

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

Luke 18: 27-34

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. We continue to read Luke chapter 18, and we'll read from verses 27 to 34.

Yesterday we read about a young ruler who, because he was very rich, was unable to follow the Lord. In verse 25, Jesus sighed and said, "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" And those who heard beside Him did not understand what Jesus meant, and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Being saved and entering the kingdom of God are not the same. Being saved is a matter of life; as long as you truly believe and are willing to receive, you can obtain eternal life. But entering the kingdom of God is a matter of the reality of God's authority being manifested in you. In other words, in our living, in our conduct, and in every single thing we do, we are able to accept the ruling of God's authority; so that what we do, what we live out, and what we speak are all according to God's heart. This is the reality of the kingdom of God. Therefore, one is a matter of whether or not we have life; the other is a matter of the growth of life. Therefore, in this passage, Jesus spoke a final concluding word.

Verse 27: "But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'"

Because this young ruler's knowledge of Jesus was not accurate, he thought Jesus was merely a Teacher. Therefore, he asked Jesus to teach him what he had to do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus specifically placed before him the thing he could not do, so that he would know that with him it was impossible; but after his

inability, the final word is, “with God all things are possible.” This sentence is the gospel to every Christian.

We all hope that we can do something for God, but God wants us to know our own limits. Many times, when we are able to do everything, God instead has no way to work in us. Only when we discover that we are powerless and that we cannot do it ourselves, then we may stop our own striving. At that time, God can do through us what He wants to do.

What this young ruler should have realized was this: with him it was impossible, but with God it was possible. This is also what God says today to every child who loves Him: Do not have so much confidence in yourself. Do not think that you can do everything. One day, God will bring us to a point where we can do nothing in everything. Once we reach that point, then with God all things can be done. The lesson of our whole life is to learn, in the end, how to lay ourselves down, so that God’s life may operate freely in us and live out a life that is according to His heart.

Verse 28: “Then Peter said, ‘See, we have left all and followed You.’”

Do you remember earlier, when Jesus taught concerning the content of prayer, He brought up two men: one was a tax collector, and the other was a Pharisee. The Pharisee came before God to pray; on the one hand, he accused others, and on the other hand, he wanted to display how good he himself was. Actually, Peter’s words here more or less have that kind of feeling. After hearing Jesus speak these words, he immediately said, “See, we have left all and followed You.”

In fact, this was also true. When they finally followed the Lord, they did leave everything behind to follow Him. But if Peter had thought carefully, how did he follow the Lord? When Jesus began His ministry in the final three and a half years, the first record is in John chapter 1. Through the introduction of John the Baptist, John and Andrew followed Jesus.

Andrew immediately brought his own brother Peter to see Jesus. At that time, he was still called Simon. When Jesus saw him, He immediately changed his name from Simon to Cephas, which means Peter. And after that? He went back again to be a fisherman, and he worked for more than a year. Until Luke chapter 5, which we have read, more than a year had already passed. At the Lake of Gennesaret, Jesus performed a miracle and told Peter to let down the net, and he caught a whole boatload of fish. Then Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" It was at that time that Jesus called Peter the second time, and only then did Peter begin to follow the Lord.

Actually, this is also the situation of each one of us in following the Lord. According to ourselves, it is very difficult, even impossible, for us to leave everything behind. But "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." If this young ruler had not gone away sorrowful, but had continued following beside Jesus, then one day Jesus would have brought him to the point where he could leave everything behind to follow the Lord. Actually, this is also what every one of us who is willing to follow the Lord must pass through. Concerning Peter's declaration:

Verses 29-30: "So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.'"

Of course Jesus knew Peter's condition. Jesus stood completely in a position of encouragement and sympathy, as if He were strengthening Peter's words: "Yes, you have indeed left all that you had; but I tell you, what you have left for the kingdom of God, you will receive a hundredfold in this present age, and in the age to come eternal life."

