

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

Romans 10: 14-17

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Romans Chapter 10. We will read verses 14-17 today.

From Romans 9 to 11, after Paul discusses personal salvation, he begins to address the first issue that must be dealt with when discussing corporate salvation: the position and relationship of the Israelites and the New Testament saints in God's eternal plan. The Israelites are God's chosen people in the Old Testament, and the church is God's chosen people in the New Testament.

We must recognize that people live within time and space, making it difficult to break free from self-centered thinking patterns, so people are always very narrow-minded. Especially when it comes to God's eternal will, Paul starts with God's sovereignty, enabling people to recognize that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe and all things. God naturally has the most absolute sovereignty, according to His own will, taking a portion from one lump of clay to make a vessel of honor; He can also take another portion from the same lump of clay to make a vessel of dishonor. This is God's absolute sovereignty, and people cannot argue against God.

Even so, God is a God full of mercy; in His infinite love, He repeatedly gives people opportunities to repent. Therefore, even when emphasizing God's sovereignty, the examples Paul cites all imply the struggles people face when bearing their own responsibilities. Thus, this makes "God's sovereignty" not a cold, impersonal term, but rather, when God exercises His sovereignty, He is full of mercy and care toward people. He not only fully respects human free will but also, when people cannot keep up, shows a little more leniency, a little more patience, giving people the opportunity to catch up with God's leading.

Take Abraham as an example: before he received the promised Isaac, he first begot a son out of the flesh; after receiving Isaac, he also begot sons out of natural means.

But this did not change God's promise to Abraham, which was fulfilled through Isaac. Let us look again at Jacob: although Jacob was chosen by God, he had to leave his hometown in his youth and died in a foreign land in his old age. Jacob valued spiritual blessings, so what he received was spiritual maturity; these were exactly what Esau despised. So we see that God chooses in His foreknowledge, and thus His election does not violate human free will in the slightest.

Even in the example of Moses, with the proud-hearted Egyptian Pharaoh, God still, through Moses' hand, gave nine warnings first, and Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his heart, not allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt, which led to the tenth plague of the death of the firstborn.

Paul's purpose is to lead us to recognize God's will in election and the wisdom within it. According to God's decree, salvation comes from Israel, then to the Gentiles and all nations. However, when the gospel flourished among the Gentiles, the Israelites could not keep up; although this was within God's plan. Paul uses Romans 10 to tell us the reason the Israelites lost salvation, which is a responsibility they themselves must bear.

First, they were full of zeal toward God but lacked true knowledge, so they sought to establish their own righteousness and did not submit to God's righteousness. Paul not only speaks of God's sovereignty but also very balancedly speaks of the responsibility people should bear. And in this section, in the message warning the Israelites, Paul, from verses 10:9–17, brings out a beautiful gospel message.

Yesterday, we already read the first half; it turns out that being saved is very easy: as long as one believes in their heart that God raised Christ from the dead and confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, they will be saved. This makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, because all have the same Lord: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Therefore, the Israelites must bear their own responsibility. It is not that God abandoned them, but they abandoned God. Today, we will read the second half of this gospel message.

Verse 14: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

After people believe in their hearts, they begin to call on the name of the Lord, and they will be saved. Now Paul traces back, asking a series of questions: How can people call on Him if they have not believed? If people have not heard the gospel message, how can they believe? If there is no one preaching, how can people hear the gospel? This series of questions brings out a very simple logic: every saint must be prepared to share the gospel message. When someone asks you about the reason for your peace and joy, you should immediately share, not with a lengthy gospel message, but with a personal testimony. People can hear and then believe; having believed, they can call; and those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Verse 15: “And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’”

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? We often have a mistaken notion, thinking that people must first attend a theological seminary to preach. The Bible does not say this; rather, those who are sent can preach. So, who is the sender, and who are those sent? We must find the answer from the Bible.

In John 20:21–23, “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” This passage occurs on the evening of the Lord’s resurrection Sunday, when the disciples were gathered together, and Jesus suddenly came among them, breathed on them, causing them to receive the Holy Spirit, and sent them out to preach the gospel of forgiveness of sins. Jesus here connects receiving the Holy Spirit with being sent out; this also tells us that every saint indwelt by the Holy Spirit has already received authority and has been

sent to go out and preach the gospel, helping people receive the grace of forgiveness of sins.

In Matthew 28:18–20, “Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” This passage is when Jesus, on a mountain in Galilee, perhaps the same mountain where He delivered the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, a place where Jesus and the disciples often gathered.

Jesus openly announced the Great Commission to the gathered disciples; this Great Commission is also spoken to every saint who has received grace and salvation. We must go preach the gospel, lead people to salvation, help people be baptized, and also teach newly baptized saints to understand the Lord’s words, obey the Lord’s words, so they can enjoy the Lord’s presence until the end of the age, which is when Christ returns.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, every one of us has already been sent by the Lord, all are to go out and preach; and the Lord also promised that those who preach the gospel, who bring glad tidings, their feet are how beautiful. Here, Paul quotes the words from Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” Paul does not quote word for word, only emphasizing that those who preach the gospel, who bring glad tidings, their feet are how beautiful.

The Chinese Union Version translates it as “feet,” which is actually relatively reserved; the original text is simply feet, not the traces they leave. Those who preach the gospel, who bring glad tidings, their feet are how beautiful. In Paul’s time, transportation was not developed; Paul’s three missionary journeys were mostly on foot; from one city to another, walking every day, and later, their feet developed thick calluses. The road conditions at that time were poor, with much dust, and daily contact with the ground certainly made them dirty and smelly. But

God's word says their feet are how beautiful! Because their feet are full of the marks of laboring for the Lord, their labor is for preaching the gospel, bringing glad tidings; their mouths are full of gracious words, bearing the fruit of their lips.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are all messengers of the gospel, we all have a glorious commission. We are sent to preach the gospel, bring glad tidings; our labor, God sees as beautiful. Sometimes, God sends us to distant places, but more often, God brings those who need the gospel to our side. May we all rise to bear the commission, becoming messengers of the gospel. Paul says that toward those who need the gospel, he is like one in debt. We all need to have this urgent feeling like Paul, to repay the debt of the gospel.

Verse 16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?'"

Preaching the gospel, of course, hopes that those who hear can accept the gospel, but this is not God's decree; more often, it is the opposite, most people reject the gospel. Therefore, Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1, "Who has believed our report?" Paul adds "Lord" before this sentence, showing that Paul truly empathizes with Isaiah. In his three missionary journeys, he encountered so many hardships, being rejected by people, being stoned, encountering riots, being imprisoned, and so on. Therefore, he cries out, Lord, who has believed our report?

We know that Isaiah 53 is the Messianic poem; I personally believe it is the most beautiful message in the entire Old Testament, the most moving poem, and the most powerful gospel. But Isaiah says, Who has believed our report? Therefore, when we preach the gospel and are rejected by people, we must not be discouraged; this is a high-probability event. God's requirement for us is to go and proclaim the gospel message; whether people are saved is not our responsibility.

Paul, in 2 Timothy 4:2, also exhorts his young coworker Timothy, whether in season or out of season, to fulfill the ministry of the gospel. When we encounter the sons of peace chosen by God, they naturally respond to the gospel message; as for those

who do not respond, our responsibility is to sow the seeds of the gospel. As for how their hearts are, that is God's matter. We must believe that the seeds of the gospel have the power of life; sometimes buried in people's hearts, even after twenty or thirty years, they can still take root and sprout. We sow the seeds, someone waters, but it is God who makes it grow.

Verse 17: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

The Chinese Union Version's translation here is very beautiful: faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of Christ. Actually, according to the original text, this verse is much simpler and clearer: faith in the original text is simply faith or faith. If translated directly according to the original text, faith is by hearing, which is hearing the word of Christ. And the word here in the original text is *rhema*, which is the timely word, the supplying word, the applicable word.

When someone preaches the message about Christ, the words preached can meet people's needs, can supply people's life. And when gospel friends hear this word of life, faith is produced in them, enabling them to accept the gospel message. Therefore, faith comes from the word of Christ, not from human effort, not from human decision.

Actually, this is completely consistent with the parable of the sower Jesus spoke in Matthew 13:3–9. The seed of life naturally has the power of life, and a person's heart is that soil; if their heart is busy, or full of stones, or full of thorns, this seed cannot grow well. But if a person's heart is good soil, the seed can take root, sprout, grow shoots, bear heads, and produce fruit; some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The word of Christ is that seed of life. Saints are sent by Christ to go out and proclaim; we do not need to look at others' conditions; we only bear the responsibility of sowing the seed. The matter of growth is left to God; God bears all the responsibility.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! The questions Paul asked are truly good: How can they call if they have not believed? How can they believe if they have not heard? How can they hear without a preacher? How can they preach without being sent? Lord, thank You! Every one of us has already been sent by You to become messengers of the gospel. Preaching the gospel and bringing glad tidings is the commission You have given to each of us. Thank You! Through Paul's epistle, You remind us to always be prepared to be messengers of the gospel, sharing with others the message of our salvation. We only proclaim, and You remember our labor, making our feet so beautiful. Bless my daily life, that I may seize every opportunity to be a person who preaches the gospel and brings glad tidings. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.