

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

Romans 8: 9-11

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Romans chapter 8, verses 9 to 11.

Romans 8:1-13 is the most important passage of Scripture in the process of every saint's sanctification. In this passage, Paul tells us that after becoming a Christian, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our spirit. We should learn how to make the spirit the strongest part of our being, so that it can bring forth the growth of spiritual life, dominate our soul, overcome the law of sin in the members of the flesh, and become a person living in the spirit. And through the supply of the Holy Spirit, organize the character of Christ in our soul.

As Peter says in 2 Peter 1:4, "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature." And through the further supply of the Spirit, even enable our mortal bodies to experience the power of resurrection. In this way, we can wait for the return of Christ in hope; at that time, our bodies will be redeemed, and we can obtain a spiritual body, to be with God forever in the new heaven and new earth.

I believe that in this passage on sanctification, Paul includes all levels of life growth, so that it can appropriately lead into the scene of the redemption of the body described in 8:14-39. But unfortunately, because the translation of the Chinese Union Version is inaccurate, and moreover, the translators of the Chinese Union Version were limited by the constraints of theological frameworks, they could not distinguish between man's spirit and soul, making this passage on the exercise of the spirit closed off to most Chinese-speaking saints.

We know that when a person is born, the body begins to grow, so everyone recognizes the importance of exercising the body. Of course, man is not just about body's normal functions of eating, drinking, sleeping, etc.; man also has a soul, and

the soul must also be perfected. Therefore, people go to school, receive education, learn how to think, how to control emotions, how to make the most appropriate decisions—these are all exercises of the soul.

After a person is graciously regenerated and saved, his spirit is quickened, and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell in man's spirit, bringing life to man, thus also called the Spirit of life. This Holy Spirit is sent by the Father God and Christ, so it also brings the eternal purpose of the Father God, and brings all the riches accomplished by Christ. Of course, there is also the anointing and sealing function that the Holy Spirit inherently has, which can transmit or impart all the riches of the Triune God through our spirit to our soul. And this process is our process of sanctification.

In order to describe this process in detail, Paul deliberately added several different milestones, so Paul used several different terms to describe how to experience the supply brought by the Holy Spirit. If we neglect the different terms used by Paul, we will not be able to appropriately recognize Paul's description of the several different stages of the sanctification process. I spent quite some time referencing many commentaries, and the vast majority of scholars follow Calvin's explanation from hundreds of years ago, considering that Paul mentions different spirits in this passage, like in verse 2, the Spirit of life, in verse 9, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, and in verse 11, the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead. They think that Paul proposes these different terms without distinction; making this passage seem like Paul repeatedly emphasizing and reminding to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh.

I personally believe that if there were no distinction, Paul would not go to such great lengths to use many different terms. However, scholars who interpret from this angle are very few. Brother Titus Chu study on Romans is the only reference book I have on hand that dares to emphasize the differences in these terms. I have developed a set of explanations that I think are more appropriate, based on the direction proposed by Brother Chu, within my own theological framework.

In my personal theological framework, I am not too willing to go beyond the traditional definition and explanation of the Triune God, especially the perfect

coordination between the three Persons. Therefore, the basic stance I take is that after a person is regenerated, what comes in to indwell in man's spirit is the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit can bring divine life, and because He is sent by the Father and the Son, He can bring the various riches of the Father and the Son, so that we can experience and enjoy them. The Holy Spirit indwells in our spirit, and through our spirit and our soul, and interacts with the body—this is the special work of the Holy Spirit in us, and does not include the persons of the Father God and the Son God.

With this basic understanding, verse 8:2 emphasizes that the indwelling Holy Spirit brings eternal life, and this life has a law of the Spirit of life. This law can release us, causing us to escape from the law of sin in the members of the flesh. However, this is conditional: we must walk according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. In this passage, Paul seems to clearly tell us that the will in our soul can choose to follow our flesh or follow our spirit. Although in this passage's translation, the Chinese Union Version translates "spirit" as Holy Spirit, it is evidently inaccurate; the Holy Spirit can only influence man's decisions through man's spirit. Of course, man's spirit has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not replace man's spirit.

