

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

Romans 8:14

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 8:14–25. Today, we will read verse 14.

Romans 8:14–39 speaks of the glorification of the saints. Sanctification is the lifelong process of the saints, going through the course of being sanctified, walking on the pathway of holiness, and ultimately reaching glory—that is, being glorified. Therefore, sanctification is the process, not the goal. The ultimate goal of every saint who follows God throughout his life is to obtain glory. 8:14–25, which are the passage we will read this week, speak about the process of glorification; while 8:26–39 speak about the assurance of glorification.

Before entering into the text, let us first define what it means to be glorified. I believe that in every saint's life, there will be some experiences of glory. For example, during the years of study, to be among the top of the class seems glorious; or in some athletic competition, to win a trophy feels glorious; or during one's career, to be promoted and receive a raise feels glorious. If one himself has not attained any glory, he may place his hope on his children—when the children are admitted to a good university or achieve other accomplishments, the parents feel glorious.

Over fifty years ago, I passed my final doctoral defense and received my Ph.D. degree. My father even wrote to me especially, saying that I was the first doctor in the family and that I had truly brought honor to our ancestors. But if you ask me whether I tasted the flavor of glory, I would say yes, especially when my advisor said to me: “Dr. Wang, congratulations!” For a few moments, I did feel elated; yet it lasted only five minutes. Immediately after that, I was faced with either finding a job or facing unemployment. This, indeed, is the glory of the world. After long years of effort, a good result naturally makes one feel valuable and somewhat glorious.

But alas, this glory does not last; its radiance fades quickly. Therefore, this is not true glory.

So then, what is glory? Glory must be lasting; it must shine continually; it must be something that when people behold it, they are filled with longing. Only God is eternal; only God shines forever. Four thousand years ago, when Abraham still dwelt in Ur of the Chaldeans, the glory of God appeared to him. Abraham forsook everything to follow God because he had seen God's glory. Therefore, true glory is the manifestation of God. And to be glorified means that God is manifested in us. We, who were hopeless sinners, can actually manifest the glory of God! This is the greatest miracle in the universe, and also the most valuable one. Paul saw this very matter, and that is why he wrote the book of Romans, devoting chapter eight to portray this great miracle.

First, sinners, through faith, receive judicial redemption, are delivered from condemnation, and are justified. Jesus Christ, according to the will of the Father, accomplished the grace of redemption; then He sent His disciples from Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth, to bear witness to Him. This testimony has been passed down for two thousand years, until it reached the place where you and I live. When we realized that we were sinners, utterly unable to save ourselves, we heard the gospel, believed, and accepted Christ as our lifelong Savior. With such a simple faith, the Holy Spirit came in, enlivened our spirit, and indwells within our spirit. We were born again, received the spiritual life, and were justified by God. Justification, therefore, is related to the spirit and is a matter in the spirit. Having received God's eternal life, we were called saints.

Next, the saints, through faith, experience the organic salvation, are sanctified day by day, and ultimately are glorified. After receiving grace and salvation, we begin walking on the pathway of sanctification, which is the lifelong lesson for every saint. Thus, Paul described it in detail, and he frankly recorded his own struggles, which are also the daily experiences of every saint. Simply put, sanctification is the Holy Spirit transmitting the riches of the Triune God from our spirit, through the channel of the conscience, into our soul, seeking to gain the leading position in the soul—that is, the will of the soul—to follow the leading of the spirit.

Why do we say seeking? Because the flesh is contrary to the spirit, and always wars against the spirit, both desiring to control the soul. The decisive key lies in our mind. When our mind becomes the mind of the flesh, our will follows the lusts of the flesh, resulting in sin, bringing us into the condition of death. But when our mind becomes the mind of the spirit, our will is able to follow the leading of the Spirit, bringing us into the condition of life and peace.

Paul wisely tells us that the operation of the spirit is according to the law of the Spirit of life, emphasizing that this operation is of life and spiritual, and that its sphere of operation is within our soul. Thus, sanctification is related to our soul. The operation of the Spirit of life can reach three levels: first, the Spirit of God makes His home in us. Second, the Spirit of Christ makes us those who belong to Christ, causing the character of Christ to grow in our soul. Third, the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead supply life to our mortal bodies. The process of sanctification brings forth the result of glorification, which is the manifestation of God upon us.

Glorification is related to our body. God is righteous, holy, and glorious. Righteousness is the principle by which God acts. When God operates in His righteousness and justifies us, this results in the regeneration of our spirit. Holiness is God's nature. Sanctification means that our soul partakes of God's nature, and the virtues of Christ are wrought into our soul. Glory is the manifestation of God. To be glorified means that the glory of God is manifested through our body. Of course, the ultimate consummation of our glorification will be at the coming of Christ. Then our bodies will be transformed, redeemed, and we will receive a spiritual body, manifesting the glory of God.

However, the measure of glory we will finally obtain depends entirely upon the process of our sanctification. Many Christians hold the mistaken idea that as long as they believe and are baptized, they have already obtained a ticket to heaven, and afterward can simply lie down and rest for the rest of their lives. They think that when Christ comes again, they will suddenly be transformed into glorious Christians. This is a misunderstanding; it is not Paul's teaching. After we have received grace and salvation, our spirit has been regenerated, our spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit,

and has been taken over by the Spirit. Therefore, our spirit has no problem. What we need is to actively walk on the pathway of sanctification. Our soul must be worked on by the Spirit of life, bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which are the various virtues of Christ. The degree to which our soul is sanctified directly determines the measure of glory we will have when we are glorified. Having gained a general understanding of glorification, let us read verse 14.

