

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

Romans 7: 10-13

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 7. We will read verses 10-13 today.

We thank the Lord that through Apostle Paul's writing in Romans chapter 7, he describes his personal struggles with sin. Through Paul's rational analytical ability and consistent logical thinking, we can understand how sin operates within us.

The perspective Paul presents is very different from the education and training we receive in the world, making it difficult for many saints to understand, leading to a psychological resistance. Perhaps it is precisely because of this resistance that, despite much effort, many saints still cannot overcome their sinful nature and fall into the same struggles as Paul. The reason Paul could rationally record his journey is that he discovered the secret to victory, and this secret is grounded in his deep understanding of how sin operates within us. Although Paul's secret to victory is recorded in Romans chapter 8, Romans chapter 7, which describes how sin operates, is critically important.

Therefore, I hope every saint can temporarily set aside the ethical education we have learned in the world, as the world teaches us to strive to restrain ourselves and outwardly conform to the law's regulations, severely punishing those who violate them. Under this system, the best outcome is that people do not violate the letter and form of the law, suppressing evildoers to some extent and maintaining social peace. However, in areas where the law cannot reach, the evil side of human nature is fully exposed, causing human society to remain filled with injustice and unrighteousness. These are the world's methods, but they are not God's way of salvation.

God's standard is far higher than the world's methods. Though it cannot be implemented in society today, when Christ returns, He will bring a kingdom of righteousness and justice, with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 as the constitution of the kingdom. This kingdom constitution governs not only human behavior but also the heart, creating a truly righteous and just society. Before Christ's return, church life is a foretaste of that future kingdom life, so saints must learn to practice this in church life.

According to Paul's description in Romans 7, we must understand how sin operates in us and not follow the world's teaching of self-restraint, as this cannot overcome sin. Instead, we should let go of our own efforts, let the new self, rest in Christ's grace, and through Christ's victory, be freed from the dominion of sin.

Yesterday, we began reading about the relationship between the law and sin. The law makes us aware of sin, and for saints who have received grace and salvation, it tells us that we cannot overcome our sinful nature by keeping the law, nor can we please God by keeping the law, because we simply cannot do it.

Paul uses his own example of covetousness to tell us that without the law, the sinful nature, though present, is dead and ineffective. However, when the commandment "You shall not covet" comes, sin seizes this opportunity. The Greek word for "opportunity" originally means "the starting point," so the commandment becomes the starting point for sin. Originally, the sinful nature is latent, without a target, and thus idle. When the commandment "You shall not covet" comes, the sinful nature gains a starting point, becomes active, and stirs up all kinds of covetous thoughts and desires in our mind.

Before the law, we, in the new self, experience a state of peace and joy, and at that time, we are alive. But when the commandment comes, sin comes alive, and the old self comes down from the position of the cross. In the old self, I become active, and in the new self, I die, losing the state of peace and joy.

Verse 10: "And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death."

The commandment to bring life, if translated directly from the Greek according to the English interlinear, is “commandment into life,” which can be rendered as the commandment leading to life or granting life. Here, this commandment instead leads to death or results in death. Originally, when God gave commandments, statutes, and ordinances to the Israelites, the purpose was to grant them life. In Leviticus 18:5, it says: “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.” God’s original purpose in giving commandments was to grant life, but now, the commandment meant to bring life results in death.

For saints who have received grace and salvation, it is the same, as described in Romans 7:8–9. This is also Paul’s personal experience: when the commandment “You shall not covet” came, sin came alive, producing all kinds of covetousness within him, and as a result, he died. That is, when his old self took over, his new self died. Why does this happen? Paul further explains how sin operates within us.

Verse 11: “For sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.”

Sin, taking opportunity, means sin found a starting point and, through the commandment, deceived me. The Chinese Union Version translates this as “seduced,” but this is inaccurate; all English versions translate it as “deceived.” When the commandment comes, it first awakens sin, and sin deceives me.

We must recognize that a saved person is complex, having two “selves”: the old self and the new self. This is like Schrödinger’s cat—before an event occurs, both cats coexist, but when the box is opened, only one appears, either alive or dead. Similarly, in saints, the old self and new self coexist, and only when an event occurs do we know whether the old self or the new self is responding.

