

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

**Luke 14: 27-35**

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 14, verses 27 to 35.

Yesterday we read about Jesus speaking to those who followed Him, stating the conditions for being a disciple. When He spoke about the second condition—to take up one's own cross and follow the Lord—He gave two parables. Today we will carefully examine these two parables.

**Verses 27-30: “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’”**

The first parable is the parable of building a tower: it speaks of a person who, before building a tower, must first sit down and calculate how much it will cost and whether what he has is enough to complete it. Otherwise, after laying the foundation, he will not be able to continue halfway through, and he will become a laughingstock to others. The first parable is about building.

**Verse 31: “Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?”**

Here it says that in this war, the enemy's forces are twice as many as one's own. Everyone needs to sit down first and calculate whether he can win.

**Verse 32: “Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.”**

If it is not possible, then do not start the war. When most of us read this passage, we basically understand it as Jesus telling us that when we want to learn to be the Lord’s disciples, we must first sit down and calculate: Do we have enough capital to build this building, or do we have enough strength to win the battle? If it is really like this, then according to Jesus’ conditions for disciples, almost none of us would be able to follow the Lord, because we cannot afford the price, and we cannot win this battle.

Actually, it is not so. The one building the tower here and the one going to war here are not us, but the Lord Himself. The master of the building is the Lord, and the master of the war is also the Lord. The Lord has already calculated how to build and how to fight the war. And because He has calculated it, He requires that those who come to follow Him must be able to bear their own cross in order to follow Him. In fact, building and warfare have always been the center of the Lord Jesus’ ministry on earth.

In Matthew chapter 16, starting from verse 13, Jesus took His disciples to Caesarea Philippi. In that place, He asked them, “Who do you say that I am?” When Peter received revelation from the Father and directly declared, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus was very pleased. In verse 16:18, Jesus said this: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

The Lord Jesus knew very clearly that His church is a work of building. He is the master builder, and every disciple is a stone in that building. He wants to build His disciples into a spiritual house like living stones. After that, “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”; it immediately brings in warfare.

Warfare speaks of authority. When the Lord Jesus begins His building on earth, the powers of Hades will certainly rise up to hinder His building work; therefore, it is a war. And the promise on the Lord’s side is that when a church is built, He is the Lord

of war, because He has sovereignty, and the powers of Hades cannot prevail against the built church.

Therefore, when speaking about the conditions for being a disciple, Jesus returns to these two themes: one is building, and the other is warfare. The Lord Jesus Himself has already counted the cost; therefore He gave up Himself, so that every person who receives grace and is saved can be reborn through His death and His resurrection and become those living stones.

In the process of building, we are like Peter at the beginning—a free stone that moves according to its own will. But through the work and polishing in God's hand, as long as we are willing to bear our own cross, in the end He will remove from each of us the stones—those things that do not match His heart and come from our natural self—through the work of the cross, so that we become suitable living stones for building.

The Lord has already counted the cost. What we need to do is to be willing to bear our own cross and allow God's cross to work on us, carving us into living stones that match His heart.

Wherever there is God's building, there is warfare. Because God's enemy, Satan, is most unwilling to see God's church completed in building; therefore he will stir up all kinds of powers of Hades to attack the church. Thus, on one hand we are stones being built, and on the other hand we are soldiers joining the army of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the spiritual warfare, the Lord Jesus is the Commander of our war. He Himself has already gone through Hades, He Himself has already overcome the power of death, and He has already won the victory. But it is also necessary that every elite soldier in His army who belongs to Him is willing to bear his own cross and follow the Lord with complete loyalty.

Therefore, in this parable of building and warfare, the master is the Lord Jesus Himself. He has already calculated: the building will surely be completed, and the war will surely be won. What He needs is for His disciples to be able to bear their cross and to forsake everything to follow Him. Then in verse 34 He gives another example.

**Verse 34: “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what shall it be seasoned?”**

In the early part of Jesus’ ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, He told the disciples, “You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world.” The use of salt is to preserve, to disinfect, and to season. We are placed in the world to have our positive function. We are the salt of the earth. What does “salt has lost its flavor” mean? It means that we as people have blended in with the world, and the taste of salt can no longer be distinguished— the salt has lost its flavor.

In the Middle East at that time, all salt was rock salt. The salt looked like a piece of stone with salt content inside. When people wanted to use it, they often dipped food onto this stone to extract the salt for seasoning. But after long use, if all the salt content disappeared and only the stone itself remained, then the salt had lost its flavor. If the salt has lost its flavor, how can it be made salty again?

**Verse 35: “It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**

We are in the world, and God has given us a positive function: we are in the world to prevent corruption and to remove everything that comes from Satan. But if our life, our behavior, and our thoughts are no different from those of the people of the world, then we have lost the function of salt. Today many churches, in order to cater to the tastes of people in the world, bring many worldly things into the church. Gradually the church loses the essence of salt, and it seems the church has become the same as the world. When a tasteless salt is in God’s hand, it has no function at all. Jesus says, “It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill.”

The land is a place where vegetables grow; generally the land is used as a figure for the church that matches God’s heart. Tasteless salt cannot or is not suitable to be placed in the church. “Or for the dunghill”—dunghill generally refers to the world. Although you are tasteless salt, after all you have once received grace and been

saved; throwing you into the world is also not appropriate. The final outcome is “but men throw it out.”

What exactly is this “out”? The Bible does not explain it very clearly. However, in Jesus’ messages, it is indeed mentioned repeatedly, such as in Matthew chapters 20 and 25—the parable of the ten virgins, or the parable of the one with one thousand talents. When the Lord comes back, they will be in “outer darkness” weeping and gnashing their teeth.

We know that overcoming Christians will be able to reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom; while unsaved people of the world, after the millennial kingdom, will all go down to the lake of fire. Between these two outcomes, there is still something called “outer.” This “outer” seems to be the place where some saved but non-overcoming saints are placed during the millennial kingdom. After the millennial kingdom ends, they will still have a part in the new heaven and new earth.

This section is the Lord speaking about the conditions for being a disciple; it can also be said to be God’s requirement for every overcomer. You must love the Lord more than your own parents, wife, children, brothers, and sisters; you must be able to bear your own cross to follow the Lord; you must be able to forsake everything to follow the Lord; and moreover, you must be that salt that has not lost its flavor: able to give a suitable testimony for God, not following the trends of the world, and being separated from the world.

In the last two verses, verses 34 and 35, Jesus also seems to tell us that if you cannot suitably follow the Lord and be a faithful disciple, one day you will be “thrown out.” Although you have received grace and been saved, although you have eternal life within you, one day you will lose your reward. Therefore, He ends with a word of warning: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for the words You have spoken to us. We all have ears; help us to be able to hear what You have said, and also give us a heart of obedience, willing to follow You and become Your disciples. Help us to become salt that has not lost its flavor. Through my life today, among the people of the

world I come into contact with, let them be able to taste from me the salt that comes from You—that is, grace. Let Your grace flow out from me; let me become a channel of grace, so that others can come to know You through my life and behavior. Bless my life. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.