

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

Luke 8:11-21

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We continue to read Luke chapter 8. Today, we will read verses 11-21. Yesterday we read the Parable of the Sower spoken by Jesus. Afterward, the disciples asked Him about it, and Jesus began to explain.

Verse 11: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

Using a seed to represent the word of God means that everything God speaks contains life. A seed can take root, sprout, and grow; the very characteristic of a seed is that it has life. The word of God—the words spoken by Jesus—contain life within them. In the Gospel of John, Jesus said that He is the Word who was in the beginning with God, and in Him was life. Therefore, we should never belittle every word we speak when we go out to preach the gospel. If the word is from God, it contains life. The sower is only responsible for sowing the seed. Whether the seed can grow depends on the one who hears the gospel.

Verse 12: "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

If a person's heart is like the wayside, it means it is too busy with traffic. When a person is busy, his heart is like the roadside—various people, matters, and things are mixed within it. There are many preferences and hobbies that keep the heart busy like a roadside. The characteristic of the wayside is that the soil is very hard. When the seed falls, it is not covered by soil at all. The seed is completely exposed, and once exposed, it is easily eaten by birds. The birds represent the devil, who

comes and “takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”

Therefore, the first kind—those whose hearts are full of busyness—are not easily saved. Even though they hear the word of God, they do not treasure it, because there are simply too many other things. There is no space and no time for the seed to settle into the soil. Very quickly it is devoured by the devil.

Verse 13: “But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.”

The second situation is different. This person’s heart is not so busy. He has time and space to receive God’s word and accept the seed of life. However, his heart contains many stones. These stones are usually long-held resentment, bitterness, dissatisfaction toward others, and complaints about circumstances. When he hears the gospel of peace and joy, it feels good and he seems to accept it immediately. But because there are too many stones in the heart, the roots cannot grow. His believing is only temporary. Later, when temptation or trial comes, he falls away.

The first kind, the wayside, has no heart to receive God’s word at all. The second kind, the rocky ground, is willing to receive it but unwilling to pay the price in times of trial. He likes to gain but cannot forsake. Therefore, the word has no root in his heart. For a rooted Christian, trials are a necessary environment for growth. But for one without roots, when trials come, the seed of life withers and dies.

Verse 14: “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

When the seed falls among thorns, it also begins to take root, sprout, and grow. Unfortunately, it is surrounded by thorns. What are the thorns? They are the cares,

riches, and pleasures of this life. Many anxieties and worries, the inability to let go of money and material temptation, and the unwillingness to forsake luxury and enjoyment—these all become thorns that hinder our growth. Because the plant cannot grow to maturity, it cannot produce mature fruit.

Verse 15: “But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

When the seed falls on good ground, it can bear fruit a hundredfold. What is the secret? It is to keep the word in a noble and good heart. A noble heart means no hypocrisy—no pretending, no falseness. A good heart means desiring what God desires. When we are honest with ourselves and with God, willing to give up fleshly enjoyment and pursue what God wants us to pursue, then the word falls into such a good and honest heart. Yet it still requires patience to bear fruit.

God gives every Christian a lifelong lesson. Bearing fruit is also our lifelong pursuit. In God’s permission, we will go through many trials and testings. Just as Romans 5:3–5 says: “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint...”

Every seed that falls on good ground grows hope through patience. What hope? The hope of abundant fruit. Following the Parable of the Sower, Jesus spoke another parable.

Verse 16: “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light.”

A lamp is lit so that people can see. Therefore, it must be placed on a lampstand. When placed on a lampstand, it can give light to the whole household. A lamp shines because it contains oil. Oil often typifies the Holy Spirit. A Christian whose heart is good soil, who has believed and received, has the indwelling Holy Spirit

within. He is like a lamp that has been lit. It must be placed on a lampstand—it cannot be covered with a vessel nor placed under a bed.

What is the vessel? A vessel is the tool by which we make a living. For a programmer, a computer is his vessel. It can also represent various concerns of life that prevent the lamp from shining. And what about placing it under a bed? A bed is a place of rest and enjoyment; it represents indulgence in material pleasures. When the lamp is covered by various enjoyments and placed under the bed, its light cannot shine. Once we have received God's word and the life that comes from Him, we must let this life be manifested before others, like a lamp on a lampstand.

Verse 17: “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.”

This clearly tells us that we cannot be hidden Christians. Once the seed of life is within you, you must let its light shine through your life. Nothing hidden will remain hidden. Those who want to be hidden Christians may feel pressure from work, concerns about career advancement, or various anxieties of life. These things can prevent one from living as a proper Christian. We must know that God has already prepared these matters for us. If we regard them as more important than the divine life within, then our lamp is not on the lampstand. Some are captivated by comfort and enjoyment—placing the lamp under the bed—so the word of life is hidden and cannot be manifested before others.

Verse 18: “Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.”

This is always the principle of the spiritual life: when you have something and you use it, you will have more. Spiritual life grows; it is not consumed. The more you use it, the more mature you become, and the more the life grows. On the contrary, if

you place it under a basket or under a bed, soon even what you think you have will be taken away.

Verses 19–21: “Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, ‘Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.’”

When Jesus was carrying out His earthly ministry and was busy, even His mother and brothers could not freely come to Him. Through this, we see that what Jesus truly values is obeying the word of God. Those who hear and do the word of God—He says—are His mother and His brothers. In other words, our relationship with the Lord surpasses all other blood relationships.

Jesus is not saying that blood relationships are unimportant, but that they are not the most reliable. If you hear God’s word and keep it, maintaining a good relationship with Him, then on that foundation all your other relationships—including family—will be strengthened and made better.

Therefore, we must place our relationship with God first. When we maintain a good relationship with Him, all other relationships will fall into place. Why? Because to live as a normal Christian is to live a life of selfless dedication and sacrifice. When you carry such an attitude, your relationships with others will naturally be good.

In this passage, Jesus especially reminds us that once we have received the Lord’s word in our hearts, we must not hide it there. It must be like a lamp placed on a lampstand, shining in our daily life with the light of a Christian. We are the salt of the earth; we are the light of the world. Only when we have a good testimony before others can we properly become messengers of the gospel. May God help us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Keep our hearts as good soil. When we hear Your word, may it grow well within us and bear fruit a hundredfold. We ask that our lives may be like a lamp placed on a lampstand, shining upon all those around us. Do not let us be hidden Christians. Teach us to be ready to bear witness that we are Your children. Bless Your word to grow vigorously within us. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.