming, the redemption of our body and the glory we shall manifest. Therefore, our time on earth is exceedingly precious. This is our only opportunity to turn "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, [into that which] is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

On the way of sanctification, there are three key verbs that enable us to turn the fact of union with Christ from a positional declaration into our subjective experience. These are also the actions in which we must personally participate step by step on the path of sanctification. These three verbs are: know, reckon, and present.

The first is "to know." This includes the objective knowing that our old man was crucified with Christ, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin; and it also includes the subjective knowing that we have been raised with Christ, and are continually alive to God.

The second is "to reckon" or "to consider." In the judicial redemption, we are justified by faith; we only need to passively believe, and we receive the standing of justification. But in the way of sanctification, we must go one step further upon the

foundation of faith. As we mentioned before, the Greek word for reckon is “logizomai”, which is the verb form of “logos”. This means that we begin with an objective knowledge of God’s eternal purpose in His Word. Then, we must allow the Word to shine, to reveal, and to operate in us. We let logos work in us, producing a subjective knowing. This is the process of reckoning by faith. The result is that rhema—God’s timely word—is produced in us, enabling us to apply it.

For example, in Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus commanded His disciples with the Great Commission. This is the Word concerning God’s eternal purpose. We first know objectively that every believer must receive this Great Commission. But then we also need an inward process, turning this objective knowing into subjective realization: to recognize God’s personal calling for me, and what portion of the Great Commission He wants me to fulfill. Not everyone can at any moment lay aside all things and respond to God’s call to go as a missionary to remote and difficult places.

The call of the Great Commission involves many aspects. How, then, can I cooperate with it in my present life? Perhaps your friends, colleagues, or neighbors who do not yet believe are God’s calling to you. Perhaps in your church there are young believers who need to be equipped and perfected in the truth—maybe teaching them is God’s calling to you. Once we have this subjective realization, it will bring forth rhema, the application of the Great Commission to us personally. In the process of application, we will also receive the supply and support of the Holy Spirit. This then leads to the third verb—present—which is the theme of Romans 6:12–23.

Verse 12: “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.”

The word therefore connects with verse 11, which tells us to reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Since we are dead to sin and alive to God, we should not allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies. This mortal body is what verse 6 calls “the body of sin.” Because our old man was crucified with Christ, the body of sin has been rendered unemployed. Saints, please remember: the body

of sin still exists; it has not died, but it has lost its job, for its master, the old man, has already died with Christ. Paul was very wise. He said that knowing our old man was crucified with Christ is an objective knowledge—positional. Yet in practice, the body of sin may still be very active. Therefore, Paul went further, saying: do not let sin reign in your body.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must recognize that after being saved, the “me” becomes complicated. This “me” may be the new “me”, part of the new man, alive toward God; or it may be the old “me”, part of the old man, still under the power of sin. Although “me” may be new or old, at any given moment it can only be one or the other; the two cannot coexist. Thus, my will must make a choice: will I listen to the new “me” or to the old “me”?

“To not let sin reign in our body” shows that we can now choose to be delivered from the dominion of sin. Before we were saved, this option did not exist. But now, being saved and baptized, we have declared the fact that our old man died with Christ, and our new man lives with Christ to God. We can choose to apply this fact by faith, refusing to let sin reign in us, which means not obeying its lusts.

The word lusts is plural, indicating the many lusts in us. What is lust, and where does it come from? The Greek word is *epithumia*, composed of *epi* (focus, intensify) and *thumia* (feeling). It means intensified or accumulated desire. When God created the body, it was without sin. The body had normal needs—food, drink, clothing, preservation of life, and marital love. These were good and satisfying. But after the fall, sin dwelt in the body, exaggerating these normal desires to an uncontrollable degree, turning them into lusts.

Once sin reigns in me, I am compelled to obey its lusts. These lusts then drag me to live in sin. But after salvation, I can now choose by my will not to let sin reign, and so I am no longer enslaved to lusts. Perhaps you say, “I understand this, but my will is weak like a jellyfish and I often fail to choose rightly.”

