

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

Romans 8:1-2

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 8:1–13. Today, we will read verse 1-2.

We thank the Lord for giving us this opportunity to carefully and slowly read through the book of Romans. Chapter 8 of Romans is the most important and the richest chapter in the book; we will take three weeks to study this chapter. This week we will read Romans 8:1–13, which is the last discourse in the section on sanctification; it tells us how the saints experience the release by the Holy Spirit. Then, in Romans 8:14–39, we have the discourse on the glorification of the saints. We will take two weeks for this section: verses 14–25 tell us how we become heirs of glory; verses 29–39 tell us about the assurance of our glorification. After finishing chapter 8, we hope that the saints will have a deep impression concerning our organic salvation, because this is the experience of our entire life, until one day when the Lord returns and our body is redeemed.

This week, we are going to finish reading Paul's discourse on sanctification. In Romans 7:24, Paul sighs and says, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" When the law of God comes, it distinguishes between good and evil. In man's soul, there is the law of the mind desiring to do good, which immediately echoes with the law of God, wanting to rely on self to keep it. But in man's flesh there is the law of sin in the members, which also immediately operates, and is even stronger than the law of the mind desiring to do good; it takes man captive and brings the will into subjection to the law of sin in the members, so that man sins involuntarily. Paul fell into such a condition and sighed, saying, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The answer, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must wholly depend on the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 8 continues along this line of thought.

Verse 1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

When Paul says, “no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,” he is not emphasizing the salvation of Jesus Christ, because that salvation has already been accomplished, and we have already received it. We have already been regenerated and have the indwelling Spirit. This is not what Paul emphasizes here. What Paul emphasizes is that after Jesus Christ accomplished redemption, He created a realm of grace. Merely receiving the salvation of Jesus Christ is not enough; we must also live in this realm of grace. Only those who are in Christ Jesus are no longer under condemnation. Romans 7 describes the experience of a saved saint still struggling in sin. Such a saint must come into Christ Jesus, that is, into this realm of grace, to experience no longer being condemned. Please notice, Paul says “no longer condemned,” not “overcoming the power of sin,” or “overcoming the sinful nature,” or “overcoming the law of sin in the members.”

In Romans chapters 1–5, Paul emphasizes that as long as sinners accept the judicial redemption, they will no longer be condemned but justified by God. We have said before that this is wholly a matter of position. As soon as we accept the grace of Christ’s redemption, we have the position of not being condemned by God, but justified by Him. When we come to chapter 8, speaking of organic salvation, Paul still begins with not being condemned. Here, however, Paul emphasizes that saints must remain in Christ Jesus, that is, remain in this realm of grace, and then experientially we will know that we are no longer condemned. In other words, if we can abide in this realm of grace, we will be both positionally and experientially free from condemnation.

In chapter 7, Paul’s experience was that although he willed to do good, he always ended in failure. He pursued victory but could not obtain it; it seemed that the more he pursued overcoming, the more he failed. And each failure brought with it a sense of condemnation; the more failures, the stronger this sense of condemnation became. Therefore, when he came to chapter 8, Paul returned to the realm of grace, and the very first thing he experienced was no longer any condemnation.

It seems that according to his own experience Paul was telling us: man always cares about victory, yet the more he desires victory, the more he fails; but God seems not to care at all about whether we are victorious. Regardless of our condition, as long as we return to Christ Jesus, God declares: no longer condemned. What God esteems is the fact of what Christ Jesus has accomplished for us. As long as we stand in this realm of grace, applying the salvation accomplished by Christ, God no longer condemns us.

Dear brothers and sisters, I do not know if you have seen the preciousness of this word. It is so easy for us to stand upon our own condition and come before God based on our situation. If today I have read the Bible, prayed, and felt strong, when I come before God it seems I can be more confident, able to lift up my head and stand tall. But if today I am weak and failing, then when I come before God, I do so with shame, as if I were about to lose my standing. This is our condition. Yet God does not care at all about our condition. As long as we come before Him, He says: no longer condemned.

When we stand strong before God, He does not condemn us for the sin of pride; when we stand weak before God, He does not condemn us for the sin of failure. As long as we are able to stand in the grace of Christ Jesus, what God sees is Christ Himself. Since Christ has already paid in full the price of our sins, God no longer condemns us.

The intention to pursue victory is good, but the only way of salvation is to remain in the grace of Christ Jesus. It is not that we must strive to overcome; for once we resolve to gain the victory, we fall into the law of the mind desiring to do good, and as a result we are defeated by the law of sin in the members, falling into the state of chapter 7: "O wretched man that I am!" Thus, the secret of victory is simply to abide in Christ Jesus.

Verse 2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

When we remain in the realm of grace in Christ Jesus, another law begins to operate, the law of the Spirit of life. The English versions translate directly from the Greek, as in the KJV, “the law of the Spirit of life.” After we are saved by grace, the Holy Spirit enters into our spirit, quickens our spirit, and abides in our spirit. We then receive eternal life from God, zoe, a spiritual life. Spiritual life has its law of operation—the law of the Spirit of life. This law supplies zoe, the divine life, into our soul.