We must pay attention that here Jesus did not say that a person leaves house, wife, brothers, parents, or children "in order to be saved." Salvation does not require us to leave anything behind. Salvation only requires that we be willing to receive, and then we obtain eternal life. But in the journey of following the Lord, when we want

to enter the kingdom of God, to let God's authority rule in us, and to let God's heart's desire be realized in us, we need to overcome the many limitations of our old self. To remove these limitations of the old self, it can only be through our leaving things behind. And what we leave behind, God replaces with Himself. Therefore, there is no one who will not "receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

The journey of following the Lord is a glorious road. It causes us to become more and more like God; the more we follow, the more we live out the fragrant virtues of Jesus Christ. That is, the farther we walk, the more glorious it becomes. Jesus should have known that, up to this point, His disciples perhaps were still not very clear about what it meant to "leave all." They all thought they had already sacrificed a great deal. So Jesus wanted to bring them deeper, and He was going to present Himself as the pattern—what does it mean to sacrifice oneself? What does it mean to leave all?

Verse 31: "Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.'"

Jesus specifically told His disciples what was about to happen to Him, so that they would know what it meant to leave all. And He also knew that in the future, except for Judas, the other eleven disciples would all walk the road that Jesus walked—that is, to forsake everything for the kingdom of God, and ultimately to be martyred.

Therefore, here Jesus very clearly told them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem." Perhaps what we are going to pass through, you do not understand now; but one day in the future, you will understand, and you will also walk the road that I have walked. What road?

Verse 32: “For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.”

The road of following the Lord is not cheap. Many times, it requires passing through humiliation. Not only was He to be delivered to the Gentiles, but He was also to be mocked by others, insulted by others, and even have others spit in His face. Today, when we are wronged in some matters, we feel indignant and resentful in our hearts. We insist on getting things clarified, insist on explaining everything clearly, and do not allow ourselves to suffer injustice. But here, Jesus said that He would be mocked, insulted, and spit upon; yet He was like a sheep before its shearers, silent and without a sound.

Verse 33: “They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

In the end, what a person still has is his own life. Even your own life must be taken away; this is the ultimate extent of forsaking all. Man’s end is God’s beginning. When we lay down everything for God, when our human road reaches its end, God begins to work. And the result? “And the third day He will rise again.”

This is also the most precious message in the life of every Christian: our Lord is the Lord who passed through death and resurrection! And today, the life He has given us is also a life that passes through death and resurrection. Death is not the final result; after death there will be resurrection. Death and resurrection are also the ultimate expression of “the things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” Therefore, do not fear those who can take away our possessions and kill our body. Our God is greater than all these things.

I somewhat believe that this word of Jesus was spoken with Peter in view. Because Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed You.” The Lord certainly knew that, at that time, Peter thought this was true. Therefore, Jesus further revealed to His disciples what was about to happen to Him. And throughout the whole process,

these disciples accompanied Him through it, so that they could see with their own eyes how their Lord left everything behind.

I believe that what they went through became the root of their future ability to be martyred and to leave everything behind to follow the Lord. But at this time, they had not yet passed through it. Perhaps they understood it doctrinally, but in experience they were not clear. Therefore, Luke added verse 34 here.

Verse 34: “But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.”

Thank the Lord. Today, when we come to read the Lord’s word and listen to the Lord’s voice, many times we are also like this—it seems that we have heard it, it seems that we have read it, but much of it is hidden, and much of it we do not know what God is saying, especially what He is saying to our heart. I believe that one day, when we encounter circumstances, when we encounter things we cannot overcome, these words will come out again, and once again speak to us; and once again tell us: “Man’s end is God’s beginning. The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” If you feel that you can still do many things, then God has no way to operate in you.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. The words You have spoken to us today allow us to realize that we often become Your hindrance. Help us to know that “the things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” Especially when, in our living, we face certain difficulties; when we feel there is no way to solve them; when we feel powerless, Lord, help us! Give us this kind of faith: “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” Instead, in those very matters, may we lay down our own efforts, lay down our own plans, lay down our own operations, and respectfully place the whole matter into the hands of our gracious Lord. Let us learn how to follow You. Let us experience what death and resurrection mean. Only in this way can we know that everything we have received is completely out of grace. We are all unprofitable servants. May You personally work in us. Thank You. Bless my life today. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ!