

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

**Romans 7: 19-21**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we'll continue to read Romans Chapter 7, verses 19 to 21.

In Romans chapter 7, Paul, through his own personal experience, tells us about his struggle with the sinful nature after receiving grace and being saved. He takes the tenth commandment in the Law of Moses: You shall not covet, as an example. When there was no external circumstance of temptation, he lived well and without struggle. But when he saw an object that did not belong to him, yet he liked it, he told himself, you shall not covet. Unexpectedly, the sin dwelling in his flesh was aroused by this commandment, You shall not covet, and began to stir. Then all kinds of covetous thoughts rose up within him, and as a result, he fell into sin.

God's law is good, yet sin was able to use the good law to bring him to death. After Paul went through much struggle, he discovered that he could will to do good, but to actually carry it out was beyond him.

**Verse 19 to 20: "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me."**

These two verses are Paul's summary of his struggle with sin, and I believe this is also the common experience of most saints. Every saint, after receiving grace and being saved, hopes to live a life worthy of the identity of a Christian, and resolves to do good and to testify of God's grace. Yet the result of each one of our efforts is the same as Paul's: For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

In these two sentences there are four occurrences of “I.” Two of them refer to the old self, or in Paul’s terms, the outer man; and the other two refer to the new self, or the inner man. The new self, will to do good; the new self does not will to do evil; yet the old self always seems stronger than the new self. As a result, the old self comes forth—the old self does not do good, the old self does evil. This is the struggle that every Christian will experience.

If I do what I do not will to do, then it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. Here Paul points out that the sinful nature dwelling in him is far stronger than his will. Sin can cause him to act against his own will—not doing the good that he wants, but instead doing the evil he does not want. I believe this is the root cause of every one of us falling into struggle: it is not that we do not want to do good, but that we lack the ability to do good. Because of such struggle, Paul came to a new discovery, which is in verse 21.

**Verse 21: “I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.”**

Paul discovered a law. Here, the word “law” in Greek is *nomos*. This word can be translated as “law,” or as “principle,” or “rule.” What is very special is that “law” and “principle” are the same Greek word; the Law of Moses uses this same word. But here, Paul very clearly is not referring to the articles of the Law, but rather to a principle.

In fact, if we truly have spiritual vision, the Law of Moses may appear to us as various ordinances, but to God it is His principle, because it is the way God acts. Paul himself went through much struggle, and in the end, he discovered there was a principle: that when he desired to do good, evil was present with him; and this evil was stronger than his intention to do good. As a result, he had no ability to do good, but instead did evil.

Paul was a thinker with meticulous logic. From his countless experiences of failure, he deduced an experiential principle, which even became a law. What, after all, is a

law? It is something that happens naturally, without any human effort. Over time, people become accustomed to it, to the point that they are not even aware of its existence.

Let us take the most familiar and personal example: gravity, or gravitational force. As long as a person lives on the earth, the earth's gravity is everywhere, surrounding him in his daily environment. When an apple on a tree ripens, it naturally falls downward; it does not fly upward, because gravity pulls it down. To us, this has become a matter of habit. We live every day on the earth, and we do not think about it, nor are we even conscious of the existence of gravity. Gravity has become an inevitable law by our side, silently and without sound being with us, so that we are not even aware of gravity.

Only when we want to go against the law of gravity do we need to exert energy. For example, when we go shopping, if we buy many things, the shopping bag becomes heavy; at that time, we must struggle against gravity in order to lift the bag. Or, for example, when we climb stairs, we need to lift the weight of our body to a higher position; then we must use strength, and so every person climbing stairs will be gasping for breath. When we follow the law, we do not need to use any energy; but when we go against the law, we must pay a price.

From his failures, Paul discovered that indeed there is a law that governs our daily behavior. This was a great discovery. Which laws govern our daily behavior? That is the next step: Paul is going to identify these laws, and tomorrow we will begin to read the laws that Paul discovered.

Romans 7:22–8:2, Paul tells us about the four laws that govern our behavior. Understanding these four laws is of utmost importance for the sanctification experience of the saints. I hope that every saint will firmly remember these four laws in their hearts, and also try to apply them in daily life. Only in this way can we gradually be freed from the sinful nature, be released from the bondage of sin, obtain true freedom, and be able to live a sanctified life.

Today let us first look at the characteristics of a law. Every life has the law by which that life exists, and this law cannot be violated; it may be temporarily surpassed for

a short period of time, but not for long. For example, the life of a fish must be lived in water—this is the law of the life of a fish. When fishing, once a fish is hooked and lifted out of the water, leaving the water, the fish begins to struggle; only when you put the fish back into the water does the fish regain freedom. Without water a fish cannot survive—this is the law of the life of a fish. Every kind of creature has the law that sustains its life. This is what God has placed within every creature's life in His creation; and that creature lives according to the law of that life.

The life of man is much more complex than that of fish, especially for one who has received grace and salvation; his life is particularly complex. To understand the life of man, we must look at the constitution of man. Regarding man's constitution, the clearest verse in the Bible is in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here it tells us very clearly that a person who has received grace and salvation has a spirit, a soul, and a body. Spirit in Greek is *pneuma*, translated in English as "spirit"; soul is *psuche*, translated as "soul"; body is *soma*, translated as "body."

A person who has received grace and salvation has these three parts: spirit, soul, and body. The body has the life of the body, and the life of the body lives according to the law of the body; the soul has the life of the soul, and therefore also has the law corresponding to the soul; the spirit has the life of the spirit, which is the divine life we received from the Holy Spirit when we were born again; the life of the spirit also has its corresponding law. In Romans 7:22–8:2, in these short seven verses, Paul very clearly tells us what the law of the body is, what the law of the soul is, and what the law of the spirit is. Within man there are three different laws, and outside of man, there is the law given by God—that is, the law of God.

These four laws interact with one another. We must clearly understand how these four laws operate in order to be able to walk on the path of sanctification.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through Paul's personal experience, he clearly told us that we are living under several different laws. Grant us spiritual understanding, that we may truly comprehend the words Paul spoke. And may we

be willing to practice in our daily life, learning to live within the law that God has ordained, so that we may be helped to be freed from the bondage of the sinful nature, and be able to live a sanctified life. Bless my daily time in reading the Bible, that not only may I have new visions and new light, but also that what I see may become my daily experience of practice. Help my life to become more and more holy. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!