In the previous verse it says that in Christ Jesus there is no longer condemnation; in this verse we move a step further—we are also released. God sees the salvation of Christ, and so He no longer condemns us, but we must still rely on the law of the Spirit of life in order to be set free. Formerly, when we sinned, we were under the control of the law of sin in our members. Now the law of the Spirit of life has come; this law is stronger than the law of sin in the members, and thus it can release us, making us free from the law of sin and death.

Paul here uses the expression “the law of sin and death.” On the one hand, this indicates that the law of sin brings forth death; on the other hand, it also indicates that our old man has died and is therefore released from the law, and thus we are delivered from it.

Perhaps you may ask: why is the law of the Spirit of life greater than the law of sin and death? When the law of God comes, sin is stirred up within man and urges him to transgress the law of God. After sinning, death follows. This is the operating pattern of the law of sin and death. But the law of the Spirit of life comes from the spiritual life, and this life comes from God. The operating principle of this life is the law of the Spirit of life, which is entirely consistent with the law of God. Therefore, as long as one lives according to the law of the Spirit of life, whatever he does naturally accords with God’s law. Thus, the law of sin and death has no ground to work, for it rules man through the law of God.

When a person lives in the law of the soul, that is, in the law of the mind desiring to do good, wanting to keep the law of God, he discovers that he has no ability to keep it. Instead, he is taken captive by the law of sin and death, falls into sin, and

enters into death. But if one returns to Christ Jesus and applies the law of the Spirit of life, he will receive the supply of resurrection life, making him alive out of death. Through repentance and confession of sin, man's sins are removed, and he obtains a cleansed conscience. Spiritual life can then be supplied to the soul through the conscience. When the soul is governed by the Holy Spirit, man's words and deeds will naturally align with God's law, and he is freed from the law of sin and death.

Every kind of life has its law of operation. The life of the body follows the law of sin in the members; the life of the soul follows the law of the mind desiring to do good; the life of the spirit follows the law of the Spirit of life. These three laws interact, contending for the mastery of the soul—that is, the will. Once the will makes its decision, it can direct the body into action.

Our heart is our soul plus two eyes: one good, one bad. The good eye of the heart is our conscience; the bad eye of the heart is our lust. The conscience is the channel through which the spirit supplies life to the soul, while lust is the channel through which the flesh tempts the soul.

If a saint departs from the realm of grace, his conscience will lose sensitivity, even become dull without awareness, so that the Spirit cannot freely supply life into the soul. At such a time, the flesh will stir up lust. Though there may be some resistance from the law of the mind desiring to do good, the law of sin in the members is stronger. It bends the will, and man yields to lust and sins. The only way for a saint to be released from the law of sin and death is by the law of the Spirit of life. This law supplies resurrection life, and therefore it naturally overcomes death and leads man out of the law of sin and death.

However, for the law of the Spirit of life to operate properly, three conditions must be met: First, to remain in the grace of Christ Jesus. After being saved, we have the indwelling Spirit, and the Spirit will never depart. This is our assurance of salvation. Yet we still must practice remaining in Christ Jesus, that is, staying in the realm of grace. In daily life it is difficult to remain every hour and every moment in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we must seize every opportunity to dwell in this realm of grace. We must attend church meetings regularly and not be absent. In the meetings we

can receive the fresh supply of the word and enjoy fellowship with the saints, which helps our life to grow. More importantly, we must have daily personal devotions before God, reading the Bible, praying, singing hymns, and having intimate fellowship with the Lord. Through such fellowship, we can reflect on the sins we have committed against God and men during the day.

Second, to maintain a pure conscience. In Acts 23:1, when Paul was on trial before the council in Jerusalem, he emphasized that he always lived in all good conscience before God and men. If the offenses of the conscience are not dealt with, the Spirit has no way to supply life to the soul, and the soul will be ruled by the law of sin and death. To deal with the offenses of the conscience is actually very simple. First John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As long as we confess our sins and apply the blood of Christ, God will surely forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In this way we can maintain a clean conscience.

Third, the free operation of the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:16–17 says, “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” When our heart turns to the Lord, and our conscience is clean, the Holy Spirit can then supply the riches of Christ into our soul. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. When our heart turns to the Lord, the Spirit can freely work in our heart—or more precisely, in our soul. He makes our mind think upon the things of the Lord, our emotion loves the things of the Lord, and our will decide to follow the Lord.

In this way, we are freed from the law of sin and death, and we obtain true liberty. We are delivered from the condition of Romans 7:24, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” When the law of the Spirit of life can freely operate in our soul, it enables us to be released from the law of sin and death. We are delivered out of the realm of the flesh and into the realm of the spirit; out of the realm of sin and into the divine realm; out of the realm of death and into the realm of resurrection; out of all that is negative, worldly, and satanic, and into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in the light.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You! In Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. What a glorious declaration this is! Lord Jesus Christ, You have accomplished everything for us. We do not need to struggle or strive on our own. As long as we remain in the realm of grace in Christ Jesus, and rely on the supply of the law of the Spirit of life, we will naturally be freed from the law of sin and death, and we will overcome the sinful nature we were born with. Not by our own effort, but by the Spirit supplying all His riches.

Dear Lord, how we thank You! Not only did You accomplish redemption for us on the cross, but in our daily life You have also prepared a realm of grace for us, that we may remain in grace and experience victory. What a simple yet glorious promise this is! Help me to always remain in the realm of grace, not relying on my own effort but enjoying the joy and peace of victory. Keep and bless my daily life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.