

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

Romans 8: 16-18

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 are going to read Romans Chapter 8 and today we will read verses 16 to 18.

The salvation of a Christian is a lifelong process—believing and being baptized are only the beginning. In the book of Romans, Paul carefully, fully, and logically describes this process from the inside out. Every word Paul speaks, every term he uses—especially the many adjectives he places before “spirit”—all carry a certain logic.

Those without light or revelation may say that these terms all mean the same thing. Those with a little light will begin to consider the meaning of these new expressions, enriching the significance of the verses. Only those who are willing to labor in God's Word, often searching before God and being led by the Holy Spirit, can truly enter into Paul's thought: a systematic, logical understanding of the complete picture of salvation as revealed through him. May the saints often come before God with a prayerful heart, bringing their daily fellowship in the Word to Him. Surely God will, according to your need, give you the explanation that is most fitting.

For me, Romans clearly depicts that salvation begins in our spirit. Through believing, the Holy Spirit comes to enliven our spirit and dwell within us; at that point, we are justified by God. Justification is related to the spirit, and it is positional. It is that we unilaterally receive the grace of redemption accomplished for us by Jesus Christ. Therefore, we call this the judicial redemption.

When we begin to experience the organic salvation and walk on the path of sanctification, this work takes place in the soul. The Holy Spirit, through our spirit, transmits and imparts all the riches of the Triune God into our soul, so that the law of the Spirit of life begins to operate, helping us to be freed from the law of sin and

death. On the path of sanctification, we begin to experience the Spirit of God making His home within us; to experience the Spirit of Christ, who imparts all the virtues of Christ into our soul; and to experience the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead, who gives life to our mortal bodies.

Then Paul begins to speak about glorification, which is the result of sanctification. Sanctification is a matter of the soul, while glorification is something that is manifested in our body. Glorification is outward—it is visible and tangible in actual action. The outward expression of glorification includes being led by the Spirit of God, paying the price to obtain the adoption as sons, and very naturally crying out, “Abba, Father.” Paul’s description moves seamlessly from sanctification to glorification, because the measure of sanctification in the soul determines the measure of glorification expressed in the body.

Of course, the ultimate completion of glorification will take place at the coming of Christ, when our body is redeemed. With a new spiritual body, the glory of God will then be manifested in us. Fearing that we might not understand, Paul once again traces back this process in Romans 8:16–18. In fact, this process is the same as sanctification, except sanctification emphasizes the inward transformation of the soul, while glorification emphasizes the outward manifestation of glory through the experience of suffering.

Verse 16: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

The Chinese Union Version’s translation is very inaccurate. The KJV is translated directly according to the original text: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit”—that is, the Holy Spirit and our spirit bear witness together. Here the Holy Spirit and our spirit use the same Greek word, *pneuma*.

The Chinese Union Version does not translate it as “our spirit,” but arbitrarily changes it to “our heart.” It is very obvious that they placed theological concepts before the Word of God. The same Greek word is divided into two different Chinese

words within the same verse—this is very improper. This also causes the Chinese-speaking saints who only read the Chinese Union Version Bible to be unable to see this important truth: that man also has a spirit. When a saint receives grace and is saved, the Holy Spirit comes in to enliven his spirit and dwell in his spirit, and he is then regenerated. That is, he has received from the Holy Spirit a new, eternal, spiritual life, which is the life of God. At this time, the Holy Spirit and his spirit together bear witness that he is a child of God, because he has the life of God.

The word “child” here in Greek is teknon, in English “child,” meaning God’s child. Here I want to insert a few words regarding male and female gender. Male and female genders are matters only of life on earth today. On earth we should respect the distinction between male and female. But on the other hand, we must also recognize that in eternity to come, there will no longer be any gender distinction between male and female.

The best example is Jesus Himself answering the challenge of the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, so they raised a hypothetical example, saying there were seven brothers who all married one woman. After the resurrection, whose wife would this woman be? Of course, their purpose was to show the absurdity of resurrection. But Jesus’ answer was very thought-provoking. In Matthew 22:29–30, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.’”

When Christ returns, after our resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. There will no longer be the relationship of marriage, because it will no longer be necessary. Every saint after resurrection will have eternal life, and there will be no need to bring forth descendants through marriage—they will be able to exist forever. Precisely because in the resurrection, in eternity, there will no longer be the distinction of male and female gender, therefore when speaking of the sanctification and glorification of the saints, Paul uses the term “the adoption as sons.” This adoption as sons includes all the saints, and of course it includes all the sisters; they also will obtain the adoption as sons. When speaking of the

relationship with Christ, the church is the bride of Christ; and this bride also includes all the brothers, for the brothers also must become the bride of Christ.

Therefore, when we read about, in the resurrection and in eternity, the matters of the bride or of sons, we should not be restricted by today's distinctions of male and female—it refers to all the saints. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. This “bears witness with” in Greek is *sunmartureo*, composed of two Greek words: the first is *sun*, which means “together”; the second is *martureo*, in English “witness,” which is usually translated as “to testify.” In Greek, “witness” and “martyr” come from the same word. Therefore, the meaning of this verse is that the Holy Spirit and our spirit together strongly and firmly testify that we are children of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, concerning this truth, we must have a deep and personal experience. After receiving grace and salvation, every saint will experience weakness and failure, even to such an extent that he may doubt: why, after being saved, is he still so weak, to the point of losing faith? But all these are accusations from Satan.

When we do not walk according to the Spirit, we live in the old man. Weakness and failure are inevitable. But do not forget—the Holy Spirit and our spirit strongly and firmly testify that we are children of God. This is a connection in life, and it cannot be changed. When we are weak, when we fail, when we fall, what we urgently need to do is to open the eyes of our heart. Through confessing and repenting, applying the blood of Christ to cleanse our conscience, letting our soul be opened to receive the supply that comes from the Spirit—the Holy Spirit and our spirit will then loudly declare that we are children of God. Our momentary stumble, our temporary failure, does not change this fact. This is the identity and position that God has given us, and no one can take it away.

Verse 17: “and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

God's destiny for us does not stop at the identity and position of being children; since we are children, then we are heirs. "Children" speaks of the relationship of life; "heirs" means the legal inheritors. Since we already have the life of God, this is eternal life, the incorruptible life. This life will surely grow, and in the future will certainly become the legal inheritors.

We must clearly understand three terms: Children refers to when we are still infants—we already have the life of God, but this life is still immature, like little children. Sons refers to when the life has grown and matured, and has obtained the legal qualification to inherit the Father's estate. Heirs refers to having actually inherited the Father's estate. This will happen in the future—that is, at the coming of Christ, when we all will obtain the adoption as sons and begin to inherit the inheritance that the Father has prepared for us. Paul very certainly tells us: since we are children, we are heirs; that is to say, since we already have the life of God, we will surely grow to become heirs. This also is the assurance of "once saved, forever saved."

Of course, in between, there is still the process of the growth of life. Here, Paul speaks in one breath of three "heirs": since we are children, we are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. The first "heirs" emphasizes the inheritance of life—since we are children, having received the life of God, we surely will grow to become heirs and inherit the estate.

The second is heirs of God, which emphasizes the hope of glory. God is glorious, and as heirs of God, naturally, we also must be able to manifest the glory of God. Although today we are still unformed, and we cannot manifest the virtues of Christ in our being, thus not having much glory, yet we have a certain hope—that when we are glorified in the future, we will surely manifest the glory of God, matching the identity of being heirs of God.

Precisely because today we are still in the process of being wrought, Paul then adds a third one: joint heirs with Christ. This emphasizes Christ's leading, fellowship, and sharing. By ourselves, we cannot become heirs of God; we cannot reach the hope

of glory. But we are not relying on ourselves—we rely on Christ. Not only relying on Christ, but also being heirs of God together with Christ.

In Hebrews 2:10–11, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Christ is not only our Redeemer; He is also our Elder Brother. He will lead all the sons of God into glory. When Jesus was on earth as a man, He experienced many sufferings, and through these sufferings, He was perfected. Today, Christ uses what He has already experienced and what He has already accomplished to help us in sanctification. When we receive His help, we can be sanctified and can also enter into glory together with Christ. Therefore, He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Beloved brothers and sisters, Christ is our Elder Brother. He has already finished His course and now sits at the right hand of the Father’s throne, waiting for us also to enter into glory. In this process, He personally encourages us, cheering us on, so that we would strive forward, not be discouraged, not lose heart, but be strong and courageous. He wants to be heirs together with us. How truly blessed we are!

