

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

Luke 11: 29-36

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 Luke Chapter 11 and today we will read verses 29 to 36.

Verse 29: "And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, 'This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.'"

Among those who previously came to challenge Jesus, some tried to test Him by asking Him to show them a sign. In response to their challenge, Jesus answered them in His public teaching. First, He told them that this generation is an evil generation. And in such an evil generation, if you want to see a sign, there will be only one sign—the sign of Jonah. Apart from this, there will be no other sign. Why? Because your attitude is not right. If you come to see a sign with a testing mentality, then even if the sign happens, you still will not be saved. What God cares about is the salvation of each individual soul, not satisfying curiosity or responding to challenges. As for such curiosity and challenges, God is not willing to perform any sign at all—except the sign of Jonah.

What, then, is the sign of Jonah? We need to go back to the Book of Jonah. The word of God came to the prophet Jonah, telling him to go to Nineveh and preach the gospel to the people there, because their wickedness had come up before heaven. But Jonah was unwilling to obey God's will, because at that time the Assyrian Empire was the enemy of Israel, and Nineveh was its capital city. Jonah did not want them to be saved; rather, he wished that God would destroy the city of Nineveh because of their sins. Therefore Jonah fled—he fled out to the sea. As a result, God caused a great fish to swallow Jonah. While in the belly of the fish, Jonah

repented, and God commanded the great fish to vomit Jonah onto the shore near Nineveh.

The people of Nineveh believed in a fish god. As a result, when they saw a man being vomited out from the belly of a fish and yet having no injury on his body, this was an extraordinary miracle. Therefore, when Jonah preached the word of God to the people of Nineveh, the entire city—from top to bottom—repented in sackcloth and ashes. This was the sign of Jonah.

Verse 30: “For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.”

Jonah himself being vomited out from the belly of the fish was already a miracle. Because of this miracle, people believed. In the same way, the Son of Man will also become the sign to this generation. At the beginning Jesus said that this generation is an evil generation. The so-called evil generation is a generation that does not believe in God. Jesus, like Jonah, would walk the path of the cross—dying on the cross and rising again.

Just as Jonah came out after three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so the Son of Man will be three days in the heart of the earth and then rise from the dead. As Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so also Jesus will become a sign to this generation. And this sign is the only sign. Why? Because this sign is the foundation of all other signs. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the greatest miracle in human history. Today is the age of grace, and you still have the opportunity to believe in this miracle and be saved. One day, the door of grace will be closed, and judgment will come.

Verse 31: “The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.”

The event of the Queen of the South, the Queen of Sheba, is recorded in 1 Kings 10:1–10. She heard that Solomon had asked God for wisdom and had become the wisest person of his time. In order to hear Solomon’s words of wisdom, she came from the ends of the earth. But Jesus said: “Indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” This One is Jesus Christ Himself.

Solomon asked God for wisdom and thus became a wise man. But Jesus Himself is wisdom. Solomon, in his wisdom, spoke about all kinds of plants and trees; yet Jesus is the Creator of those plants and trees. Solomon, in his wisdom, built the temple for God; yet that temple is the body of Jesus Christ. All that Solomon had and all that he did were only a shadow, while Jesus Christ is the reality that was to come. Therefore, He is greater than Solomon.

Verse 32: “The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”

Jesus Christ is not only greater than Solomon; He is also greater than Jonah. The gospel that Jonah preached was for the city of Nineveh alone, but Jesus Christ came to save all mankind. Because of Jonah’s preaching, the entire city of Nineveh repented. At the time of judgment, the people of Nineveh will rise up to condemn this generation. Why? Because they do not believe.

Here it mentions that Jesus is greater than Jonah, because Jesus not only passed through death and rose from the dead, but He also ascended into heaven. In the Gospel of John it says that after He ascended, He would send the Helper—the Holy Spirit—so that all who believe may be saved, may be born again, and be born of the Spirit. This Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the inheritance for all the children of God. Why is the Holy Spirit mentioned here? Because of the next verse.

Verse 33: “No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light.”

A cellar is a basement or underground storage place. When a person lights a lamp, he places it on a lampstand so that it can give light to everyone in the house, and those who come in may see the light. No one lights a lamp and puts it in a cellar, nor under a basket. A cellar is a hidden place where people cannot see. As for putting it under a basket—the basket is a tool people use to make a living, a measuring container for grain. No one lights a lamp and then places it in a cellar or under a basket. The purpose of lighting a lamp is so that people can see, so that it may give light to the whole household.

Earlier, in the parable about demon possession, it was mentioned that a person is like a house, which must allow the Holy Spirit to dwell within. If the Holy Spirit does not dwell within, then many times unclean spirits will come and dwell there instead. So how can our house be filled with light? We must light a lamp, and the lamp must be placed on the lampstand. Then what exactly is the lamp? And what does it mean to light the lamp?

Verse 34: “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.”

Jesus immediately used an illustration that we all understand, speaking about the relationship between the eye and the body. Because the eye can see, the body can walk without being in darkness. If the eye is clear, the whole body will be full of light. However, the word translated as “clear” is not very precise. In the original language, if we look at the English meaning, it is “single.” That is to say, if your eye is single—pure, focused on only one thing—then your whole body will be full of light. But if the eye is bad, the original word is “evil.” If your eyes look here and there, wanting everything, then your whole body will fall into darkness.

Through the relationship between the eye and the body, Luke here leads us to understand the relationship between the eyes of our heart and the Holy Spirit. If a person's inner being is like a house, then what is the lamp? What is the light? Proverbs 20:27 tells us: "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart." The spirit of man is like the eye within our heart, and this eye of the heart is the lamp of the LORD. The Holy Spirit is the oil of that lamp. When the Holy Spirit enters into a person's spirit—into the eye within the heart, into the lamp—then the lamp can be lit. Once the lamp is lit, it shines upon our whole being, and the house within us becomes completely bright.

If the eye within our heart is single—if our spirit seeks only the Lord and follows only the Holy Spirit—then our whole body will be full of light. But if the eye is evil, if the eye in our heart wants everything—today wanting fame and gain, tomorrow wanting wealth, and the day after tomorrow wanting power—then our whole being will fall into darkness.

Verse 35: "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness."

How can the light within become darkness? The Holy Spirit has no problem; rather, it is our human spirit—or the eye within our heart—that has become dim and no longer single or pure. When this happens, our whole being falls into darkness.

Verse 36: "If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

In this passage, Jesus tells us that the only sign given to this evil generation is the sign of the Son of Man—His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven. If you do not believe this sign, there will be no other sign given for you to see. But once you believe, you will be connected to the Holy Spirit whom God gives from heaven. When the Holy Spirit enters into your human spirit, your spirit is lit.

Then you must place this lamp on the lampstand so that it may shine upon your inner condition, causing your whole being to be filled with light and your whole person to be full of brightness.

To maintain such a condition, it connects back to the beginning, when the disciples asked Jesus how they could become people of prayer. You must often come before the Father and ask God. When you ask God, the Father will give you the Holy Spirit. For “everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” And in this passage, Luke especially tells us that our eyes must be clear, or our eyes must be single.

Let us pray together: Lord, yes, give us a single eye, that we may seek only You and look up to You. Bring all the needs of our lives and focus them before You, for You are the answer to every problem in our lives and the fulfillment of all our needs. Help us become a simple person, a person who desires only You, willing to place our whole life in Your hands. Starting today, Lord, lead me to live a life that is according to Your heart. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!