

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

Song of Songs 1:15-17

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 Song of Songs chapter 1, verses 15 to 17.

A saint who loves the Lord consecrates himself to the Lord and, through the initial lessons of the cross in the Lord's hands, begins to emit the fragrance of spikenard ointment from his being. He starts to treasure Christ's death and its efficacy. Sin's entanglement, the world's temptations, the lure of selfish desires, the indulgence of the flesh, and natural tendencies no longer seem so stubborn or irresistible. As long as he can draw upon the Lord's death by faith and hold fast to the efficacy of dying with the Lord through love, these difficulties that once troubled him can now be easily laid aside. Thus, he regards his Beloved as a sachet of myrrh resting between his breasts all night—an experience of being freed from the old self through dying with the Lord.

He gains a wholly new understanding of his service in the church: it is no longer his vineyard or the vineyard of his mother's sons, but the vineyards of En Gedi. The Lord is the master of this vineyard, and within it flows the abundant supply of the fountain of the Lamb. The water of life streams from the pierced side of the Lord Jesus Christ, flowing from the throne in heaven into his spirit, then through his soul. Finally, it overflows from his service, aiding the young female goats he serves.

He knows that the power of this service comes from the Lamb seated on the throne, and the source of this supply is the High Priest ministering in heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, this vineyard, lush with verdant greenery, is no longer his focus. His gaze remains fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood and gave His life for him. He regards his Beloved as a cluster of henna blooms standing out in the vineyard of En Gedi—a vivid image of a single red flower amid a sea of green. His eyes are not fixed on the vineyard's abundance but on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for him. He no longer values the work itself but the Lord who sustains him

in the work. His eyes are solely set on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord rejoices in the spiritual growth this saint who loves Him is now experiencing and quickly praises him.

Verse 15: “Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes.”

Some words are omitted in CUV translation. The KJV renders it: “Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes.” Here, two “beholds” are not translated in CUV. Translated directly from the KJV, it would be: “Behold, my beloved, you are fair; behold, you are fair.” This is a praise filled with action, and it doesn’t seem to be a private commendation between two individuals alone.

Verse 12 mentions they were sitting at a table in the house with family present. In today’s terms, this would be during a church gathering, seemingly a public testimony before the family in attendance. First, He says, “Behold,” to draw the family’s attention; then He turns to this saint and says, “My beloved, you are fair.” Next, He turns to the assembled saints and says, “Behold,” and then back to this saint, saying, “You are fair.” This repetition of “You are fair” twice expresses the Lord’s heartfelt admiration for him.

So, wherein lies this saint’s beauty? The Lord continues, “You have dove’s eyes.” In Scripture, doves consistently prefigure the Holy Spirit, and the Lord’s praise means, “Your vision is excellent; you are full of spiritual sight.” We know that when a dove is taken far away and released, it flies straight home because its eyes focus solely on its home. Its vision has one focal point, one goal.

This saint who loves the Lord, though engaged in much busy service, fixes his eyes solely on the Lord; apart from the Lord, he sees nothing else. This truly pleases the Lord. In verse 8, the Lord praised him as the fairest among women, or the most beautiful; that commendation carried more encouragement than literal description. At that time, the Lord likened him to a steed in Pharaoh’s chariot—tall, beautiful, strong, enviable, prancing proudly—yet unaware that it was harnessed

to Pharaoh, not the Lord, and inadvertently bringing the world into the church. Now, having undergone the Lord's initial shaping—braiding his hair with gold and studding it with silver—he has faced some dealings of the cross. His life has grown, his composition has changed, and now the Lord can praise him according to his true condition, saying, “You have dove's eyes,” gazing solely at the Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the most crucial experience in the first stage of every saint's spiritual growth: fixing our eyes solely on the Lord, desiring only Him. By nature, we are not born with dove's eyes but with fly's eyes—compound eyes that see up, down, left, right, all directions, taking in every scene. We see everything but nothing clearly. He saw the Lord's beauty and loveliness, yet also saw money, status, power, and fame, leading him to drift with the world's current.

If we are willing to begin loving the Lord and following Him, the first work the Lord does in us is to transform our vision, turning our fly's eyes into dove's eyes, enabling us to gaze solely at the Lord. This is a small step, yet the most vital one. Matthew 6:22-23 says: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” Because his eyes are fixed solely on the Lord, his vision is clear, and his whole being begins to be filled with light.

Verse 16: “Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also, our bed is green.”