Next, Paul tells us how to walk according to the spirit and not according to the flesh: it is to place the most important part of our soul, which is the mind, on the spirit, not on the flesh. Because if a person thinks about fleshly things all day long, he will be led by the lusts of the flesh to obey the flesh. A person can only walk according to the leading of the spirit of life and conduct when thinking about spiritual things. If we can frequently exercise, making our mind the mind of the spirit, we can walk according to the spirit, obtaining life and peace.

Conversely, if our mind becomes the mind of the flesh, the result is death. In Romans 8:1-8, Paul clearly tells us that we must frequently exercise to place the mind on the spirit, or say the mind must be set on the spirit, and we can obtain life and peace; that is, the spiritual life brought by the Holy Spirit can reign in our whole being, and bring forth the scene of peace. In the next three verses, Paul tells us

three milestones in the sanctification process, and the markers of these milestones are hidden in the terms chosen by Paul.

Verse 9a: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you."

In the original text, there is no word "heart," and translating it as "belong to" comes from a preposition, en, which is "in" in English. If translated directly according to the original, it is: if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are not in the flesh but in the spirit. As we said earlier, the Holy Spirit indwelling in our spirit brings all the riches of the Triune God, and Paul particularly mentions the Spirit of God first from these riches. The Spirit of God is brought by the Holy Spirit and can dwell in man through man's spirit.

Paul does not tell us where it dwells; Paul does not use the word "heart" for a reason, because at the beginning, the Spirit of God dwells in our spirit. But the Spirit of God can pass through our spirit, and if our conscience is clean without hindrance, the Spirit of God can also enter our soul. So, Paul says "dwells" in us; the Greek word for "dwell" that Paul uses means dwell, or perhaps "make one's home" is more appropriate. That is to say, it is not a temporary stay, but a permanent residence, treating it as home. If the Spirit of God makes its home in us, we are in the spirit, not in the flesh.

This verse is actually the conclusion of the previous verses 5-8. If we frequently place our mind on the spirit, that is, set our mind on the spirit, to the extent that our mind becomes the mind of the spirit, able to be dominated by the spirit, and reaches a point where the Spirit of God can make its home in us. That is to say, the Spirit of God can freely come and go between our spirit and our soul, and in this way, we become a person in the spirit, or we can say he is a spiritual man. This is the first important milestone for a saint after receiving the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and having spiritual life: he becomes a person in the spirit, and the Spirit of God can pass through him unhindered.

Dear brothers and sisters, if in the depths of our heart there are still some dark corners or some closed rooms that do not allow the Spirit of God to enter and visit or make its home, then we are not yet a person in the spirit. Of course, we can be in the spirit briefly, especially when we attend Sunday worship, or when we have our own devotional time. In these brief times, we are truly in the spirit, so we ask for the Lord's mercy to help us grow. Let the time we are in the spirit increase, and reach a point where the Spirit of God can make its home in us at any time.

Verse 9b- 10: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. The translation of this passage is accurate. Here, the Spirit of Christ is particularly mentioned as one step further than the Spirit of God, but the verb for the Spirit of Christ is not "dwell" but "have." If a person has the Spirit of Christ, he belongs to Christ. The "belongs to" here is presented in a possessive way, "of Christ," so translating it as "belongs to Christ" is accurate.

Next, in verse 10, there is no word "heart," and the word translated as "spirit" in "heart and spirit" is actually *pneuma* in the original, so it should be translated as spirit. The accurate translation of verse 10 is: And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. The Holy Spirit indwelling in us also brings the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit of Christ is among the riches of the Triune God. Paul particularly brings out the Spirit of Christ here, and the verb he uses is "have"; if a person has the Spirit of Christ, he is a person belonging to Christ—this way of speaking is very special.

What kind of person is one belonging to Christ? As we said earlier, Galatians is the outline of Romans, and Romans is the development of Galatians. Galatians 5:24 (NKJV), "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." If we have the Spirit of Christ, we are people belonging to Christ, and the definition of a person belonging to Christ is one who has crucified the flesh with its

passions and desires on the cross. Paul tells us here that having the Spirit of Christ means belonging to Christ.

A person belonging to Christ is just like Christ is in him, which also brings co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ. So, verse 10 continues to say that his body is dead because of sin, that is, this sinful body is crucified together on the cross; his spirit shall live together with Christ because of righteousness, and this spirit shall supply life to his soul and bring forth actions of the body.

Just as Galatians 5:25 (NKJV) says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Having obtained life by the Spirit, we should also live and walk by the Spirit. And the result of such living and walking is that in his life, the fruit of the Spirit can be manifested. In Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV), "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Dear brothers and sisters, Paul tells us here that if we have the Spirit of Christ and become people belonging to Christ, we can put to death our flesh and its passions and desires through the cross of Christ, and bear the fruit of the Spirit in life. This is the second milestone in the sanctification process, not only escaping from the dominion of sin, but living out a life full of virtues.

Verse 11: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

As mentioned earlier, the Spirit of God is the first milestone, the Spirit of Christ is the second milestone, and in this verse, Paul proposes a new term, the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead. Paul does not explicitly define who this one is who raised Christ from the dead, so the Chinese Union Version translates it as the one who raised Christ from the dead, because there are two different statements in the Bible.

In Acts 2:32, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses." Here it clearly tells us that it was the Father God who raised Christ from the dead. In John 10:18 (NKJV), Jesus Himself says, "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." Jesus Himself declares that He laid down His life, so He also has the authority to take it back Himself. So, in John 11:25, Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life."

From the above passages, we see that it can be the Father God who raised Christ, or Christ who raised Himself; so, Paul calls it "Him who raised Christ from the dead," on one hand the Father God raised Him, on the other hand Christ raised Himself. For convenience, we will call it the Resurrector. This Resurrector can be the Father God or Christ. In this verse, what Paul emphasizes is the Spirit of the Resurrector. If the Spirit of the Resurrector dwells in you, the Chinese Union Version adds a "heart" word here; this "heart" is superfluous—it is not dwelling in the heart, but dwelling in us.

And this Spirit of the Resurrector is also one item among the riches of the Triune God, similarly brought to our spirit through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit of the Resurrector to dwell in us, the word "dwell" here is also dwell, make one's home. The Spirit of the Resurrector is originally in our spirit; it can also transmit or impart from our spirit, through our conscience, to our soul. The Spirit of the Resurrector can make its home in us, and this Resurrector can give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit.

"Give life" can also be translated as give life to our mortal bodies, that is, impart life to our mortal bodies. The Spirit of the Resurrector can overcome death, so He can impart life to this corruptible body of ours. Imparting life to our corruptible body does not make us immortal; because our soul-body today comes from the dust and is corruptible. But in this third milestone of the sanctification process, we can experience the power of resurrection, supplied by the Spirit of the Resurrector to our soul, and then from our soul supplied to our body, so that our weak and weary body can also be renewed with strength to accomplish the commission and mission God has given us on earth.

Paul has a very rich experience regarding this stage of sanctification. For example, in 2 Corinthians 4:11, Paul testifies, "For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." Paul accepted God's commission to become the apostle to the Gentiles; among the Gentiles he preached the gospel, established churches, and experienced many deadly situations multiple times; he was delivered to death for Jesus. However, the Spirit of the Resurrector again imparted life to his mortal body, enabling him to continue on earth to fulfill God's commission, and through his hand wrote 13 epistles, becoming the content of faith for saints in later generations.

This third milestone is the highest realm we can experience in the sanctification process. After we are graciously saved, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit brings eternal life, and this eternal life has the law of the Spirit of life, which can overcome the law of sin in the members of the flesh. But it must meet the condition that we walk according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. Because sometimes we can walk according to the spirit, sometimes we walk according to the flesh, therefore sometimes we overcome, sometimes we fail.

In Romans 8:9-11, Paul proposes three stages of sanctification. The first is that the Spirit of God can make its home in us, making us a person in the spirit, able to overcome the temptations of sin. The second is having the Spirit of Christ, able to crucify the flesh and its passions and desires together with Christ on the cross, and live and walk in the spirit, bearing full fruit of the Spirit in our soul. And the third is having the Spirit of the Resurrector, which can impart life to our mortal bodies, enabling us to accomplish on earth the mission and commission God has given us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! For giving us such wisdom and revelation. Let us truly understand the sanctification experience described by Paul. The Spirit of God can make its home in us; the Spirit of Christ can do the work of putting to death in us, removing the flesh and its passions and desires, and be full of the fruit of the Spirit in life; and through the Spirit of the Resurrector, supply life to our mortal bodies, so that we can faithfully accomplish on earth the commission You have given us. Lord, help us not only to have such a vision, but to actually

experience it in life. Bless my daily life, in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.