

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

Song of Songs 2: 13-14

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we'll continue reading Song of Songs Chapter 2, verses 13-14.

The first stage of life growth focuses on entering within the veil, having intimate fellowship with the Lord, and being able to appreciate the value of His love. The second stage of life growth focuses on going forth outside the camp to follow Him. To be able to rise up and go with the Lord, one must experience the resurrection power of Christ; otherwise, relying on ourselves, we would not be able to follow in Christ's footsteps.

Yesterday we read that in the Lord's calling, winter has passed, spring has come, flowers are blooming on the earth, and birds are singing. Nature is filled with vibrant life—even the voice of the turtledove is heard throughout our land. The nature created by God is filled with signs of resurrected life. The Lord is reminding the saint who is still within the wall to rise up and go outside the camp to follow the Lord.

Beyond this surface image of spring returning to the earth, there is a deeper spiritual meaning—it is a reminder to this believer that he should grow from the first stage to the second stage, because the manifestation of the Lord has already progressed from a single solitary henna flower in En Gedi to the many flowers now visible everywhere. And each flower among these many flowers is the beauty of the Lord being manifested through the believers.

This serves to remind the believer still resting within the wall that he also needs to begin accepting the Lord's pruning so that he may bear more fruit. Pruning inevitably involves pain, but the believer only needs to gaze with single and pure dove's eyes upon the Lord, who, like a turtledove, is singing a love song. Then the joy of growth will surely cover the birthing pain that must accompany the process of growth.

Verse 13: “The fig tree puts forth its green figs, And the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!”

The fig tree is the national tree of Israel. The people of Israel were God’s chosen people in the Old Testament, and the nation of Israel represents God’s testimony. The fruit of the fig tree is sweet, and it can bear fruit twice a year—winter fruit and summer fruit. The winter fruit grows through the winter and bears in early spring. What is being referred to here should be the winter fruit. Now that spring has arrived, the fruit of the fig tree is gradually ripening; the grapevine, having been pruned, is also beginning to blossom and give off its fragrance. The fig tree and the grapevine both exist for the purpose of bearing fruit. The fig tree emphasizes God’s testimony, while the grapevine emphasizes the character that is produced through the growth of life, which is the fruit of the Spirit.

In the final week of Jesus’ earthly ministry, He stayed each night in Bethany, at the house of Martha and Mary; every morning, He would set out from Bethany and enter the city of Jerusalem. Matthew 21:18–19 says, “Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, ‘Let no fruit grow on you ever again.’ Immediately the fig tree withered away.”

The Israelites are like this fig tree. They were originally God’s chosen people, but they could not bear fruit and become God’s testimony. Therefore, Jesus cursed the tree, and it immediately withered. God’s testimony was then transferred from the Israelites to the New Testament church. Paul says in Romans 11:20–22: “Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore, consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”

For New Testament believers to become God’s testimony, they must bear fruit. Now that spring has arrived, the winter fruit of the fig tree is gradually ripening.

The word “ripening” in Hebrew is *chanat*—this word appears five times in the Bible. The other four times are in Genesis chapter 50, verses 2, 3, and 26.

Genesis 50 speaks of how Jacob died in Egypt, and because his body was to be carried back to be buried in the land of Canaan, Joseph instructed the physicians to embalm Jacob’s body with spices for forty days so that it could be preserved. The word *chanat* refers to this process of embalming with spices. Later, when Joseph died, he also instructed the Israelites to take his body back to Canaan in the future. Therefore, his body was also embalmed with spices.

The same word is used for the gradual ripening of the fig tree’s fruit, indicating that the fruit’s ripening comes from being smoked or perfumed, which is quite special. A corpse is embalmed with spices for forty days, and the fragrance seeps into the skin, allowing it to emit a scent. It turns out that the fragrance of knowing Christ, which can be released from the saints, is also produced through this “smoking” process. Our Lord is rich in anointing oil, and the oil emits a sweet fragrance. If we stay with the Lord for a long time, His fragrance will gradually permeate us, and as a result, we too will begin to emit the aroma of the anointing oil. Therefore, this process of being infiltrated is also the process of fruit maturing.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we want to bear figs and become a testimony for the Lord, we must be permeated with the fragrance of the Lord. This process of being infiltrated is truly not easy. If any sisters have ever made smoked duck, they’ll know it involves hanging the duck in a specially made smokehouse, with a gentle fire below burning fragrant spices. Over a long time of smoking, the duck is gradually smoked until it is cooked. Smoked duck is not like roasted duck. Roasted duck is cooked quickly over a big fire—it’s like saying, “If we must die, let’s just die quickly!” The process of being roasted is much easier. But true maturity is not roasted—it is smoked. The feature of smoking is that the fragrance of the spices can be infused into the duck.

