

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

**Romans 5: 1-2**

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 read Romans 7:1–13. Today, we will read verses 1-3.

Romans chapter 6 speaks about union with Christ. Not only at the time of baptism was the fact of being united with Christ declared, but in our daily life, through knowing, reckoning, and presenting, this objective fact of union with Christ must be transformed into our subjective experience. When we present ourselves to God, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God, we are able to be sanctified day by day.

After speaking such practical truth, Paul in chapter 7 goes on to describe a person's struggle with sin. Many times, Paul uses the first person, expressing it as his own struggling experience. Since chapter 6 already explained how to be delivered from the power of sin, why then is there still struggle in chapter 7? This makes the chapter difficult to read, and exegetes have given many different interpretations.

If the saints have not yet built up your own framework of interpretation, but casually read different commentaries, you may feel confused and at a loss. But if the saints are willing to follow my framework of interpretation, then first you must set aside your previous understanding, and, according to the logic of my interpretation and the verses cited, see the whole picture before comparing with other commentaries. This will more easily help you discern which interpretive framework is most suitable for you.

Since Paul already told us in chapter 6 how to overcome sin, some commentators believe that chapter 7 is Paul recalling his experience before salvation. If that were true, then this chapter should be placed between chapters 5 and 6—that is, after recognizing that the gift in Christ is far greater than the inheritance in Adam, but before baptism in chapter 6. That would follow Paul's logic. But since Paul places

the struggle in chapter 7, it shows that even after the experience of union with Christ, Paul realized that to be fully released from the power of sin, chapter 6 alone is not enough—chapter 7 must also be added, to be released from the law. Thus, chapter 7 describes how to be delivered from the law.

When I was young, I could not understand how such a great apostle like Paul could still struggle with sin. Not until I myself had received grace for more than forty years, and laid aside my occupation to serve the Lord full-time, did I realize that I also often struggled with sin—many times just like Paul describes in chapter 7. I then became even more certain that the theme of chapter 7 is to further tell us how to be released from the law. To understand this, we need to know the relationship between the law and sin. Of course, according to Romans 3:20, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” But in this chapter, Paul tells us further in Romans 7:8–9 that sin is able to work in us through the law, provoking us to sin. In other words, without the law sin is dead, but when the law comes, sin revives.

So Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:56, “the strength of sin is the law.” If we are still under the law, then we are still under the power of sin. Therefore, to be completely free from the power of sin, we must be free from the law. This is very different from our traditional concept. I hope the saints will repeatedly ponder this in the Holy Spirit, in order to see Paul’s light. Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” That means when we are still under the law, sin will rule over us; but only under grace will sin no longer have dominion.

Thus, the experience of chapter 7 can be seen as Paul’s further explanation of Romans 6:14—how not to let sin reign in us. That is, we must be free from the law. After salvation, we become complex: we can live in the old man or in the new man; we can allow the old self to appear, or let the new self reign. This brings out the question: who is ruling? Therefore, Paul uses the analogy of a husband and wife to explain how to be free from the law.

**Verse 1: “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?”**

The law is meant to regulate man's conduct—whether to give the knowledge of sin or to judge those who sin—it only applies while a person is alive. The dead no longer have ability to act, and thus are naturally released from the law. Suppose a person committed multiple murders and was sentenced to several death penalties; once one is carried out, the offender dies, and all the others are canceled. Today many death-row prisoners still carry multiple charges, but that is because execution has not yet been carried out. Once executed, all the charges are canceled. The law only rules over the living; for the dead it has no effect.

**Verse 2: “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.”**

Paul uses the example of a woman and her husband to illustrate the function of the law. If a woman has a husband, as long as he lives, she is bound by the law to him. That means she must fulfill her rights and duties to her husband according to the law. The law says, “You shall not commit adultery,” so she cannot go after another man but must remain faithful. If the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband and may marry another. Up to this point, Paul is simply stating common sense. But, of course, Paul is not merely speaking about husbands and wives—he is speaking of a type.

Who then is the woman, and who is the husband? Let us first define the woman and the husband in a spiritual sense. Let us begin with the wedding ceremony. In both Eastern and Western traditions, weddings bear the same significance. In the West, the bride is veiled; in China, she wears a red cloth. The meaning is the same: the woman should not come out to take the lead. In her household, the husband is the head, and the wife must stand in the position of submission.

Paul speaks of this relationship in detail in Ephesians 5:22–33. He sets forth the relationship between Christ and the church as the model for husbands and wives. The wife is to submit to her husband, just as the church submits to Christ; and the husband is to love his wife, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.

From the spiritual perspective, then, the husband is the head, and the wife is to submit; yet a true head must love his wife and give himself for her.

Having this definition in mind, we can now look at the typology of the woman and the husband. The woman is easier to interpret—it refers to created mankind. Isaiah 54:5 says, “For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name.” When God created man, He gave him the position of a wife, to take God as his Husband. This refers not to an individual, but to mankind corporately—the race of Adam. God’s original intention was for man to be His wife. At the consummation of time, in the new heaven and new earth, God will fully accomplish this purpose.

As we read in Revelation 21:2: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Here we see that in the new heaven and new earth, a corporate new man is fully prepared as the bride of Christ, fulfilling God’s eternal purpose. If Adam had not sinned, and if sin had not entered the world, the typology would be simple: Christ is the Husband, and corporate humanity is the wife. This was God’s intention from the beginning, and it will surely be accomplished in the end.

Sadly, in Genesis 3, man fell. Sin entered the world, and Satan became the ruler of this world. The whole created race—that which is of Adam—became the “old man.” The old man is a collective term, and the “self” is an individual member of this old man. Satan was once an archangel of the previous age. His fall is recorded in Isaiah 14:12–15. His downfall was that he sought to be equal with God. He was not content with his appointed place; he refused to submit, but wanted to exalt himself. Satan desired to come out and take the lead, and thus he fell.

Satan used the same method to tempt man. He approached Eve. Eve was Adam’s wife, meant to submit to him, but she came out to act independently of Adam. Then Adam followed her, coming out independently of God. God’s order was that Eve submit to Adam, and Adam to God. But in man’s fall, the order was completely overturned. This disorder constituted the whole Adamic race—whether male or female—as the old man. That is, when man refused to remain in the role of the wife, choosing instead to be independent of God, he became the old man. Man,

discontent with the position of the wife, sought to come out, to be independent, to become the husband—and thus became the old man.

The tragedy is that the old man thought he had become independent, but in reality, he became a slave of sin, whose source is Satan. Man, instead of submitting to God, unknowingly submitted to Satan and became his wife. Satan is indeed cunning. He knew God's plan was to have a corporate people as the bride of Christ. As the great counterfeiter, Satan corrupted God's creation, usurped God's place, and made man his wife—while man imagined he had gained independence.

In 1 Kings 16:31, we read that the king of Israel took Jezebel as his wife and followed her in worshiping Baal. "Baal" means "my husband." To worship idols is to take them as one's husband. That is blatant idolatry. Yet even those who do not outwardly worship idols unknowingly become followers of Satan, for Satan is the ruler of this world. By sin and death, Satan enslaves mankind. The old man is thus left in utter hopelessness, with no way of escape.

But in man's hopeless condition, God carried out His plan of redemption. Jesus Christ, according to God's plan, was crucified. We know that His death on the cross bore the penalty of our sins and accomplished our redemption. But beyond this, there was another crucial purpose. As Hebrews 2:14 declares: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." When Christ died on the cross, not only were the sins of mankind laid upon Him, but Satan himself was judged and destroyed.

At first, Satan rejoiced at the crucifixion, thinking his scheme had succeeded. He did not realize that God placed all sin—even sin at its source—upon Jesus, and judged it there. Satan thought he had dug a pit for Christ, but he himself fell into it. This truth is vital, for the "self" is part of the old man. When Jesus was crucified, the old man was crucified with Him, and Satan was judged. "For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband." (Romans 7:2). The old man has died, Satan has been destroyed, and the law binds only the living. When death

comes, there is release. When the husband dies, the woman is freed from the law of her husband.

**Verse 3: “So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.”**

When mankind was created, God was their Husband. But while God was alive, man left Him for Satan, falling under the power of sin and death. Man became the old man, the adulteress. No wonder, in Hosea, God likened Israel to a great harlot. Yet, when Jesus died on the cross, He not only accomplished redemption, but also destroyed Satan, the adulterer. At the same time, the old man was crucified with Him—the adulteress put to death as well. At the cross, both the adulterer and the adulteress were dealt with once for all.

But Jesus did not remain in death. On the third day, He rose again, bringing forth the new creation. All who are saved are made part of this new man. The new man is free from the law of the husband, and may belong purely and freely to Christ. The “new self” is a member of this new man. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” In this verse, there are four “I’s.” The first two refer to the old self, and the latter two refer to the new self. The old self has already been crucified with Christ, so the one who now lives is no longer the old self, but Christ living in the new self; and the new self, living in the flesh, lives by faith in the Son of God.

As Romans 6 teaches, objectively, the old man was crucified with Christ two thousand years ago. But that objective fact must become our subjective experience. Today’s “I” may be the old self or the new self, depending on our experience. Because we are so complicated, Paul warns in 2 Corinthians 11:2–3: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

To Christ, we must be a pure virgin, wholly for Him. Although Satan was judged and destroyed two thousand years ago, that judgment and destruction are real only within the realm of Christ. In history, Satan will not be cast into the lake of fire until after the millennial kingdom. Therefore, in practice, we must see in Christ that Satan has already been defeated, and that the old self has been crucified. Then the new self may freely belong to Christ, no longer under the bondage of the law. Paul's analogy of the woman and her husband is to show us our position: in Christ, we are freed from the law's dominion and released from its bondage.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You for Your great grace. On the cross, You not only accomplished our redemption, but You also destroyed the source of sin, Satan himself. In You, every believer is freed from the law of the husband, no longer bound, but released. Help us to see this truth clearly, and to live it out daily—replacing law with grace in every matter. May our labor and service spring not from the demands of law, but from the riches of grace and gratitude overflowing to You. Bless my daily life. I pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.