

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

**Luke 16: 27-31**

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 16 and today we will read verses 27 to 31.

This chapter in Luke brings together Jesus' teachings concerning wealth to tell us that a person who serves God cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. Wealth is something temporary in this life. We must use this temporary thing to make friends so that they can bring us into the everlasting home.

Jesus' view concerning wealth, however, was sneered at by the Pharisees who were listening nearby. Therefore, Jesus went on to tell the story of a rich man and Lazarus. Both the rich man and Lazarus died and went down to Hades. Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man was in torment. As a result, a series of conversations took place between the rich man and Abraham. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, but Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented."

Although they could see each other and could speak to each other, there was a great gulf fixed between them, so that people could not cross from this side to that side, nor from that side to this side.

**Verses 27-28: "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'"**

This rich man perhaps had heard the gospel while he was alive but was unwilling to believe, because he served mammon. Since he had money, he lived a secure and

prosperous life. He always thought that once he died, everything would be over. He never expected that after death he would still exist. He arrived at the place of torment in Hades and suffered, yet he saw Lazarus lying comforted in Abraham's bosom. He felt deep regret in his heart. He thought about his five brothers who were exactly like him—enjoying good things while alive and treating the words of the prophets as if they were nothing but wind passing by their ears.

Now he truly regretted it, but he thought of his five brothers. If they did not change quickly, their future end would be the same as his. Therefore he begged Abraham to send Lazarus to testify to his brothers, so that they would not also come to this place of torment in the future. Although his intention was good, perhaps this was the first time he began to think about how to make preparations for eternity.

**Verse 29: "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'"**

This was a common saying among the Israelites. The words of the prophets and Moses are actually the entire Old Testament. After Moses, God often spoke to His people through the prophets. Abraham said to him: They have the word of God and the Scriptures of God already written out. If they are willing to listen, they certainly can listen and obey.

**Verses 30-31: "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"**

Actually Abraham was not wrong at all. The word of God has already been written very clearly and plainly. If you read it but do not believe, even if there is a testimony of someone rising from the dead, you still will not believe. In this story, the rich man has no name, but the beggar has a name—Lazarus. Lazarus means "God has helped" or "the help of God." This beggar lived a miserable and poor life all his days, enduring very difficult circumstances, yet he was a person who had God; he was a person who had the help of God.

Although Abraham said to this rich man here that even if someone rose from the dead, they still would not believe, and therefore he did not send Lazarus, the Bible is very interesting and can even be said to be very humorous. In the Bible there is another person who is also named Lazarus. He and his sisters Martha and Mary were all good friends of Jesus. They lived in Bethany, and every time Jesus went up to Jerusalem He would often stay at their house. Of course, this Lazarus and the beggar Lazarus in this story are not the same person, but that Lazarus Jesus did call back from the dead.

It is recorded in John chapter 11. He became sick, died, and was buried. Then Jesus called him back from the dead. Indeed, there was a person who rose from the dead. Let us see how the entire Jewish society reacted to this person. In John 12:9, "Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead." Sure enough, there was a person who rose from the dead. His name was Lazarus. Because he rose from the dead, he became a good testimony, and many people came to see him.

But verse 10-11 says: "But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus." Indeed, there was a person who rose from the dead, yet the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees in the upper society of the Jews actually plotted together to kill this Lazarus who had risen from the dead. Therefore Abraham was not wrong at all. To believe the word of God, the words of the Scriptures are already sufficient. If you do not believe what Moses and the prophets said, even if there is a miracle of someone rising from the dead, you still will not believe.

And today, two thousand years after Jesus died and rose again, the church has been established. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have become the foundation of our faith and also the center of our gospel preaching. When we preach this Jesus who rose from the dead as the Christ, the result is that the vast majority of people still do not believe. But thank the Lord, because the Pharisees challenged Jesus concerning His view on wealth, Jesus took this opportunity to tell us the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

He clearly tells us that when a person dies, it is not the end. After death, a person's body is gone, but the soul first goes to Hades. And Hades has two parts: one part is for those who believe in Jesus Christ; they are lying in Abraham's bosom, being comforted there. The other part is for those who do not believe; they are in torment in Hades. Although there is a great gulf between these two groups of people and they cannot cross from this side to that side, they seem to be able to see each other and can still communicate with words.

This state will continue until the time when Jesus Christ comes again. When Jesus Christ comes again, all those who have been born again, who believe in Jesus Christ, and who are lying in Abraham's bosom will rise first. After they rise, they will come before the judgment seat of Christ. Some will receive reward, and some will not be approved. These rewarded Christians will reign with Christ for a thousand years. After the millennial kingdom ends, those unbelievers who are suffering in Hades will also rise from the dead. After they rise, they will face the judgment before the great white throne. Whoever is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Through this passage of Scripture here, especially the matter that the rich man appealed to Abraham about—namely, that he still had five brothers who were also living in luxury and feasting just like him—this is also a very good reminder for every one of us who has received grace and been saved. Do we still have some relatives, parents, brothers and sisters, or good friends who have not yet believed the gospel?

Because one day the time will come when we will all finish our life on earth. After the body dies, our souls will all go down to Hades. In the end, there will be two different parts in Hades. The saved will be with Abraham, and the unsaved will be suffering in the other part, and they will even be able to talk to each other. If today, while there is still time and while there is still opportunity, we do not do our best to preach the gospel to them, on that day we will all regret it, and they may regret it even more. May the Lord place the burden of the gospel in the heart of every believing Christian, so that we will carefully consider and see which people we love around us have not yet been saved. This is a very serious matter concerning their eternal destiny. We all hope that the people we love can be together in the future.

Of course we also know that preaching the gospel to our beloved and close relatives and friends is especially difficult, because this kind of gospel preaching does not depend on what we say with our mouth, but on the testimony in our daily life. May the Lord help us to become people who serve the Lord in our daily life, and not people who serve mammon. Let us be clearly distinguished from unbelievers in our living, and let a good testimony be produced in us, so that when our relatives and friends see it, they will envy it and desire to obtain what we have obtained. In this way we will have no regrets in the future.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! You have placed this passage of Scripture before us. We especially pray for the relatives and friends around us. Lord, just as You saved us, please also give them a wise heart and grant them a spirit of repentance. Through the preaching in our life and the testimony in our living, Lord, just as You gained us, please gain them in the same way. Lord, I also ask You to help me, right from today, to have a beautiful testimony in my life, so that the people I contact today will, because of my testimony, be willing to draw near to You and come before You. Help me and bless me to become a channel of Your grace and gospel. Thank You. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ!