

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

**Luke 12: 49-59**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 12, verses 49 to 59.

This passage from verses 49 to 53 is called "the great monologue of Jesus" by Campbell Morgan, and it is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. After Jesus had spoken a very long teaching to His disciples and to the multitudes, He truly began to speak out from His heart. At this time, He was steadfast in His face, setting His face toward Jerusalem. Of course, He knew that there He would face all kinds of persecution, and ultimately go to the cross. But for this path of cross, He was ready and eager to go. What did He say?

**Verse 49: "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"**

When Jesus first encountered John the Baptist, at His baptism John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water; but He who is coming after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Jesus was very certain, knowing His ministry, and therefore He said, "I came to send fire on the earth." What is this fire? It is the fire of the gospel, and also the fire of judgment. The gospel spreads like fire among the people, making everyone fervent. We see that at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended, He appeared like tongues of fire, distributed to each one; each person was moved by the Holy Spirit and began to speak the things of the kingdom of God. How willing Jesus was to send fire on the earth! The gospel is set ablaze; and this fire also brings judgment. Those who hear the gospel are divided into two completely different conditions: those who believe and receive become the people of the kingdom of God; those who reject it condemn themselves as unworthy to receive the gospel.

Paul also said that he spreads a fragrance in the triumphal procession: to some it is a fragrance of life unto life, but to others it is a fragrance of death unto death. Therefore, when we preach the gospel, we also separate people: those who receive obtain salvation; those who do not receive come under judgment. Thus Jesus says, "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"

Today we continue this ministry of the gospel. God sends us to bear witness for Him in all places. We too should say this: we come to send fire on the earth, and how we wish it were already kindled!

**Verse 50: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!"**

This "baptism" refers to the fact that He must go to Jerusalem, that He must suffer persecution, and that He must be nailed to the cross; and regarding this baptism of the cross, His heart is deeply urgent.

While Jesus was ministering on earth, His physical body became a restriction and limitation to the divine life within Him. Through the death on the cross, His body was broken, and the divine life within was released. This divine life then brought forth the fire of the gospel to spread everywhere; and Jesus was deeply urgent concerning this.

Today we are the same: on the one hand, we have a burden for the gospel and are willing to continue spreading this fire; but for the sake of this fire of the gospel, we may first need to pass through the baptism of the cross. As we go out today to preach the gospel for the sake of the kingdom of God, we must also have a mindset of bearing the cross. This will not be a smooth road; this will not be an easy path. Are we prepared? What does Jesus say?

**Verse 51: "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division."**

We must truly understand this statement: people are bound by sin; they are limited by sin, by the world, by the old self, and by their natural life. When Jesus comes, He saves some people out of this bondage; and those who are saved are willing to live a different life. Their lives are often a life of bearing the cross, often a life of being persecuted. Therefore He says, “I did not come to give peace on earth, but rather division.”

**Verse 52: “For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three.”**

Because those who truly hear the gospel and are saved are always a minority, like a little flock. Those who are saved are not understood by those who are not saved, and therefore division arises. Then Jesus says:

**Verse 53: “Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”**

Jesus places all kinds of relationships before us. Before salvation, it seems that everyone is controlled by sin. Once someone is freed from the bondage of sin and is saved, he is willing to live according to Jesus’ teaching and begin a life of preaching the gospel; and this life is a life of bearing the cross. This life is also a life of being misunderstood, and even persecuted, and therefore division arises.

In various human relationships, outwardly it may appear as disharmony—why is that? Because those who are saved are willing to preach the gospel, and they desire that those they love may also receive the benefit of the gospel; but when what they preach is not accepted, division arises.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you look at your own life and recall your condition before and after your salvation, have you also been misunderstood by those you

love, even opposed, even persecuted? This is the division that Jesus is speaking about here. But Jesus Himself went to receive the baptism of the cross.

Each one of us who follows Jesus Christ must not become those who persecute others; rather, we are willing to bear the cross, willing to be mistreated, willing to be oppressed, and we desire that others may see in us the likeness of Christ's suffering. Jesus went to the cross so that all of us might be saved. If you, for the sake of those you love, are willing to bear the cross, then as long as you are willing to bear the cross, those you love may be saved.

What Jesus emphasizes here is that we should not think our gospel will be gladly received; on the contrary, people often do not understand it, especially those who love you—they think they are doing it for your good. Therefore, they may persecute you. May we all be those who are willing to bear the cross.

**Verse 54: “Then He also said to the multitudes, ‘Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, “A shower is coming”; and so it is.’”**

After Jesus finished that great monologue, He turned to the multitudes: the western side of the land of Israel is the Mediterranean Sea. When clouds rise from the west, moisture from there drifts toward the land, and indeed rain comes.

**Verse 55: “And when you see the south wind blow, you say, ‘There will be hot weather’; and there is.”**

Because the southern part of the land is mostly desert, when the wind comes from the south, it is hot air. When the south wind blows, they say it will be hot, and so it is.

**Verse 56: “Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?”**

You can look at the weather and know whether it will rain or be dry. Jesus says, you know how to read the face of the sky—how is it that you cannot discern this time? What is this time? It is what Jesus said in Luke 10:23–24: “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.” Jesus spoke such a long discourse to tell them that the time has come—you must discern it.

**Verses 57–58: “Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.”**

Jesus then turns to the multitudes and begins to preach the gospel. We are all still on the way; everyone is. You always have some adversary, some place where you have wronged others. And this person is taking you to court; while you are still on the way, you still have time—so you should make every effort to settle with him. Do not wait until you actually reach the court and are judged, when the judge hands you over to the officer and you are thrown into prison. This “judge” refers to the judgment at the time of Christ’s return.

We know clearly that in our daily life, if we have offended someone, wronged someone, or owe someone, then before that day comes, we should quickly make it right. In our daily living—at home, in the church, or at work—we encounter many people; we must maintain a clear conscience each day. If we have offended someone, we should quickly reconcile, lest when we meet the Lord one day, we are handed over to the officer and thrown into prison.

**Verse 59: “I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite.”**

While there is still time, let us deal with everything that must be resolved, reconcile where reconciliation is needed, ask forgiveness where needed, forgive where needed, and settle all things while there is still time. For the time is coming—the fire of the gospel is already burning in many places, and soon, when the number is fulfilled, our Lord will return. How urgent Jesus is! May we each today also have such urgency for the gospel, especially toward our relatives and friends whom we know and love, that we may desire to share in the blessings of the gospel with them.

Let us pray together: Lord, place such a burden for the gospel in our hearts; among our relatives and friends, give us opportunities to bear proper testimony; and give us a willingness to bear the cross, knowing that when we are willing to suffer, that is when the gospel is most powerful. Bless our lives today with the fragrance of the gospel. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.