

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

Romans 6: 22-23

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 22-23 today.

Romans chapter 6 speaks of being united with Christ, from knowing to reckoning to presenting. Paul encourages us to present ourselves to God as His slaves and to present our members to God as instruments of righteousness.

Paul speaks very high, but fearing that our spiritual life is too immature to understand or grasp his meaning, he first uses negative examples: before we were saved, when we were still slaves to sin, we presented ourselves to uncleanness and lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness. This is an experience we all had in the past, so we should be able to understand Paul's meaning.

Paul specifically distinguishes between uncleanness and lawlessness: uncleanness refers to our impure nature, full of defilement; lawlessness refers to our actions crossing the boundaries of the law, committing offenses. In other words, after sin entered the world through Adam, his descendants inherited a sinful nature from him, and when this sinful nature manifests in actions, it becomes sinful deeds. Once sinful deeds emerge, we become lawless people, and the ultimate outcome for lawless people is death. From uncleanness to lawlessness to death, this is an inevitable reality for Adam's descendants.

However, once we receive grace and salvation, the precious blood of Jesus Christ first addresses the problem of our sinful deeds. All our lawless actions are covered by His blood, and God forgives our sinful deeds. The next step is to deal with our sinful nature. Paul tells us to present our members to righteousness as slaves, meaning every action of our members must be governed by God's righteousness. Righteousness is the principle of God's actions. When our every move is governed by God's righteousness, we become righteous, meaning our actions align with

God's righteous principles. Such actions gradually make our nature holy, and this is sanctification.

We have previously experienced going from uncleanness to lawlessness; now God wants us to walk the opposite path, first turning lawlessness into righteousness, then from righteousness to holiness, and holiness means being fully set apart for God. I hope we can all understand why Paul explains sanctification so meticulously, starting from righteousness and culminating in holiness.

In fact, this picture is already clear in Leviticus through the ordinances of offerings: we offer a trespass offering to deal with our sinful deeds, then a sin offering to deal with our sinful nature. Once both sinful deeds and sinful nature are addressed, we can offer a peace offering to celebrate the peace between God and man. After this, we offer a burnt offering, meaning our entire being becomes holy, fully set apart for God. What Paul describes here is the exact same process.

Verse 22: "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life."

After discussing negative examples, Paul returns to the message of sanctification. "But now" is spoken to every saint who has received grace and salvation. We have been set free from sin because every saint, at the time of baptism, has declared the fact of dying with Christ and living with Christ. After this declaration, we have a new identity and status. We have been transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. We are God's people; we have been freed from the power of sin, and having been set free from sin, we are to become slaves of God.

Though this begins with a change in status, Paul tells us we must learn to present every member of our body to God as an instrument of righteousness. It is easy to say generally, "We have presented ourselves to God," but God examines us closely: Are our eyes instruments of righteousness? Do they still look at things they shouldn't, or do they focus solely on Jesus Christ? Are our ears instruments of

righteousness? Do they still listen to Satan's lies, or do they hear the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit? Is our mouth an instrument of righteousness? Does it still speak evil words, or is every word seasoned with grace? Are our hands instruments of righteousness? Do they still do evil, or do they follow God's leading to do the Lord's work? Are our feet instruments of righteousness? Do they still walk unrighteous paths, or are they on the path of peace?

If we truly become God's slaves and live out a beautiful testimony in daily life, we are walking the path of sanctification, and we will bear the fruit of holiness. Since it is fruit, it indicates a process of life, where fruit grows in life. After we present ourselves and our members to God, submitting to the Holy Spirit's leading, we will ultimately bear the fruit of life in our being.

We do not merely do things; rather, the spiritual life within us initiates growth, prompting us to read the Bible, pray, and serve. These outward actions are the fruit of our sanctification, and the ultimate outcome is eternal life. We know that after receiving grace and salvation, eternal life is in our spirit, and this life gradually governs our soul, enabling our body to do what pleases God. The ultimate outcome is bringing our entire being into eternal life.

We know that the new heaven and new earth in the last two chapters of Revelation describe the realm of eternal life, which only those who belong to eternity can enter. Our spirit, having eternal life, naturally belongs to this realm; our soul, defiled by sin, cannot enter eternity. But after receiving salvation, we begin walking the path of sanctification, and in this process, the Holy Spirit continually weaves God's nature into our soul. The sanctified parts of our soul are eternal.

Our current body belongs to this world and cannot be brought into eternity, so when Christ returns, everyone belonging to God will receive a spiritual body, which is also eternal. Thus, in the eternal realm of the new heaven and new earth, we remain a complete person, with a regenerated spirit, a sanctified soul, and a spiritual body. We can then enter this eternal realm, forever with God.

Verse 23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This verse is the conclusion of chapter 6: “The wages of sin is death.” The word “wages” originally refers to a soldier’s salary. After man sinned, sin entered and took control; sin treats us like mercenaries, driving us to sin, and the final payment is death, eternal perdition.

In God’s original creation, there was no sin, and thus no death. Death was originally Satan’s destiny. Unwilling to remain alone, he tempted and seduced God’s created people, bringing them into sin, and the wages they receive is death, eternal companionship with Satan in the lake of fire. How pitiful are those who reject salvation.

Today, God’s mission for the church is to seek those who are children of peace, helping them understand the gospel, accept Christ as their lifelong Savior, and join the church to grow together in church life. “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Here, “gift” in Greek is *charisma*, an operative gift. As we mentioned earlier, after receiving salvation, we obtain eternal life, which brings the instinctive gift of life, *dorea*. This life must grow, overcoming limitations in the soul, and develop into mature gifts, *doreama*. When these mature gifts begin to operate and function, they become *charisma*, operative gifts.

We serve God and the church in these operative gifts. In these operative gifts, we present ourselves to God as slaves and our members as instruments of righteousness. Through the operation of these gifts, we bear the fruit of holiness, ultimately leading to eternal life.

Dear brothers and sisters, you surely never imagined that a simple decision to be baptized into the name of the triune God and into the body of Christ, such a simple act, contains such rich grace, inexhaustible throughout our lifetime. A simple act of obedience can produce such abundant fruit, and we should offer thanks and praises to God.

Let us pray together: Dear Father God, thank You for Your abundant grace, willing to give Your only begotten Son to accomplish redemption for us. Dear Lord Jesus Christ, how we thank You! Through Your accomplished work, we simply believe and obey, and the act of baptism becomes a lifelong blessing. In our lifetime's experiences, the fact of being united with Christ becomes our subjective experience. Lord, help us truly know and subjectively experience resurrection with Christ, and through the reckoning of faith and presenting our body and members, bear the fruit of righteousness in us.

Not only does our outward life conform to God's righteous principles, but our inward nature gradually becomes holy, partaking in God's nature. The ultimate outcome is bringing our entire being into eternal life. What great grace! Help me remain in this grace and live out a beautiful testimony in life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.