Here lies a key secret: do not allow lusts to accumulate. Each person has particular lusts that are hard to overcome—some for drink, some for lust, some for wealth, some for temper. We must know our weaknesses and avoid the situations that accumulate these lusts. If you know you cannot resist gambling, then never go near

the casinos. To “not let sin reign” means we can actively resist. If we do not take the initiative, once sin takes the throne, we will passively fall into sin and even dwell in it.

Verse 13: “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

First, we are told not to let sin reign in our body. Next, more specifically, we are told not to present our members as instruments of unrighteousness. To not let sin reign is to deny sin authority over the whole body; to not present our members is to deny sin the use of individual parts—eyes, ears, hands, feet—as tools of sin.

What does it mean to present? The Greek word *paristemi* is composed of *para* (beside) and *histemi* (stand). Thus, to present means “to stand beside” or “to stand with.” The word for instruments actually means “weapons.” If we let sin reign, our members stand beside sin, becoming its weapons to harm others. But if we choose the new man, we are freed from sin’s dominion.

We must also deal with each member, lest by habit they continue in sinful ways—feet straying into sinful places, hands doing sinful acts, eyes beholding sinful things. By our will, we must prevent our members from standing with sin.

“But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.” When we use our will to stand with God, we present ourselves to Him. But note the crucial phrase: “as being alive from the dead.” This indicates that resurrection is the starting point of presenting ourselves to God. It is the new man who has been raised that can present to God. The old man, filthy and corrupt, cannot be presented; it belongs only to the cross. Only after the old man has died can the new man live in resurrection and stand with God to be presented to Him.

Our common understanding is that presenting ourselves to God means rising up to work for Him. This is not entirely wrong, but it is shallow. Often, we present ourselves, only to do much that does not please Him. True presenting is to stand

with God, to enjoy His supply, to let all His riches constitute us until our whole being is in harmony with His will. Only then can we be sent by Him to do His work.

To illustrate: some Chinese immigrate to America but never “present” themselves to America. Though America is rich and full of opportunities, they remain in Chinese circles, eating Chinese food, speaking Chinese. They never partake of America’s riches, and so though they live in America, they live as if still in China.

Many Christians are the same. They have been transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love, but they do not partake of Christ’s riches, nor see His will and plan for them. They have not presented themselves to God, nor stood with Him. Though they have the passport of the kingdom, they live as the old man, often under sin’s power. Such a two-sided life has the standing of the new man but lives as the old.

Dear brothers and sisters, if this is your condition, what you urgently need is to present yourself to God—not only your whole being, but each member as an instrument of righteousness.

How can we present our members to God? Present your mouth to sing, pray, praise, and preach the gospel—be a weapon of light in a dark world. Present your hands to obey God’s command, to do His appointed work—rescuing His children of peace. Present your feet to walk only in the path of peace, leading others toward the heavenly home.

Watchman Nee once told a good testimony: A brother, after being saved, presented himself and his members to God. One day on a train, three fellow passengers invited him to join their card game. He politely refused, saying, “I am sorry to disappoint you, but I cannot play, because today I did not bring my hands with me.” Surprised, they asked what he meant. He explained: his hands were no longer his; he had presented them to God, and they could only do what God desired. He thus turned the invitation to gamble into an opportunity to share the gospel. This is a good example of presenting one’s members to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, in your Christian life you already know to die and live with Christ. You have reckoned yourself dead to sin and alive to God. The next step is to present yourself and your members to God.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You. On the cross You gave Your life for us, paying the great price to redeem us. We belong to You; we ought to present ourselves to You. Help us see that what we present must be the new man in resurrection, for the old man belongs only to the cross. Teach us the lesson of presenting, so that we may continually stand before You, enjoying Your rich supply. In such enjoyment, let us know Your will, receive Your commission, and complete the work You assign. In this way, we may present ourselves to You as instruments of righteousness, seeking in this dark age the children of peace who belong to You. Grant us daily experiences of presenting ourselves to You. Bless our daily life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.