This saint who loves the Lord hears the Lord praise his singular vision—a praise well-deserved and one he recognizes in himself. Thus, he is thrilled and immediately responds. We should note that in this first stage of spiritual growth, the most evident trait of a saint is talkativeness. At this stage, his knowledge of the Lord is not yet deep, and his spiritual experiences are not yet rich. If a person is a vessel, his capacity is small; a simple praise from the Lord fills him to the brim. Hence, he has much to say, and all his words revolve around himself. In a few weeks, as we continue reading the Song of Songs, we'll see that as his life matures,

his words gradually decrease, while the Lord's words increase, and the Lord's praise elicits his praise for the Lord.

Now let's examine his response at this stage. "Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant!" The Lord praised his beauty, and he praises the Lord's beauty in return. The Lord's praise of his beauty lies in his singular vision, but he cannot articulate where the Lord's beauty lies, for his knowledge of the Lord is not yet deep, and his experiences of Him are few. Thus, he cannot describe the Lord's beauty subjectively or accurately, resorting to general terms. Saying only "handsome" might have felt insufficient to him, so he quickly adds "pleasant"—meaning comfortable and soothing in English. He cannot specify what is good about the Lord, but he simply enjoys being with Him; the Lord makes him feel comfortable and at ease.

Then he says to the Lord, "Also, our bed is green." Before this, he had experienced intimate fellowship with the Lord in the inner chamber and feasting with the Lord at home, enjoying abundant provision. His capacity is gradually expanding, and now he longs to go further, to appreciate the natural world the Lord created alongside Him. To lie together on lush green grass as a bed, with eyes beholding the universe and all things the Lord has made. He yearns to broaden his perspective, no longer fixating on personal gains and losses; he appears magnanimous and expansive.

At this point, he realizes that striving relentlessly in the world for something yields, at best, that one thing—and often not even that. This made his old self petty—small eyes, small nose—always nitpicking and frequently arguing over trivial matters. But when he turns his eyes to the Lord, gazing at Him, lying with Him on the green grass, and admiring the universe and all things the Lord created, he suddenly understands that gaining the Lord means gaining all that the Lord has made.

He begins to grasp what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:21-23: "Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." To gain Christ is to gain all things. We possess all

things, yet we belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. God intends to unite all things in Christ, and Christ ultimately belongs to God—this is God’s ordained cosmic order.

Verse 17: “The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.”

The “house” mentioned in this verse is metaphorical. As this saint who loves the Lord lies with the Lord on the green grass, taking in the universe and all things the Lord created, it expands his perspective. Yet he also knows that God desires a new construction in this universe—the heavenly sanctuary. Recognizing the Lord’s heart, he shifts his gaze closer. Around him stand tall, straight cedar trees and lush, branching firs—or possibly cypresses. Some translations render it “fir,” while the KJV uses “fir” for pine, and the ASV uses “cypress” for cyprus.

In 1 Kings 6:14-15: “So Solomon built the temple and finished it. And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress.” Cedar and fir are both associated with the temple, materials for its construction. This inspires him. Lying on the verdant grass, full of life’s supply, he sees cedar and cypress—or fir—as materials for the temple’s building.

In nature, he sees God’s construction—a house. The tall, straight cedar forms the beams, and the cypress serves as rafters. The beams are vertical, the main structure of the house; the rafters are slanted, supporting the roof. In this natural house, he can rest with the Lord.

Spiritually, the green grass prefigures the abundant supply of life; the straight, sturdy cedar prefigures Christ’s resolute, transcendent humanity; cypress, often planted in cemeteries, prefigures Christ’s death; and the rafters, the most visible part of the house, serve as its testimony. Cypress rafters bear witness to Christ’s death.

Here we see this saint who loves the Lord, having undergone the Lord's shaping, experiencing initial growth. He realizes true rest lies in partaking of the Lord's rich supply of life, being upheld by Christ's resolute humanity, and the testimony he can lift high is Christ's death. How he longs, through Christ's abundant life supply, to grow quickly, to share in Christ's steadfast character, and to bear a testimony of dying with Christ.

He is no longer a steed harnessed to Pharaoh's chariot. He separates himself from the world, exalting Christ's death, yearning to develop Christ's transcendent character and rest with Him. Dear brothers and sisters, do not underestimate this first stage of spiritual growth—it is the foundation of all growth. He can fix his eyes solely on the Lord Jesus Christ in all things and longs to expand his perspective, enjoying the universe and all things the Lord created in Christ's presence.

Let us pray together: Lord, help us fix our gaze solely on You. You promise us abundant supply. Your steadfast, resolute humanity upholds us; help us experience Your death together, making it our testimony. Bless my daily life, that I may shed the old self's bad habits, lay aside the world's temptations, and break free from sin's entanglement. We know there is no resurrection without passing through death. Work deeper in us, Lord, to remove the natural traits that displease You, teaching me to truly rest in You. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.