Verse 14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Although we distinguish between sanctification and glorification for the sake of understanding the process of organic salvation, in actuality the result of sanctification is glorification. In the preceding verses, Paul had just described the realms that sanctification can reach, and he exhorted the saints to walk according to the spirit and not according to the flesh. In every matter of daily life, there are two choices: to walk according to the spirit, or to walk according to the flesh. Paul repeatedly exhorted us to walk according to the spirit. He then tells us that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Here we must distinguish between children and sons. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” When we believe in Jesus Christ, we receive the right to become children of God. The Greek word for children is teknon, meaning “child.” Thus, translating it as “children of God” is more accurate. For we are regenerated, having received God’s life, but this life is still immature, so we are called children. But in this verse (Romans 8:14), the word son is huios in Greek, meaning “son.” Sons have not only received the life of the Father, but that life has grown and matured to adulthood, qualified to inherit the Father’s inheritance. This speaks of the saints who, on the pathway of sanctification, have made certain progress and are able to be led by the Spirit of God—they have grown into sons of God.

According to Paul’s description in the stage of sanctification, when the law of the Spirit of life operates in the saints, if they cooperate with the operation of this law by setting their mind on the spirit, eventually their mind becomes the mind of the

spirit, their will follows the spirit's leading, and the Spirit of God is able to make His home in them. They are then able to be led by the Spirit of God; they have grown into sons of God. They not only have the position of being God's sons, but they also stand upon this position to partake of the riches of the Triune God, becoming those who are led by the Spirit of God. This proves that they are indeed sons of God.

We must realize that for a person who knows God and believes in Him, the Spirit of God is within him. Therefore, for the Spirit of God to lead him is a very natural thing. But whether or not we can be led by the Spirit is another matter. The Greek word for led is in the present passive tense. This means: can we now be led by the Spirit of God? The Spirit of God is actively leading, but are we passively willing to be led? The Spirit leads according to God's eternal will and plan. Whether we can be led includes two aspects: first, whether we know; second, whether we are willing to obey.

Those saints whose life is still immature cannot perceive the Spirit of God, and therefore cannot know His will and plan. Naturally, they cannot be led by the Spirit. To be led by the Spirit requires a certain degree of growth in life, enabling us to perceive the Spirit of God and to know the content of His leading. We may perceive and understand this during our devotion, Bible reading, or prayer. This is the first aspect—knowing. But after knowing, we must also be willing to obey in order to be truly led by the Spirit of God.

Many times, accepting God's leading requires us to suffer, to experience loss. For example, you may have a better job opportunity, but it requires you to move, making it impossible for you to continue serving in the church. In the flesh you may reason, "There is also a church in the new place. I can still serve there; there is no difference." But at that moment, can you still obey the Spirit of God, staying in your original church to serve, and losing that opportunity? Or, for another example, God tells us not to forsake assembling together. Yet in the church there may be certain people you do not wish to see, or things that disturb you and make you uncomfortable. Can you still follow the Spirit's leading and continue to gather? Whether a saint can be led by the Spirit of God reveals his measure of life and testifies to his spiritual health.

Some saints may think that the Spirit's leading is violent, coercive, something that people resist yet cannot escape. In fact, it is just the opposite. In the Bible, the Spirit is often symbolized by a dove. Therefore, the operation of the Spirit is delicate and gentle. The best picture in the Old Testament is the holy anointing oil. Exodus 30:23–25 tells us that the holy anointing oil was made of one hin of olive oil as the base—olive oil signifying the Holy Spirit—mixed with four spices: myrrh five hundred shekels, sweet cinnamon two hundred and fifty shekels, calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and cassia five hundred shekels. Myrrh signifies Christ's all-inclusive death; calamus signifies the effectiveness of death; cinnamon signifies the power of resurrection; and cassia signifies the surpassing power of resurrection. The holy anointing oil is the olive oil plus the four spices. This typifies the indwelling Spirit in our spirit, compounded with all the riches of what Christ has accomplished, to meet all our needs.

Then in Exodus 30:26–30, we are told to anoint the ark, the tabernacle, and all the furnishings of the tabernacle—the bronze altar, the laver, the table of showbread, the golden lampstand, and the golden incense altar—as well as to anoint the priests who served. This typifies the indwelling Spirit continually applying the riches of the Triune God to us. This applying process is the process of being led by the Spirit of God. It is full of nourishment, it is sweet to the taste, and it involves no compulsion. This is a leading of life, and when we obey, it brings forth life and peace.

Therefore, for the Spirit of God to lead us does not require us to grit our teeth and force ourselves to accept His leading. Rather, it is something very natural, very pleasant, as the Holy Spirit applies the riches of God again and again into our soul, until our emotion delights, our mind understands, and our will is willing to obey. Although in this process we may experience suffering and loss, what are these compared to the life and peace we gain?

The Greek word for lead is *ago*, which is also the root word of *euaggelion*, the gospel. This means that the Spirit's leading brings us into the reality of the gospel. This gospel is not only that we preach the good news to save people; it is the full gospel that Paul speaks of in Romans—from condemnation, to justification, to sanctification, to glorification. Glorification is the goal of the gospel, that one day

God's glory may be manifested in every saint. Dear brothers and sisters, may we all grow to be those who can be led by the Spirit of God, grow into the full measure of life, become sons of God, and inherit all the spiritual blessings God has prepared for us.

Let us pray together: Lord, help us to grow into those who can be led by the Spirit of God. Though in our daily life there are still many struggles, grant us sufficient grace. In every matter we encounter in our living, may we come before God to seek, grant us a clear mind to understand Your leading, and a submissive will willing to obey Your leading. Let us in our daily life learn to follow the Spirit of God. Bless my daily life. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.