

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

Romans 6: 14-16

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 6. We will read verses 14-16 today.

Baptism signifies that we have already been united with Christ, united with Him in the likeness of His death, and also united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. After having this objective fact, we still need to go through knowing, reckoning, and presenting ourselves, in order to turn the objective fact into our subjective experience. Regarding presenting ourselves, Paul carefully tells us that we must, as those alive from the dead, present the new self of resurrection to God. The old self cannot be presented; the old self deserves only to be crucified on the cross. After presenting the new self to God, we must also present every member of our body to God as instruments of righteousness, to serve God.

When we think of offering ourselves, we often assume it means rising up to do things for God; but what God values even more is that we can stand together with Him, first receiving His supply, allowing us to understand His will and commission upon us, and then receiving His sending to accomplish the work He wants us to do.

Today in the church there are far too many saints who, under the guise of offering themselves, are actually doing the work of Satan. They bring the customs and trends of the world, along with politics and culture, into the church, causing division and damaging God's testimony. Therefore, in the matter of offering ourselves, we must be cautious, making sure that the old self has been crucified with Christ, that the new self lives to God, and that it is the new self we present to Him.

Verse 14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

When we were still in the old man, sin ruled and reigned over us. We were slaves of sin, under its dominion. Now that our old man has died, we have been released from the power of sin; sin can no longer be our master, for we are no longer under law but under grace. Under the law, man relies on his own strength to keep it, and once he crosses the line, he sins. We know that man has no ability to keep the whole law, and therefore he falls under the bondage of sin.

Under grace it is entirely different, for it is God who supplies grace, helping our life to grow and enabling us to live a life that accords with the law. Grace means that God works in us, granting us abundant grace so that we have the strength not to cross the boundaries of the law. Even if we occasionally fail, as long as we confess our sins and apply the blood of Christ, God will still forgive us. Therefore, those who are under grace are truly blessed, for sin can no longer rule and reign over them.

Beloved brothers and sisters, if we are under the law and try to accomplish God's righteousness by our own efforts, the final outcome is to die in trespasses and sins. In fact, this was our condition before we were saved. It was by God's grace, through the giving of His only begotten Son to complete redemption, that we could receive grace and salvation and become children of God. Since we entered through grace, we no longer need to return to the principle of the law. We all know this, yet so often we unknowingly fall back onto the old path of the law—especially when we use the law to condemn others, including our spouse and children. May the Lord help us, that since we entered by grace, we may also be perfected by grace.

Verse 15: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!"

What then? This follows directly from the previous verse. Does being under grace and not under law mean that we may sin? Certainly not! The Chinese Union Version translates it in such a way that it seems Paul is merely repeating what he said in 6:1–2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" But if we look at the original text, Paul does not mean that here.

Rather, he is saying: since we are already under grace and not under law, with the law no longer binding us, will we then commit sin? Absolutely not.

Here Paul is not concerned that people might abuse grace and treat it as a license to sin. Rather, he is saying that once a person has the fact of being united with Christ, and then goes through the experience of knowing, reckoning, and presenting, allowing the fact of union with Christ to become a subjective experience, all of these are grace. In this grace we experience growth in life, especially to the point where we can present ourselves to God and also present the members of our body to God as instruments of righteousness. In such a condition, we will not sin.

Here Paul is not warning us not to sin; rather, he is speaking in a very positive and definite way, telling us that if we follow the experiences he describes and practice them step by step, we truly will not sin, because we have already presented ourselves to God. Following this line of thought naturally leads into verse 16.

Verse 16: “ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

Here we see that before we received grace and salvation, we had no choice at all; we could only be slaves of sin. Now that we have received grace and salvation, we are free. Although Jesus Christ paid a high price to redeem us and we naturally belong to God, God does not force us; instead, He gives us free will to make our own choice. Whomever we present ourselves to as a slave, we must obey. To be a slave means to submit to the master of the slave: to obey sin is to become a slave of sin, leading to death, for the wages of sin is death. But to obey God is to become a slave of God, leading to righteousness.

Righteousness is God’s attribute; it is the principle by which God acts. If we become slaves of God, obeying Him in everything, the result is that in what we do we reflect God’s righteousness and can manifest His righteous nature. This verse emphasizes

that presenting ourselves is a choice of our free will, and there are only two options: to choose to obey sin, which leads to death, or to choose to obey God, which leads to God's righteousness. There is no middle ground.

Dear brothers and sisters, in your Christian life, have you ever offered yourself to God? This is a choice we must make. Although in position we already belong to God by redemption, experientially God still wants to lead each of us to a point where, in His calling, we are willing to fully present ourselves to Him. Once we choose to be God's slaves and obey Him, we no longer have an independent status or position; we must fully submit to our Master. Therefore, we must understand that presenting ourselves is a transfer of sovereignty. Before presenting ourselves, it seems we are free in every decision—where to go, what to eat, what to wear, what to do. Once we have been presented to God, in every matter we must obey Him; we can no longer act independently.

Some saints may feel reluctant, wondering if offering themselves will result in a great loss. We must understand that authority determines reality. If you offer yourself to God, God has authority over you, and His reality will be manifested in you—righteousness, life, peace, and holiness. But if you hesitate to offer yourself, it shows that the old self is still ruling over you; the ultimate outcome is that sin still has power in your life, and the result is death.

Beloved brothers and sisters, presenting ourselves is a threshold that every saint must pass through in following the Lord. We must have a serious and deep experience of fully offering ourselves to God, and thereafter, each time we are moved by God, we must offer ourselves to Him again. We need to continually remind ourselves that we belong to God. In our daily lives, there must also be the practical reality of presentation, living a life that accords with God's righteousness.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. On the cross, You gave Yourself, paying the price of life for us and redeeming us; we naturally belong to You. Thank You for giving us free will, delighting in our willingness to voluntarily present ourselves to You. Lead us in the matter of presentation to be truly serious before You, to carefully consider, and to choose to stand with You, knowing that all You have

prepared for us is excellent. When we surrender our sovereignty to You, we no longer need to worry for ourselves or plan for ourselves, for sovereignty belongs to You. You will lead us to experience a more abundant life and live a more glorious life, not only receiving a hundredfold in this age but eternal life in the age to come. Preserve and bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.