In order to bear testimony for God, we must be able to emit the fragrance of Christ. God often places us in suffering environments—environments that restrict us, that make us feel unfree, yet do not crush us. In such suffering, we have the Lord’s

presence. The Lord emits fragrance, and we are gradually permeated in His fragrance. Our testimony often connects to environments of suffering, and in those environments, we experience the Lord's presence. That helps us know God's will and joyfully submit to it, staying in the environment God has prepared for us. In the end, what is released from us is the fragrance that comes from knowing Christ. That the fig can be ripened by smoking shows us that testimony often originates from external circumstances.

Next, the vine is also blossoming and giving off fragrance; and after that, it will begin to bear grapes. The Lord is the vine, and we are the branches. The key to the vine bearing grapes is that the branches must always remain connected to the Lord. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." Therefore, grapes are the fruit of being connected to the rich life supply of Christ and being pruned, resulting in the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22–23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." These are all the beautiful qualities that can be manifested in us.

Winter has passed, spring has come. After experiencing death, resurrection is coming soon. The figs are about to be smoked and ripened; the vine is also blossoming and releasing its fragrance. At this moment, the Lord calls out: "Arise, come away with Me." This is the Lord's call once again: "My beloved, my beautiful one, arise, come away with Me." Although she is tenderly called by the Lord, this saint within the wall remains unmoved.

Verse 14: "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

Today we will only share on the first line of verse 14: "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff." From the start, the Lord calls out, "O my dove," once again reminding her that she has already learned the spiritual lesson of the first stage—to be like a dove, able to gaze solely upon the Lord, to look unto Him,

and to have spiritual sight that sees the Lord is no longer within the wall. The Lord is outside, leaping on the mountains, skipping on the hills, and He is calling her to go forward with Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, no matter how precious our past attainments, enjoyments, and knowledge of the Lord may be, if we cling to them tightly, they will eventually become a hindrance to us moving forward. We too easily become immersed in things related to God—whether it be work, service, gifts, or blessings—but as soon as God is no longer in it, we must lay it down and quickly follow the Lord’s advancing footsteps. “You are in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff.” The Lord is calling her to go forward together. Where to? The Lord then reveals the next place He is calling her to—to attract her to rise up, to leave the wall, and to come into the clefts of the rock.

The rock is a type of Christ. Moses led two million Israelites out of Egypt and into the wilderness. When they arrived at Rephidim, the people contended with Moses because there was no water to drink. In Exodus 17:6, it says: “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” God told Moses that He would stand before him on the rock at Horeb, and Moses was to strike the rock. Then water would flow out of the rock to give the people something to drink.

In typology, this shows that God ordained Christ to be like a rock that would be struck, and afterwards living water would flow out to quench people’s thirst. When Jesus Christ was crucified, a soldier pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out—blood for redemption and water for the supply of life. Christ was struck in this way only once. We cannot crucify Christ again; therefore, the striking of the rock at Horeb could only happen once. The Hebrew word for “rock” here is *tsur*, referring to a rugged rock. Later, after Moses and the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for nearly forty years, they came to the Wilderness of Zin and again had no water to drink. The people once more contended with Moses. Then God said to Moses in Numbers 20:8: “Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield

its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.”

God clearly told Moses that this time, in front of the people, he only needed to speak to the rock, and it would yield water to quench the people’s thirst. However, because of the people's complaints, Moses became angry with them. In his anger, he struck the rock twice with the rod. He did not follow God's instructions, and as a result, Moses was not allowed to enter the good land of Canaan. Why was this so serious? Because in typology, Christ cannot be crucified again. As the Rock, Christ was already struck once at Horeb. After the Rock was struck, it had a crack. From then on, you only needed to speak to the Rock, and it would bring forth water. The Hebrew word for “rock” in this case is, sela, the same word used in Song of Songs 2:14.

The first rock that was struck is referred to as, tsur. After being struck, it developed a crack, and this cracked rock is called sela. From this rock, you only need to speak, and water will flow out. This is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4: “and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” That spiritual Rock that followed them was Christ. We only need to ask the Lord, and we will receive the living water. The Lord does not need to be struck again. After the Rock is struck, a crack appears, and in the crack, there is a cleft.

In Exodus 33, Moses asked to see the face of God. But God told him that no one could see His face and live. Yet God was still gracious to Moses. In Exodus 33:22–23, it says: “So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock, and when God’s glory passed by, Moses was able to see God's back. The cleft of the rock is a safe place—a place closest to God. For no one has ever seen God except the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. Yet Moses was the only one who saw God’s back. The Lord is calling this believer—who is still hiding within the walls—to arise and go with Him,

so that he may come to the cleft of the rock, and there he can see the back of God. This means he can, through the death of Christ, draw nearer to God and gain a deeper vision of Him.

Then comes the phrase, “in the secret place of the steep rock.” The steep rock is like a towering cliff—straight and high, something no one can climb. Yet in that towering rock, there is a secret place—a hidden forest, unreachable by people, but a heaven for birds. In that hidden grove, there is no disturbance; the birds can rest and enjoy abundant provision. The Lord is calling this believer to be like a dove, flying up to the secret place on the steep cliff, to enjoy heavenly rest and heavenly supply. The Lord is calling this believer not to stay in the same place, but to move forward—to have a deeper union with Christ's death by being hidden in the cleft of the rock and to have a deeper union with Christ's resurrection, to enjoy the heavenly rest and supply in the secret place of the steep cliff.

The place the Lord is calling him to is so beautiful—so why is he still hesitating and not quickly rising to go with the Lord? In the Lord's calling, there is a hidden clue, and this clue might explain the difficulty the believer in the wall is facing. The problem lies with the cleft of the rock. In Exodus 33:22, when God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock, the Hebrew word used for “cleft” is *neqarah*—which speaks of the cracked, split rock, symbolizing Christ, the One in whom we can safely hide ourselves.

In Isaiah 2:21, “To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.” The word for “cleft” here is also *neqarah*, which likewise indicates a place where one can hide and not be harmed by God's majesty or glory. However, in Song of Songs 2:14, the word for “cleft” is a different Hebrew word: *chagavim*. This word appears only three times in the Bible. The other two instances are in Jeremiah 49:16 and Obadiah 1:3. In both of these passages, the word refers to the dwelling places of the Edomites, who lived in the rocky clefts.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob—they were both sons of Isaac. Esau, because he despised his birthright, lost Isaac's blessing.

Though he came from Isaac, because he craved pleasure, he lost God's promise. Esau prefigures our flesh, which is closest to us, yet opposes God. This seems to indicate the current condition of this saint: outwardly, he appears to be in the cleft of the rock—God's appointed place of refuge within the split rock that represents Christ—yet in that place, he has found a cleft of his own. This cleft is not from God, but is connected to man's flesh.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that in our consecration, in our service, and in our following of the Lord—though outwardly it may appear as if we have fully given ourselves to Him—in reality, we are still full of our own choices. If we truly consecrate ourselves fully and place ourselves on the altar, we become a burnt offering, burned to ashes, completely losing our self. That means there will be no personal choice, no natural preference, and no personal inclination. Most of the time, we are still unwilling to let go—just like Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5. They also sold a piece of land, wanting to participate in the practice of having all things in common. But when the moment came to truly give, they held back a portion out of reluctance—and it ended in a tragic outcome.

The Lord here is much more merciful than the judgment Peter executed through the Holy Spirit back then. The Lord is subtle and hidden, rather than pointing things out plainly—otherwise, we would all be guilty of lying to the Holy Spirit. Yet God has left this foreshadowing in the Bible, in order to remind us: Many times, the reason we cannot follow the Lord's leading is that we have made our own choices, held onto our own preferences. This is why we cannot keep pace with the Lord's calling. May the Lord have mercy on us.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. In Your resurrection, You continually call us to go with You. You want to lead us to the clefts of the rock, to the secret places of the steep cliffs. Let us be further united with Your death, and also further united with Your resurrection. Help us to learn to hide in Your bosom, not to seek our own clefts in Your embrace. Let us fully offer ourselves to You, that we may experience Your protection and provision in heavenly circumstances. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!