So how then can we become joint heirs with Christ? This is conditional. The condition is: “if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” Suffering and glory are inseparable—how much we suffer is how much we will be glorified; only by suffering together with Christ can we be glorified together with Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must not have a miraculous kind of thought, thinking that if we live comfortably and at ease today, then when Christ comes, we will miraculously obtain glory. Paul does not say this. Today we must suffer together with Christ, so that on that day we may be glorified together with Christ. That is to say, our future glory is exchanged through today’s suffering.

Why is it necessary to suffer in order to be glorified? We must realize that the glory to come is what we accumulate today. This is why Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:20, to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Every time today when we meet the Lord

in reading the Word, we are laying up a bit of glory. Every time in prayer we fellowship with the Lord, we are laying up a bit of glory. Every time we submit to the Lord in circumstances, we are laying up a bit of glory. Every time we bear the cross and follow the Lord, we are laying up a bit of glory.

Yet, according to our old man, there are all kinds of veils upon our face—money, power, fame, traditional culture, customs, and so on. These coverings of the veil prevent us from seeing the Lord, and thus we cannot follow Him. Therefore, in God's mercy, He sends sufferings to break us, to remove the veils before our eyes, so that we are no longer covered by our own lusts and interests. Thus, every suffering is a disguised blessing.

God gives us special grace to help us remove the veil, so that with unveiled face we can behold Christ and follow Him. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." When we meet with the Lord often, we can reflect the glory of the Lord, and be transformed from glory to glory.

Christ Himself, after completing redemption, resurrection, and ascension, has already obtained glory. Philippians 2:9–11, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Christ has already obtained glory and now sits upon the throne of glory, waiting for His many brothers—that is, us—to also obtain glory. Therefore, we must quickly strive to grow and mature. As 2 Thessalonians 1:10 says, "When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe..." On the day when Jesus returns, He will be glorified in us.

Verse 18: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

At the beginning, I think, the word “think” in Greek is *logizomai*, in English it is reckon, meaning after logical reasoning, the result obtained. It can also be seen as, I have calculated, and now the sufferings of this present time, compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us—when compared, are not worthy to be considered. That is to say, the sufferings we endure today cannot be compared with the glory that is to come. This was Paul’s careful calculation: the coming glory is so great, therefore we can lightly regard the sufferings we face today.

In 2 Corinthians 4:17, Paul has an even more direct statement: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The sufferings we endure today, in terms of time, are momentary; in terms of degree, are light. But the glory that will be revealed in the future, in terms of degree, is exceedingly great, far beyond measure, and it is not within time—it is eternal. Therefore, when comparing the two, we are willing to joyfully accept all kinds of sufferings today, because in the future we will obtain exceedingly great, incomparable, eternal glory.

Concerning this glory, in the original text it is coming glory to be revealed. If you translate it directly, it is “the glory that is coming, to be revealed in us.” This expresses that this glory is continually increasing and is on its way. That is, each time we experience suffering today, a little glory is added. People may not see it today, but when Christ comes again, it will be fully manifested. The Greek word for revealed is *apokaluptō*. *Apo* means “away from,” *kaluptō* means “to cover.” Together the meaning is “to uncover, to remove the covering.” This word is usually translated as reveal or revelation.

Today the glory in us is covered—it cannot be seen. When Christ returns, the coverings will be removed, and the glory in us will be revealed; and this glory is the manifestation of God. Dear brothers and sisters, every day we need God to remove the coverings for us, so that we can see revelation. In revelation, we can see the glory. This glory will attract us, so that we can be like Abraham, who in Ur of the

Chaldeans, saw God's glory, was deeply attracted, and was willing to rise up and follow God. Today, we are the same. May we receive revelation each time we read the Scriptures. In revelation, we see the glory; being attracted by the glory, we are willing to rise up and follow the Lord. Revelation, glory, and attraction—these are the reasons we are able to follow the Lord, and also the motivation that enables us to follow Him. May the Lord help us.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, thank You! Through faith, we have become children of God. And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. What a firm promise this is, and what a glorious hope! Yet this hope comes with a condition: that today we suffer with Christ, so that in that day we may also be glorified with Him. Lord, help us—if we fall into tribulation, help us to realize that every tribulation is a disguised blessing. Remove the veil from us, break our flesh, so that we may look upon You with unveiled face and follow You. Through looking upon You, we may reflect the glory of the Lord; through following You, we walk on the path of sanctification, and ultimately reach the glory we hope for. Bless my life today. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.