However, more definitively than Schrödinger’s cat, Paul clearly tells us here that when the commandment comes, it is almost always the old self that appears. Because sin is awakened first, it deceives the old self, saying, “You can do it; you

can keep this commandment.” As a result, the old self falls for it every time, thinking it is capable, and tries to keep the law on its own, but of course, it fails, bringing the fruit of death. Thus, sin, through the commandment, kills me, and the commandment becomes the tool sin uses to kill, causing us to bear the fruit of death.

God’s purpose in giving the law was not for people to keep it but to make them recognize their corruption and inability, realizing they cannot keep the law and must seek God’s grace. When grace comes, it is the new self that emerges, taking the position and status of a wife, with Christ as the head, submitting to Christ, resulting in the fruit of life and peace.

If, as Paul describes, the commandment becomes a tool for sin to kill, does that mean the commandment is bad? Paul answers immediately in the next verse: certainly not.

Verse 12: “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”

Therefore, the law is holy. The law is God’s requirement for His people’s conduct. God is holy, so the law is naturally holy. The commandment is God’s instruction to people. Jesus specifically tells us in Matthew 22:38–40 that loving God and loving others as oneself are the two commandments on which hang all the Law and the Prophets. Thus, Paul emphasizes that the commandment is holy, just, and good. Paul uses three adjectives—holy, just, and good—to describe the law, and these are not chosen arbitrarily but follow a structured thought.

Holiness refers to God’s nature. In 2 Peter 1:4, it says: “By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” We must escape the corruption of lust to partake in God’s nature. This shows that holiness is God’s nature, and the commandment manifests God’s holy nature.

Justice is the principle of God's actions. In Deuteronomy 32:4, it says: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He." His ways and actions are just. Thus, the commandment manifests God's just principles of action.

Goodness is God's essence. In Luke 18:18–19, it says, "Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.'" God Himself is good; apart from God, there is no goodness. Goodness is God's essence, and the commandment manifests God's good essence.

Thus, the commandment testifies to who God is: it testifies to God's goodness, His holy nature, and His just actions. The commandment is inherently good, but when it comes, it still awakens sin. Sin hides behind the commandment to deceive us, causing the old self to take over and urging the old self to keep the commandment.

We must learn to serve in life, helping others understand the way of life and live in life, rather than demanding that people keep the law, as they are incapable of doing so. Only when a person's spiritual life grows, begins to partake in God's nature, and acts according to God's just principles, matching who God is, will they naturally live a life that aligns with God's commandments without deliberately trying. This is God's way.

Verse 13: "Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."

Returning to Paul's reasoning, sin deceived us and killed us through the commandment; yet the commandment is holy, just, and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Paul's answer is: Certainly not! What truly causes my death is sin. The commandment is the tool sin uses, and though the commandment is good, sin can use what is good to produce death in me. Does this not reveal how

cunning and detestable sin is, showing its true nature? Anything good in the hands of sin can become a tool for sin to kill.

Therefore, we must have no expectations of sin. Likewise, we must have no expectations of our old self. No matter how much the old self is adorned, polished, or improved, it ultimately cannot resist sin's deception and temptation. Thus, the old self deserves only to be crucified with the old man on the cross.

The new self must consistently hold the position and status of a wife, submitting to Christ without taking over, and recognize that sin can use the holy, just, and good commandment to deceive and kill. Sin always appears wearing a mask of holiness, justice, and goodness, encouraging people to take over and keep God's commandments on their own. Therefore, we must recognize sin's nature, how it operates within us, and the old self's weakness and inability.

Only by understanding how sin operates within us can we remain in the position and status of the new self, preventing the old self from taking over, and triumph over the sinful nature through Jesus Christ's victory.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through Romans chapter 7, You have shown us how sin operates within us. Help us, with humility, to know that we have no ability within to overcome sin. Thus, we can remain in the realm of grace, walk the path of life, follow the Holy Spirit's leading, and hide in Jesus Christ. In this way, we will find that overcoming the sinful nature comes naturally—not through our own struggling efforts but because Jesus Christ has already triumphed. By hiding in Christ, we triumph through His victory.

Lord, we know this truth may be understood, but in experience, we still need to learn, in every matter, not to take over but to remain in the realm of grace. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.