

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

**Luke 17:5-10**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We'll continue reading Luke Chapter 17. Today, we will read verses 5-10.

Verses 17:1-10 were spoken by the Lord Jesus to the disciples on that Sabbath afternoon as the final conclusion concerning serving. Yesterday we read the first four verses. First, you must not become a cause of stumbling for others. At the same time, it is inevitable that people will offend you. When the one who offends you repents and asks you for forgiveness, you must forgive him. Even if he offends you seven times in a day and turns back, you must forgive him. God's requirements for everyone who is willing to serve Him are strict, and His standard is high.

**Verse 5: "And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'"**

Here the word "apostles" is plural. In other words, these few disciples beside Jesus, as soon as they heard that the standard of serving was so high, each one looked at his own serving and felt it was not up to standard. Therefore they were very wise and said to the Lord, Lord, increase our faith. We really cannot do it; help us. How should You help us? Increase our faith. Very specially, he did not say let us have more love or let us be more tolerant; he spoke about increasing our faith. Actually this is a very wise statement.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Every one of our spiritual lives begins with faith and is also perfected through faith. The just shall live by faith. When we completely cannot do it, we can only come before God and ask God to increase our faith, because faith is the only way for our life to grow.

**Verse 6: “So the Lord said, ‘If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.’”**

The disciples seemed to feel that their faith was not enough and that they needed Jesus to increase their faith. But Jesus’ answer was very interesting. He seemed to be saying that faith is not a matter of size. As long as you have faith like a mustard seed, the mustard seed is the smallest among all seeds. In other words, it does not matter at all if your faith is very small, as long as your faith is like a mustard seed.

What is a mustard seed? It has life; it can grow. As long as you have living, active faith like a mustard seed—although it is very small—but in such faith, if you say to the mulberry tree, “Be pulled up by the roots,” generally speaking the roots of a mulberry tree are very deep, and it is not easy to pull up a mulberry tree by the roots. But if your faith is as small as a mustard seed, as long as it is alive, in such living faith, if you say to the mulberry tree to be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, it will surely obey you.

I believe that the disciples were like us. When the Lord Jesus placed such a strict requirement for servants before us, each of us would say we cannot do it—Lord, help me. But Jesus reminded the disciples, You have all received living faith inside you. You only need to let this living faith be manifested in your daily life. You will be able to do things even more difficult than these, such as commanding the mulberry tree to be pulled up by the roots and planted in the sea.

In other places Jesus also said that if your faith is like a mustard seed, you can even move a mountain from here to there and it will be done. Therefore do not look down on this living faith. We are only afraid that we forget we still have this living faith. When we encounter difficulties, when we accidentally cause others to stumble, or when we are offended by others and have no way to forgive in our hearts, what Jesus actually means is that you should return to your faith. Although your faith may be as small as a mustard seed, as long as it is alive, there is no problem. In your living faith, ask God to help you. God will not only bring you

through, but He will also accomplish even greater things, causing this life of faith to increase and grow in you.

Therefore Jesus clearly tells us here that every person's serving should be serving in living faith. Will serving have difficulties? It certainly will. Will you be offended by others? It certainly will happen. But you must experience all kinds of situations you encounter in serving in living faith, and God will also help you through your living faith.

How long should you serve faithfully like this? Until the end of your life. You must serve faithfully to the end.

**Verses 7-8: "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"**

When we come to serve others, the Lord Jesus said, our position is that of a servant. It is only right and is the duty of a servant to do anything for his master. It seems that sometimes after you have been busy all day, serving very laboriously—plowing the field and tending the sheep—and finally return home, would the master tell you to sit down quickly and eat? No. The master would say to the servant, Quickly prepare supper for me, and you must gird yourself and serve me. Only after I have eaten and drunk may you eat and drink, because this is originally the servant's portion.

A servant who serves faithfully not only must not offend others, but when you are offended you must forgive others. Moreover, in your busy and laborious serving, you have no right to rest. After being busy all day and returning home, you still have to prepare food for the master, and you still have to gird yourself and serve the master while he eats. Only after the master can rest may you eat.

**Verses 9-10: “Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”**

Jesus also said here that for everyone who is willing to serve faithfully, serving faithfully to the end is a lifelong lesson. Serving is busy, serving is laborious, and serving allows no rest. Even after finishing all these things, you must still confess to the master, We are truly unprofitable servants. What we have done is only what we ought to do. We dare not claim any credit. Actually, this is what a person who truly serves the Lord is like. What he serves is not out of himself, but out of the grace that comes from God, out of receiving God’s leading, God’s supply, and God’s support by faith. Since we are not the source, we cannot take any credit.

Up to verse 17:10, Jesus concluded that Sabbath afternoon. After finishing lunch at the Pharisee’s house and coming out, many people followed Him, and He spoke a lot of teaching words to them. Here it completely ends. This was a very rich Sabbath afternoon. Jesus spoke many very important words to those who followed Him, especially to His disciples—words concerning the gospel, concerning salvation, and even more concerning serving.

Especially in these last few verses, He spoke about the four basic attitudes that every servant should possess. First, you must not become a cause of stumbling for others. Second, when others offend you, you must forgive. Third, you must have living, active faith and serve in your faith. Fourth, such serving of yours must be faithful to the end. In the end, you still say, “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”

When we read to this point, we would say to the Lord, Lord, it is really difficult! How dare I serve at all? But do not forget that in verses 17:7-10, which speak about the servant serving faithfully to the end, there is a completely corresponding passage in 12:35-37. In chapter 17 it speaks about how every servant should serve. In 12:35-37 it is exactly the opposite: it speaks about how, one day when we have served faithfully to the end, the Lord Jesus will receive us when He comes again.

In 12:35-36, “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding.” In other words, we serve so faithfully all our life. Then one day when the Lord comes again, He returns from the wedding feast. He comes and knocks, and we immediately open the door for Him. Verse 12:37 says, “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.”

Now we are on earth, serving faithfully to the end. One day when the Lord comes again, if we are still serving so watchfully, we will be blessed and rewarded. The Lord will have us sit down, and He Himself will come and serve us, just as we today serve the brothers and sisters around us.

What we do today is all in time and is temporary—only a few decades of time. One day in the future when the Lord comes back and sees that we have been faithful to the end, the portion He gives us is great, eternal, and extremely precious. Actually, the most precious thing in the life of every child of God is that we use these temporary things in time, these smallest matters, to exchange for that extremely heavy glory in eternity in the future.

May God help us to see what is temporary and what is eternal, and may He also cause us to be willing to consecrate ourselves in this life and learn to serve in God’s household. Then one day when the Lord comes again, we may receive the Lord’s commendation as faithful and wise servants.

Let us pray together: Lord, how we long for the day when You can commend us as faithful and wise servants. Therefore, in our daily life and serving today, we ask for Your grace to lead us and give us a willing heart. Every day may we serve the brothers and sisters around us in living faith. Through our wholehearted and diligent serving, may Your life grow even more in us, and may Your disposition be formed even more in us, so that we may gradually grow, become more and more according to Your heart, and more and more become qualified servants of Yours. Bless my life and also bless my serving. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ.